CUSTOMER VALUE FORMATION IN PRACTICE
A PRACTICE-THEORETICAL APPROACH

Helsingfors 2006
Customer Value Formation in Practice: A Practice-Theoretical Approach

Key words: Customer value, service marketing and management, service development, practice theory, ethnography

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Oskar Korkman
Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration
Department of Marketing and Corporate Geography

Distributor:

Library
Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration
P.O.Box 479
00101 Helsinki, Finland

Telephone: +358-9-431 33 376, +358-9-431 33 265
Fax: +358-9-431 33 425
E-mail: publ@hanken.fi
http://www.hanken.fi

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Oskar Korkman
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Prologue: setting the scene

This thesis has its background in continuous academic interest and consulting work done during the last 9 years in value creation and in the development of services and offerings. The buzzword has for a while been value creation: ‘we have to deliver our customers value’; ‘we have to make sure that we are valuable for our customers.’ An interesting question, which seems to be somewhat difficult to answer, is ‘what is value creation?’ There seem to be many different views on what customer value really is. Some managers talk of value in very traditional terms as being an output of the production processes of the company. Others say that customer value creation is helping the customer to be more successful in whatever he is doing.

The idea of value being something which is created by the customer as a subjective process managed by the customer is tempting. This is truly a customer-oriented view of customer value, which has been put forward by Normann (Normann & Ramirez, 1993; 1994; Normann, 2001), Storbacka & Lehtinen (2001) and more recently by Vargo & Lusch (2004a). There is, however, something in this view which I think can be further developed. According to this view, customer actions or doings are seen more or less as workflows of the customer, which is probably feasible in a B2B environment. However, when speaking about human beings, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and consumption researchers make a more complex image of the human being. Human beings do not create meanings according to pre-defined processes, but in sociocultural systems, which can be described as non-linear, not always goal-directed, and sometimes chaotic forms of social play and games. This is of course also true for the B2B environment, as a business is a ‘collection’ of persons.

The enthusiasm for this work was found in the task of finding ways of understanding and describing these systems of embedded actions, or practices, as they are referred to in this thesis. My interest is in the concept of customer value as a concept describing how value appears for the customer as a part of everyday life; not as value assessment or judgements as the current tradition in service marketing and management literature tells us. My concern with current customer research is that it is rather engaged with abstract cognitions happening in the ‘mind’, labelled perceived value, attitudes, needs, wants, quality etc. than with practical issues of what would be valuable for the customer in the practices of for example eating, drinking, walking, showering and telling jokes.

Surprisingly, this kind of practice-theoretical approach has been excluded to a large extent from the text books in marketing and consumer behaviour. The mind is mostly put in a superior position, whereas action is seen as an organ for the implementation of ideas. In my research I have in a very pragmatic way experienced the problematic stance of making a clear distinction between action (body) and thinking (mind). It appears to be, in simple real cases, impossible to make distinctions as in the practice of me ‘producing’ my dissertation.

Have I done my dissertation? Or, have I thought my dissertation? Many times I have the feeling that I have primarily done my dissertation, and my thinking has evolved as a
product of my research practice, not only as a product of the mind. The practice per se can thus result in implications of how we think and feel – not vice versa. The same discourse can, according to this thesis, be applied to consumption.

1.2. Customer value in practical terms

‘Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.’ (AMA, 2004)

The American Marketing Association (AMA) recently launched a new definition of marketing which emphasizes the concept of customer value. The purpose of marketing is to improve value creation for both the customer and the provider. The focus on customer value in marketing has already earlier been regarded as one of the most successful competitive strategies (Treacy & Wiersema, 1993; Ravald & Grönroos, 1996; Woodruff, 1997; Khalifa, 2004).

What does the customer value? How can we help the customer to experience more value? These are questions which most managers would like to gain more insight into. In a closer analysis of the value concept it is clear that both scholars and practitioners have very different views on customer value and the formation of customer value (Zeithaml, 1988; Ravald & Grönroos, 1996; Woodruff & Gardial, 1996; Woodruff, 1997). A literature review shows that there are at least three different axiological (value theoretical) starting points for discussing customer value - each with subcategories. There are scholars viewing customer value as a cognitivistic process (Zeithaml, 1988; Grönroos, 2000), as an experiential process (Holbrook, 1999), and as a resource-based production process (Normann & Ramirez, 1993; 1994; Normann, 2001). In addition, there is a vast literature on customer values (plural). It can thus be concluded that there is no undisputable theory of value in marketing, although the concept has a central role in most definitions especially in the relational perspective to marketing, referred here to as service marketing and management (e.g. Grönroos, 2000).

The most popular view of customer value in service marketing and management is the cognitivistic view on customer value as a form of assessment which presents value creation as a form of internal negotiation between sacrifices and benefits involved in a product, service or relationship (Zeithaml, 1988; Grönroos, 2000). This represents a view of a customer who is engaged in abstract thinking rather than practical doing. The customers are viewed as independent subjects of choice and acts of consumption (Marsden & Littler, 1999). As a consequence marketing uses psychological concepts such as decision-making, attitudes, needs, wants and perceptions in order to explain how people behave in the market place (Foxall, 2000 in Hackley, 2003). Also the literature on mainstream consumer behaviour tends to be restricted to explanations of consumers as decision-makers, although the name of the research area would imply something else.

A new approach, which presents an option to the existing theories of value in the field of service marketing and management, is proposed in this thesis. This proposed approach takes the contextual, practical, and dynamic nature of the customer as a starting point for understanding what customer value is and how it appears.
There are at least two aspects of service consumption that make it relevant to introduce a new approach to the concept of customer value. First, service usage, and the value of it, is practical, and thus it appears to be a good choice to view the customer as a practitioner of his everyday life. Due to the practical nature of usage, and also service usage, it appears to be fruitful to use an approach which not only stresses the mentalistic approach to life, but also the pragmatic nature of life construction in everyday situations. This view is implicitly supported by other scholars of service marketing and management who emphasize the active nature of the customer in service use (Rathmell, 1966; Grönroos, 2000). Second, in order to understand the value of a service, one has to link the service to the contextual nature of human life. As Thevenot (2001) concludes, we live in a ‘furnished’ world, which is both material and social in its nature and affects the way we live our lives. The service cannot be disentangled from the life of the customer, as the service is used in a specific context and no other. Especially if one wants to understand how valuable a service is or how one could create more value, one should be able to relate it to the life of the customer per se. Fournier & Mick (1999) made a similar attempt regarding the concept of satisfaction, and linked customer satisfaction with the more general concept of life satisfaction. This supports the idea that the customer is viewed not only as a user or a co-producer of services, but as a human being – with the complexity and opportunities this entails. As proposed, it is inadequate to describe human beings without integrating the material and social context of life into the unit of analysis (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; McCracken, 1988).

The theory of practice\(^1\) is in this thesis used as an ontology for viewing human behaviour simultaneously as practical and contextual. The customer is viewed as a practitioner of his life, in opposition to the currently predominantly used cognitivistic approaches to explaining human behaviour. None of the perspectives currently used in the literature of customer value tend to apply both a wide contextual and a practical approach that would explain value as something being formed through practical engagement in a world constituted of many different domains, not only of relationships between the customer and the provider.

The theory of practices defines practice as the unit of analysis. A practice refers to a ‘way of doing’ that is contextually situated and can be ‘carried’ by an individual customer. The customer is not the ‘king’ of his own actions and ‘his value formation’ in an uncomplicated way as proposed by mainstream marketing. The customer is rather decentralised in a systemic whole of other people, material and spaces. A customer can have various degrees of agency in practices. Some practices can be highly impersonal ways of doing, as for instance tooth brushing, whereas others can be highly personal and creative, as for instance knowledge work (Knorr Cetina, 2001). The consequence of applying a practice-theoretical approach is that customer value is not ‘delivered’, ‘perceived’, ‘experienced’, ‘co-created’ or ‘created’ but, according to the arguments presented, ‘formed’ in a dynamic way in the practices of the customer.

The proposed new approach to customer value contributes to the field of service marketing and management on several levels. The practice-theoretical approach is per

\(^1\) The theory for understanding practices can be found in numerous different, mostly sociological or anthropological streams of thinking: the phenomenological view, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, Marxist activity theory, Bourdieu’s habitus and Foucauldian discourse analysis.
se a contribution to the field of service marketing and management. In addition, a practice-theoretical approach to understanding how and where customer value emerges, the method used for empirical enquiry, and an illustrative example of how the method has been used will be introduced. Finally, the implications of the results of the research will be discussed from a managerial perspective.

1.3. Why bother?

Why introduce a new approach to the literature of customer value in service marketing and management? The practice-oriented theory building is interesting from a number of perspectives. Especially for the uses of service development, it appears that the value approach developed here can have several implications as a complement to current ways of working.

First, there is an opportunity to develop a practice-theoretical discourse in service marketing and management that emphasizes customer practice instead of cognitivistic, experiential and resource-based views popular in the current literature of service marketing and management.

The practice-theoretical approach has significant implications on the ways we understand customer value, as currently most value theories used approach the customer as centred and determinant of value. In addition, it is also concluded that the practice-theoretical approach can have significant implications on the ‘new’ service logic as it has been discussed recently in numerous publications (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004; Vargo & Lusch, 2004a; 2004b; Grönroos, 2005).

The way we talk about the customer in service marketing and management, and especially service development, seems to emphasize the ‘voice of the customer’ as a source of insight. It is here proposed that a new conceptual framework on customer value should be promoted in order to take into consideration the customer as a practitioner in a holistic fashion: combining the customer, the context and the interactions between the customer and his context into a unit of analysis. This requires a change of discourse, which de-emphasizes the customer as a determinant of value and the interactions between the provider and customer as the arena for value creation.

Second, the current dominant value theories in the literature have some fundamental limitations for understanding how value is formed as situated in a context. First, customer value from a cognitivistic perspective is in most cases defined as a subjective judgement of the customer. This perspective claims that value appears in the processes of assessment, not in life per se (e.g. Grönroos, 1982; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985; 1988). Second, customer value from an experiential perspective is defined as the individualistic preferred experience of the customer (Holbrook, 1999). This perspective only takes into consideration the effects of social and material context to a limited extent. Third, customer value from a resource-based production perspective defines value creation as something practical and action-oriented (Normann, 2001). These actions are, however, in most cases described as work-like actions taking place in a linear and non-contextual manner. According to Payne & Holt (2001) this gives a rather mechanistic view of the customer.
It is here claimed that customer value formation is contextual in a broad sense in which provider and customer interactions only play a supportive role. The role of the company becomes rather that of a developer of the whole system of practice (to the extent it is possible) than an entity pleasing customer needs and wants (cf. Suchmann et al, 1999; Shove & Pantzar, 2005). Customer value appears although a commercial provider would not be ‘present’. This means that the customer is engaged in valuable practices no matter whether a provider is involved or not. The role of the provider becomes that of a mere supporter of customer value, and not a source of it. This stance, although already implicitly discussed by Normann (2001), needs further elaboration for understanding the phenomenon of value formation in a consumer market.

Third, there is also, on a more concrete level, an opportunity to use new kinds of methods for gaining empirical insights into customer value formation that would be in line with the practice-theoretical stance.

Service development has not to a great extent utilised a methodology which would view the customer in practice, although there are some exceptions (e.g. Swan & Bowers, 1998; Harris & Baron, 2004). It appears that current research techniques are mainly based on the opinions (voice) of the customer (e.g. Griffin & Hauser, 1993), which are labelled needs, wants, perceived quality and perceived value etc. This is naturally criticised by scholars (e.g. Atuahene-Gima, 1996; Gustafsson et al, 1999; Slater, 2001), as at least 80% of the launches of new products and services fail, although customer inquiries have been carried out in many cases (Zaltmann, 2003).

There is a need to further develop the perspectives, methodologies and techniques for gaining customer insight (Fournier et al, 1998). The problem is not the lack of tools for acquiring knowledge about the customer in a practical manner, as other research traditions have already both in theory and practice examined the customer in practical terms. For instance Beyer & Holzblatt (1998) have defined in detail a method called contextual design, which puts emphasis on practical issues. As it happens, much of the research done is somewhat focused on technological design (e.g. Suchmann et al, 1999; Dourish, 2001), whereas the service literature lacks an extensive discussion on the theme. The problem seems to be that the necessary ontological underpinnings to ‘practice-oriented’ methods are lacking from the literature of service marketing and management.

It makes sense to understand practices also in a service context, as it appears that many innovations today are more or less adaptations, or minor modifications, to already existing everyday practices which are, due to their embeddedness in our life, difficult to question and reinvent. For instance mobile telephone services are not new from a customer-practice point of view, but rather an extension and development of ways to practice communication. Some even claim that the embeddedness of new products and services in current customer practices may be a prerequisite for successful product or service launches (Beyer & Holzblatt, 1998).

In addition to these theoretical and methodological limitations it appears that the problematic stance of the value concept is a highly relevant discussion in a managerial context. Practitioners discuss the concept of customer value with various different meanings, which in most cases reveal a lack of understanding of how one should
approach the task of enhancing customer value. In many cases, service providers seem to give customers power by asking them what they think is important and what is not, and thus relying on the ability of the customer to express his ‘needs’. The customer is given a centred position in the research. This is many times done through different kinds of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups, without perhaps understanding the more holistic and systemic nature of consumption, and without having clear strategies of how to gain a position in certain practices of the customer. The stance of this thesis is clearly that a company should not rely on the ‘voice’ of the customer, but build a more holistic understanding of the dynamics of consumption where the customer is only one element, which is partly constructed by its context. Therefore it is suggested that the company should increase its agency concerning making conclusions of what is valuable and what is not. This should also be accompanied by explicit ethical responsibility.

All in all there are four different areas that function here as a motivation for the research. First, current service marketing and management mainly makes use of a cognitivistic approach to market phenomenon. Second, current value theories set limits on opportunities to understand how customer value forms in the life of the customer. Third, service companies use the ‘voice of the customer’ as a means of developing their services and do not extensively make use of opportunities to understand the customer in a practical manner. Fourth, the problems mentioned above are also prevalent in the managerial context of marketing management.

1.4. The purpose of the research

The purpose of the research is to introduce a new approach to customer value formation in the field of service marketing and management based on a practice-theoretical stance, operationalise it into a methodology to be used in service development, and illustrate the methodology in a context of consumer services.

This purpose can be divided into a number of research aims, which also reflect the structure of the report.

- Research aim #1: To introduce the practice-theoretical perspective to service marketing and management research.

There are ontological and epistemological implications of seeing the customer as a practitioner, and these need to be discussed in this thesis. The discussion appears to be especially important as this approach to the customer is novel and has not been thoroughly introduced in the literature. This discussion is carried out based on influences from consumer behaviour (e.g. Holt, 1995; Shove et al, 2004; Shove & Pantzar, 2005), interaction design (e.g. Nardi, 1996; Suchmann et al, 1999) and more importantly sociological theory on practices (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984; De Certeau, 1984; Engeström, 1987; Reckwitz, 2002). The first aim was first approached in a deductive manner, but later the arguments were developed in a grounded manner by using the empirical studies done.

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2 This statement is based on personal experiences from working as a consultant regarding the development of issues related to customer orientation and customer value since 1996.
• Research aim #2: To develop understanding of how value emerges according to the practice-theoretical stance.

The concept of customer value was chosen as the main focus of this thesis. It would have been possible to pick any other concept from the service marketing and management literature. The value concept has, however, gained a central role in both academia and practice, which appeared to be a good enough reason to give the concept of value special attention. The concept is already ambiguous on the level of common sense. Current approaches to customer value do not give the necessary conceptual tool to understand how customer value is formed in practice.

Therefore, the second aim after discussing the practice-theoretical approach is to discuss the opportunities of how to understand value formation according to the stance. The objective is to create an understanding of how customer value is formed in a contextual manner. Practice theory is used as a background for discussing the current usages of the value concept and opportunities to create a complement to the current stances in the literature. In this thesis, the conclusions of customer value are only applicable to the empirical context under scrutiny. It is, however, believed that there is an opportunity to develop a generic approach, which gives the necessary flexibility to be applied to most empirical contexts.

• Research aim #3: To develop a method (prototype) for understanding customer value for the purpose of service development.

The aim of the research is to operationalise the value approach into a method for creating customer insight for managerial use. This insight into customer value can then be used as a source for developing services. An ethnographic approach is used as a basis for developing an applied ethnography that focuses on identifying, describing and improving customer practices. An ‘applied’ ethnography refers here to ethnography being used as a means for creating managerial insight. Ethnography is a method for understanding what the customers do, not only what they say they are doing (Forsythe, 1999). This understanding is gained through the reflexive combination of the researcher’s understanding and the perspectives given by informants of a specific context. The applied ethnography is at this point a prototype of a method that needs further development in several empirical contexts in order to be called a method.

• Research aim #4: To use the method (prototype) in a selected context of practices, and to use that in the thesis as an illustration.

The method utilized is furthermore illustrated in the context of cruise consumption. Families are selected as a ‘segment’ for the enquiry. The empirical research was carried out before, after and on board a cruise vessel travelling between Helsinki and Stockholm. The empirical research question is twofold: 1) what are the practices and their nature in a cruise context for families; and 2) what are the opportunities to develop current practices, and perhaps ‘move’ new practices into the context of the cruise, which

3 It appears for example to be unclear whether value is something perceived, created, co-created, or delivered. In some cases it appears that scholars do not see any problems in mixing different value theoretical starting points, which makes some texts very hard to understand.
would make the context of a cruise more valuable for families? The second empirical research question will be treated only on a generic level.

The illustration gives, in addition to an example of how practices can be identified, described and improved in the setting of cruise consumption, the necessary input for creating a context-specific definition on practices and an approach to customer value for the context of cruise consumption.

In conclusion, the contribution of this study comes from introducing a new perspective to service marketing and management (ontology and epistemology), a new approach to customer value (axiology) and a methodology for improved customer value (methodology). The main contribution is theoretical, whereas the empirical part functions as an illustration of the theoretical contribution.

1.5. The research approach

The first part of the research was purely deductive theory building, aiming at creating a new axiology for understanding customer value as a practical phenomenon happening in the world and for the use of service development. Deductive refers here to conceptual research done based on the current literature without any inductive empirical research.

The pragmatic approach to customer value was thus already at an early phase cemented and given as a loose framework for exploring reality through ethnography. This was, however, only an ontological and epistemological starting point and did not provide any exact content for the definition of the concepts of practice and customer value, that is the elements of the practice emerged later from the ethnography carried out in the empirical setting of cruise consumption. This part of the research used abductive reasoning, which is characterised by a constant movement between an empirical world and a model world (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). This phase was neither inductive, nor deductive, but aimed at combining both these approaches in a creative way. It was assumed that the empirical context and the phenomenon at hand could be understood in new ways by applying the practice-theoretical approach. Similarly, the aim was also to ‘improve’ the theoretical framework by doing empirical research (cf. Kovács & Spens, 2005).

The abductive reasoning of the practices in the empirical setting resulted in an understanding of customer value and how value emerges. The researcher remained open to influences from both theoretical ideas and implications coming from the ethnography used for explaining cruise consumption. The final definition of the practice and the approach to customer value was determined only after numerous rounds of ‘dialogues’ between the theory and the empirical part. This kind of interaction of theory and empirical findings is typical of abductive reasoning (Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Kovács & Spens, 2005). This was done during the whole period of empirical research, which means that the way the ethnography was carried out was gradually improved as the understanding of the phenomenon both theoretically and empirically improved. In that sense the empirical research was not conducted according to an exact scheme, but was gradually improved in order to match the theoretical framework that was built. The
empirical study was not carried out as one standardised study, but as consecutive studies of families that constituted cases of their own.

Figure 1 below describes the logic behind the research used in this thesis (read from left to right).

![Figure 1. The research approach.](image)

In sum, the ontological position in practice theory (1a) and the interest in customer value (1b) were cemented already on the basis of the pre-understanding. A literature study and a deductive experimentation made it possible to state that there is an opportunity to develop a practice-theoretical approach in service marketing and management (2). This approach to customer value was based on deduction operationalised into an applied ethnographic method (3). This method, or rather the prototype of a method, was then used in empirical research on cruise consumption (4). The empirical research was partly used as an illustration of the method, partly as a way to improve the method while using it, and partly as a grounded way of understanding customer value formation in practice (5).

The aspects of ontology, epistemology and methodology will be further discussed later in this thesis (chapter 2 concerning ontology and epistemology, chapter 5 concerning methodological issues).

### 1.6. Key concepts and limitations

The key concepts of the thesis, and the relationships between the concepts will be described in this section. The research is mainly conceptual, which means that the concepts used will be discussed in more detail later in the thesis.

The starting point will, however, be reviewed here in order to make the text easier to grasp. There are mainly three concepts that function as important foundations for this research: 1) customer value, 2) practice, and 3) service marketing and management.

Customer value is the specific concept under scrutiny in this thesis, whereas practice theory and the definition of practices give the necessary new perspective to the theory on customer value that makes the contribution possible. The novel approach to customer

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4 The focus in the discussion on value is on the concept of value (singular) and not values (plural), unless the term values is not directly linked to the concept of value.
value contributes to the field of service marketing and management. Each of these concepts has thus a specific role in the thesis.

*Customer value* is a concept used in service marketing and management, and more extensively in marketing, to indicate different aspects of ‘what is valuable’ for the customer. The discussion on ‘value’ is, however, multi-faceted and the concept tends to be used in many different contexts to explain widely different issues, ranging from how something of value is produced (as if value would be objective) to how something valuable is actually perceived or experienced (as if value would be subjective). The concept is selected as a special focus due to its importance in marketing jargon and the active discussion on the topic carried out in recent publications (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a; Grönroos, 2005). Customer value has also gradually become a concept that is used in managerial contexts rather frequently.

*Practices* are ways of ‘doing’ which are greatly affected by different aspects of reality. It is typical for practice theory that it gives different elements in the context an ontological status, meaning that reality is not only in the perception or experience as suggested by phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 2004 [1962]), and subjectivists in the field of marketing (e.g. Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Reality consists of numerous aspects: mental activities, material and actions, which fit together into a practice (Shove et al, 2004). All of these different aspects of reality affect the way we practice our life and, according to this thesis, the way customer value is understood. The author of this thesis will stay loyal to the ontology of practices, and hence not use terminology from for instance cognitive psychology.

It is of great importance to make a distinction between what is here named practices and actions. The concept of actions is used frequently in the literature of the resource-based view on customer value and refers to the ‘something that is done’ by the customer. An action can for instance be ‘ordering food’. A practice, on the other hand, is a ‘larger’ concept and refers to culturally embedded ‘ways of doing’ that combine actions and context. For instance ‘fine dining’ is a practice, and hence not only the action of eating, but a specific sequence of actions that are contextually embedded in a specific context of certain physical spaces, certain tools, know-how and images. Certain practices foster certain actions (Dourish, 2001). A more exact definition of the concept of practice used for this thesis is presented in chapter 2.3.

*Service marketing and management* refers here to the paradigm in marketing that emphasizes the relational aspects to marketing. In the service marketing literature, services are frequently described by characteristics such as intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability of consumption from production, and the impossibility to keep services in stock (Grönroos, 1982; 2000). What the customer consumes in a service context is, therefore, fundamentally different from what the focus of consumption is in the context of physical goods. This view on service marketing and management is based on the research tradition of the Nordic School of marketing thought (cf. Grönroos & Gummesson, 1985) that has been identified as one of three major research streams in service marketing (Berry & Parasuraman, 1993). Service marketing and management is here defined as the field in which the contribution of this research is positioned.
The research is limited to consumer marketing and therefore does not discuss the implications of the practice-theoretical stance on industrial marketing (B2B).

The concept of the customer will be mainly used in order to indicate an existing or potential user of services. It is here stressed that the concept of customer also refers to a potential user, which may differ from other definitions of the concept. The concept of the consumer will be used when the researcher wants to indicate specifically that the customer is an individual consumer and not an industrial player. The researcher also considered using a concept of the subject of service consumption (e.g. practitioner, person, human being), which would be even more suitable for the approach taken in this thesis. It was, however, decided that the concept of ‘customer’ will be mainly used as this is the praxis in the field of service marketing and management. As mentioned, service marketing and management is the intended field of contribution.

### 1.7. Positioning of the research

This thesis is positioned in the tradition of service marketing and management and more specifically in the Nordic school, but takes an ontologically and epistemologically speaking novel perspective to the tradition. This means that the thesis does not take interactions as the starting point for the analysis as the majority of the research does. It is argued that the Nordic school could gain advantages from a ‘critical’ perspective to current mainstream research through a consumption-oriented contextual perspective to services. This perspective could be labelled consumption-centred service marketing and management.

Service marketing and management has traditionally been interested in themes of service quality, service encounters/ experiences, service design, customer retention, relationship marketing, and internal marketing (Fisk et al, 1993), which has later been enlarged into new research areas such as customer equity (Blattberg et al, 2001) and customer value (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996). Service marketing and management has gradually become an accepted marketing discourse, which has earlier and still is put into contrast with the ideological norm of traditional product marketing (Grönroos, 1994; Gummesson, 2002), thus creating a new rhetoric of marketing (cf. Hackley, 2003).

The interest in marketing has mainly been in modernist world-views, seeking for managerial means-ends relationships (Brownlie et al, 1999). The same appears to be true for service marketing and management; although Brown (1993, 27) claims that the relational perspective has been influenced by postmodern perspectives.

Consumption-centred service marketing and management puts consumption in a superior position, and views the customer in a contextual manner. From this standpoint the customer has an ontological status of his own, independent from the provider and the interaction with the provider. The customer exists although he is not involved in any commercial relationships, which is a highly theoretical assumption, as all people are more or less involved in commercial relationships. The company is seen as a possible supporter of the customer’s everyday life. This approach could be labelled consumption-centred service marketing, as it puts consumption in focus and gives it a productive role, no matter whether a commercial provider is involved in the practice or
not. Service production per se, although it is co-produced with the customer, becomes merely a support for the customer, and thus gives practice per se agency and a centred position in the analysis. Edvardsson (2005) points out that services are currently dominantly viewed from a provider perspective.

Some of the foundations of this thesis are in the critical stance to modernist explanations of marketing. Some authors call it critical marketing (Brownlie et al, 1999; Burton, 2001; Hackley, 2003) and some postmodern marketing (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2001). The common element of these approaches is that they tend to criticize the rationalization and generalization of marketing theory into a managerial discourse of manipulation. In opposition to most authors within this critical stance, the aim of this thesis is to bridge mainstream service marketing and management with critical influences. It appears that most critical thinkers tend to take an anti-managerial stance due to the impression that the word managerial is almost synonymous with normative, generic and exploitative, which are all in conflict with the ideal of the relativistic point of view of the critical thinkers. Thus, the critical influences tend to discuss issues such as exploitation and emancipation (e.g. Firat & Venkatesh, 1995).

Nevertheless, the aim here is to create a discourse and method that can be used as managerial tools in service marketing and management, especially in the processes of service development. Thus, the aim is to introduce the specific theory on practices to the field of service marketing and management as a conceptual and methodological tool for creating customer insight for the purpose of developing and managing services. This approach can simultaneously function as a tool for improving the life practices of the people and a managerial tool for improving the ‘business’ of the company. The conflict of doing good for the society and doing good for the individual business is, maybe in a naïve and idealistic manner, not recognized here. The ethical responsibility put on ‘the service company’ is, however, noticed and discussed as one elementary part of service management and marketing.

In addition, it is also important to mention from a positioning point that the consumption-centred service marketing and management proclaimed here describes consumption as a phenomenon happening in the dynamic constellation of both subjectivity and objectivity. This is in opposition to some current experiential literature in marketing that tends to glorify ‘subjectivism’ as a counter reaction to more managerial ‘objectivistic’ marketing thought (Hoolbrook, 1999; Addis & Hoolbrook, 2001).

This thesis represents neither a subjectivistic nor an objectivistic stance to consumption, but aims at bridging this gap by integrating or overcoming this dichotomy. Subjectivity refers here to an ontology that supposes that the subject of doing (the customer) has agency of its own and can arrange his world. Objectivity, on the other hand, refers to a reality that is objective and determines the practices of the customer. An objective reality does not give any opportunities for a customer to express his subjectivity.

The concept of practice is a conceptual tool to overcome this dichotomy as it tends to assume that different practices have a different ‘portion’ of subjectivity and objectivity that jointly constitute a practice. The person involved has, depending on the practice,
different opportunities to express his subjectivity. In that sense each practice positions itself on a continuum between subjectivity and objectivity. Highly objective practices are those that are routinized and are not questioned (e.g. the practice of having a meeting). Highly subjective practices are those that are clearly conducted by a subject and are ways for people to express their subjectivity (e.g. the practice of making art).

In addition to the positioning statements mentioned above, there is an opportunity for researchers in Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)\(^5\) (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) to utilize the theory and method developed here for the purposes of their field, as there are very few contributions explicitly studying practices of consumption in concrete terms (e.g. Holt, 1995; Moisio & Askegaard, 2002; Shove et al, 2004; Shove & Pantzar, 2005). It should, however, be mentioned that there is a vast literature that implicitly discusses the concept of practice, which has not been discussed enough in order to make any more exact conclusions of the contribution of this thesis to Consumer Culture Theory.

1.8. The history of the research

I will here also review in more personal terms the different phases of the research processes, and the influences absorbed along the way.

The main part of the research process started in the summer of 2003 with a theoretical analysis of current conceptualizations of customer value and service development in the literature of service marketing and management and related literature. I decided already in the summer of 2003 that the practical view on customer value in the 90s proposed by Richard Normann could be further developed to better apply to service marketing for consumers. This became my research interest due to various discussions with people from different areas of expertise interested in gaining an understanding of customers, and also as a result of practical consulting work done in the field of offering and service development.

The research interest was during that time defined as an enquiry into understanding customer value as a cultural process. During the autumn of 2003 and the spring and summer of 2004 a new conceptual framework for understanding customer value in a dynamic, contextual and historic manner was conceived. It was decided in July 2004 that the focus will be on the concept of practice, which seemed to be a mildly hot topic, not in service marketing and management, but in some areas of consumer research, user-centred design, developmental research and strategy literature. There was, for instance, a track reserved for practice-theoretical considerations in the yearly meeting of the Finnish Association for Consumer Research in 2004 conducted by the Head of Research for the National Consumer Research Centre, Mika Pantzar. Also the Centre for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research at Helsinki University has been successful both in Finland and internationally under the management of Professor Yrjö Engeström.

\(^{5}\) Traditional consumer behaviour literature has in most cases not been interested in phenomena outside the buyer’s decision-making processes. The embeddedness of consumption in the social and material reality has been the interest of this smaller subgroup of researchers.
The human being is in these perspectives foremost seen as a practitioner, a practitioner learning through doing and acting. As a Master of Arts (adult education) I was familiar with this line of thinking and realized, when reading marketing literature, that the body of research on customer value and quality lacked a pragmatic approach to the customer. The customer was more or less, although there are some exceptions, seen as a thinking man, speaking man, but not as a practicing man (or woman).

At this point, it was increasingly clear that viewing the customer as a socio-cultural being in a practical way can contribute to the science of marketing, and also to the practice of marketing in the business community and amongst non-profit organizations. When discussing with marketers in companies my own conviction was strengthened; current dominant ontology, epistemology, and the methodology of customer value and more largely customer insight do not sufficiently match the managerial needs of marketers. Later, in the autumn of 2004 I started to work on my thesis full time.

The concept of practice was rather challenging for me as a researcher. The ontology of the concept of practice, as it is understood in different ways by for example ethnomethodologists, phenomenologists, symbolic interactionists, activity theorists and contemporary sociologists and philosophers such as Bourdieu, Giddens, Foucault, Baudrillard and De Certeau, was problematic. It seemed to be impossible for me, due to my restrictive competence in philosophical and sociological discourse, to integrate this literature into a coherent theory of practice. Therefore it was decided that Engeström’s model on activity, which is basically a neo-Marxist cultural-psychological model on action, would function as the starting point for the research.

At this point I also worked with the concept of service development and more broadly with consumption and service marketing and management. These concepts were in many senses more straightforward to work with. This literature review and the contemplation on the concept of practice is reported in detail in chapters 2-4.

The understanding of the concept of practice was gradually improved through reading and through discussions with scholars knowledgeable in the field of practice theory. At this point a literature review was carried out that focused more directly on the concept of practice. For instance the writings of philosophers such as Schatzki and Reckwitz, and discussions with Professor Jaakko Virkkunen, Professor Mika Pantzar, and Dr Elizabeth Shove had a major influence on my thinking. I started with my ethnographic study of cruise consumption in the autumn 2004, which is reported in detail in chapter 6. The theoretical discussion was continued during the empirical studies in the spirit of abductive reasoning. The theoretical definition of the concept of practice was cemented in the final phase of the empirical research. I also rationalised the key concepts for my theoretical research and decided upon the limitations to use in the thesis. It was decided that the research would concentrate on the concept of practice as an ontological starting point; customer value as a concept to reflect the ontology on; and service development as a context for the contribution.

The empirical research was finalized in the early spring of 2005, after which the analysis and the writing of the thesis was worked upon until August 2005.
1.9. The structure of the report

Finally, the structure of the report will here be accounted for, before going further into a discussion on the theoretical starting point for the thesis. The thesis is structured into seven chapters.

The first chapter, *the introduction*, focuses on the existing research gap in the literature and the motivation of the research. It is suggested that the customer is not viewed as a practitioner in current literature. The research is positioned in the field of service marketing and management. It is, however, stated that the thesis aims at taking a novel, critical, and practice-theoretical approach to the phenomenon of services and, in particular, customer value. The chapter also includes a description of the research process and the structure of the report.

The second chapter, *the practice-theoretical starting point*, defines the ontological and epistemological starting point of the thesis. Practice theory functions as the source of inspiration and a new paradigmatic perspective to the field of service marketing and management. The principles of practice theory are discussed, and a grounded definition is established for the specific empirical context of family cruises selected for the thesis. Practice theory and its larger implications for service marketing and management are discussed. It is, however, concluded that the concept of customer value will be the specific focus of this thesis.

The third chapter, *customer value – a concept of multiple meanings*, discusses the different paradigmatic starting points of current value theories in the field of marketing. Three different categories are identified according to the basic ontological assumptions made in each theory. These three approaches; the cognitivistic, experiential, and resource-based approaches are all discussed from the perspective of each view’s contribution to the understanding of how customers value services. The conclusion is that current value theories do not sufficiently explain the customer as a practical and contextual being embedded in the world.

The fourth chapter, *customer value as embedded in practice*, defines the concept of customer value according to the practice-theoretical starting point outlined in the second chapter. Four principles related to value embeddedness, agency in the value definition, value formation and the role of the provider are defined, after which an approach to customer value according to practice theory is stated. A short discussion on the managerial implications of the new approach is carried out, in order to remind the reader of the relevance of the proposed view on customer value from a practitioner’s point of view.

The fifth chapter, *an ethnographic method for mapping practices*, outlines the empirical research process. The research methodology applied for mapping practices is an applied ethnography. The applied ethnography uses four different research methods: non-participant observation, participant observation, videotaped interviews, and practice mapping by the personnel of the cruise line. The research process is defined in detail according to the techniques used for collecting data, analyzing data, and writing up the ethnography.
The sixth chapter, *family practices in a cruise context*, is the actual empirical result of the research. The empirical research was carried out in a cruise context of families that attend a certain cruise between Helsinki and Stockholm. The result consists of descriptions of 21 different practices carried out on board the vessel. A model of opportunities for enhancement of customer value is stated on the basis of the ethnographic understanding built in the empirical research.

The seventh chapter, *conclusions and implications*, discusses the contribution of the research and outlines directions for future research. The implications of the research are defined to relate to the discourse of service marketing and management, the use of a new type of service development process and method for creating consumer insight. A more general practice-theoretical approach to a service logic is discussed in order to give a concrete understanding of the implications that the approach in this thesis can have on service marketing and management, and perhaps also on marketing overall.
2. THE PRACTICE-THEORETICAL STARTING POINT

The ontological and epistemological starting point of this thesis will be discussed in this chapter. It is suggested that service marketing and management can benefit from complementing current approaches with a practice-theoretical approach, which puts consumption practice in the centre of the analysis.

2.1. Approaches to research in social phenomena

In addition to the current approaches to customer value in service marketing and management, it is here suggested that a practice-theoretical standpoint to consumption would benefit service marketing and management. The practice-theoretical stance is mainly discussed as a reaction towards individualistic and subjective thinking. Especially, the cognitive approach tends to be presented as ‘inward’ reasons of ‘outward’ human behaviour (Reckwitz 2002). The mind makes up a plan, which is then implemented by the body in different forms of bodily acts such as speech and movement. This approach is unquestionably the most dominant way of thinking in service marketing and management, and can be seen in the ways scholars use concepts (needs, wants, perceived quality, perceived value) and methods for ‘revealing’ plans and strategies of the customer, which is then expected to have a rather uncomplicated relation to action.

Consumption according to the practice-theoretical stance presents a very different approach to social phenomenon. This approach could even be called an anti-individualistic (Schatzki, 2002), and anti-subjective stance. Consumption practice is not only what the customer thinks, feels, and decides to do (subjectivism), but also the consumption the customer takes part in (objectivism). The acts of consumption are neither decided by the customer, nor by context alone, but more specifically in the system of the subject and context in interaction, which consist of both human (e.g. other people) and non-human (e.g. tools) elements. This stance is one of the basic premises of practice theory, which will in this thesis function as the theoretical foundation and approach to research. This does not mean that, for instance, thought would be excluded; rather it refers to thought as being a part of practices (Barnes, 2001).

Before going further into practice theory, it is essential to make some clarifications on the possible paths to choose when examining service consumption. Reckwitz (2002) has defined four different approaches to social phenomenon with distinct ontological and epistemological starting points: culturalist mentalism, textualism, intersubjectivism, and practice theory.

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6 Layder (1993) makes a similar distinction between different elements of examination in social research into interrelated elements of analysis, which are context, setting, situated activity, self and history, which are represented in literature of different research and symbolize different research strategies. This categorization, however, lacks the textual approach.
According to culturalist mentalism, social life can be analyzed through using the mind of the human being as a unit of analysis. The majority of research in service marketing and management is in this discourse. As mentioned, the assumption in this approach is that customers know, are capable and want to talk about their actions. The mentalistic view is, however, criticized as it can constrain the managers to see their business only through the eyes of current customers (Atuahene-Gima, 1996; Trott, 2001). Furthermore, this discourse makes an assumption that human beings ‘are aware of’, ‘are capable’ and ‘want to tell’. Here the research goes wrong, as not all people are capable of telling what they know and sometimes they do not want to share their knowledge.

Textualism has a totally different approach to science and claims that reality is neither formed in the minds, or the context of the customer, but rather in the language, and the ways we speak and put our speech into action. This is many times referred to as discourses (Foucault, 1980). In this perspective, the unit of analysis is naturally the discourse itself. The discourse constitutes the subject, which is meaningful in that particular discourse. For instance the discourse of doctor and patient is embedded with power through the scientific knowledge of medicine. The power of the discourse lies in its ability to be unnoticed and unquestioned (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000).

Intersubjectivism, mainly represented by symbolic interactionism, claims that reality is constructed in the interactions between human beings (Goffman, 1959), and thus the unit of analysis becomes the social interaction per se. Symbolic interactionism views the human being as embedded in the social context, in which she creates and sustains the definitions of the world, which are social to their character (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). In that sense, symbolic interactionism stresses that a person is not only an actor, but very much also an interactor in a social world (Prus & Frisby, 1987).

Finally, practice theory focuses on the practical construction of life in a world where both humans and nonhumans have an ontological status of their own (that is both humans and nonhumans exist as separate elements). The practice is constituted of both the customer and his context, which is embedded with meanings in practical terms (Holt, 1995). The practice per se is the unit of analysis and the human being becomes decentred in the analysis of reality, which constitutes different elements of reality: material, competence, and images (Shove et al; 2004; Shove & Pantzar, 2005). This ontology is perceived as a rather recent ontology challenging more accepted approaches (Schatzki et al, 2001).

The concept ‘Practices’ refers to ‘ways of doing’, which are embedded in the context of both inward (subjective) and outward (objective) interlinked elements. The outward elements are embodied in the sense that the subject is constituted within the practice (Schatzki, 2001a; 2001b). This means that practice is not synonymous with action or behaviour, but enlarges the unit of analysis to a totality that explains the systemic whole that fosters action (cf. Dourish, 2001). Practices are thus contexts where actions are carried out (Schatzki 2001b).

Practice theory has seldom been treated as a separate philosophy of science (Reckwitz, 2002). There are a couple of exceptions which have solely focused on the concept of practice in an integrative manner taking into account the vast literature on the theme (Schatzki et al, 2001; 2002; Reckwitz, 2002).
Practices can according to Reckwitz\(^8\) (2002, 249-250) be defined in the following way:

‘A ‘practice’ (Praktik) is a routinized type of behaviour, which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.

A practice – a way of cooking, of consuming, of working, of investigating, of taking care of oneself or of others, etc- forms so to speak of the ‘block’ whose existence necessarily depends on the existence and interconnectedness of these elements, and which cannot be reduced to any one of these elements.’

Schatzki (2001a, 2) defines practices in a similar way, but with different terms:

‘A central core, moreover, of practice theorists conceives of practices as embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared understanding.’

The specific definition used in this thesis will be introduced later in chapter 2.3. The reason for using practice theory and the nature of it will be discussed more thoroughly before giving a more exact definition of the concept of practices.

Practice theory has been chosen as a starting point for the analysis for a number of reasons which have been discussed in the introduction of this thesis. It was argued that since the nature of service consumption is to be practical and contextual, this provides a good motivation for applying a practice-theoretical approach. According to practice-theory, social phenomenon cannot be described with individualistic concepts such as beliefs, desires, emotions, and purposes; rather, one has to take into considerations the individual as being embedded and constituted by the context of the practice.

My main point is that there is an opportunity to create a theory that sees the customer as a practitioner in the context of his everyday life, and thus approach consumption of services as integrated into the ‘being in the world’. From a positioning point of view, this means that this work is not aiming at understanding human beings (the customer in this case), their general relation to cruises or implications for the self of that human being. The focus is taken away from the ‘self’ due to the assumption that the focus on individual’s perceptions of himself and reality do not give an adequate understanding of service consumption. Rather, the practice per se and the social site the practice is embedded in gives an understanding of social phenomena (cf. Schatzki, 2002). Thus, meaning creation is reflected in practice (Holt, 1995; Holt & Sternthal, 1997).

This approach to understanding services, service marketing, and management is suggested to give an important new discourse and methodology for understanding service consumption and how value is formed in consumption. Before discussing more thoroughly the implications of this thinking for service marketing and management, and later more specifically for the concept of customer value, a review of the main principles of practice theory will be carried out.

\(^8\) Reckwitz (2002) defines practices as routinized type of behaviour. This thesis does not consent to this view as it is explained in chapter 2.2. that practices range from subjective to objective behaviours, and thus include other than routinized behaviours. Reckwitz is, however, cited here due to his otherwise clear conceptualisation of the concept of practice.
2.2. The principles of practice theory

The influences on practice theory can be found in a vast array of different theoretical contributions of philosophers and sociologists in the fields of phenomenology (e.g. Merleau Ponty, 2004 [1962]), symbolic interactionism (Goffman, 1959), theoreticians on discourses (Foucault, 1980), ethnomethodologists (Garfinkel, 1967), activity theorists (Vygotsky, 1978; Engeström, 1987), and contemporary thinkers (Bourdieu, 1984; Decerteau, 1984; Giddens, 1984) that are harder to label. As mentioned, there is also a smaller group of theoreticians that have focused solely on the concept of practice (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki et al, 2001), and also some scholars in consumer behaviour (Holt 1995; Moisio & Askegaard, 2002; Shove et al, 2004; Shove & Pantzar, 2005) and interaction designers (human-computer interaction) (e.g. Nardi, 1996; Suchmann, 1987; Suchmann et al, 1999; Dourish, 2001) have shown an interest in the field.

There are a number of principles that can be stated to be common for something that is here called a theory on practices, although there are some significant variations in the interpretations and definitions of different scholars. Four principles are reviewed here: 1) practices are practical, 2) practices are contextual, 3) practices are based on shared understanding, and 4) practices are dynamic constellations.

2.2.1. Practices are practical

The idea that practices are practical may sound as a truism, but is nevertheless, an important point that should be stated here, especially in the case of a discussion on service marketing and management. Service marketing and management usually turns to abstract concepts describing ‘in the head’ aspects of consumption, rather than consumption as situated and practical.

Many consumption theorists stress the symbolic as a signal of status and identity, whereas practice theory implies that material is used rather directly in the reproduction of daily life (Shove et al, 2004). Life is about living through different practices, taking on the competences in the practices, and using different tools for carrying out actions. A practice refers to the usage of something (tools, images, spaces, competence) in a particular way, which in the final analysis is practical. As Marx concludes in the theses of Feuerbach ‘All social life is essentially practical. All the mysteries which lead theory towards mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice’ (Marx cited in Jenkins, 1992, pp. 68). In this analysis the customer becomes a practitioner or a ‘carrier’ of practices, and as such practice is something which a participant either can join or withdraw from in a practical manner (Shove & Pantzar, 2005).

Phenomenologists have had a great impact on the way we perceive the link between abstract thinking and the mundane practical world. Heidegger made attempts to overcome the distinction between mental activity and mundane existence in everyday life. This was a reaction against the Cartesian ‘cogito ergo sum’9, which lifted ‘thinking’ up as a superior activity beyond bodily existence. Heidegger was opposed to the

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9 ‘I think therefore I am.’
dualism between ‘mind and body’ (Dourish, 2001), which was and still is in many traditions a prevailing dichotomy. The way customer value is defined in service marketing and management as a judgment represents this dichotomy and tends to assume that the customer’s mind observes the world, gives it meaning and creates a plan for action. Heidegger would have opposed this sequential thinking, and would probably have claimed that the meaningfulness of everyday life, and thus also services, is not in our minds, but in the world where we encounter them. According to Heidegger, it is senseless to discuss being without the world. The world becomes not only an object for active being, but also a tool for achieving goals in the world (Winograd & Florens, 1986).

This kind of practical approach can also be applied to the context of service marketing and management. Due to the practical nature of usage, and also service usage, it appears to be fruitful to use an approach which not only stresses the mentalistic approach to life, but also the pragmatic nature of life construction in everyday situations.

2.2.2. Practices are contextual

The contextual (social and material) nature of human life seems to be one of the basic premises of how consumption can be understood also outside practice theory (Boyd & Levy, 1963; Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Baudrillard, 1998 [1970]; Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; Levy, 1981; Solomon, 1983; McCracken, 1988; Bergadaa, 1990; Holt, 1995; Fine, 1997). According to practice theory life is constructed in relation to one’s social, material and historical environment. The subject and contextual factors bear their own ontological spaces in reality, which are in interaction but separated.

There are differing approaches to the definition of the context. What really matters is how the constituent elements fit together (Shove et al, 2004). One point is that no matter what the elements of the context are, they have in a philosophical sense all their own ontological space, meaning that they are not subordinated to each other, but rather arranged in a systemic totality. This means that social phenomenon is not constituted by regularities, but more or less as arrangements, in which both humans and nonhumans can function as agents (Schatzki, 2001a; 2001b). Thévenot (2001) refers to a ‘furnished’ human world, which gives an understandable image of the world as having an ontological status of its own.

Action is not a response to some mental stimuli, but builds a bridge between the mind and body, and subject and context, through the inter-social and materialistic nature of action (Vygotsky, 1978). De Certeau (1984) has made a distinction between tactics and strategy, which illustrates the variations of the dominance by the mind and body in different practices. Tactical practices refer to routinized practices, which are more or less embedded in the bodily routines, whereas strategic practices give a better opportunity for people to make decisions of their own reality. In that sense the role of the mind, body and context varies on the basis of the nature of the practice. Bourdieu (1984) has struggled with similar problematic discussions of integrating subjectivism and objectivism into a theory of practice that is similarly self-organising but also gives space for human agency.
This kind of contextual approach can also be applied to the context of service marketing and management. In order to understand the value of a service, one has to link the service to the contextual nature of human life. The relationship between the customer and the service is definitely contextual in the sense that service use cannot be separated from other life. Especially if one wants to understand how valuable a service is or how one could create more value, one should be able to relate it to the life of the customer per se. Fournier & Mick (1999) made a similar attempt concerning the concept of satisfaction, and linked customer satisfaction with the more general concept of life satisfaction.

2.2.3. Practices are based on shared practical understanding

All practice theorists acknowledge the dependence of activity on shared skills and understanding. There is, however, a disagreement about whether there is a need to add something more to the analysis than shared understanding (Schatzki, 2001a). In this case, it is however preferred to view practices as social sites in which material and the subject are integrated through a sort of practical and bodily understanding, which is often referred to as tacit knowledge (Collins, 2001).

Ethnomethodologists have studied the use of ‘common sense’, which is a form of tacit knowledge that is used for coping with situations in everyday life. People have a reason for behaving the way they are doing; they are acting according to mechanisms which become explicit in everyday action (Dourish, 2001). The objective of ethnomethodology is mainly to understand how people create social reality in a practical way through practical understanding, rather than through macro-level theories about social reality. In that sense ethnomethodology focuses on how people ‘do’ social life (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). Ethnomethodology proposes that social order is not established in shared cultural principles, but is rather defined in the situation by changing constellations (Maynard & Clayman, 1991; Pollner, 1991; Lynch & Peyrot, 1992; Gubrium & Holstein, 2000; Dourish, 2001). This would imply that reality is constantly constructed through situations in which individual practical understanding is applied. Ethnomethodology is thus a micro-level explanation of ‘common sense’ (Coulter, 2001).

The discussion of tacit knowledge has further evolved to examining the relationship between the individual and the context. According to Bourdieu (1984) ‘thoughtless habit’ can neither be understood solely through individual behaviour and decision-making nor in collective structures. Habitus is a concept for building the bridge between the subjective and objective. The concept refers to ways of doing things manifested through behaviour and constituted in the interaction between the subject and his context. Giddens (1984) proposes a similar view with the concept of practical consciousness. In sum, practical understanding is a collection of abilities that results from and also makes it possible to participate in a certain practice.

Nevertheless, service marketing and management can gain from acknowledging the fact that many practices are embedded in collective understanding, which at times can be either restricting or enabling for service marketing and management. For instance, when developing a new service, the company should acknowledge the historical development
2.2.4. Practices are dynamic

Practices are by no means static, but are reproduced and reconfigured in the acts of everyday life. Activity theorists (e.g. Vygotsky, 1978; Engeström, 1987) and dialectic marketers (e.g. Marsden & Littler, 1999) claim that activities/practices are remodelled through contradictions inside the activity and also between different activities in a historical perspective. Contradictions come from ‘tension’ between elements or practices.

In that sense, the subject is not ‘forceless’, but devoted practitioners can actively shape ‘the game’. However, one should remember that the context also possesses a high status, and thus people are also shaped by the different elements of the practice. Shove et al (2004) discusses the power of the floorball practice per se, which can capture players into the game without giving, in the end, very much choice to the individual player. It is here, however, stressed that there is a dynamic interaction between the different elements of the practice and shifts of agency between different elements can happen. Thévenot (2001) sees that the strength of the concept of practice is its breadth concerning the matter of agency. A practice can similarly explain personal and intimate actions and also collective, public and institutional practices.

A good example is the promenade deck on board of the cruise vessel studied, which per se seems to steer passengers to construct practices around strolling and window-shopping. In this case it appears that passengers are more or less like puppets steered by the environment, whereas another practice may direct agency to the subject. Knorr Cetina (2001) claims that for instance knowledge-intensive work does many times require that the person takes agency and does not follow ‘habits’, but creates dissociation between the subject and the context. DeCerteau (1984) also stressed the creative character of many practices, which implies that practices are a larger category than for instance routines.

Concerning service marketing and management, it appears that service providers can create a certain dynamics that creates value for the customers involved in the practice. The objective of service development becomes thus not the creation of meaningful service, but the cultural production of new forms of practices (cf. Suchmann et al, 1999 concerning system development).

2.3. The definition of practice – a grounded definition

As discussed in the previous section, a practice can be summarized to be an ontology that supports a practical view on the world, which is constituted through practices that are based on shared understanding, and remain dynamic.

The objective of this section is to introduce a definition of practice that is used in this thesis. This definition has partly emerged from the empirical site, and partly been
influenced by the literature on practices. It will also be pointed out that the definition used is mostly influenced by materialistic practice theory, and not for instance discursive practice theory.

2.3.1. The emergence of the definition

The practice definition has emerged during the data collection and analysis of the empirical research of cruise consumption. The definition is grounded in the sense that the researcher already in an early phase decided to keep his mind open for elements appearing as important for the constitution of different practices in cruise consumption, and more specifically families entering the context of cruise consumption.


To me all these contributions represent somewhat different emphases of practice theory, which all had an influence on the definition I decided to use. The actual definition on practices emerged from a ‘dialogue’ between earlier theoretical and empirical contributions, and the specific context of cruise consumption investigated in this thesis. The researcher was open to both theoretical and empirical influences through the whole process (cf. Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Kovács & Spens, 2005).

I will come back to the empirical work in chapter 6, but in order to make the rest of my theoretical arguments understandable, I shall here give my definition of practice.

2.3.2. A materialistic definition on practice

Practices are defined by different elements that constitute the practice in a systemic manner. These elements usually represent a systemic whole of mind, body, subject and context, which are all embodied with a ‘potential’ for improvements, and better fit between elements (Shove et al, 2004).

Some authors give the material ‘things’ in the context a very dominant role, whereas other practice theorist ignore the involvement of material in practices, and see them as truly socially constructed. For instance De Certeau (1984) and Bourdieu (1984) appear to lean more toward the social than material, and in some ways exclude the materialistic view. Others tend to give the language per se and the usage of language in discursive practices a superior position (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000), although for instance Foucault tends to view discourse in a very broad sense as for example ‘things’. Some claim that there are no great differences in studying linguistic practices compared to other forms of practices (Turner, 2001).
A practice theory that emphasizes a pragmatic integration of material or tools is put forward in this thesis (cf. Vygotsky, 1976; Engeström, 1987; Schatzki et al, 2001; Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al, 2004; Shove & Pantzar, 2005). This is an important limitation, which gives this thesis a ‘materialistic’ underpinning in contrast to more discursive practice-theoretical discussions (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). The reason for making this limitation is on one hand my starting point of the research process in activity theory, which is materialistic in its nature. On the other hand, this decision was also made because of how the practices occurred for me in the empirical context. It appeared that they are highly embodied ways of doings, in which different ‘things’ are used to do something for the purpose of something. This materialistic underpinning of the practice concept was a very important decision which guided my methodological choices. Conversation analysis or discourse analysis would perhaps have been a better choice of method if a more discursive approach to practices had been chosen.

Reckwitz (2002) discusses 1) bodily routines, 2) mental routines of understanding, and knowing and 3) the use of objects as elements of practice. For instance subject-subject relations in practices are not defined as separate from subject-object relations, which means that this perspective to practice includes social relationships (e.g. the involvement of other people in a practice) into the same category as usage of objects. In the division of the different elements the point is not to make a clear distinction between subject and context, but rather integrate them into a whole giving an understanding of reality. For instance mental routines include elements of both subjectivity and objectivity.

Shove et al (2004) and Shove & Pantzar (2005) put an emphasis on the elements of 1) material, 2) image and 3) competence. Innovation is dependent on the active integration of elements of the practice. The authors have studied amongst other things Nordic walking, digital photography, and floor ball in order to understand the relation between different elements of practices and their influences on the evolvement of certain practices. The implication is that for instance the sticks used for floorball and Nordic walking, and the camera used for digital photography, lack value but gain value per se for the human being when they are integrated into practices.

Activity theorists such as Vygotsky (1967) and later Engeström (1987) emphasize the ‘tools and signs’, which are similar to material and images above, in their definition of activities in their reasoning. Engeström (1987) defines activity as 1) subject, 2) object, 3) instruments, 4) rules, 5) community, and 6) division of labour. This model has been mostly used in the developmental work research, and focuses perhaps more on work-like practices, than playful and game-like practices as in the examples of floor ball, Nordic walking and digital photography.

All authors mentioned above stress the systemic nature of the customer’s reality, consisting of the subject, mind and body, and context including different forms of social, material and symbolic features.

A definition of the concept practices (specific for the empirical context) is given in this thesis. This definition is not ‘truer’ than any of the models mentioned, but grounded in the empirical work done on cruise consumption during the period between autumn 2004 and spring 2005.
During that time an applied ethnography was used to investigate practices on board a large vessel travelling between Helsinki and Stockholm. The study was narrowed down to study only the practices of families, or more correctly, the practices that families’ ‘carry’. In the context of cruises for families it appeared that five different elements were of importance in order to understand the dynamic nature of practices in a cruise context. The elements are the following:

- **Subject**: The agent, who takes on the practice (Shove & Pantzar, 2005). In the context of the cruise it appeared that the practices were divided between three different subjects: the family, the children, and the parents. The carriers of the practices differ during the travelling depending on which practices are carried out. There are clearly practices which are carried out by the family as an entity, and practices that are constructed to involve only either adults or children.

- **Tools and know-how**: The agent uses certain tools and know-how to reproduce the practices on board related to play, eating & drinking, strolling, killing time etc. Tools and know-how therefore here refer to different elements that are directly used to do something. Tools can be everything from very concrete material ‘things’ to competence and rules that are directly used by the subject in the practice. For instance, the whole system of a buffet dinner is used in a direct way in order to carry out a specific practice of eating. The buffet gives the opportunity for a family to exercise a form of freedom from normal rituals of dining in a restaurant, which is tied to a selection from menus and a know-how of the whole family to sit together more or less peacefully. The context of the buffet provides the family with a vast set of different tools and embedded know-how, which helps the family to cope with the practice of eating.

- **Images**: The agent uses also certain images of the practice at hand in order to carry out a practice. The images embedded in the cruise context are rather clear, and appear to change rather slowly. For instance, many people attach an image of ‘being compulsory’ to the tax-free shop, although this would not have a rational basis. The element of image refers here to the symbolic meanings embedded and influencing the practice. It does, in the spirit of practice theory, not refer to a subjectivist concept, but an image that is embedded in the practice per se, and constitutes an independent element of the practice. The images refer here to aspects that are more symbolic and less concrete than tools and know-how that are directly used in the practice in a pragmatic sense.

- **Physical space**: The physical space could be perceived as a tool for the subject, but is here treated as a separate element due to its dominant role in the context of a cruise, as both a matter of restriction and empowerment. A good example is the promenade deck (a street-like open space on board the vessel) that creates great opportunities for strolling and impulse buying. During my trips with the vessel I was first confused by what the (to me) seemingly pointlessly wandering families are practicing on board. It appears, however, that the promenade enables a rather coveted practice, due to the lack of such ‘meaningless’ and similarly relaxing things to do for the families in everyday life.
**Actions:** Nevertheless, action is also needed in order to constitute a practice through the integration of the different elements. The practice per se gets its status in reality only through the actions of a certain subject. The practice fails to ‘come alive’ if the subject rejects the logic a certain practice has through the elements defined above.

Conclusively, I have in my research used a definition of customer practices as ‘more or less routinized actions, which are orchestrated by tools, know-how, images, physical space, and a subject who is carrying out the practice’.

The notion ‘more or less routinized’ refers here to the variation of practices concerning routinization. See below for a visualization of the practice concept that is used in this report.

![Figure 2. Elements of practices.](image)

The empirical research concluded with a whole range of different practices with embedded potential for the cruise company at hand, divided by the subjects of the family, the adults, and the children, which all are accounted for in chapter 6.

21 practices were identified in the context of family cruise consumption. Each practice was defined on the basis of their heterogeneous and multi-layered meanings in that specific cruise context. As will be discussed later, it would have been possible to identify either more or fewer practices depending on the level of abstraction defined for the specific research. For instance, the ‘opening of the cabin door’ could perhaps be identified as one separate and meaningful practice, but would have meant that the researcher would have had an unbearable task of identifying and describing all practices occurring on board the ship on the same level of abstraction.

This means that practice theory has not been used here to create a taxonomy of different levels of abstraction in practices. As will be pointed out in the chapter on ethnography, ethnographic research is seen as a creative task, and therefore practices are identified on the level as they appear for the researcher.

**2.4. The epistemology of practices**

Concerning the epistemological stance, it is as mentioned stressed that knowledge of the social phenomenon at hand arises from the practical implementation of actions situated
The practice-theoretical approach has a number of specific characteristics, which are mentioned here as epistemological principles.

First, what knowledge are we interested in? This has already been discussed several times. The knowledge in focus in this thesis is the practical knowledge of practices as they occur in the customer’s life, and the value which is argued to be embedded in these practices. The interest is thus not in the understanding of human beings, but the practice they are engaged in. This implies that research does not aim at a thick description of the involved customers, but rather descriptions of the practices. This has implications for the empirical research design (cf. Geertz, 1973).

Second, who masters the knowledge of practices? Bourdieu claims that the actor is incapable of reflecting upon one’s practice (Jenkins, 1992). Practical mastery or competence in any given situation depends upon a great deal being taken for granted and implicit. The epistemology brought forward in this thesis states that the agency of practice lays in the systematic nature of subject and context, which means that the customer cannot in any case be viewed as the creator of value, rather the value and the knowledge of value arises from the system, as it is viewed from the outside. It is also argued that the customer is not capable of understanding his practical life, especially not the everyday practices, which are partly routine behaviours. It should, however, be pointed out that the researcher also has limitations in building understanding as he also has implicit assumptions.

For instance, Marx and Foucault downplayed the role of human agency in history. The focus is on structures/systems, not individuals. (O’Shaughnessy & O’Shaughnessy, 2002). Practice theory has, however, a more complicated stance as it gives agency both to the subject and the context, but according to a different logic in different practices.

Third, what is the nature of the knowledge we are interested in? The trivial is interesting (Lynch & Peyrot, 1992). The focus is, in this research, on the behaviour which is taken for granted. It is here argued that the knowledge of life as it appears for people as non-problematic and self-evident can be a source of value. The aim is to focus on those behavioural constellations which are culturally embedded and not problematic, rather than on conscious needs and wants acknowledged by the customer. It is in market and customer research very typical to focus on issues that the customers find problematic, not on the issues that are self-evident and seemingly not ‘worth’ discussing. Nevertheless, it appears that many innovations actually ‘develop’ very mundane practices (e.g. mobile telephones empower the mundane practice of communication).

An ethnographic inquiry will be used to study practices according to the epistemology defined above. Swidler (2001) argues that Geertz (the renowned ethnographer) has been one of the great influences in the development of practice theory, as he referred to cultural understanding as not something in the heads of people, but rather as observable symbolic and ritual practice that structure the possibilities of meaning in a given ‘cultural system’. It could also be argued that the discussion of practice theoreticians
about a reality that combines both subjectivity and objectivity can make use of ethnographic methodology, due to the aim in ethnography to combine both emic and etic representations, in which the emic representations represent subjectivity and etic representations represent the researcher’s understanding of objective phenomena.

2.5. Practice theory and service marketing and management

What is the link between practice theory and service marketing and management? The review of practice theory is here mainly for the purpose of carrying out a discussion on customer value in ‘practical’ terms. However, it is perhaps reasonable to briefly discuss the implications practice theory can have on service marketing and management more largely before going in depth into the concept of customer value. This discussion is mainly carried out in order to already in this phase ensure its relevance to service marketing and management, which is the field of contribution.

It is claimed that the shift from singular exchange to relationship orientation puts new requirements on how to develop solutions for customers (Grönroos, 1982; 1990; 2000). In the early days of service marketing and management, one centric discussion was on the differences on products and services. This discussion was, however, more or less concerned with the production rather than with the consumption of service, such as whether a service could be stored or not, or whether the customer is involved in the production of the service. Edvardsson (2005) has recently concluded that most service literature still focuses on provider-centred issues. The attention is drawn to the processes involved in service delivery, the actions of the individuals involved, both employees and customers, and the management of such activities (Syson & Perks, 2004).

In addition, it is also typical that service marketing and management put the interactions between the customer and the provider resources into a focal point in its analysis (Grönroos, 1997; 2000; Gummesson, 2002). Grönroos (1997, 327) writes that the service paradigm ‘clearly views marketing as an interactive process in a social context where relationships building and management are vital cornerstones.’ Value is also expected to either generate from the interactions, or the support the interaction gives the customer’s value generating process (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996).

In this thesis, the consumption-oriented and practice-theoretical view takes into consideration the context of the practices in which certain resources of the service provider are used or could be used. Thus the focus is neither on the provider-centred issues of service marketing and management, nor (only) on the issues related to

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10 Grönroos (2000) sees differences between services and physical goods, which should be taken into account in the management of an offering: Tangible – intangible, homogenous – heterogenous, production, distribution separated from consumption – production, distribution and consumption is simultaneous, A thing – an activity or a process, core value produced in factory – core value produced in value-seller relationship, customer do not (normally) participate in the production process – customers participate in production, can be kept in stock – cannot be kept in stock, transfer of ownership – no transfer of ownership (2000, 47).
interactions between service provider and customers. This thesis is an attempt to introduce a truly contextual approach from the customer’s point of view.

Edvardsson & Olsson (1996) claim in a similar way that the company does not sell services, but rather the prerequisites for well-functioning customer processes and attractive customer outcome. Strandvik & Törnroos (1997) refer with another concept, relationscapes, to a similar space of both existing and potential relationships, thus expanding the perspective beyond the firm’s direct network to the ‘reality’ of the customer. The detailed contemplation of what the embeddedness of services in the customer processes and context in a consumer market is, is however, missing in the current literature. It appears that the dynamic contextuality of consumers’ life is problematic to fit into the rhetoric of service marketing and management.

The practice-theoretical approach presented above is suggested to be an ontology that would make it possible to describe the embeddedness of services and customer value in the customers’ life. Services can be reconstructed to describe the ways they support, empower or reinvent customer practices in a contextual and dynamic manner. This would mean that service is truly embedded and a part of the customers ‘being in the world’. Thus the interaction between the provider and the customer has the same status as interactions happening in the customer’s life with other domains (e.g. social, cultural, material). Services compete with all other social phenomenon and domains in a certain practice.

The usage of practice as the unit of analysis and source of value is an unvisited territory in the field of service marketing and management. Theoretically speaking, this means that the ontological status of services (as they are currently defined as interactions) is reduced, and the practices of consumption are taken into the forefront of the analysis. This shift could be explained as the shift from the interaction paradigm to a practice theory of services, which puts consumption practice into the centre of the analysis and views provider involvement only as a possible support for customer practices.

![Diagram](image.png)

Figure 3. Illustration of the shift in service marketing and management proposed.

The figure above illustrates that the current approach in service marketing and management tends to define services as constituted in the interactions between customer and provider. The thesis at hand suggests that the concept of service can be reconstructed as practice (subject + context), in which each provider can intervene and gain a role. According to the definition of practices introduced, context refers here to tools and know-how, images and physical space.
The arguments above would mean that the actual service is the practice which the customer is engaged in, whereas the provider would then point out its own involvement in the specific practice. A banking service could be defined in the following way according to the proposed logic above: ‘the service of saving money [customer practice] that is supported by the bank through involvement of tools, competence, images and physical spaces [provider intervention]’.

These arguments will be examined closer by studying the concept of customer value as a central concept in service marketing and management. The connection to service marketing and management, in large, will be carried out in the chapter on conclusions and implications of the research.
3. CUSTOMER VALUE – A CONCEPT WITH MULTIPLE MEANINGS

The concept of customer value is under special attention in this thesis. The concept has been chosen due to its importance in current discourse on services in both academia and practice, but also because of its problematic stance. The value concept has been approached from many different perspectives and has many different meanings (Zeithaml, 1988; Oliver, 1999; Huber et al, 2001; Payne & Holt, 2001).

This thesis focuses on value (singular) and not values (plural). The term value refers to a preferential judgment, whereas the term ‘values’ is used to indicate the criteria by which such judgments are made (Laukkanen et al, 2004). In addition, the term value is also used in order to indicate, not from a psychological perspective, but in other terms ‘what is valuable’ and ‘how do valuable phenomena appear’.

The concept of customer value has evolved through different phases starting from Aristotle to a wide range of researchers contemplating the true meaning of the value concept. The aim of this review is to sum up the current body of literature into a discussion on the opportunities to create an optional axiology that is practice-theoretical. The focus will mainly be on the literature of service marketing and management, and related scholars. The concept of value has been used in diverse fields such as finance, economics, management, information systems, ethics, aesthetics, justice, social equity and fairness etc (Normann, 2001; Wikström et al, 1992).

A historical analysis will end in a conclusion of three main, paradigmatically different, stances on customer value: resource-based theories of value, cognitivistic theories of value, and experiential theories on value. The following chapter (chapter 4) will introduce an additional practice-theoretical approach on customer value.

3.1. A brief background to the concept

The value concept has a long history with different connotations and meanings, which in most cases have a historical explanation and are situated in a context. Therefore it appears relevant to give a brief background to the concept of customer value as it is discussed in current literature.

Most customer value theories include a notion of something being worth something. The customer value theories seem in most cases to be about making a valuation of some sort (Najder, 1975; Hartmann, 1967 in Oliver, 1999), representing a valuation of what is ‘good’ for different perspectives, both subjective and objective stances. Although some authors (Woodruff, 1997; Khalifa, 2004) conclude that there is a general agreement in the literature that customer value is determined by the customer’s perception, it appears that resource-based theories on customer value in particular also have objective elements.

According to Vargo & Lusch (2004a), Adam Smith had an important impact on the way the value concept is dealt with today. The classical theory of value in economics
explains value as being ‘something’ that is cumulated in a process of production resulting in a product (McKnight, 1994; Vargo & Lusch, 2004a). This theory represents a purely objectivistic view on value theory, as the value is embedded in the final products coming out of the production. This theory is concerned with how value is created on a macro-level, and does not view the usage of goods as valuable per se. David Ricardo and later Marx further developed the value theory, which was used for political causes to prove, for example, that the workers are the righteous receivers of the value as they are the ‘owners’ of the labour put into the process.

The production and labour theoretical perspectives on customer value have had, although it is not a theory of customer value, an influence on the discussion of customer value in the field of service marketing and management. Porter’s (1985) discussion on the value chain represents a form of a production-oriented approach to value creation, but does not restrict the value chain only to the production of products, but also includes consumption as a productive act. The approach is here referred to as the resource-based approach and consists of subcategories. Scholars in service marketing and management have later developed the thoughts of Porter further towards a more dynamic and interactive approach, and have given agency to the customer (Normann & Ramirez, 1993; 1994; Ramirez, 1999; Storbacka & Lehtinen, 2001). Also, more critical authors have discussed the productive nature of consumption (Baudrillard, 1998 [1970]; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995), although from a different starting point.

The resource-based or production-oriented theory on value, as it was defined by Smith, Ricardo and Marx, was criticized for simplifying the value concept by excluding the role of consumption merely as a prerequisite for production. The core of the argument was that value cannot be equal to labour put into production as it seems that the worth of a good on a market is not in all cases related to the effort put into production. There was a need to include a theory of demand into the theory of value.

A group of Austrian economists (e.g. Menger, Bohm-Bawerk, von Mises) were the first to define the factors of customer value, which were not only supply-related, but also explained the demand of a certain product. These scholars defined value as a product of a commodity’s marginal utility. Marginal utility refers to the significance good(s) have for the well being of a certain subject. The estimation of market value is, of course, a simplification of the real utility value (McKnight, 1994). According to this perspective, the value is not in the product per se, but rather in the utility, which is always subjective.

The utility theory implies that value is not embedded in the product and the act of value generation as in the production-oriented approach. The theory on utility implies in opposition, that value is an assessment of the expected utility (Tool, 1980). Roughly speaking the logic of the utility theory is the same as the theories on perceived value (Payne & Holt, 2001), which have been developed further in order to match a micro-level need to understand how customers value different products, services and relationships (e.g. Holbrook & Corfman, 1985; Zeithaml, 1988; Grönroos, 2000). This approach is here referred to as the cognitive approach to customer value and is reviewed below.
In addition, there are also some influences of scholars like Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill that propose that the pursuit of utility is not rational, but more or less hedonistic, a form of pleasure seeking (Woodall, 2003). The view of customer value as being a hedonic experience in a less rational sense also has its ideological background in the phenomenological philosophy of Heidegger, Husserl and Merleau Ponty (cf. Dourish, 2001).

This logic has also had its implications for the current view on customer value, especially brought forward by consumer researchers such as Holbrook (1999) and Babin et al (1994). The experiential approach, applying a phenomenological view, sees value as preferred experience (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Holbrook, 1999). Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) have been pioneers in introducing aspects of consumption experiences other than rational.

In conclusion, there are, according to this analysis, three different approaches to customer value, which all have a solid background in the history of economic theory. These approaches are the resource-based approach, the cognitive approach, and the experiential approach. I will in the next section review these in further detail on the basis of the contemporary literature.

3.2. Review of perspectives on customer value in service marketing and management

Before more thoroughly reviewing the different stances, it should be mentioned that there are different options on how different theories of customer value can be categorized. There are some recent attempts to create holistic categorizations on the value theory (e.g. Khalifa, 2004, Payne & Holt, 2001; Woodall, 2003). The categorization made here is based on the basic paradigmatic stances lying behind different variations in the literature. The stances defined have all distinct ontological and epistemological starting points.

A discussion on the different approaches, their strengths and limitations will be carried out in conjunction with the review of the different approaches.

In addition to the approaches reviewed here, there are a number of other aspects to value creation which are not separately discussed here. A number of authors tend to view customer value more or less as the customer’s increased financial result (e.g. Anderson & Narus, 1998; Slater & Narver, 2000; Kaario et al, 2004). These authors are, however, clearly focused on the B2B market, which is outside the scope of this thesis.

3.2.1. Cognitive approaches

Referring to the consumer as an information-processing consumer has been very dominating in marketing since marketing became a science (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). The attempt of the cognitive approach is to understand what defines value in the customer’s mind (Duman & Mattila, 2005). The scholars in this approach tend to use the concept of perception as a means of explaining how value appears for the customer.
According to this stance, customer value is mainly presented as a cognitive comparative process of the consumer making a judgment whether a past, present or imagined future experience is valuable for him (Oliver, 1999). In this approach the customer is expected to have the interest and knowledge to assess and make trade-offs between the benefits and the sacrifices of a certain product (e.g. Zeithaml, 1988) or relationship (e.g. Grönroos, 1997; 2000). The cognitive process is labelled differently. Some authors mention that it is a matter of judgement (Zeithaml, 1988; Woodruff & Gardial, 1996; Woodruff, 1997; Andersson & Narus, 1998), some an evaluation of value (Raval & Grönroos, 1996; Huber et al, 2001), others a preferential judgement (Payne & Holt, 2001), but inherently all of these concepts refer to similar cognitive processes of assessment. A common characteristic is that they represent cognitive responses to consumption experiences, thus leaving affective responses unanalyzed. (Duman & Mattila, 2005)

The deconstruction of value in different parameters is typical of the cognitivistic approach. This is done usually in order to operationalise the customer value concept into empirical research. Pararsuraman & Grewal (2000) apply a categorisation which consists of four types of value: acquisition value, transaction value, use value, and redemption value. Acquisition value relates to the benefits and the costs during acquisition. Transaction value refers to the pleasure of getting a good deal. Use value comes from using the product, whereas redemption value inherits from the remaining benefits when a certain product is switched or terminated. Similar deconstruction is made concerning the terms of cost and benefits (Huber et al, 2001). For instance, the sacrifice component has been made gradually more complex by including not only monetary costs, but also non-monetary factors such as the time and effort needed to acquire and use the product or service (Zeithaml, 1988; Grönroos, 1997). Scholars have also gradually extended the concept of customer value to take into consideration elements other than benefits and sacrifice. For instance the personal tastes and characteristics of the customer have an impact on the perception of customer value (Lapierre, 1997).

The concept of customer value in service marketing and management is influenced by the literature on service quality (Liljander & Strandvik, 1995; Heinonen, 2004). There are especially two models which have been influential and should be reviewed in this context: Grönroos’ (1982) model on perceived service quality and the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1985; 1988). The concept of perceived value was later initiated in order to develop the quality concept to take into account not only the difference between expected and experienced service, but also the sacrifice the customer puts in. Grönroos’ (1982) model on service quality has defined quality as a function of technical and functional dimensions. This means that quality appears not only from the actual output of the process, but also the process of the service. The assumption is that quality can be deconstructed into a number of measurable dimensions or variables. Heinonen (2004) developed this model further and implied that both spatial and temporal dimensions should be included in the concept of perceived quality and perceived value. Edvarsson (2005, 127) presents a rather critical perspective to the cognitivistic notions on service quality by asking the question: ‘Is perceived quality more than the outcome of customers’ cognitive assessment?’
The process of perceiving value has not been studied in detail (i.e. how customer perceives value) (Huber et al, 2001). The literature has its focus on the understanding of what kind of different dimensions and attributes affect the valuation done. There are, however, a number of contributions of the nature of customer value as being subjective, individual and dynamic over the course of time (Gardial et al, 1994).

There are at least three different variations to a cognitivist view on customer value which are appropriate to review. The first contributions on customer value in marketing defined customer value as an assessment of the utility of a product. Zeithaml (1988, 14) defines customer value as ‘the consumer’s overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given’. The common elements of most definitions of customer value are based on the idea that a subject evaluates a product (Woodruff, 1997; Holbrook, 1999). Customer value appears in the ‘heads’ of the customer as a cognitive reasoning of balancing what the customer gives to what he gets. The divergence in the definitions seems to be in many cases related to the terminology used in the definition: for example utility (Zeithaml, 1988) and benefits (Slater & Narver, 2000).

The relational perspective on marketing implied some changes to the logic of assessing value by including the longitudinal approach of assessment. This perspective views customer value as an assessment of relationships and thus puts the relationship per se into the centre of the definition. Grönroos (2000, 140) defined value as ‘…perceived by the customer in their internal processes and in interactions with suppliers or service providers when consuming or making use of services, goods, information, personal contacts, recovery and other elements of ongoing relationships’.

Finally, there is a school of thought referring to customer value as a somewhat more complex construct than only ‘give’ and ‘take’ and includes different levels of cognitive abstraction through the use of means-end theory (Parasuraman, 1997). Means-end theory posits that linkages between product attributes, consequences produced through consumption, and the personal values of the customer underlie their decision-making processes (Gutman, 1981), and thus also the concept of perceived value. Value as means-end suggests that value can be defined as a hierarchy of representations (Gardial et al, 1994; Woodruff & Gardial, 1996). According to this view, attributes are the most concrete level of customer value. Consequences describe the user/product interaction, whereas the desired end-states represent the user’s core value, and the purposes and goals of product usage. Woodruff (1997, 42) defines value as ‘… a perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performance, and consequences arising from use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer’s goals and purposes in use situations.’ The means-ends models of customer value fill a gap in the literature by being able to explain why customers attach different weights to various benefits in evaluating alternative products or services. They also take into account the negative consequences of certain product or service attributes (Khalifa, 2004).

3.2.1.1 Strengths and limitations

There are some limitations and strengths to the cognitivist approach. The cognitivist approach to consumer behaviour presents an independent rational consumer who is able
and willing to assess the value of a product. This approach becomes questionable in the light of the hedonistic aspects of consumption presented by for example Holbrook & Hirschman (1982), and even more questionable in the light of cultural approaches to consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Furthermore, the approach puts the individual customer into the centre of the analysis and excludes context as an active source of value creation. The individual is centred as an observer of the ‘outside world’, which indicates a distinction between the subject and the object, that is the product, service or relationship (Schembri & Sandberg, 2002). This becomes especially cumbersome in the relationship-oriented version of the cognitivistic approach. In this case the customer (subject) makes an assessment of a relationship (object), which he is inevitably a part of (according to most definitions on relationship). This means that the customer is actually objectifying himself in the assessment, thus making the assessment partly a form of introspection.

Finally, the cognitivistic approach is restrictive in the sense that this value definition does not give any understanding about how the customer in practice gains value. From a managerial point of view, it could be assumed that this kind of value theory can be used to more or less ‘check’ whether the customer really thinks a certain product, service or relationship is valuable. This is valuable per se, especially if one would like to have a more general understanding of the thinking of the customer concerning a specific product or service. The theory does, however, have serious limitations in its ability to build insights into what is valuable for the customer in his everyday life, especially concerning more tactical practices that are not reflected actively upon by the customer.

### 3.2.2. Experiential approaches

The cognitivistic approach has been criticized as it may neglect important parts of the consumption phenomena (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). According to the cognitivistic view, the customer is seen as a problem solver engaged in goal-directed activities such as searching for information, making valuations and decisions of whether to buy or use a product or not. In the experiential approach the customers are not only thinkers, but also feelers and doers, which strengthens the need for viewing consumption as not only a rational act but also a symbolic act (Addis & Holbrook, 2001).

Some authors have wanted to add for instance emotional factors into the ‘traditional’ models of customer value in order to get a more valid understanding of the parameters affecting the decisions of the customer (e.g. Duman & Mattila, 2005). In this analysis, these attempts are categorized as being cognitivistic as these models, although it includes emotional factors, claim that customer value is embedded in a sort of trade-off between benefits and sacrifice, which is according to this thesis basically a cognitivistic notion, and does not take the nature of experience into account as it has been presented in the literature as a phenomenological concept. Nor does the category of the experiential approach here take into account those more popular perspectives of

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11 The unit of analysis is the individual customer, which does not mean that context is not seen as an influencing factor. In practice theory the unit of analysis is not the individual customer, but the subject and context integrated into a practice.
experiential marketing that tend to view experiences as a type of offering that is added to the merchandise (e.g. Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

The experiential approach refers here to those authors who take an ontologically and epistemologically speaking different stance, and view the customer from a first-person perspective in a phenomenological fashion. This has in most cases also methodological implications, as the experiential approach tends to reject the fact that services are deconstructed into a number of dimensions or attributes to be measured on a scale (cf. Schembri & Sandberg, 2002). As Thompson et al (1989, 144) conclude, ‘For consumer research to understand experience, they must first employ methods and assumptions that allow for experience to exist’. Therefore the scholars tend to use methodologies belonging to the interpretive turn, rather than positivistic stances as many times in the cognitivistic approach.

Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) have been pioneers in bringing up other aspects of consumption experiences (Carú & Cova, 2003). These authors’ views emphasize emotions and non-utilitarian aspects of consumption. Baudrillard (1998 [1970]) implied already in the 70s that sign value is one important form of value creation, as products are not used only for their use value, but also as symbols. Consumption is according to this thinking used in addition to utilitarian ‘uses’ as a means for defining the self and creating a sense of identity (Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967; Belk, 1988), or a source of meaning (Richins, 1994).

Consumption is thus redefined to include flow of fantasies, feelings, and fun by the experiential view. According to the phenomenological stance the world is considered as an experienced world, and thus the world is truly subjectivistic (Addis & Holbrook, 2001).

Phenomenologists tend to put some emphasis on bridging two dichotomies, which is characteristic of the cognitive approach. First, scholars according to the experiential approach tend not to make a clear distinction between the subject and the environment, but more or less study the human being-in-the-world. People are embedded in the world. This is ontologically clearly different from the cognitivistic point of view where an ontological division between subject (customer) and object (product) is usually made (Schembri & Sandberg, 2002). Second, phenomenologists tend also to bridge the dichotomy between mind and body. Merleau-Ponty (2004 [1962], 235) claims that ‘a theory of the body is a theory of perception’, which refers to the ‘embodiment’ of multisensory experiences. Our capacity of critical reflections is based on our bodies and bodily interactions (Joy & Sherry, 2003), and not only the ‘head’ as the traditional cognitivistic approach tends to assume.

The contributions of Arnould & Price (1993), Holbrook et al (1984) and Thompson et al (1989) are explicitly in the experiential perspective, but do not take value into consideration. There are, however, a number of contributions discussing specifically the role of customer value according to an experiential approach (Babin et al, 1994; Richins, 1994; Holbrook, 1999). Holbrook (1999) presents a typology of different consumer value emerging through experiences. These different types are the following: efficiency, play, excellence, aesthetics, status, ethics, esteem and spirituality. As mentioned, this perspective is phenomenological in its spirit and claims that
consumption is primarily a subjective state of consciousness with varieties of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and aesthetic criteria (Holt, 1995).

Holbrook (1996, 138) defines consumer value as an ‘interactive relativistic preference experience’. This definition requires some explanations in order to make it clear what Holbrook means. Interactive refers here to the notion that value is created in the interaction and relationship between the object and the customer, or perhaps as a phenomenologist would say in the ‘embeddedness’ of the human being in its context, which is here referred to as the object. The concept of relativistic implies that customer value is comparative, hence value is always relative to something else that is either less, equally or more valuable. Value is also according to the experiential approach always personal and thus varies from individual to individual, and situational in the sense that value appears in certain contexts and cannot be generally defined for a certain consumer. The act of judgment is present in this definition also in the concept of preference, which means that the customer is actively making choices for better experiences. Finally, experience refers to the view that the value is not in the object of consumption, but rather in the experience of consumption.

3.2.2.1 Strengths and limitations

The experiential approach is at least partly a counter reaction to the information-processing metaphor of the customer. From an experiential perspective it appears that the product’s ontological status is reduced, that is the physical object has disappeared. The phenomenological view of the customer could be interpreted as a rather extreme form of subjectivistic thinking, as the customer’s experience of ‘being in the world’ is put into the forefront. Everything is subjective according to this stance. This is somewhat different from the cognitivistic approach that, as described above, retains a distinction between subject and object as separate entities in the world. In that sense this kind of thinking, as it is often related to more interpretive methodological solutions, gives a good starting point for analyzing the subjectivity of the customer.

There are some limitations to this thinking (in relation to my aims), although the experiential approach tends to give a better and more vivid and empirically more embedded view on what customers really value in relation to the cognitivistic approach. The phenomenological approach is individualistic and subjectivistic, that is the focus is on the consumer’s own immediate experience. The social and cultural context is not taken actively into account (Holt, 1995). In particular, the formation of value in the mundane practices of life tends to be unnoticed by some of the scholars in the experiential perspective. It seems that these scholars in many cases are more interested in peaks and extraordinary experiences that the customer actively participates in than mundane and routine actions. From this thesis point of view, it is nevertheless self-evident that unquestioned routines are also embedded with value.
3.2.3. Resource-based perspective

The experiential approach takes into consideration the active production/construction of value by the consumer, but there is one additional body of literature which defines customer value production as the nature of value creation. This perspective appears, in this analysis, to have its origin in production theory and strategy literature, and is a resource-based view (Gouthier & Schmid, 2003).

Ravald & Grönroos (1996) claim that we need to examine the consumer’s value chain in order to establish what value the consumer is looking for. They refer to the customer’s own chain of value-generating actions. This implies that the customer is creating value for himself. It can be assumed that the literature and arguments concerning this have been highly influenced by Porter’s (1985) arguments on the value chain, although later scholars (Normann & Ramirez, 1993; 1994; Ramirez, 1999) are critical towards the value chain as a metaphor for customer value. The value chain gives the impression that value would be added up in a linear process of actions with certain inputs and outputs. The value chain fails to capture the complex and dynamic roles and relationship in a business system. Therefore it appears to be appropriate to develop a synchronic and interactive concept for explaining how value is created. Normann & Ramirez (1993; 1994) claim that it is a form of value constellation, which represent a form of system thinking in which value is co-produced by different players in the market. This implies that the value is embedded in the joint production carried out by the customer and the provider(s) and perhaps the whole network (Normann & Ramirez, 1993; 1994; Wikström, 1996).

Ontologically speaking, the discussion on the nature of value becomes very complex; value becomes neither subjective nor objective. The customer is active in the production of value, but nevertheless the value is not subjectively produced by the customer as the provider and perhaps other players are ‘also producing’ it. The idea is presented as if there existed a lump of value that can be shared between different parties, and the value would appear in the exchange between different parties (cf. Bagozzi, 1975). Ramirez (1999, 51) explains that ‘value… resides… in actions and interactions which the acquired resources makes possible or supports’.

This implies that action and interactions per se are valuable and thus do not include the element of ‘judgment’ that is usually incorporated in value definitions. The discussion

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12 When discussing the concept of practice in the context of service marketing and management one should not mix it with related economic- or production-oriented concepts of work like ‘actions’ or processes with certain input and outputs, which is suggested to be the source of value by Porter (1985) and Christopher et al (1991). Processes are formalized and regularized procedures by which ‘work’ is managed, whereas practices here relate to the informal constellations by which actions are put in action (Dourish, 2001). The practice hence comes inevitably before the action, and is more or less the structure by which actions are orchestrated in everyday life.
on value co-production may in some cases appear to be restricted to matters of work division and the dynamic reconfiguration of the efforts put into the process of production. The theory certainly underlines the opportunity to use the customer as an active participant in production, in order to decrease the costs of the provider. The customer is seen as a resource for the provider, or for a larger network to carry out certain actions. This is the reason for naming this approach the resource-based approach.

There are, however, two different subcategories of this theory that have somewhat different starting points, although both represent a thinking that value is embedded in the usage of resources. First, we have the discussion on value co-creation that is referred to above. This view is discussed by different authors, especially in the relational perspective on marketing (Grönroos, 2000; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000; 2004: Normann & Ramirez, 2003; Vargo & Lusch, 2004a). Co-creation is underlined in order to emphasize the mutuality of relationships, and the need for consumer participation in service and also goods in order to make value creation possible. Vargo & Lusch (2004a, 11) makes this concrete: ‘As we have noted, goods are appliances that provide services for and in conjunction with the consumer. However, for these services to be delivered, the customer still must learn to use, maintain, repair, and adapt the appliances to his or her unique needs, usage situation, and behaviours.’

Second, there is another stream of thinking that assumes that the customer produces the value independently with the support of the provider (Normann, 2001; Storbacka & Lehtinen, 2001). According to this view the customer is creating value in his/her life in a complex context of relationships and interactions. The provider’s role is to understand the current value creation and try to establish, maintain or improve a relationship with the customer by helping the customer to improve his/her value-creation process. Normann (2001) refers to relieving and enabling as ways of supporting customer value-creation. This refers to the support of the customer’s tasks in his everyday life by either relieving the customer from a task or enabling the customer to do a task.

3.2.3.1 Strengths and limitations

The resource-based view has somewhat different antecedents from the value theories mentioned above. As mentioned already in the prologue of this thesis, this approach is very interesting as it gives the customer a creative and active role, which appears to match contemporary thoughts on the customer. It has, however, been criticized for being rather mechanistic (Payne & Holt, 2001). The approach tends to implicitly assume that work-like tasks carried out by the customer are valuable per se. In a B2B market it is assumed that the customer creates value when it activates resources for the benefit of the production of new value. From this perspective value becomes a theory of labour, in which some resources contribute to production of valuable ‘things’ more than other resources in comparison to competition (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000). In that case the value of resources is determined by the contribution of the resource to competitive advantage.

A similar logic has been transferred to consumer markets (Normann & Ramirez, 1993; Wikström 1996), but has according to the arguments posted in this thesis limitations
concerning its ability to explain how value actually is formed in the processes of the doings of the consumer. In particular, scholars promoting a view on value as being co-created by both the firm and the customer tend to assume that the participation in the production of a service is valuable per se for the customer. As earlier discussed it also appears to be rather mechanistic to explain consumer behaviour as work-like actions, at least partly taking place in the interaction between the customer and the provider. The practice-theoretical approach suggested in this thesis tends to view the customer in a contextual and embedded way, which is basically a very different approach from the resource-based perspectives.

As discussed in the introduction, the concept of practice does not refer only to the actions carried out, as productive ‘doings’. The concept of practice refers to the subject and context interlinked while acting, and meanings appearing in this integration. Thus, actions are not valuable per se, but become valuable in the interaction with its context.

### 3.2.4 Summary of three different approaches to customer value

As mentioned, there is no grand, comprehensive theory of customer value that would satisfy researchers influenced by service marketing and management. There are examples of customer value seen as delivered (traditional production theory\(^\text{13}\)), perceived (the cognitivistic approach), experienced (the experiential approach), created or co-created (resource-based approach), which all in the analysis carried out here tend to represent different paradigmatic starting points. Surprisingly, there are scholars that see this as unproblematic, and mix different value theories.

I have below in table 1 briefly summarized the different ontological and axiological stances on the basis of the discussion above

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\(^{13}\) This approach is not discussed here, as this is not a theory on customer value
Table 1. Different approaches to value theory in service marketing and management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Theoretical foundation</th>
<th>Value theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitivistic approach</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value as assessment of product</td>
<td>Information processing customer</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Cognitivistic theory on assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value as assessment of relationships</td>
<td>Information processing customer</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Cognitivistic theory on assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value as means to end</td>
<td>Information processing customer</td>
<td>Product attributes – consequences – values</td>
<td>Means-end theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experiential approach</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value as preferred experience</td>
<td>The phenomenological subject</td>
<td>The subjective experience</td>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource-based approach</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value as co-production</td>
<td>The acting/working customer</td>
<td>The service</td>
<td>Resource-based view/interaction paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value as customer production</td>
<td>The acting/working customer</td>
<td>The customer's own process</td>
<td>Resource-based view</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each approach defined above has its strengths and limitations concerning the understanding of how value is formed in society. It appears that the different approaches to the value concepts have their origin in the different aims and reasons for using the concept. For instance, the cognitivists in marketing seem to aim at understanding whether the customers perceive the entity at hand as valuable, and to what extent. The scholars interested in the experiential perspective aim at understanding customer value, not only as a rational assessment, but as a holistic embodied experience. The scholars interested in the resource-based approach seems to want to understand the actions and achievements of the customer, and suggest that value is created as a results of actions, often work-like actions that are productive in a rather modernistic way, in opposition to more sociological explanations of production and construction of for instance sociality (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1972).

In conclusion, and naturally due to the differences in the ontological starting point, none of the contemporary approaches to value theory can be directly applied to a practice-theoretical stance. It should, however, be mentioned that the source of inspiration is the resource-based view on customer value that stresses partly similar issues as this thesis. One problem with most of the value theories dominant in economics and marketing discourse is they are built upon the understanding of the man as an individual, as he would not be affected by social or material context (Porter, 1964; Dolfsma, 1997). Although there has been extensive research carried out in the field, it appears that this problem has not been solved. Another basic restriction seems to be that most value theories in service marketing and management tend to assume that daily consumption and value creation cannot occur without a marketing relation (Carú & Cova, 2003).
The next chapter will outline a practice-theoretical stance that will function as an answer to the criticism presented towards the current approaches to customer value in the literature.

The chapter will propose an approach to customer value that locates it in the practices of the customer, and thus give customer value a contextual and dynamic definition that rejects to the dichotomy of subjectivism and objectivism that has been one of the main parameters for discussing customer value (e.g. Holbrook, 1999). From that perspective it is a certain in-between theory of value that is currently a rather abnormal way of talking about customer value.
4. CUSTOMER VALUE AS EMBEDDED IN PRACTICE

The practice-oriented approach to theory on customer value in service marketing and management will be presented in this chapter. It is proposed that customer value could be seen as something embedded in the practices of the customer.

The limitations and focus of the customer value concept developed here will be discussed. The logic of a holistic and consumption-oriented view on customer value is presented and the characteristics are discussed in order to create an understanding of what the embeddedness of value in practice would mean in a theoretical sense.

4.1. The dynamics of value formation

Before going further into the details of the practice-theoretical stance to customer value, the background of the aspiration to develop a new definition of customer value should be specified. As mentioned, it is typical for current value theories that their background and aim are rather different and belong to different traditions. The aim of the customer value concept presented in this thesis also represents a specific interest. The focus of the concept here is primarily to create an axiological starting point that would make it possible to understand how value is formed in the life of the customer (consumers), and the opportunities for companies to enhance this value formation.

This interest implies that the focus is clearly on building an understanding of the dynamics of how value is formed in the customer’s life, that is how value is formed in a certain practice. The research is thus mainly influenced by the resource-based view that tends to have its primary focus on creating an understanding of the processual nature of how value is constructed. This is in contrast to the cognitivist view that finds it more important to understand whether value has been formed or not, and to what extent.

The starting point for defining customer value, according to the practice-theoretical view, is thus to understand the logic and dynamics of how value is formed in practice. Each practice is valuable per se, but can be improved to become even more valuable. This thesis emphasizes the importance of understanding the dynamics of value formation, and claims (for the purpose of this research and as positioned in the practice-theoretical stance) that it is not interesting to define ‘how much’ value is embedded in the practice, and ‘how much more’ value would be embedded in the practice when the practice would have been enhanced.

It is therefore suggested that the concept of customer value should be used as a relative concept and that it does not require ‘absolute measurements’ of how much value has been formed and can be formed. The concept should also mainly be used to explain a process (customer value formation) rather than to imply that there is a certain level of customer value in a certain practice. The starting point for this thesis, that defines practices as a form of social dynamics, makes it paradigmatically impossible to define static ‘amounts’ of customer value. Therefore, enhanced customer value refers to an enhanced dynamics of customer value formation, rather than to an increased amount of value.
4.2. The holistic consumption-oriented view on customer value

The current most dominant perspective to customer value, the cognitivistic view, gives the customer responsibility to judge and assess the value of a certain product, service or relationship. According to this view the customer is truly the ‘king’ (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995), whereas the provider becomes the servant. According to this discourse, the customer is asked to give his judgment, or assumed to make an assessment, regarding the value of already existing or imagined products, services and relationships.

In the case of a practice-theoretical approach the manager would take responsibility for actually developing practices in a holistic manner and the value formed in these practices. I will here provide a number of examples on the logic behind this assumption. The examples are fictive, but inspired by academic and popular literature (e.g. Beyer & Holzblatt, 1998; Kelley & Littman, 2001; Shove et al, 2004; Shove & Pantzar, 2005) and foremost practitioners.

- **The bank:** A bank’s business has traditionally been to provide its customers with accounts, manage their transactions, offer the possibility to borrow money, and provide opportunities to invest money. According to the logic in this thesis, the bank should in addition to this take responsibility for its customers’ practices of saving money, managing wealth, arranging their habitation etc. This may sound as a minimal shift of focus, but is a dramatic change concerning many internal processes. Totally new forms of customer insight are needed in order to reach a holistic understanding of the practices in which the provider in most cases only provide some minor tools for. Product and service development should relentlessly seek new opportunities in order to get a better position in the practices of the customer.

- **The mobile operator:** The mobile operators were still a number of years ago in the business of supporting customer communication practices. Currently, the technology allows the mobile operator to provide services for a vast array of different practices, from cooking (recipes by mobile phone) to providing the service of watching TV (TV is provided through a mobile phone). The strategic task of the mobile operator is to carefully analyze different practices and look for opportunities to improve a certain practice with the help of a handheld device with related services. Certain practices allow faster and more drastic changes, whereas others seem to be impossible to enter. It remains to be seen whether the practice of watching TV can be changed into a practice carried out in a mobile manner, and whether there is some value in that practice.

- **The insurance company:** The insurance company has traditionally been a part of many different practices in the role of providing the element of security for the customer. This company is in a subtle way present in the practices of driving the car, travelling, building a house, living etc. Usually the insurance company becomes more dominant in the practices of arranging things after an incident has occurred. In these cases the insurance company is expected to provide the right tools, images, competence and physical spaces for carrying out the relevant practices of taking care of arrangements after an incident.
None of the examples above are novel in the sense that current practitioners in these industries would be unable to grasp the holistic and embedded nature of consumption. On the contrary, many Finnish companies have done this, at least as a conceptual discussion. The agenda of this research is rather to provide researchers and practitioners with the necessary discourse and tools for formalizing this kind of logic for it to become a part of everyday business development.

The current discourse in service marketing and management does not give the language and methods for seeing the life-world of the customer in a holistic way, neither does it provide extensive ways to see the possibilities to improve the practices the customer carries in order to create a position in a certain selected practice.

As suggested earlier, this thesis proposes a customer-value concept and method for taking a step towards a more in-depth understanding of how customer value appears as embedded in the contextual practices of both everyday life, and more special practices, as for instance the practices taking place in a cruise context. The service marketer currently tends to focus on the context of the relationship between the provider and the customer, but fails to view the customer as a contextual active being living in his life world (cf. Mick & Fournier, 1999). This is partly understandable and beneficial in the sense that theories explaining ‘the whole world’ are naturally difficult to state due to their complexity. It appears, however, on the basis of the empirical study done, that the focus on the concept of practice, and the statement of customer value as embedded in the entity of practice, gives a possibility to investigate narrow practical segments of ‘reality’ in depth, without taking on a research agenda that becomes cumbersome to handle from a practical research technical point of view. The attempt made here can be seen as one step towards perhaps a new way of understanding and using the concept of value in service marketing and management.

The practice-theoretical approach to customer value is here presented first by stating a number of assumptions, after which the practice-theoretical approach is concluded.

4.3. The characteristics of a practice-theoretical approach to value

I will in this section account for four different assumptions of the approach to customer value proposed in this thesis:

- Assumption 1: Customer value is embedded in practice
- Assumption 2: Customer value is neither objective nor subjective
- Assumption 3: Customer value is formed in practice
- Assumption 4: Customer value is enhanced through intervention

4.3.1. Assumption 1: Customer value is embedded in the practice

The logic behind most of the literature in service marketing and management is that the customer has needs and wants that are basically defined by the customer consciously
and subconsciously. Value appears when these wants and needs are satisfied taking also into account the price of the product or service at hand (Grönroos, 2000).

The assumption is that utility is maximized, but the real analytic interest of how the needs and wants emerge in the practice of everyday life has been less studied in the field of service marketing and management. Most scholars tend to start from the notion about both conscious and subconscious needs, but do not engage in a discussion on how these needs and wants appear in the larger context of everyday life. The needs and wants are rather presented as a mysterious source of opportunities for the provider to provide value, and thus do business.

The discourse on value presented here will not take the needs and wants as a starting point, but rather the practice and the altruistic development of practices into account. According to practice theory, the customers do not primarily have needs or wants, but are rather carriers of practices that require different elements of reality: tools, know-how, images, and physical spaces. It could be explained that what customers perceive as their needs or wants is actually constructed in the practice they attend. The elements of the practice help the customer to construct ‘thinking’ that he feels a certain service or product is important for him. The practice that the customer is involved in is in many cases too self-evident and complex to be reflected upon by the customer himself.

Customer value, according to the proposed discourse, appears in the whole system of the practice as a dynamic and an ever-changing constellation of different elements. This system is in many cases related to the subject of ‘doing’ only in an indirect manner. The practice can have value per se, not only through the filter of the human mind, as the cognitivistic literature proposes. The subject is of course needed in order to make the practice come alive, but lacks a centred position in the system. The subject is one equal element amongst other social and material elements in the system of practice.

For example, if the order of the bookshelves of a library in your hometown would change in order to support the practice of selecting books in more efficient ways, then the value of this practice would be enhanced. If you had not been in a library for the last 10 years, you would perhaps not even see that a change has happened in the lay-out. Nevertheless, the practice of selecting books in the library has perhaps become more valuable through an improvement of the physical space. More value is embedded in the practice (without you knowing about it). This improvement is based on a thorough understanding of the practice, and is thus an improvement from the library’s point of view, which is believed to be an improvement for the customer.

4.3.2. Assumption 2: Customer value is neither subjectivistic nor objectivistic

Firat & Venkatesh (1995) propose that one of the problems of modernism is the reduction of reality into simplified dichotomies that postmodernism sees as only partial truths. Usually one part of the dichotomy gives superior status to the other. Marketing typically uses a dichotomy of subjectivism and objectivism, in which subjectivism appears to currently be put into a superior position (e.g. Holbrook, 1996; 1999). Some even propose that an explosion of subjectivity has happened (Addis & Holbrook, 2001).
This has also happened in the discussion on customer value: beauty is in the eye of the beholder. In the present academia it appears almost to be a taboo to judge value according to an objectivist tradition. One is not allowed to claim that something is good or bad, ugly or beautiful, valuable or invaluable without continuing the sentence with the words: in my view or in his view. The practice concept takes a clear distance from this stance and claim that a practice is neither subjective nor objective (Bourdieu, 1984; Jenkins, 1992). As discussed above, a practice consists of different elements both ‘inside’ the customer (e.g. competence) and ‘outside’ the customer (e.g. tools), which interact in a dynamic manner as the customer is carrying out actions.

The value is embedded in the practices of the customer in a similar manner as a number of authors propose that customer value is embedded in the processes of value creation (Normann, 2001; Storbacka & Lehtinen, 2001; Grönroos, 2005). The difference is therefore that the practice is not a process of creation, but a systemic context of doing something in which value is formed in the interaction between subject and object while doing. In this case the value is not only up to the customer, but is embedded in the larger context of the practice. The customer can thus not determine customer value, as he is only a part of the unit of analysis and seldom has competence of the whole system of the practice.

The strength of the concept of practice is its breadth concerning the matter of agency. A practice can similarly explain personal and intimate actions and also collective, public and institutional practices (Thévenot, 2001). Therefore it could be claimed that practices range on a continuum from subjectivistic to objectivistic. Subjectivistic refers to those practices that are personal and conscious, whereas objectivistic practices refer to routinized unproblematic and unquestioned practices. This range of different practices, and the embeddedness of value in them make the epistemology problematic, as the knowledge of what is valuable and what is not cannot only rely on what customers utter, but must be a combination of what customers report (emic) and an outside perspective on the practices by a researcher or a provider that carries out research (etic).

4.3.3. Assumption 3: Customer value is formed in the practice

The literature on customer value is rather ambiguous concerning the phenomenon of how value is constituted. Different verbs for explaining the emergence of value can be found in the literature, for example value delivery, value creation, value perception.

In the spirit of the ontology of practice theory, it is given that the emergence of customer value in consumption cannot be described by the verbs mentioned above. First, value is not delivered as if it was pre-packaged in a product or service due to the argument that the actual value appears only in the dynamics of practices. Second, value is not created alone, because a certain practice require the systemic agency of all elements in the practice, and is thus created by both human and nonhuman elements creating the arrangement of the practice. Third, value is neither perceived, as this would assume that value is not related to the actual practice, but the assessment of this, which logically comes after the practice. In this thesis, it is therefore assumed that value is formed in the dynamic arrangement of the practice.
4.3.4. Assumption 4: Enhanced value comes via interventions in the practice

The support of customer value formation requires the researcher or the service provider to take a more dominant role in determining the value from ‘outside’ of the practice. The service provider should be able to make judgments and interpretations of the possible opportunities to enhance the value on the basis of the whole systemic nature of the customer practice at hand.

Companies are criticized for letting too much of the decisions made be done on the basis of what customers express as their needs (Fournier et al, 1998). This criticism assumes that the company should get more involved in the context and make more independent interpretations of the possibilities to improve a certain practice at hand; too much listening to the customer inhibits innovation. The company can and should dare to make judgments of opportunities to improve a certain practice at hand by looking at the whole systemic nature of the practice. These mature judgments can function as a source for idea generation for the company to improve the value of the practices they are involved or could be involved in. It is a matter of ethnographic skills and courage to make interpretations of practices, and make conclusions on how the practice at hand can be improved by making an intervention into it.

An applied ethnographic approach has been developed in this thesis in order to provide companies with valid understanding of not only the customer per se, but also the customer and his context, and the dynamics related to this phenomenon. This approach assumes, in contrast to the current tradition, that the customer is not the only rightful party to decide the value of something. Nevertheless, it does not imply that the customer is wrong; it simply entails that the customer may be unknowledgeable and unable to speak about value and how it is formed. According to the ethnographic method applied to the research of customer value as a practical matter it is in the final analysis the researcher (or the provider as the researcher) that has to make conclusions on the value of the practices based on an empirically grounded understanding combined with the researcher’s holistic understanding of the practice under investigation. This is not as radical as one could assume since all research in the final analysis is steered by the researcher’s judgment. For example, the instruments of measuring service quality (e.g. SERVQUAL) that represent more traditional customer value measurements would include the researcher’s assumptions of parameters for what is value and what is not.

I will here come back to the case of the library. Five years ago the manager of the library came to the conclusion that the service can be improved in order to make the library experience more tempting for the customers. According to the value definition proposed here, the librarians decided to make an effort to understand their customers in order to make decisions about improvements in the service. They observed people in the library and put an effort into understanding the practices in the library. One important part appeared to be the selection of books, which was dysfunctional in the sense that the system of shelves was arranged in a way that was confusing for their clients. This conclusion could be made from the way the customers were spending time to understand the logic of the shelves and the practice of finding a certain book.

Earlier the library made interviews as a part of their customer satisfaction survey. The conclusion was that they should focus on improving their personnel’s service skills and
get new books quicker onto their shelves for their clients. None of the clients had any notion about the way the current books were arranged and how the shelves were distributed. This was apparently because they were not able to ‘think and speak’ in terms of shelves, and did not know that a change in the system of shelves would perhaps make the experience better for them. The library manager nevertheless decided to make the change.

In this case, one could debate whether the value of the practice of selecting books is enhanced. In the spirit of this thesis, it is here, however, assumed that if the changes made to the practice were based on in-depth knowledge, although the customers would not react in any ways, the value would still have been enhanced through the intervention. In most cases one could also assume that the intervention could perhaps be measured after implementation or via a pilot with more traditional tools for measuring customer value. The change of the shelves would preferably have implications also on the ways the customers perceive the value of the service, at least in long term. This cannot, however, according to the approach promoted here be a prerequisite for enhanced value formation.

4.4. Customer value formation in a practice-oriented manner

As discussed earlier, the foremost interest in this thesis is to understand the dynamic nature of customer value formation, as this is an area that allows for contributions. The definition for customer practices used here is the following:

‘More or less routinized actions which are orchestrated by tools, know-how, images, physical space, and a subject who is carrying out the practice’.

Customer value is thus viewed as being embedded in the customer’s practices and can be enhanced by positive changes happening in the practice. The interest of the company is to improve the practices of the customer in order to be able to build a valuable role for itself in the customer’s life. In conclusion, customer value, according to the practice-theoretical stance, is embedded in the practice, and can be enhanced through positive changes either by interventions in or other development of the practice.

The positive change mentioned above can be both consciously orchestrated or happen more or less as a natural development of the practice at hand. The actual positive change can mean many different things.

The customer can for example be provided with new tools for his practice, which makes the practice considerably more convenient. In some cases, the practice is injected with new images, which creates a more positive image towards the practice at hand. In other cases, the know-how related to the practice is significantly increased, which makes it easier for the customer to perform the practice at hand. The practice may also have been made increasingly more difficult, but simultaneously more interesting and challenging for the customer. All of the examples above would imply that value has formed.
In addition, a practice can naturally be enhanced because of other reasons that are not initiated by a provider. For instance, the customer himself can improve the practice by, for instance, developing competence and developing new tools. The development of practices without provider involvement can in some cases even be negative from the provider’s perspective. The customer could in some cases decide to develop his own tools and thus not use the resources of the provider.

See below for a more thorough list of examples of provider-initiated possibilities to improve a practice.

**Table 2. Examples of opportunities to improve practices.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of practice</th>
<th>Possibilities for ‘positive’ changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Subject             | • Change the subject of actions to somebody else who find the practice more valuable  
                      • Change the subject of actions to the service provider if the action is not valuable |
| Tools/know-how      | • Improve the current tools provided to the customer  
                      • Integrate the tools provided by the service provider better to other tools the customer is using in the practice  
                      • Provide totally new tools for making the practice more efficient or perhaps more interesting for the customer  
                      • Support the customer in developing new competence about possibilities |
| Images              | • Develop the image of the practice in order to make the practice more desirable to carry out  
                      • Create a less desirable image of the practice if the practice is not otherwise valuable for the customer |
| Physical space      | • Develop the physical space to be more functional and interesting for the customer  
                      • Create a physical space for practices that have lacked a physical space |
| Action              | • Reconfigure the actions needed for a certain practice to improve the value of the practice of the customer  
                      • Create new actions that are interesting and valuable for the customer |

Strictly speaking there is a limited number of opportunities to enhance customer value formation. This also applies well to the context of family cruise consumption.

First, *improvement of practices*: there is naturally an opportunity to improve the practices at hand by considering the examples of opportunities listed above. Second, *reduction of practices*: there are also practices that per se are not as valuable and not attractive to carry. In these cases, the provider should aim at either diminishing the practice, or finding opportunities to gradually change the practice at hand into a more valuable constellation. Third, *transfer/creation of practices*: there are practices that exist outside a specific context that can perhaps be introduced to the context.

The matter of agency is probably the most challenging issue in the definition above. It is defined that the value of the practice can be enhanced through positive changes to a practice. The term positive is highly subjective and needs to be defined separately in this context.
'Positive changes are determined by the service provider on the basis of an ethnographic understanding of the total systemic nature of a certain practice.'

Positive changes refer here to the service provider’s and in this case the researcher’s view on the practice and the possibilities to improve the practice at hand. It requires ethnographic skills, intuition and courage to make conclusions on the basis of interpretations.

Marketing literature has always constituted a discussion of the power distribution between the customer and the provider (Zaltmann, 2003). The practice-theoretical starting point implies that the practice per se is powerful, and can be partly challenged by the customer, but also consciously developed by the provider through interventions of different kinds. Critical theorists (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Burton, 2001) and others (Klein, 2002) take a critical approach to company and brand dominance, and tend to believe that the consumers in the end have rather few opportunities to use their power. The practice-theoretical starting point also makes the question of dominance of consumers highly relevant, because the theory per se takes away agency from people and claims that for instance tools and embedded images of a practice can affect the customer’s practices to a great extent. Thus it is not believed that the customer per se would be totally aware of the ‘decisions’ he makes concerning consumption.

In the introduction of this thesis, it was concluded that the research is based on the notion that it is not contradictory to “make good” (be valuable) concurrently for both the consumer and the provider. This does imply that the service provider has to take ethical responsibility and be transparent in its operations to improve practices. Take for instance the development of the practice of Nordic Walking discussed by Shove & Pantzar (2005). This practice has dramatically increased in Finland during the last years and has arguably been ‘good’ for the health of especially elderly people; similarly, one of the companies producing sticks for the practice has been one of the fastest-growing companies in Finland. Other practices related to, for example drinking, smoking or body consumption (e.g. cosmetic surgery) are perhaps more questionable in terms of whether the equation of value formation for both parties appears.

The ethical consideration should rightly be discussed more as it becomes a very important issue regarding the approach to customer value developed. This will, however, be ascribed to the list for further research.

4.5. Discussion on the value concept and empirical methods

The elaboration on the managerial implications will be done in the last chapter of this thesis. I will, however, carry out a short discussion here, in order to make the empirical part of this research more meaningful and understandable to read.

The new approach to customer value formation (and more generally the practice-theoretical approach to service marketing and management) can influence many different areas related to marketing management. This thesis aims to discover the opportunities to create proactive customer insight of how value is formed in the life of the customer through an ethnographic method.
Currently most inquiries in customer value rely on the customer to determine what is valuable, what is not, and to which extent. The practice-theoretical approach emphasizes that value is formed ‘in the world’, which inherently means that the unit of analysis becomes larger and wider to include not only the customer, but the customer and the context and systemic relationships between these elements.

This has implications on the discourse of service marketing and management, as it is suggested that practices should be put into focus instead of interactions, as the analysis tends to do currently. The practice-theoretical approach can also have very concrete implications on the way service development is carried out, and the methods for acquiring customer insight for the purpose of service development.

In the next chapter, a prototype of a method for mapping practices is described in detail. The objective of the method is to map current practices in the context of family cruises, and also to identify opportunities to dismiss problems or disjunctures in the current practices situated on board the vessel through service development, and thus enhance value formation on board the vessel.

The background of the empirical research is the aim to utilize the specific results and more generally the method as sources of customer insight in service development. It is thus implied that neither current service development processes nor the methods for gaining customer insight are sufficient for effective and efficient service development. It is later in this thesis suggested that service development should start by gaining a credible understanding of the existing practices, and the practices that are decided to be enhanced by the service. After this, considerations of the opportunities to enhance the customer value for those specific practices are carried out, after which more traditional provider-centred considerations of service production are defined. This service development process is described in more detail in the chapter on implications.

The method described in the next chapter is planned to function as the source of insight for the first phases of the service development process. The benefit of the method is that it gives contextual and in-depth understanding of certain practices that a certain provider decides to focus on. This does not mean that the service provider cannot use other approaches for the latter phases of the service development process. For instance, the testing of a ready-made service can be carried out with more traditional questionnaires, interviews and focus groups.
5. AN ETHNOGRAPHIC METHOD FOR MAPPING PRACTICES

The focus in this chapter is on the empirical research methodology and the process for carrying out the research. As mentioned, the research is inspired by ethnography, but has some restrictions due to the focus on practices as the unit of analysis, although Knorr Cetina (2002) claims that the renowned ethnographer Geertz is one of the initiators of practice theory.

Ethnography was originally a method used in anthropology, which has been most of all applied by scholars in anthropology for the purpose of understanding the cultures of ‘others’. For instance Geertz (1973) and Clifford & Marcus (1986) are frequently cited references in the field of ethnography. Ethnographers’ focus has, however, because of influences by postmodernists and others, shifted from understanding traditions to understanding dynamic processes by which people create meaning in their everyday situations and life. The methodology focuses currently more on demonstrating the relationship between forms of heterogeneous action than trying to identify a culture as a whole (Chambers, 2000; Lecompte, 2002; Baszanger & Dodier, 2004).

Although ethnography may sound demanding and is that also in many perspectives, the basic logic of doing ethnographies is rather common sense. The work of the ethnographer is actually somewhat similar to any learning process of a person accessing a new territory of practices. The ethnographer participates in the lives of people, watches what happens, listens to what is said, asks questions, and collects available data in order to understand the issues with which he is concerned (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). On the other hand, one should also realize that ethnography is a special skill in the way it requires the researchers to problemize what is often taken for granted, which is not the same as common sense (Forsythe, 1999).

5.1. Ethnography and marketing

Ethnography has been discussed as a theoretical orientation, and even a philosophical paradigm, within anthropology. Ethnography has recently been extended (primarily as a useful methodology) to cultural studies, literary theory, folklore, women’s studies, sociology, cultural geography, and social psychology (Tedlock, 2000), in addition to marketing and consumer behaviour (Sherry, 1986; 1989; 1990; Belk et al, 1988; Hill, 1991; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Service marketing and management lack an extensive ethnographic tradition, although there are some contributions (e.g. Swan & Bowers, 1998; Harris & Baron, 2004). Ethnography is seen here as a way to find a new perspective to the tradition of service marketing and management. Others have used ethnography more implicitly by using techniques closely resembling applied ethnography (e.g. Gustafsson et al, 1999). Unfortunately there has also been some reluctance to use ethnographic methods due to a lack of familiarity (Sherry, 1989).

Consumption researchers have more generally applied the ethnographic method to the research of consumption and implications for marketing strategy. Consumption researchers have used an ethnographic approach for studying consumption behaviour...
related to, for instance, bikers (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), swap meets (Belk et al, 1988), thanks-giving (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991) and flea markets (Sherry, 1990). Ethnography in marketing and consumer research is often referred to as being a part of the interpretive approach in contrast with methods that take their ideals from natural sciences (Murray & Ozanne, 1991; Foxall, 1995).

In addition, one should in this context mention the substantial literature on ethnography-inspired methods in software design, which has not to my knowledge yet used extensively as a source of inspiration for service design (e.g. Suchmann, 1987; Nardi, 1996; Forsythe, 1999; Harper, 2000). The general reason for using the ethnographic approach is to understand the behaviour of the customer, not only what the customer says he does (Forsythe, 1999). Ethnography has also been used in commercial research, which in many cases has serious limitations on the original principles of ethnography (Elliott & Jankel-Elliott, 2003). One limitation is perhaps the cost of carrying out ‘pure’ ethnography.

In market-oriented ethnography there are, according to Arnould & Wallendorf (1994), four distinctive features guiding the research, which in this context gives a rather good illustration of the uses of the methodology and the specific character of it.

First, ethnography gives primacy to systematic data collection and the recording of human action in natural settings. Ethnography aims at identifying embedded socio-cultural patterns, which also entails that the understanding is hard to build, out of context, on a generic basis. In the context of the cruise it implies that it is not sufficient to only record the stories and opinions of customers of the cruise, but there is a need to record the behaviour as it appears when planning and carrying out the actual cruise.

Second, ethnographic research involves experiential participation of the researcher in a specific cultural context. Ethnographers follow actions as they occur rather than steer them; this means that the sampling plan evolves during research and is not specified by an a priori design. In the context of this research, this would mean that the researcher should participate in the cruise as it is planned, carried out and apprehended, and record both internal and external understanding of the cruise. Ethnography is about learning to ‘see’ social situations in a manner that does not follow pre-defined conceptions (Forsythe, 1999).

Third, ethnography results in interpretations of behaviours that the persons studied and the intended reader find credible. In everyday life, culturally embedded patterns usually remain unarticulated by participants. This can also be concluded concerning the context of cruise consumption. The researcher is in a crucial role in the setting of the cruise, and should use his own capability of viewing the cruise as ‘strange and mysterious’ in order to be able to understand and write about it.

Fourth, ethnography involves incorporating multiple sources of data. Rather than using multiple data sources to achieve a coherent interpretation, ethnography uses data sources to generate alternative interpretations on the practices of interest. In the context of the cruise, this would mean that the researcher should use all different sources of information in order to be able to find discrepancies and different ways to understand
the practices of the cruise. I experienced on many occasions that the informants were saying something, and doing something totally different.

The main focus of the ethnographic inquiry is in the understanding of practices, which are cultural and/ or social rather than cognitive. Ethnography sees individuals not from a ‘between-the-ears’, decontextualised perspective, but as historically and socially situated persons engaged in constructing their own realities through interactions with the context they live in.\(^\text{14}\)

I will below in more detail describe the ethnographic approach to 1) collecting cultural data of practices, and 2) analysing and writing about practices. I will also discuss the validity and reliability of the research carried out.

5.2. Collecting data on practices

Ethnography is a form of a learning process for the researcher which is somewhat hard to prepare for (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). The research cannot be defined in the pre-field stage, but must remain open during the whole process for new data in various forms and different techniques for collecting data. Some have a very clear plan for carrying out the research, whereas other simply select a context of inquiry and find out during the process ways of participating in the field (Baszanger & Dodier, 2004).

The process of ethnography can be described as a dynamic dialogue between the emic perspective, which is the ‘native’s’ interpretation of or reasons for his or her practices, and the etic perspective, which is the external researcher's interpretation (Agar, 1985; Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). In practice this means that the ethnographic data collection is on the one hand about observations of the external ‘world’ and the events happening through note taking and explanations of behaviour as it appears in the world. On the other hand, the research process is as much about an analysis of the internal world of the researcher and the transformation of the researcher’s own way of apprehending the world (Baszanger & Dodier, 2004). Both activities should be carried out during the whole research process.

In other words, the observer establishes a parallel between what he believes, and what the people observed believe. A form of introspection is used to build new understanding of the field. The researcher builds an ability to understand the people observed. He tries out his understanding in the field, at which point he can recognize its validity. This dynamics is here believed to give prerequisites for understanding practices as a systemic phenomenon.

The long duration of the fieldwork enables the fieldworker to absorb himself in the observed behaviour, which requires a process of socialization (Baszanger & Dodier, 2004).

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\(^\text{14}\) Jones (2000) claims that ethnography is perhaps ill suited for the task of understanding ‘in the head’ beliefs, although attempts to do so have been made. Ethnography has in research traditions such as education been a way to shift from psychological to sociological, and cultural understanding of people ‘being in the world’. Ethnography has been a way to criticize behaviouristic explanations earlier dominant in the field (Lecompte, 2002).
The postmodern critique emphasizes the understanding of the ethnographer’s situation as a part of the interpretation (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000).

The objective of the data collection is to create a ‘thick’ description of a cultural phenomenon (Geertz, 1973). A ‘thick’ description blends the action and meaning of the action into a credible account. If the ethnographer reports actions as they appear, the description is ‘thin’ and is not credible in the final analysis. The ‘thickness’ of descriptions was very concretely experienced during the research process. During the early period of my research it appeared to me that the families on board were simply walking on board, eating & drinking, sleeping and shopping. The further the process of collecting, analyzing and writing ethnography proceeded, it became self-evident that the ‘actions’ first identified were merely a façade of practices. Through in-depth understanding and the outliving of the cruise it became apparent that actions could be grouped into meaningful practices that both explained the nature of the practice at hand, and the systemic whole of the customer using tools, know-how, image and physical spaces in his meaning creation.

Despite the restriction in the research, the research has through the specific focus on practices and the usage of multiple research techniques provided a rather valid account. Multiple techniques are typically used to prove the consistency and reliability of the different techniques. In contrast, multiple techniques of data collection in ethnography are used to access different aspects of the phenomenon that may diverge from another (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). Divergence in the data between different techniques is therefore seen as an interesting opportunity to understand a certain context. For example, it is interesting if people say that they do differently than they actually do.

In this research, because of its position in service marketing and management and its focus on understanding and improving practices, an applied ethnography is developed to focus on the understanding of customer practices. The ethnography will thus exclude modern explanations on cultural matters (e.g. values, assumptions). As mentioned earlier in the introduction, the term ‘applied’ relates partly to the focus on practices (which restricts the ethnography to certain phenomena) and partly to the fact that the focus of the research is to gain managerially relevant insights.

The method used combines four different techniques: 1) participant observation and verbal reports, 2) non-participant observation and verbal reports 3) videotaped family interviews including photographs taken by informants, and 4) practice analysis by cruise line personnel. It was earlier planned that the research would include expert interviews on the historical matters of cruises. This was, however, later left out due to a change from an epistemology of neo-Marxism to more post-modern influences on practice theory, which have less emphasis on the historical nature of practice.

The techniques of observations and verbal report, videotaped family interviews including photographs taken by families can be considered as techniques frequently used in ethnography, whereas practice analysis carried out by the cruise line personnel may be less used and is specific to the method used here.

15 The issues of validity and reliability will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.4.
5.2.1. Techniques included in the empirical research

The techniques used are reviewed here. A more detailed description of the data collection process and the means for data collection is presented in the next section.

5.2.1.1. Participant observation and verbal reports

Observation is central in the ethnographic method. An ethnographer observes everyday situations in order to build etic understanding of a certain context (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). Observation is more or less dependent on the researcher’s etic judgement, whereas verbal reports can more directly express the views of the subjective opinion, and thus represent the emic perspective to action.

Observation is referred to as perspective in action, whereas an interview is a perspective to action, which in combination can result in a ‘thick’ description. This does not, however, mean that observation would only be restricted to non-verbal behaviour (Heath, 2004). Angrosino & Mays de Pérez (2000) claim that one could see observation as a context for collaboration between the researcher and the informants, rather than a single method for collecting data.

An ethnographer can assume different roles, ranging from full participation to non-participation. Junker (1960 in Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, 93) defines four different roles: complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant, complete observer. Complete participant refers to the role when the researcher not only ‘passes’ as a member of the community, but rather ‘becomes’ or is already a member that secretly observes the behaviour of others. This role is according to some ethnographers the ideal role, but also restrictive in the sense that the researcher is limited to the pre-existing routines and practices. The complete observer does, on the other hand, not have contact with those he or she is observing. The most likely roles taken by an ethnographer are either the participant, who takes on a role as an observer, or the observer that participates in action.

In this research, two different roles depending on the technique applied have been used. Concerning the participant observation, the researcher was an observer that participated in the family cruises trying to become a ‘natural’ part of the cruise, a co-traveller with the family. The researcher decided to take another role concerning the non-participative observation and maintained a complete observer in these cases. The researcher was travelling on the vessel, but did not make any contact with the co-passengers.

Participant observation implies that the researcher takes both a participative and a more distant observer’s role in the inquiry (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Tedlock, 2000). This dualistic approach has resulted in many different kinds of ethnographic accounts ranging from scientific descriptions of cultural behaviour to fictional ethnographies depending on how much the researcher is willing to make his own ‘voice’ heard and how much he is willing to let the informants’ actual behaviour and talk appear in the account. ‘Who gets to tell whose story’ is an ongoing discussion in the field (Lecompte, 2002, 289). No matter what role the researcher takes and the style of writing he chooses, the researcher should be able to maintain the role of the ‘stranger’, because he can lose a
critical and analytic perspective if he is totally absorbed into the culture or practice he is studying (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

It was decided that the researcher would participate in the trip with three families16 during a weekend trip. In the beginning of the research, the possibility to travel with families which are randomly selected or recruited through the cruise company was considered. The conclusion was, however, that this was not feasible. The researcher did not want to ‘spoil’ their trip by being a ‘hang around’, ‘looking over their shoulders’ and perhaps preventing them from carrying out their trip in the manner they naturally would do. Therefore, it was decided to give up the principle of researching randomly picked, not known, informants. The researcher decided to travel with people who were more or less familiar in order to keep up the natural way of practicing in the cruise context. The researcher travelled with two members of his family and their families, and his sister’s friend’s family. The trips were prepared for by an interview with the families before the trip.

The selection of known informants turned out to be a rather good decision as all informants were rather at ease with having a researcher as a travelling companion. For instance, none of the families were awkward about displaying conflicts and other minor negative practices, although the researcher was observing and making notes about them. The use of family members as informants of my research was thus not interpreted as decreasing the quality of the research. On the contrary, the close relationship between researcher and informants gave the necessary access to family practices. Similarly, the researcher can be defined as an ‘outsider’ to family practices, as the researcher does not have children. As Forsythe (1999, 130) writes ‘…ethnography usually works best when conducted by an outsider with considerable inside experience.’

The participant observation gave essential input to the research. The participant observation was the ‘closest’ and most ‘naturalistic’ technique for data gathering used in the research at hand. The data gathered through the participant observation was in conjunction with other data very informative of the practices on board and in the terminal, although the sample for the participant observation was rather limited.

5.2.1.2. Non-participant observation and verbal reports

In addition to participant observation and verbal reports, a number of non-participant observations were carried out. This technique seemed to be surprisingly fruitful as the cruise vessel is a restricted area and the families and other passengers on board are rather exposed to observations.

The researcher decided to travel with the same cruise vessel twice during the earlier phase of the research and try to blend in with the people on board, watching and listening to what people were talking about. The researcher remained anonymous and did not directly ask questions. Rather he was searching for ‘good spots’ where something was going on. ‘Good spots’ were the queues to the restaurants, the restaurants, the entrance to the vessel, the playroom, the terminal, the corridors and the

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16 These families, and also other families studied are described on pp. 79.
promenade deck on board. This made it possible to get a more generalized picture of a larger number of families’ behaviour in different parts of the vessel, and which practices they engaged in. Rust (1993) did similar observation research by waiting in the aisle of a shop, waiting for parents and their children to pass by, making notes about their behavioural constellations.

The results of these observations were documented into field notes, which did not focus on particular families, but rather aimed at viewing practices as a social ‘happening’ on board and in the terminal. A notebook, video and a camera were used to record field notes. According to Kanstrup (2002) visual material, and in her case photography, can be used to replace field notes. In practice the researcher used the cameras rather cautiously (more as a tourist than a frenetic researcher trying to capture everything on film). The conclusion was that the traditional written field notes were perhaps the most important media for data collection. In anthropology, film, and more recently video, have received more attention, but have been increasingly used as a medium for representation and documentation rather than a resource for the analysis of social actions and activities (Heath, 2004). The same applied in this research. The photographs and other visual material were more or less used as a form of documentation and inspiration, but were not used for more extensive analysis.

The non-participant observation gave valuable additional insight into the practices related to the cruises. It was, however, clear from the start that this technique alone cannot give a ‘thick’ description of the practices. Restriction to only non-participant observation risk interpretive problems, because it does not reveal aspects that the informants know about, but do not show in behaviour (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

5.2.1.3. Videotaped family & researcher discussions including photographs taken by the informants

Discussions or other verbal reports typically supplement observational data in ethnographic interpretation by providing emic understanding.

Ethnographers do not enter the field with a pre-defined list of questions to be asked. They may enter with a list of issues that needs to be covered. Nor do the ethnographers restrict themselves to a single mode of questioning. On different occasions, or at different points in the same interview, the approach may be directive or non-directive depending on the intention one has with the question. Non-directive interviews are relatively open-ended and the researcher stays rather passive, whereas in the directive interviews, one has a clear intention to get specific data. Often one may wish to test hypotheses with rather direct questions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Arnould & Wallendorf (1994) make a distinction between unstructured arranged interviews initiated by the researcher (typically steered by a rather general topical structure) and unstructured spontaneous discussions carried out by the researchers and the participants during observation. The interviews were, in this research, unstructured and clearly initiated by the researcher.

The situations for the discussions were not natural, although they were carried out in the homes of the informants. In some of the cases, the researcher had the opportunity to
have a very small role in the discussion, whereas in other cases the role of the researcher was rather important as an initiator of discussions. Comments as a technique were also used as a supplementary data-gathering method (Snow et al, 1982). The researcher drew upon common knowledge of the cruise or comments that other informants had given in order to give the informants the possibility to either object to, or approve of, the comment presented. This was a way to validate the etic understanding of the researcher and was done in addition to open-ended discussions on different phases of the cruise. Typical interviews carried out in ethnography are ‘the daily routine’ and ‘the life history’ interviews that have been used to get a grip of the everyday behaviours of the customer (Elliott & Jankel-Elliott, 2003).

A similar approach to ‘the daily routine’ was used in this specific case. The informants were asked to tell as concretely as possible about their cruise. Two discussions (á 45 - 120 min.) with each family were videotaped. The discussions held before the cruise concerned the expectations, planning and planned practices related to the cruises. Each of the families was asked to take photographs during their trip of both extraordinary events, but also seemingly unimportant events on board. The discussions held after the actual trip was a form of ‘walk-through’ of the practices carried out during the trip with the help of viewing the photographs. The photographs were in this phase mainly a device for remembering and creating a structure for the interview (cf. Elliott & Jankel-Elliott, 2003). The interview technique during the second discussion was largely influenced by Contextual inquiry (Beyer & Holzblatt, 1998). Contextual inquiry puts the practices in the forefront of the discussion, rather than the attitudes and feelings of the informants. The informants were asked to tell about their ‘doing’ at the time of the taking of the photographs, but also in between the photographs in order to build a comprehensive understanding of the practices on board. A map of the vessel was used as help for getting a clear picture of the locations of the informants at any point of the trip.

Verbal reports were a valuable compliment to the observations made also in this study, although experienced ‘cruisers’ had a hard time to find ‘according to them something valuable’ to tell the researcher about the routinized practices of cruises. The videotaped discussion was, however, informative as soon as the researcher was able to get the informants to understand that the interest was not solely in the spectacular events, but as much in the routines and seemingly meaningless behaviour.

Video was used in order to make it possible for the researcher to keep track of who is talking (as the whole family was attending the interview). It may have proved difficult to afterwards make distinctions of who is speaking based on an audiotape. Some of the respondents were also showing artefacts (e.g. photographs and souvenirs), which were successfully documented by filming them.

5.2.1.4. Practice analysis by cruise line personnel

One assumption made in this research is that the personnel of the cruise line possess tacit knowledge of customer practices and that this tacit knowledge can perhaps be used as insight for gaining comprehensive knowledge of customer practices (cf. Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1996).
Five persons were selected by the cruise line in order to codify their joint understanding of the customer practices and their insight of the possible dysfunctionalities the customers are experiencing when practicing the cruise. The members of the personnel were naturally doing the analysis from their perspective, but were asked to be as empathetic as possible. The practice analysis was done according to a format, which has not yet been academically published, but has proven to give fruitful results as a part of a consulting process in more than 30 projects during the period of 1998-2005.\textsuperscript{17}

The practice analysis was carried out in spring 2004. The cruise company selected the persons who were in direct interaction with their customers and gave them the task to ‘put themselves in the shoes’ of the family customers. They were given a simple, preliminary model of customer practices which they were asked to describe in more detail concerning two issues. The personnel was asked to map the actions or ‘routines’ of the customer in more detail, and after that to brainstorm the possible challenges or dysfunctionalities the customer may have when performing his practices. The group had one day (8 hours) to sit together and carry out the task in a workshop.

The practice analysis by cruise line personnel was carried out before the other techniques were used, and thus gave the researcher a good pre-understanding. Nevertheless, one conclusion of this exercise was that it is rather difficult to create more exact descriptions without ethnographic skills in a workshop out of context. Just as the customer takes issues for granted and generalize (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1994), the personnel also seems to do that. The original reason for including this technique was the feeling that the personnel possess an enormous amount of knowledge, which is not utilized in the company’s service development process.

This technique did not give that much input for the research, and could be here defined as a sort of pilot study for the actual research carried out by the researcher, and was not directly used in the final analysis.

See below in table 3 a summary of the different techniques used in the empirical research.

\textsuperscript{17} This analysis is based on the practical consulting work done in the regime of Vectia Ltd, which is a consulting company focusing on customer-oriented business model development. Chairman Markus Westerlund is the inventor of the technique.
Table 3. The techniques used in the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Participant observation and verbal reports</th>
<th>Non-participant observation and verbal reports</th>
<th>Videotaped family interviews including photographs</th>
<th>Practice analysis by cruise line personnel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The researcher joined 3 families on a cruise as a travelling companion</td>
<td>- The researcher was during the pilot study participating in 2 cruises (families were not as special focus) + 2 cruises in the actual research</td>
<td>- The researcher interviewed 3 families before the cruise</td>
<td>- The cruise personnel was asked to map the customer’s doing according to a template</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The actual trip was prepared by 1 group interview with each family</td>
<td>- The researcher observed as an anonymous co-passenger different settings on-board</td>
<td>- Each family was instructed to take photographs on the trip</td>
<td>- The cruise personnel was also asked to think of and document possible dys-functionalities in their current practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The research was documented with a camera, video camera and field notes.</td>
<td>- The research was documented with camera, video camera and field notes.</td>
<td>- The researcher interviewed the same 3 families after the trip in order to walk-through the cruise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>- 3 families with close relationship with the researcher</td>
<td>- Families on-board of the vessel - Randomly selected</td>
<td>- 3 families through convenience sample – cruise line contacts</td>
<td>- 5 persons from the personnel selected by the cruise line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to the understanding of practices</td>
<td>- Participation enables both observations and discussions with the families (emic + etic understanding)</td>
<td>- Non-participant observation does not provide understanding of the whole cruise, rather selected settings</td>
<td>- Interviews give the emic understanding of the cruise context</td>
<td>- Practice analysis by cruise line personnel gives an understanding of the current interpretation the provider has on their customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Opportunity to get a comprehensive understanding of the families “doings” during the cruise</td>
<td>- Enables the observation of a larger number of families</td>
<td>- Give an opportunity to discover the “discrepancies” between what is said and what is done</td>
<td>- Reveals repeated actions by the customer that could be otherwise overviewed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.2. Carrying out the data collection

The data collection was done in several phases with different objectives, contribution to the ethnographic understanding and outputs, which will be reviewed below. The analysis has been carried out during the whole period of research, but will be presented separately in the next section.

5.2.2.1. Phase 1: Pilot study – getting familiar with the setting

A pilot study of the research was carried out in autumn 2003. During this point it was already decided to focus on a pragmatic view of the customer as a user of the cruise, although the ontological starting point was not described or even completely understood. The researcher participated in two cruises in order to practice ethnographic thinking, although he was not familiar with the method during that period of time. At that point it was not yet decided that the focus would be on families.

The first cruise concerned the researcher’s two working colleagues’ practices, both women aged 25-30. The cruises were carried out as a part of a consulting assignment for the cruise line. 132 photographs were taken, which were, due to the lack of competence in the field of ethnography, rather superficial and ‘staged’. This can be seen from the photographs taken, which seem to be in many cases ‘arranged’. In addition, a lengthy interview with both of the informants, and after the cruise an additional lengthy interview with one of the informants, were carried out in order to gain emic understanding of the cruise context. The interviews were transcribed into 9 pages of text.
and gave in the analysis phase some insights into the practices of the cruise. The researcher was, however, not pleased with the quality of the research. The researcher felt somewhat awkward in the role of an observer. The whole research, instead of ethnography, became a laughing matter.

It was decided before the second cruise that the researcher should take a less obvious role as an observer and participated in the cruise with the same working colleagues and a member of the personnel from the cruise line in the same fashion as they did. The researcher took a very natural role as an interested ‘learner’ in a specific context. During this cruise, it was decided to focus on families. The family segment was for the researcher perhaps the most unfamiliar and strange, but similarly it was assumed that the researcher could participate as an empathetic observer who is willing to learn and get involved in their practices. Finally, it was also from a convenience perspective easier to suggest participation to families than for instance a group of single women. This second cruise was not documented in any way, except for a number of notes in a field book concerning the limitations and the interest concerning the research.

5.2.2.2. Phase 2: Working with the personnel of the cruise line

As mentioned, the researcher has been working as a consultant for the cruise line. Thus, the researcher has access to the company and also the possibility to utilize the competence of the personnel to map practices.

During the second phase of the research, the technique of practice analysis by cruise personnel was used according to the principles defined above. As mentioned, this was done according to a predefined categorization of customer practices, which was a draft from the perspective of this research. This categorization was, however, used for other purposes internally at the cruise line (e.g. basis for designing internal processes, organization).

The draft consisted of the following practices, which at that time were called processes: idea generation & planning, making decisions regarding the trip, planning the trip, arriving to & leaving from the terminal, taking care of formalities in the terminal, getting around on board, living on board, shopping, eating & drinking, spending time on board, attending a conference on board, doing things at the destination, solving problems before, during and after the trip, and planning the next trip. All of these practices were then analyzed in more detail according to the technique.

This phase of the research, which was not done only for the purpose of this doctoral thesis, gave a starting point for thinking about practices in a cruise context, and also gave inspiration for the development of the practice-theoretical framework of practices defined in this thesis.

5.2.2.3. Phase 3: Getting involved in the context

The third phase was the most active part of the research. The phase was carried out during the summer-autumn 2004 and spring 2005. During that time it was possible for
the researcher to work full-time on the research, both concerning the theoretical framework and the empirical work. This gave good possibilities to apply abductive reasoning around the theme of consumption practices.

Three different techniques for inquiry were used concurrently during the same period of time: participant observation and verbal reports, non-participant observation, and videotaped family interviews. This phase resulted in three different written documents: field notes, analytic notes, and video notes, which were all important in the analysis. In addition, the data collection resulted in a vast number of photographs and video-recordings.

The different forms of empirical data which have functioned as the main source for doing analysis and writing the account are described below.

- **Field notes.** The task of the researcher in making a field note is to write down what he hears and sees. The field note is the traditional means for collecting observational data. The taking of field notes constitutes a central research activity, and it should be carried out with as much care and reflexivity as possible. High-quality notes often mean that the researcher has to focus on some aspects, and thus leave other aspects unnoticed (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). The field note is also important in the sense that it records changes in the ways the researcher makes interpretation (Elliott & Jankel-Elliott, 2003).

- **Analytic notes.** The task of the researcher in making analytic notes is to write down reflexively the etic subjective thinking and later use it as a part of the data for further analysis. The researcher should distinguish analytic notes from accounts of the informant. The construction of such notes therefore is based on subjective thinking based on the experience of the field. These analytic notes may be appended to the daily field notes. ‘Rather than coming to take one’s understanding on trust, one is forced to question what one knows, how such knowledge has been acquired, the degree of certainty of such knowledge, and what further line of inquiry are implied’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, 165).

- **Video notes:** The task of the researcher is to selectively make notes of the videotapes taken. The videotape per se can function as a field note (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, 165). In practice it seems, however, to be wise to make notes of the videotapes when watching them. This should minimize the need for the researcher to watch the videotapes, which is a time consuming and tiresome task. These notes are neither field notes nor analytic notes. The video notes are not field notes, because it is not necessary to make such an exact note of everything that takes place on the tape, because you have the opportunity and you should watch the videotapes several times in order to be able to understand what happens during the discussions. The video note is neither an analytic note as you should not only document your analysis of the videos when watching them, but also focus on what is happening on the video. The video note can, however, consist of elements of both field notes and analytic notes.

- **Photographs and videotapes:** In addition to the different forms of notes, photographs and videotapes have been used as a source of inspiration and
insight. In practice this data has been used after making the notes and writing the first versions of the account, in order to find additional new ‘insights’ for the writing. The photographs and videotapes are referred to directly. The researcher has not conducted or got acquainted with more sophisticated or detailed techniques for visual analysis, as this is not needed in order to describe the practices on the level done in this thesis. It appeared that the most valuable insight, in the final analysis, came from the participation in the real context of the cruise. The discussions with the family regarding the photographs gave seldom valuable insights.

The analysis of the material done in phase three resulted in the account for practices in the cruise context.

5.2.3. Arranging material

The data collection resulted in a rather vast material of different notes, videos, and photographs. The arrangement of the material was rather straightforward in the sense that the researcher had already very early decided to focus on the practices of the customer, and thus the research interest was not in the families per se, but rather in the practices they take part in.

During data collection the material was, however, in the first phase indexed according to the technique used, sort of data, family under study, and the date when the data was collected. For each category of indexing there is a system for coding. The system for indexing has also been used as a system for reference in the descriptions of the practices.

See below the system for indexing the material.18

Table 4. The system for indexing the material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of data</th>
<th>Logic of indexing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>Photo/ Non-participant observation/ # of photo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photo/ Family [participant observation]/ # of photo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video (observation)</td>
<td>Video/ Non-participant observation/ # of DVD / time on DVD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video/ Family [participant observation]/ # of DVD / time on DVD or video clip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video interview</td>
<td>Video interview/ family/ # of DVD / time on DVD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field note</td>
<td>Field note/ family/ date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytic note</td>
<td>Analytic note/ date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the second phase of analysis the material was coded according to the practices identified. This coding gave the structure to the account, but is not visible as references in the writing.

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18 Video notes are not mentioned here, because this material was not indexed but more or less used as an intermediary tool for doing the analysis. The actual video sequence was returned to if something interesting was found in the video notes, and the video sequences were then referred to in the final analysis.
5.3. Analysing data and writing of practices

The process for building a credible ethnographic description can be understood as an iterative effort to articulate for breakdowns between different data sources and in those data sources (Agar, 1985; Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). The ethnographic method implies that the researcher should take the role of a reflexive writer, who is able to combine different data sources, including one’s own subjectivity, into a credible account. There are especially two aspects of the analysis that have been very influential on the work of studying practices as they occur in the cruise context.

First, the reflexive nature of an ethnographic analysis is typical also for the accounts presented in this thesis. Because ethnography goes beyond the mere cataloguing of emic themes, the decision to end the empirical research is more complex than merely verifying repetition in emic representations. The disharmony between different data sources is needed for developing a credible account. The clue is to be able to include oneself into the research focus, and not only ‘trust’ the empirical account. Ethnography is not an empiricistic methodology (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, 25).

Second, the iterative combination of several data sources and identifying disharmony between sources of data turned out to be a very challenging task. People are not doing what they are saying and vice versa. For instance, people tend to drink more alcohol and watch more television than they report (Alasuutari, 1995), or tend to eat unhealthier than they report (Fellman, 1999). A challenge is to combine data obtained by multiple methods into a credible account describing the ‘reality’ (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994).

5.3.1. Analysing material

Rather than truly separable stages, the process of analysis begins in the field with making field notes and using working hypotheses or ideas about recurrent practices. Data analysis and interpretation become more focused when the ethnographer stops fieldwork and starts to code, sort, and index data. Analysis may many times require that the researcher return to the field to gather additional data to address gaps in data. (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994)

Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) claim that one should start the analysis by reading carefully through the material and use the data to think with. The researcher should see whether anything surprising and interesting arises, and whether contradictions between the expressed and real behaviour can be identified. The practices identified can sometimes arise from comments made by informants, and in other cases by the researcher as conclusions of the observed behaviour.

Multiple data sources are used to identify disjunctures in the empirical material, which becomes the basis for an etic understanding of the phenomenon at hand. The word disjuncture used by Arnould & Wallendorf (1994) stands for separation or disconnection and is used to refer to the disharmonies between different data sources.

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19 From The Concise Oxford English Dictionary in English Dictionaries & Thesauruses (www.oxfordreferences.com).
Agar (1985) uses the term breakdowns to indicate a similar kind of phenomenon, but emphasizes that breakdowns can also come from the disharmonies between the expectations of the ethnographer, and the data.

Ethnography questions and reflects upon the reasons for convergences and disjunctures in the empirical material. The interpretations are then ‘thickened’ into a representation of the field (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). The process can be referred to as a resolution of the breakdown existing in the data, which ends in a coherent understanding of the phenomenon at hand (Agar, 1985). Agar (1985) concludes that a coherent resolution can be judged on the basis of three criteria: 1) one can show why the resolution at hand is more thinkable than others, 2) the resolution ties itself into a broader context, and 3) the resolution clarifies and enlightens the understanding of the phenomenon.

5.3.2. Writing the ethnography

The role of the ethnographer’s situation, background, and ways of writing is important (Baszanger & Dodier, 2004; Clifford & Marcus, 1986). Ethnography is a means for self-discovery and creative self-authorship. The ethnographer should be at least as much interested in finding out more about himself than ‘the others’ (Humphrey et al, 2003).

The ethnography is foremost a function of the ethnographer (Agar, 1986). Ethnography involves an ongoing attempt to place specific situations and actions in a fuller, more meaningful context. This context is in this thesis referred to as practices. It is not simply the production of new information or research data, but rather the way in which such information or data is transformed into an understandable account (Tedlock, 2000). There is no neutral way of writing. After the research is ‘completed’ then the results are presented as a neutral ethnographic account (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

Ethnographic research can range from descriptive to more theoretical. Descriptive ethnography results in many different versions of descriptions that leave open a range of different theoretical possibilities. Theory development, on the other hand involves a narrowing of focus and a process of abstraction. Assuming the theoretical ideas are well grounded, they begin to give much more knowledge about how a particular aspect of a social practice is organized and perhaps even why events occur in the ways they do.

The arrangement of data seems to be one of the great problems in ethnographic writing. The achieved competence as a participant observer needs to be arranged into a linear sequence of text: chapters, themes, topics and arguments, and so forth. A text needs to begin and end, which puts demands on the way we think about the account at hand (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983), although Coffey (1999) suggests that for instance hypertext would be a way to apply new structures of text in ethnography.
The analysis was started by carefully reviewing through the material available. As the focus in this thesis is on practices, it was already at this stage interesting to understand the ‘doings’, the ‘whats and hows’, of the customer instead of, for instance, the ‘whys’ of behavioural constellations.

The phase resulted in several preliminary definitions of the practices the families are involved in in the cruise context. This phase was rather lengthy and started already after the pilot study was finalized.

The first version of the preliminary definition of practices was done in a rather mechanistic way by splitting the ‘doings’ on board into sequential actions. The researcher realized, after having carried out a large part of the empirical study, that the categorization that had seemed obvious did not reflect the actual practices on board. Rather it represented a linear and rationalistic image of the customer as being totally subsumed to the services of the cruise line, and acting according to the plan of the cruise line. The categorization did not represent the actual behaviour of the customer, which seemed to be to a more game-like and overlapping sequence of various forms of social activities as struggle, togetherness, and play.

A second preliminary conceptualization of the practices in the cruise context was done after finalizing all empirical data collection and several reviews of the material. This categorization was based on the realization that the subject of the practices naturally changes somewhat during the course of the trip. Three different main categories were identified: parents, family (together), and children. The cruise context seemed to be divided between these different subjects, which all engaged in practices of their own.

The conclusion to the structure of the analysis according to the subjects of the practices came from a disjuncture (cf. Wallendorf & Arnould, 1994) in the material. The cruise was several times referred to as a means for ‘doing things together’ or ‘being together’; however, there appeared to be several problems in actually putting this intent to practice. Several practices could even be described as problematic in the sense that they have a tendency to split the family, rather than invite members to do meaningful things together.

The first version of the definition of practices is presented below:

- **Children:** play with the boat, playing ready games, independence walk, play taken from ashore, playing by moving around.
• **Parents**: taking a break, sharing duties, enjoying a meal peacefully, must-do shopping, stopping for a drink, shopping as play, window-shopping, planning.

• **Together**: getting on/ getting off, living on board, strolling around, orientating, watching others play, getting fed, experiencing food, going somewhere, buffeting, shopping as an event for the children, eating in a hurry, eating in sequences, sleeping.

This logic of categorization into children, parents, and the family was also used in the final version, although the actual practices and the names of them were changing during the whole process of analysis. The first versions of the practices will not be presented in more detail here.

5.3.3.2. Phase 2: Coding of practices

The empirical material was codified according to the preliminary conceptualisation of the subjects and practices made during the previous phases. The data was reviewed once more. The researcher made notes in the margin of the written documents, and marked all photos according to the different practices identified.

After coding, the material was rearranged according to the different practices identified. The validity of the categorisation was critically reflected upon by letting the emic material continuously interact with the etic understanding of the researcher. As mentioned, the categories changed dynamically during the whole process.

The result was a collection of material for each customer practice, which included all different data sources. Some of the practices were more represented in the material, whereas others were less represented.

5.3.3.3. Phase 3: Codification of elements of practices

At this point, the data was laid out on a big table. The analysis from this point onwards was rather spatial as the researcher was reading the different material, looking at photographs and going back to the original videotapes, which at this time were converted to DVD format in order to make the analysis more convenient to do both on computer and at home with the help of DVD-player and TV.
The definition of practices in chapter 2.3.2. was used at this point as a framework for analysis (with minor revision in the version presented in this thesis). The objective was to understand the structure concerning subject, tools, know-how, images, action, and physical space. This model was, however, not the model from the start, but occurred during the phase of codification.

The model created by Engeström (1987) was first used as a ready framework. This framework has, however, earlier been used mostly as a framework for analysing work practices. During the analysis the researcher decided to view the model of practice in a less rigid manner (that is the models in the literature was not taken as granted), and decided to let the model occur from the interaction between the empirical investigation and ontology of practice theory according to the principles of abductive reasoning.

5.3.3.4. Phase 4: Writing and rewriting the account of current practices

The ethnographer is a writer, an author, who makes an account of ‘reality’ not a representation (Baszanger & Dodier, 2004). Hence, the writing phase is probably the most important phase of ethnographic research.

The aim was to strive for a style of writing which would make it possible to combine an etic and emic writing style, and thus let multiple ‘voices’ be heard. In writing, many ethnographers wish to be similarly ‘scientific’ and ‘literary’ at the same time. Scientific refers here to the researcher’s desire to be true to a world understood through the empirical research done; literary in the sense of expressing what one has learned through evocative writing techniques and form (Richardson, 2000). In this thesis, a
combination of these two forms of writing has been used. The objective with the ethnography has been to let multiple voices get heard, both different members of the families and the researcher as the one who has built an etic perspective to family cruise consumption. It was also decided to let the different voices integrate into a readable and interesting account, and not be separated into different narratives.

5.4. The question of validity and reliability

Anderson (1986) discusses various forms of relativism opposed to positivism, and concludes that a relativist can believe in a single social and natural reality, but cannot believe that science would be able to reveal that reality. Relativists accept different research programmes for what they are as different ways of exploring reality. Nevertheless, the question of validity and reliability is important.

Validity refers to the degree to which the ethnographic account represents accurately the social phenomenon it represents, whereas reliability refers to the degree to which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions (Silverman, 2000). Qualitative researchers need to convince themselves and others that their findings are based on critical examination, and that the studies are credible (Silvermann, 1993; 2000; Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Qualitative research, in this case ethnography, is especially demanding because of the importance of incorporating rigour as well as subjectivity and creativity into the research. In addition, different qualitative methods require different evaluative criteria which need to be carefully considered (Peräkylä, 1997; Whittermore et al, 2001).

A limitation often raised in the connection with ethnographic work is that because only a small number of cases, is studied, the representativeness is always doubtful. This same problem, however, arises in a similar way in for instance experimental research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Adler & Adler (1994 in Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000) have in opposition to many authors highlighting problems, suggested that in the future, observational research functions as the most powerful source of validation, as it is based on the researchers’ “direct” knowledge and their own judgement of reality.

The empirical research resulted in approximately 80 pages of qualitative, highly subjective accounts of 21 different practices that were studied in order for the researcher and the cruise line to gain deeper insight into the practices of cruising. As mentioned, these are subjective accounts and another researcher would most certainly have found perhaps 10 or maybe 62 different practices depending on the level of abstraction in the analysis, and in what the researcher decides to view as practices. It is here, however, argued that the researcher that would have used the same research methodology and the same underlying ontological starting point would have most certainly found similar findings as for instance in the matter of integration and separation. It is hence argued that the accounts give one valid representation of the world as it appears in a cruise context.

20 See chapter 6.6. for a discussion on separation and integration.
Richardson (2000) has suggested five criteria for evaluating the quality of ethnographic research: substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, impact, and expression of reality. All these criteria will be here discussed in order to determine whether the accounts presented are credible or not. The researcher also invites every reader to make judgments of the research.

First, does the research at hand have a substantive contribution? An ethnographer should critically reflect whether the research at hand contributes to an understanding of the phenomenon at hand. The substantive contribution of the empirical research is the very specific case of understanding family cruise practices on two sister ships travelling between Helsinki and Stockholm. The research is unique in this context and has provided new insights for the ‘client’. Hence, it can be argued that the lengthy description of family cruise practices has made a significant contribution to the understanding of cruise consumption, although the specific accounts cannot be generalised directly to another context. See below for a discussion on the credibility of the account from the perspective of the ‘client’.

Second, is the account aesthetically successful? Ethnographers open up the text, invite interpretations and shape the text artistically in order to make the account worth reading and not boring (Richardson, 2000). An ethnographer should not only be analytical, but also have a skill in authorship. In this case, it would have clearly been beneficial for the researcher to write in his own mother tongue (Swedish), instead of in English. The researcher has, however, made an effort to make the descriptions as vivid as possible by using both emic and etic representations interlinked into accounts that are believed to be easy to follow. The intention has been to make the accounts understandable, interesting and perhaps also almost comical21 in some cases. In addition, the intention has been to avoid misleading the reader with expert jargon typical for doctoral thesis. In some cases the researcher may have failed in this attempt. For instance, many people have asked: what does embodied mean?

Third, can the author show reflexivity in his account? How did the author come to write this text? How was the information gathered and ethical issues considered? How has he presented his subjectivity in the text? The empirical research process is described in detail in this chapter in order to explicate the ways the researcher has landed in the specific practices and the aspects of the practices described. The accounts in this thesis can be defined as subjective, but representing what Geertz (1973) calls a thick description. The dialogue between emic and etic understanding has evolved during the whole research process, and has according to the researcher’s own judgement landed in a credible description of ‘one’ truth on two cruise vessels for families. The intention has been to as openly as possible review this process, also by being open about the problems that have occurred during the process. The ethical issues of this type of research are briefly referred to in chapter 2 on practices.

Fourth, does the account have an impact on the reader? An ethnographer should have the ability to make accounts to move other researchers to write, to try new research

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21 This was actually achieved, as one of the informants was loudly laughing when reading about her own behaviour on board. She said that the account is exactly right and gives a good description, but that family life can be comical.
practices and move into action (Richardson, 2000). Chambers (2000) points out that applied ethnography should also be relevant to the goals and achievements of the client. As mentioned, the agenda of this research is managerial, as the researcher aims at finding new perspectives to the development of the service, in this case the service of the cruise line. The accounts, or a summary of them, have been verbally presented to the cruise line in question and approximately ten other audiences. The manager of the service concepts for the cruise line commented that she had never seen any research that gave such detailed information about their customers. The response has in all cases been positive\textsuperscript{22}.

Fifth, does the account express a reality? Does the account seem ‘true’ and give a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the ‘real’ (Richardson, 2000)? This has been tested with two of the informant families and a range of family members who have not been engaged in the research (during the presentations held on my research). The two informant families have given their consent on the credibility of the accounts. In almost all of the cases, when the researcher has presented the research, there have been a number of people smiling during the presentation. When asked what they were smiling about, they said that they were smiling because of the fact that they recognize themselves and find the research to reveal things that are there, but that they never thought of.

In summary one can conclude that the empirical research has a reasonable good quality in the specific context where the research was done, and especially in the relation to the ‘client’ of the research.

5.4.1. The applied ethnography and its shortcomings

The methodology chosen is here referred to as being applied ethnography, rather than being ‘pure’ ethnography due to a number of reasons which are elaborated on below. The data collection, analysis, and writing have followed the principles of ethnography, but are applied in two perspectives.

First, the focus is clearly on the understanding of practices and thus has a more specific ontological and epistemological starting point than most ethnography that tends to give the empirical context the most emphasis. Most ethnographers approach a certain context and sample with a less clearly pre-defined ontology and epistemology than in this research. Thus, the interest of most ethnographies is in most cases not related to the illustration of a certain theoretical starting point; rather it is solely in a grounded empirical approach. Ethnographic methodology implies that the research design should not be made a priori, but rather during the process of empirical research. The interest here has been to illustrate an ontology and epistemology new for service marketing and management through an illustrative empirical account of practices in a cruise context.

\textsuperscript{22} Apart from the case when an overview of the research was presented for a healthcare institution, and one specific person informed me that the logic of production processes applies better to the case of patients than the ethnographic method presented. I was not alarmed concerning the research by this comment (rather amused by her attitude and view on human beings as patients), and do not want to make conclusions of the credibility of the research on the basis of this single incident.
Second, the focus has been on the development of a methodology which can later be put into the managerial context of service development. Therefore, the validity terms related to managerial insight and usability as a complement to other sources of customer insight is emphasized, prior to principles of the creation of a ‘totalizing’ description of a culture (cf. Baszanger & Dodier, 2004; Chambers, 2000).

The perhaps more alarming aspect, which makes the empirical work done in this thesis applied rather than ‘pure’ ethnography, is the fact that the ethnographic writing is based on a somewhat short experience of the context under scrutiny. These choices of sample and nature of observations have also to do with the interest and choice of contribution of the research. The researcher has chosen to put effort on the theoretical part of the work, which is illustrated with a rather narrow, but arguably ‘thick enough’ empirical material.

5.5. Case description

The cruise as a context for family practices was chosen as a case for this thesis. The primary focus of the research is to develop a practice-theoretical view on service marketing and management, and more specifically on customer value. Hence, the cruise as a context for family practices is here defined as a case amongst other possible cases.

The case is an instrumental ethnographic account, which helps to understand the way practices can be documented, analyzed, written about and developed (Stake, 1995). The cruise becomes here one of many arenas on which certain things can be done and others cannot. The cruise is a ‘culture’ in the sense that it can be represented through the ethnography (cf. Geertz, 1983 in Rosen, 1991).

The opportunity to generalize is restricted to both the definition of practice and methodology for understanding and developing practices on the basis of this specific instrumental case. The practices identified cannot be generalized to other contexts.

5.5.1. Selection of the case

The family cruise was chosen as a case due to a number of reasons which are all equally important.

First, the family as a consumption unit is interesting. The family has been defined to be the most important decision-making and consumption unit (Shoham & Dalakas, 2005). The family is also interesting as it represents a group of people in which different identities are constructed based on different context. There has been a decline in family research during the 90s, which calls for new contributions. In addition Ekström (2004) also suggests that there is a need for family research to use more interpretive and contextual research as an alternative to survey research.

Second, the access to the case of family cruises was crucial for selecting the case. The researcher has worked with a Scandinavian cruise company as a consultant in order to develop their processes and organizational abilities to enhance customer-orientation. This means that there is a good pre-understanding of the cruise context. The researcher also had good access to the company and their customers. The company sponsored the
researcher with free tickets, and was in many ways very supportive in my work to understand their customers.

The researcher has had the opportunity to work very freely from constraints of time schedules and other restraints, which would have perhaps made the validity and reliability of the research more questionable.

Third, the practice of cruise consumption is not self-evident and thus interesting. The cruise is understood to be ‘strange and mysterious’ in a way, which is beneficial in order to create a credible ethnography (Garfinkel, 1967; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). This unfamiliarity did not relate to the actual cruise as a context, but more to the dynamics of family life, which was hard to understand for the researcher (as he has not a family of his own). Especially child practices seemed difficult to understand. A number of different options for selecting the case were considered during the first phases of the research process. Practices related to banking, housing, and mobile services were considered, but the conclusion was that the case of the cruise was very interesting for the research at hand. It appeared especially interesting to view the cruise as an open context for opportunities for carrying out practices. The vessels were thus viewed as arenas for practicing free time. The cruise was not viewed as a practice per se.

Fourth, the family cruise sums up a restricted number of practices. During the first phase of my research it appeared to me that the cruise as a context seemed to be a rather ‘straightforward’ context for investigating practices. It appeared that the people going on a cruise were simply choosing between options for taking a ‘mini holiday’ and getting away for a weekend. Although this may be the reason for going on a cruise, it became very challenging for me to understand what was really practiced on board, especially as it appeared that most informants did not really question or even understand the ways they were managing themselves through the context and ‘routine’ of cruising.

The research ended up focusing on different forms of play, games, and practices for being together, getting distance etc. In the latter parts of the research, in the spring 2005 it was concluded that the context of the cruise is actually a very complex ‘stage’ for practicing one’s life (cf. Goffman, 1959).

5.5.2. Description of the case

The case selected for this research is restricted to the consumption practices carried on board a cruise vessel travelling between Helsinki-Stockholm. The vessel or the ‘stage’ is described here, whereas the more specific sampling within the case concerning the context, time and people will be accounted for in the section.

The research has been carried out on (or in relation to) two different sister vessels with the same design, travelling every other day between Helsinki and Stockholm.

The vessels are large passenger vessels (appr. 200 m long and 30 m wide) with a capacity to carry over 2800 passengers and 350 cars. There are almost 1000 cabins in
various classes. The vessels are used for various purposes, for transport and cargo, for connections to other destinations, but also solely for cruises.

The concept of cruise refers to the practice of going on a holiday in order to enjoy the stay on board and the short visit at the destination. The typical cruise is carried out in the following way. The family leaves in the afternoon, arrives the next day in Stockholm, stays for the day in Stockholm, and leaves with the vessel that evening. The family arrives back in Helsinki the second morning. The trip thus takes approximately 40 hours.

This thesis concentrates on the families ‘cruising’. The space for carrying out the cruise is mainly on four different floors. These spaces are here briefly described.

First, the promenade is an open ‘street’ that runs in the middle of the vessel from stem to stern. At the sides of the ‘street’ there are three different restaurants, a wine bar, a pub, a café, a shop for cosmetics, a shop for clothing, a shop for toys and souvenirs, a playroom, a games arcade and an information desk. The promenade is a centre for activities for the families. A nightclub is situated in the stem of the vessel in conjunction with the promenade. Second, the floor beneath the promenade is also mainly a public space with different opportunities to practice the cruise. This floor has in addition a conference department, a large buffet restaurant, an á la carte restaurant, a tax-free shop and a smaller shop for shoes and accessories. Third, the sauna, the pool department, and the disco are located on the top floors of the vessel. Fourth, the cabins are located on different floors and are classified into nine different classes ranging from budget options to spacious suites. In addition, the families are, of course, allowed to use the outer deck as a space for ‘cruising’, which is especially in the summer time an important part of the vessel.

5.5.3. Sampling within the case

Sampling within the case is as important as sampling of the case (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). The sampling within the case is discussed on the basis of aspects of context, time and people.

5.5.3.1. Context and time

The context of the cruise should not be mistaken to be only the place of the vessel. We must identify the context according to the people in the setting, recognizing that the phenomena under inquiry are social constructions, not physical locations (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). The cruise as a context is thus everything which engages people in the practice related to the cruise (including preparations, the actual cruise and after the cruise). This inquiry has, although the actual context of cruises is a larger entity, been limited to practices occurring on board. This limitation was done partly because of the need to focus on some practices, and partly because the limited access to observe practices related to planning, which is hard to attach to a certain point of time and place, and thus makes it hard to study in practice.
The focus is on public practices which are easy to talk about and possible to observe, although there have arisen opportunities to observe people in the private space of the cabin. In addition, the informants have been asked to tell about and take photographs of their ‘doings’ in the cabin, which has in some cases given fruitful insights. Behaviours that could be classified as ‘the dark side’ of free time (Valtonen, 2004) or other taboo-related issues of the cruises are, however, out of scope. The behaviours referred to here are for instance sex, family violence, alcohol problems, conflicts etc. For example heavy drinking has typically been a practice on board a cruise vessel, which also may have affected many experiences of especially children. This restriction may be seen as a serious limitation of the research, as the understanding of the reasons and patterns for such behaviours to occur would perhaps help to develop the service in order to avoid ‘the dark side’. The account made in this research gives a rather positive account of the cruise experience, although there are assumingly also ‘negative practices’ carried out.

In addition to the contextual limitations mentioned above, one should also mention that my research has been carried out on one route (Helsinki-Stockholm), which is carried out by two vessels both owned and operated by the same company. It was already in an earlier phase noticed that the actual design (which is the same for both vessels) rather much influences the practices on board. This is discussed through the whole account. This makes the result of the study only applicable for this specific route and the specific design. This does not, however, mean that the actual research method and study of practices would not be applicable to other context, and thus generalizable.

The scope concerning the context relates in this case also directly to the time of inquiry. Four different techniques for gaining understanding of the family cruise were chosen. The techniques have a somewhat different scope concerning the time of involvement, which has been discussed above concerning the usage of those techniques.

5.5.3.2. People

Three different samples of people were involved as informants in the research. The sample has been in all these cases different according to the technique used. The object for the study has been families which have small children (younger than 10 years old). The concept of family includes both families with both parents living in the household, and single parents. It should also be mentioned that the sample selected is not by any standards representative of the whole population of cruises. For instance, all of the informants were Finnish, although many of the cruisers are Swedish. The difference in the culture of Finland and Sweden is presumably significant, and can thus have implications on the way families of different nationalities carry out their cruises. The sample has neither been selected to represent an equal distribution of people concerning socioeconomic and demographic parameters.

Concerning participant observations, the number of families was restricted to only three due to the restriction of resources and time for the research. It is, however, typical for ethnography to make use of rather small samples (Elliott & Jankel-Elliott, 2003). The
three families selected are rather close to the researcher. See below a list of the families\textsuperscript{23}.

### Table 5. Families as informants for participant observations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family members</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation/ education of the parents</th>
<th>Relation to the researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family White</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Walter: Lawyer</td>
<td>Family member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanessa</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Vanessa: Doctor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vera</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Red</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regina</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Regina: Social worker</td>
<td>Friend of family member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridge</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Green</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Grant: EU specialist in agriculture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Grace: Member of Parliament</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginger</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A different method for sampling was applied concerning the video-taped interviews (incl. photographs taken by the informants). The cruise line recommended families that they knew were attending a cruise anyway. In addition, a colleague’s family was used as informants.

### Table 6. Families as informants in videotaped interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family members</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation/ education of the parents</th>
<th>Relation to the researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Pink</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paulina</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Paulina: Consultant/ Ph. D in marketing</td>
<td>Colleague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauly</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoebe</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Brown</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Brandon: Gold smith</td>
<td>Arranged through the cruise line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Brenda: School teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brad</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Lilac</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Lucas: Teacher and student at polytechnics</td>
<td>Arranged through the cruise line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livia</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Livia: CEO of a market research company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loretta</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a sample of five persons from the cruise personnel was used to carry out the description of the customer practices on the basis of their tacit knowledge. This sampling was made by the cruise line on the basis of the criteria to select people with a good understanding of the customers. This group of people is not further described here as the result of their contribution was not used in the final empirical analysis.

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\textsuperscript{23} The informants have been named according to a ‘coding’ system in order to ensure the privacy of the informants. First, the surname refers to colours and is inspired by the film \textit{Reservoir dogs} by Quentin Tarantino. In that film a number of bandits are given code names according to colours in order to ensure their privacy in the act of robbing a jewel store. Second, the first names of each person are coded by names spotted on ‘the stage’ of popular soap operas. The names are picked from a list on the web page: \url{www.babynames.com/Names/Soaps/}. 
The sampling done when carrying out non-participant observation related to characteristics that could be visually determined (1 or 2 people with children). The researcher is here unable to give further description of these families, as the focus of the non-participant observation was in making field notes on their practices, not on background factors.
6. FAMILY PRACTICES IN A CRUISE CONTEXT

The empirical results are presented in this chapter. First, a more general discussion on the practices on board is carried out. Then, a discussion on the logic behind the analysis is carried out, and the way the results have been divided according to three different subjects of cruise consumption (family, adult, children) each representing different practices on board the ship. After that, all 21 practices identified will be presented. Finally, a discussion will be carried out concerning the possibility to enhance the value of cruise consumption for families.

The empirical research question is twofold: 1) what are the practices and their nature in a cruise context for families; and 2) what are the opportunities to develop current practices, and perhaps transform new practices into the context of the cruise, which would make the context of cruises more valuable for families?

The focus in the thesis will be on the first research question, that is to understand the current practices on board the vessel. The latter research question will be discussed on a more general level as a discussion of customer value in the context of cruise consumption. This is partly because of the sensitivity of the material for the cruise line in question.

6.1. Practices in the cruise context

‘What are they really doing? Very few of the things done during the cruise seem to be utilitarian in any sense. Most of the doings are playful: killing time, being, strolling around without direction. Maybe getting on board, getting to the destination, getting away are exceptions. And perhaps also a form of must-dos on board, which are done because of the impression that such things are beneficial for the family? The activities on board seem to be hedonistic, but not in the sense of surprises and overwhelming experiences. Rather down to earth, in an almost boring way.’ (Analytic note, 4.1.2005)

The cruise context appeared to be a very interesting context to study practices due to the complexity of doings in the sense that very few actions on board seem to have an obvious meaning and value in rational terms. However, I decided already in the beginning that the research would focus on those practices that are difficult to understand, in order to illustrate the possibilities to use ethnographic method as a way to dig deeper into the systemic structures of practices. The task was not easy, as one can conclude from an analytic note scribbled down.

‘I really have a hard time understanding the practice of the cruise. Why are they going there? Why not something else? What are they really doing? I feel somewhat anxious, because the practices seem at first very simple, but on second glance extremely complex. I am referring to the real practices which lie behind the obvious one. I mean, what is really play? What is really strolling around?’ (Analytic note, 7.1.2005)

The cruise was viewed as a context, as already discussed before. This means that the cruise is not seen as a practice per se, but as a ‘space’ in which different practices can appear, some of them very similar to the ones happening ashore, at home or in some
other place, whereas others appear to be very typical for the cruise context and do not have parallels to other context. The practices on board can be described in many terms, but are here defined as a form of ‘subtle escape’. This is characterized by a form of *routine behaviour* on board that does not allow very many surprises, but similarly as a form of *escape from everyday life and the chores* of the family.

*Routinized behaviour* learned through repetition refers to the families’ tendency to both talk about the cruise, and actually perform the cruise in manners that are very routinized and match a collection of practices that the families are used to carrying out on the same or similar vessels. All the families engaged in the study seemed to see this routinization mainly as a positive aspect, which means that it is easy and convenient and does not require extensive planning beforehand. The cruise context is not really the context for expressing one’s subjectivity in the sense that the family would deliberately start to reinvent practices and break rules of their own behaviour. This is apparently a part of the value of the cruise, as people tend to be rather passive and act according to routinized patterns. The families do not make very conscious and determinant decisions about their own practices. Families also tend to get stuck in practices that have been valuable for the parents in their childhood, but are not in all cases very valuable anymore. For instance, the tax free shop and the buffet restaurant are in some cases a sort of practices that perhaps the adults have found valuable as children, and tend to participate in partly for those reasons. It is an accustomed way to practice cruising.

The family practices in the cruise context are somewhat stable and predefined in the sense that there are very few direct surprises and variations. There is hardly any positive drama in experiential and peaks and valleys, which is interpreted to bring deep satisfaction (Arnould & Price, 1993; Celsi et al, 1993; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Holt & Thompson, 2004). In most cases the expectations of the cruise are, however, met in the sense that each family has a very realistic view of the experiences available. There were some exceptions to this which related to unusually bad service, and in one case because of the fact that the pool & sauna department was under renovation and could not be accessed. It appears, however, that it is uncommon that expectations would be radically exceeded.

*Escape from everyday life and chores* refers to the interpretation that most families tend to see the cruise as a variation in their life. Although the cruise is somewhat routinized, the routines are still different from the ones of everyday life. The parents can escape daily chores of preparing food and doing work in the household. As Paulina said, she does not have to do anything ‘ordinary’ (cleaning up, preparing food etc.) 24. Many parents tend to explain that the cruise is not an overwhelming experience for them, but that they still appreciate to get away for a while. The parents assume, probably rightly, that the cruise is much more important and exciting for the children. This can be clearly seen from the practices identified and described during the study. The adults seldom engage in practices that would clearly be valuable for them in an egoistic way for longer period of times. It appears, however, that the adults have a more extraordinary

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24 It would most certainly have been valuable for the researcher to study also the ‘everyday life’ of the families in order to be able to point out the differences between ‘cruise life’ and ‘everyday life’. This has not been done and may be seen as a restriction to the research.
experience than they report. For instance, the being on board the ship is an experience per se, but seems to be rather hard to talk about.

6.1.1. Practices of families, adults and children

According to the theoretical framework of practices defined above, practices consist of a subject, tools/know-how, images and physical spaces. In the middle of the research I decided that a categorisation of the practices according to the different subjects would be a way to understand and group practices together. An analytic note was made on this in January 2005.

‘I have actually begun to think about the possibility to structure the whole empirical part according to the problems of “being together” on the cruise. This seems to me, after all, to be the main reason for going on a cruise, and still rather problematic. There are some things done together, but similarly it feels that most part of the doing on board splits the subject of family into different subjects of doing? I think this is what I want to focus on. ’ (Analytic note, 9.1.2005)

During the cruises it was concluded in a grounded way that the split between the subject of children, adults and family would provide a framework for analysing practices. There would have been the possibility to divide the subject in a more detailed way. It was apparent that in order to describe the whole cruise context of the family on board it was not possible to make a division on a lower level of abstraction concerning for instance children of different age etc.

It would have for instance been possible to make a gender study of the differences in practices of male and female, both concerning children and adults. This is partly taken into consideration in the analysis, but was not a dominant theme. It would also have been possible to take into consideration the ways the family distinguish themselves according to social class as some researcher would perhaps have done (cf. Bourdieu, 1984). In addition, it would most probably have been a relevant approach to distinguish between child practices of different ages. The sample was, however, too small to make conclusions of the practices of play in different age groups. The level of abstraction appeared to be from the managerial objective’s perspective the necessary level of detail, and made similarly the research searchable in the frame of time and resources reserved for the project. A next step would be perhaps to focus in more detail on some specific practice that is of special interest from the cruise line perspective. For instance the different practices of eating would be certainly an interesting research question for further research. This could be compared with the study made by Wallendorf & Arnould (1991) on thanksgiving and the ‘eating’ related to it.

As mentioned above, the cruise is a way of being together for the family. This was, especially in verbal reports, one of the most dominant arguments for going on a cruise. This is a somewhat interesting statement that was made by several families, and indicated by all in indirect terms, although the reasons behind may differ. Some of the families may have a guilty conscience for not spending time with their family and see an instrumental value in the cruise. Others may see terminal value in the cruise as simply a context for practice that is enjoyable. The reason for attending the cruise was,
however, not the focus of this work as the focus is on the value formed in the practices situated on board the vessel.

The interesting thing is that as one of the mothers said: ‘It is more a way to be together, than to do together’ (Video interview, Family Brown [Brenda], 0:10:35-0:10:42). This is apparent on the basis of the participant observations, as there are very few practices to actually do together. Most of the practices are divided between the children and the adults, and there are few spaces where these practices could be integrated into a joint doing.

The child practices are very dominant. Many of the parents, all but one, indicated in a very direct manner that they would put the children first during the cruise, and ensure that the children get a positive experience from the boat trip. In this sense it is in most cases clearly the subject of the children which is put in the forefront during the cruise.

There are practices that integrate the family into one subject of doing, but it appears that in most cases these practices are brief, for instance the practice of fine dining tends to be split into a practice of children looking for new actions and adults slowing their children down.

The adult practices are predominantly practices for either enabling the practice of the children, or active construction of the joint cruise experience. Adults also engage in practices that are ‘for them’, but these practices tend to be brief and hard to arrange. For instance, there are very few elements for men to escape the role of the ‘family father’ or the ‘breadwinner’ role as Holt & Thompson (2004) write. The authors assume that men, in most cases, also have an inner urge to express more rebellious aspects of their being. Sherry et al (2004) see ESPN Sport Zone (a themed restaurant and sports bar chain) as perhaps a place for men to carry out a role that is not solely connected to the family. The research done shows that this kind of behaviour is most certainly not only restricted to men but is, although in different forms, relevant for all adult parties of the family unit.

6.1.2. 21 practices in a cruise context

The practices of the family in a cruise context are divided into three different subjects: children, family and adults. Each subject has a number of optional practices that they can carry out in order to ‘perform’ the cruise.

It should be mentioned in this context that not all of the practices were ‘carried out’ by all families. As mentioned, the intention of this work is not to describe the families and the likelihood for some family to engage in certain behaviour. The intention is to describe the practices ‘located’ on the vessel that may be carried by a family. The list below can therefore be perceived as a list of possible practices that families tend to carry. The emphasis is regarding different families on different practices and some practices tend also to be totally ‘unvisited’ by some families.

Short descriptions of each practice are presented in the table below.
Table 7. Summary of the practices of family cruise consumption.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fine dining rituals</strong></td>
<td>The practice is constituted through a peaceful dinner according to traditional á la carte restaurant practice. The practice is somewhat problematic to orchestrate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Free selection and movement</strong></td>
<td>The practice relates to a dinner practice that is less strict than the fine dining ritual, and involves an abundance of food, and opportunities to engage in free movement and selection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mediating wants and splitting the family</strong></td>
<td>The practice consists of the actions and context of joint planning, mediation of wants in the family, and the decision-making concerning splitting the family into subunits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Routines in travelling</strong></td>
<td>The object of this practice is to carry out routines related to the arrival on board, settling down, preparing for next action and queuing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circulate the boat</strong></td>
<td>The practice relates to a very specific doing on board the cruise vessel. Most families circulate the boat, and use that as a gateway to other doings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compact living</strong></td>
<td>The practice relates to the ‘living’ on board of the ship. The practice gives opportunities for the family to live ‘close together’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being a passive spectator</strong></td>
<td>The practice relates to the passive ‘watching’ of a certain programme or a teaser for a programme on board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking time off</strong></td>
<td>The adults, at least in the families with two parents, tend to take time off from the joint practices of the whole family. These are practices that take a short time and usually relate to shopping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negotiation about duties</strong></td>
<td>The practice relates to the need to practice negotiations between the parents in order to decide who will take care of certain duties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slowing children down</strong></td>
<td>The practice consists of the actions that are taken in order to slow down children when the children are looking for new actions (see below).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being in stand-by mode</strong></td>
<td>The adults are especially in the playroom forced to take a position of being in a standby mode, that is waiting for the children to be ready with their play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must-do shopping</strong></td>
<td>The adults engage in some cases in a sort of must-do shopping that seemingly does not form very much value. This shopping relates usually to the tradition of buying tax-free.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ensuring the child experience</strong></td>
<td>The adults feel a responsibility of the experience of their children. The parents are prepared to do things in order to ensure that their children will have a good experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practicing responsibility</strong></td>
<td>The adults also engage in a practice in order to ensure the security of their children. This relates to a constant negotiation on the amount of independence given to the children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploring merchandise</strong></td>
<td>The practice relates to a sort of explorative shopping that is more experiential than the practice of must-do shopping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Using play formats</strong></td>
<td>The practice relates to children’s usage of ready-made play formats arranged on board the vessel. For instance, the usage of the ball pool is an action that relates to this practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Embodied ship consumption</strong></td>
<td>This practice is also a kind of play, but relates to the vessel per se as being the tool for play. It appears that children can construct joy from using elements of the vessel such as the beds, windowsills, corridors and staircases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creating a context for security and play</strong></td>
<td>The children tend to create their own spaces of security and play in cases when the cruise line cannot provide doings. This usually relates to the child bringing with them or buying toys or soft animals on board.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adult imitation

The cruise is a rather special context in the sense that children usually get more independence that in other public spaces. This gives good opportunities for children to practice independence and imitation of adult life in their walking, dancing, shopping, drinking etc.

Looking for new actions

Children tend to rather quickly get bored concerning a certain practice, especially if it is a practice that is not ‘theirs’. This practice relates to the way children start to ask for new things to do.

Acquiring toys

The children have a practice that is similar to the adults’ exploration of merchandise. The practice per se is, however, rather different because of the children’s need to engage their parents in the practice.

All these practices are described in-detail below.

6.1.3. The relationship between practices

This research presents foremost practices as independent systems of elements according to the definition in chapter 2.3. This does not, however, mean that practices would not form different relationships to each other.

The best way to describe the relationships between different practices is to describe them as a ‘tacit task list’. The family and the children actually have a rather hard time to talk about the cruise, as it appears to be so self-evident what is done during the trip. Each family has an almost identical list of practices that are carried out during the cruise, which is in this work described according to the different subjects who carry out the practices. There are surprisingly few exceptions to this ‘list’. It appears to be more a matter of weightings of different practices. Families tend to focus on different practices that are naturally also very much dictated by the age of the children.

Although each practice seems to be selected by some tacit task list in a way that is hard to explain as linear processes, hierarchies or other modernist explanations on relationships, it appears all the same that there is a certain structure that can be identified. This thesis will not attempt the daring task of structuring all the practices into an explanatory map of practices in cruise consumption. A couple of examples will, however, be given of optional relationships between different practices that have appeared from the empirical study.

The relationships discovered are the practices in sequence over time, practices that function as sort of gateways for other practices, and practices that have a dialectic nature and are highly interdependent.

Each of these three relationships is visualised below in figure 4.
The *practices in sequence* can be explained with the example of three different practices that partly have a sequential nature. The typical situation in the á la carte restaurant is that the family starts out a practice in which all integrate into one subject of the practice of fine dining. Usually, the practice ends rather quickly and turns into a practice in which the children are looking for new actions, and the adults are trying to slow down the children. The relationship between the fine dining ritual, and both looking for new actions and slowing children down, are sequential over time.

The *practices as gateways* are practices that are related to other practices in the sense that it functions as a starting point for entering other practices. Typically decisions are made in this practice. For instance, the practice of circulating the boat is a typical gateway in the sense that it opens up the opportunities for other things to do.

The *interlinked practices* are those practices that are highly interdependent of each other, and at least one of them does not exist without the other. The playroom, and the practice of the adults in that place is a typical dialectic practice. The adults are forced to carry a practice of being in a standby mode, because the adults are assumed to watch over their children while they are using play formats. The similar situation appears, with an even higher interdependence, when children are looking for action and the parents respond by trying to slow the children down.

**6.1.4. How to read the descriptions**

Each 21 practices are described according to a certain format. The format consists of three different descriptions of the practice at hand.

First, the practice is discussed on the basis of the etic and emic understanding of the practice at hand. In this description both perspectives are used as empirical data and referred to. Second, the practice is structured according to the definition of practice documented in chapter 2.3.3. in conjunction with the discussion on the practice-theoretical starting point of this thesis. This description is presented in a table format and elaborates also the possible disjunctures in the elements of the practice. The problems/disjunctures can be used as a source for services development (what could be done in order to dismiss the problems/disjunctures?). Third, each table is also presented in text.
Please note that quotations are used concerning all empirical material, which means that for instance in the case of a field note, the quotations are from the field notes and refer to what somebody had said and not the actual quote of what that person was saying. Concerning analytic notes, the quotes refer to the etic representations of the researcher. By treating both etic and emic material in a similar manner, the researcher has been able to create an ethnography that goes beyond a single-layered emic representation.

6.2. The family as subject

The review starts with an account of those practices that are done together truly as a family, as a unified subject. As was already commented above, there seems to be rather few opportunities for the family to actually share and enjoy practices. A number of practices that integrate the family have been identified: fine dining rituals, free selection and movement, mediating wants and splitting the family, routines in travelling, circulating the boat, and compact living.

6.2.1. Fine dining rituals

There are a number of actions on board the vessels, especially related to dining, which are clearly restrained and empowered by certain rituals which involve the whole family. This refers to clearly defined patterns of actions defined for instance by the practice of eating in an à la carte restaurant.

The family is simply not ‘allowed’ to behave in any way they choose in the à la carte restaurant. The eating practices usually involve restraints and cooperation in the family, that tend to be rather soon replaced by other practices. All families observed and interviewed tend to say and also implement a strategy of eating at least once according to a ritual of fine dining, and once according to a more free form of dining ritual. This means in practice that the families tend to go once to an à la carte restaurant, and once to the buffet restaurant, in order to get some variation to their eating practice (Video interview, Family Pink, 2b, 0:37:15-0:37:35; Family Green, 6a, 0:36:20-0:36:32).

The ritual of fine dining is here discussed as a source of customer value. In most cases it appears to be both valuable and challenging to engage in a fine dining ritual.

‘It is of course a little unclear… when you travel with small children it is hard to say if you are allowed to eat in peace… you do not know if it is going amount to anything.’ (Video interview, Family Green [Grace], DVD6a, 0:05:05-0:05:21)

‘The restaurant is such that it ‘holds’ for sometime… then you start to realize how the whole thing starts to collapse. The children can only behave as well-raised children for a limited time.’ (Video interview, Family Green [Grant], DVD6a, 0:39:25-0:40:08)

The parents indicate to their children that they should behave in a specific way in a restaurant.

‘Here you eat in a proper way (Field note, Family Red [Regina], 13.2.2005).’
Many times, it appears that the family simply does not have the competence and tools for keeping the ritual together for a longer period of time. There are of course exceptions where the family carries the ritual, and everybody has been ‘trained’ to carry it on for hours. Walter claimed that this is problematic, because Finnish children are not used to sitting together with adults to eat dinner. Children are usually directed to sit in a separate table where they are allowed to behave in a less orderly way. It appears, however, that most adults would like to see their children carry out an adult practice of fine dining ritual, partly due to the context that put pressure on them, partly because they simply feel that a ‘dinner’ according to a ritual is enjoyable.

In the case of the à la carte restaurants, the structure of a fine dining ritual is very clear and consists of the following sequenced actions: 1) sitting down together before eating, 2) selecting drinks and food from a menu, 3) waiting for the appetitizers, 4) eating the starters, 5) waiting for the food, 6) eating the main course, 7) looking at the menu, 8) ordering desserts, 9) waiting for desserts, 10) eating desserts, 11) asking for the bill, 12) handing money/credit card, 13) waiting to sign or get money back, 14) signing or getting money back.

There are, however, some minor modifications done to this ritual in order to make it more functional for the family on board. For instance, the service is fairly fast on board (in most cases), which makes it possible to go through the whole ritual in a rather efficient way. It is also possible to get the food faster for the kids. In one of the cases the parents were first served the food, which was considered a disaster by the family (Video interview, family Lilac, DVD3a, 0:17:20-0:23:39). The disappointment and stress can be seen in photos (Photo, Family Lilac, 15; 16).

Although the children would get their food first, there is still a fundamental difference in how adults and children are prepared to dine. Children tend to be much quicker in their eating than adults, which means that the children are ready to walk out of the restaurant much earlier than their parents (especially if the child has got his food before his parents).

‘The children do not want to wait… the children get the food on their plates quickly and eat their food very quickly. They have eaten many times over before we have even got the food.’ (Video interview, Family Lilac [Livia], DVD4b, 0:09:29-0:10:00)

This quotation refers mainly to the problematic situation of keeping the children busy after they have finished their dinner. The parents would find great value in being able to focus on their own dinner. In most cases, even with children as old as 9 years, the child starts to engage in a practice of asking for new actions, whereas the adults are carrying the practice and rhetoric of slowing children down.

Overall the parents tend to be very satisfied when the family has been successful in carrying out ritualized practices as having a lengthy dinner, with the children and adults sitting peacefully together for a longer period of time. This is a situation when customer satisfaction does not only appear from the interactions between the service provider and the customer, but also from the social context of the customer (cf. Mick & Fournier, 1999). Grace remembers one occasion of successful dining.
‘I remember the time, that the eating went very well. We [Grace and Grant] even had time to have a bottle of wine.’ (Video interview, Family Green [Grace], DVD6a, 0:10:30-0:10)

The practice of toasting and drinking together is another example of a ritual with similar characteristics as in ‘fine dining’ that apparently is valuable for the family and functions as a means for integration. This event can be seen on photos taken of both family white and family red (photo, family white, IMG_2760; photo, family Red, IMG_2968).

![Picture 2. A family having a drink.](image)

There are also other places, for instance the buffet and cafeteria, where the parents may, in order to make the eating a more enjoyable experience for them, put demands on the children to follow the practice of a ‘fine dining ritual’. This practice is hence not limited only to an á la carte restaurant, but is rather constituted from a sequenced dinner (appetizers, main course, dessert), and the social activities and expectations related to this.

The space and the acts of other persons have clearly an impact on the practices of the family, which makes some places an easier arena for the practice of fine dining compared to others. In the case of the buffet and the cafeteria, there are obvious opportunities for the children to engage in free movement and other practices, which makes the fine dining ritual harder to orchestrate. The motion and noise overall also seems to, in some cases, hinder the fine dining ritual from being carried out. The parents are usually not able to keep the structure of the ‘fine dining’ experience together for the same length of time as in the á la carte restaurant.

Conclusively, the practice of the ‘fine dining ritual’ will here be described with the practice concept.
Table 8. The practice of ‘fine dining ritual’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actions:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining (eating simultaneously according to a structure)</td>
<td>The sequenced dinner is lengthy for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a drink together (e.g. toasting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family eats together</td>
<td>The family subject is usually split into different subjects of adults and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family is many times not successful in carrying out the ritual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional structure of an à la carte dinner (opportunity to get food faster, opportunity to get pens &amp; paper to the table, children’s menu, in some cases involvement by personnel)</td>
<td>The current à la carte concept requires children to act as adults and does not extensively engage children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The structure and the way of eating is mainly adapted to the ways adults prefer to eat</td>
<td>Many children lack know-how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image of the ‘fine dining ritual’ is traditional: ‘sit together to dine and wine peacefully’</td>
<td>The current buffet concept makes a structured dining experience almost impossible due to the fact that there is a need to fetch food etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>À la carte restaurants: intimate and smaller space</td>
<td>The physical space is not interesting for the children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The buffet setting lacks supportive elements of a ‘peaceful dinner’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The object of the practice is to carry out a ritual, which appears to be valuable especially for the parents, but also the children in the sense that they tend to more nervous and annoyed in free patterns of behaviour related to dining.

The practice consists of actions related to carrying out a peaceful dinner. In an à la carte restaurant, the structure is different than that in the buffet, but it appears that the families tend to want to create the ritual in both places, although in different ways. The problem in the current fine dining ritual is how to combine the interest of the parents (to enjoy a lengthy dinner) and the children’s rather impatient practices considering dining.

The subject of the practice is the family, although the family is usually ‘broken into pieces’ as the children usually already in the beginning of the dinner start to engage in other practices than the ritual at hand.

The tools and know-how relate currently to the traditional structure of an à la carte dinner. The structure and the way of eating is mainly adapted to the ways adults prefer to eat and socialize as a part of dining. This involves lengthy discussions and rather time consuming eating. The à la carte concept requires children to act as adults and does not extensively engage children. Some claim that children should have the competence to eat according to the fine dining ritual. However, children often lack that competence. As mentioned, many parents tend to want to practice fine dining in the buffet restaurant as well, but the structured dining experience appears to be almost impossible to carry out due to the fact that there is the need to fetch food etc.

The image of the ‘fine dining ritual’ is a sort of traditional image of eating out in a restaurant. The image could be defined as ‘sitting together to dine and wine peacefully’. The image of the ‘fine dining ritual’ is somewhat problematic for children to live up to, because it is basically formed on the premises of adults. Some parents find it stressful.
that they do not succeed in getting their family to apply to the image of the practice, but instead retreat to something more chaotic.

The physical space of the á la carte restaurant is considerably more intimate and smaller than in the buffet restaurant. The main problem with the two venues is the lack of things for the children to ‘look at’ or ‘do’.

As discussed in the theoretical part of this thesis, customer value is assumed to be formed in the practices of the customer. In the case of the fine dining and drinking ritual, it appears that the dynamics and logic of value formation are mostly in the interactions between the different parties of the family and the possibilities to maintain a joint practice of dining, although there are obvious risks of failure.

6.2.2. Free selection and movement – the practice of buffet

There is a certain practice on board regarding eating which is based on the image of freedom, abundance and spatial movement, which has its historical background in a Swedish style smorgasbord or other forms of buffet eating. This practice is here called free selection and movement and takes mainly place in the buffet restaurant. The buffet concept is more or less completely free from restrictions regarding structure typical for an á la carte restaurant; you can select, eat and move very freely due to the general image of the buffet.

As mentioned already earlier regarding the fine dining ritual, there is a tendency for the families to want to put a more restricted format onto the practice by stating rules. Thus, the buffet dinner and breakfast is an ambiguous practice for many people. For example Grace and Grant feel a little bit controversial about the practices, as they state in the conversation below.

‘The researcher: what do you think about having the buffet?
Grace: Ooh, this amount of food. It is not very nice when there is so much left over.
Grant: but, you can choose yourself how to do it. You should take as much as you are going to eat, not more.
Grace: But it is still like this (pointing at the leftovers). Not very nice. I have thought about going to the coffee shop, ordering a sandwich and tea for the children. They will eat as much as they will do and that’s it.
Grant: They are going to leave food there also. Aren’t they?
Grace: Hmmmm. But it is different.’ (Field notes, Family Green, 23.1.05)

The practice of the buffet is historically speaking a very typical practice for the cruise vessels travelling between Finland and Sweden. It is a very inveterate custom to eat buffet. Some tend to explain the practice through historical reasons.

‘My husband wants to do the cruise in a certain manner, and I am trying to live up to it. It is important to eat at least once at the buffet, because that is the way cruises are carried out’ (Field notes, Family Green [Grace], 23.1.05).

25 As mentioned earlier, the study has not included an in-depth historical analysis that would most certainly have given the practice description more depth.
In these cases the family tends to be a little uncertain of the reason for actually attending the buffet. It is a tradition which becomes a structure and is hence unquestioned. The historical background of the practice per se becomes an agent. A number of families express rather straightforward dislike towards the buffet, but nevertheless most of them use it.

‘It is about eating quickly, fuel, drink as much as possible and leave.’ (Video interview, Family Brown [Brenda], DVD5b, 0:45:20-0:45:30)

‘The buffet is ‘rough’ (fin: karua) it is about stuffing oneself with food. I do not on principle like the buffet.’ (Video interview, Family Lilac [Lydia], DVD4b, 0:38:00-0:38:20)

‘The buffet is a little bit noisy. One reacts to how much people eat.’ (Video interview, Family Green [Grant & Grace], DVD6a, 0:24:48-0:25:11)

There are different strategies for eating in the buffet in order to carry out the free dining experience. I heard a rather extreme story which tends to explain in practice why the buffet restaurant does not work for families with smaller children. One should, according to the one telling to story, do the buffet in sequences. First, one of the parents should go in beforehand to the restaurant and collect some food, and start to eat already. Second, the other parent arrives with the children to eat ready picked food and go for some food for him- or herself. Third, when the children are ready in approximately 20 minutes the parent who came first can leave with the children, and the other parent can stay to enjoy his/ her dinner. This sounds effective, but is hardly very valuable, especially as the families tend to romanticise about peaceful dinners and ‘togetherness’. Nevertheless, these families perhaps view the actions of eating not as a practice of dining, but more as a routine in which the food is more regarded as fuel for being able to do something else.

The example above puts very much emphasis on avoiding possible problems and conflicts. There are also variations due to the age of the children. There is one simple and practical rule that applies to all informants: the practice starts with arranging food for the children. A number of photographs illustrated the complexity of arranging both food and drinks for the children and the parents themselves. In the photos both Grace and Regina are surrounded by their children picking food and arranging the food at the table (Photo, family Green, IMG_2660; family Red, IMG_2901; 2902).
In the case of two parents with two children (age 3 and 6), both parents go with a child each to fetch food from the counters. The parents first arrange food for the children on their own plates. A field note was made regarding how the eating was arranged in a family with three children.

‘They go in groups to find food. Grant waits at the table with the youngest child, whereas Grace first gets food for her... The other children (7 and 9 years) take food for themselves from a children’s table with meatballs, fries and other courses specially designed for kids. The 9 years old serves herself. The 7 years old can take food, but is a little unsure of how to get water from an automatic drink machine.’ (Field note, Family Green, 9.1.2005)

The practice of buffet is strange in the sense that everybody has their own process of eating and fetching food several times in various orders. A father comments that one should not do it in a hurry, but take one's time to enjoy the meal (Field notes, Family Green [Grant], 23.1.05). The result is, however, in most cases that there are actually very few moments when everybody would sit down together. This was noted in the field notes, but could also be seen on a number of photos (Photo, family Green, IMG_2663; IMG_2662; IMG_2697; family Red, IMG_2867) and on video (Video, Family Red, MVI_2870.AVI; VI_2875.AVI).
This practice also led to an image of gluttony as the process appears to result in piles of plates with leftovers, which does not improve the image of the restaurant. The personnel is trying to pick the plates away as soon as possible, but the different pace of the family members results in a continuous flow of plates with leftovers, which can be spotted all over the place (Photo, family Green; IMG_2664; family White, IMG_2761; family Red, IMG_2907).

One can also notice from the pace of eating that this practice is not something which the families endure for a very long time.

‘The eating in the buffet is surprisingly quick. Although each person, at least the adults, takes at least 4 portions of food, the place quiets down after an hour of hectic eating. It seems that the whole concept of buffet makes it quick; it requires one to take food and eat as long as there is food left. There is a sense of urgency, although the food never runs out.’ (Analytic note, 9.2.05)

Many people use rather negative words in their accounts about the buffet practice: ‘eating for the cause of eating’, ‘stuffing oneself’, ‘hassle’ etc. The general image of the buffet can be seen from a video sequence with a lot of chaotic movement (Video, Family Red, MVI_2864.AVI).

There are, however, examples of families which are successful in keeping the practice together and actually perform a form of ‘dinner’ with the family. For example Regina controls in a reasonably firm manner the whole process of eating, and the children wait for the adults to finish their dishes, after which she goes off with the children to pick some food. This kind of behaviour could be spotted also in the cafe, which is even less structured than the buffet. As I put it in one of my field notes.

‘Some families try to ease it down… others have a hard time to distinguish themselves from the hassle in the buffet or the cafeteria.’ (Field notes, Family Red, 12.2.05)
It is, however, very hard to have this kind of easy pace of dining, due to the fact that the practice does not support it. One has to really make an effort to separate oneself from the hassle in order to put a structure on this practice. The vast space is one of the elements which tends to increase the ‘hectic’ nature of the buffet. (Analytic note, 9.2.05)

The fact that the buffet is arranged in the way that they have two different caterings, one at 5.30 p.m. and one at 8 p.m., makes the sense of urgency more obvious. The doors are opened at 5.30, and there are queues forming fast around the different counters. It is a kind of happening for the masses.

There are naturally also advantages for the family to engage in the practice of free dining and movement. For instance, the vast selection makes it somewhat easier to take the children into account. In the à la carte restaurants the selection of food on the basis of verbal descriptions is in some cases quite difficult. In the buffet, the parent can walk with their child, and simply ask whether the child wants a particular kind of food by pointing at it. The children also find the freedom of movement in some cases exciting as in the note below.

‘The children are enthusiastic about the option to fetch their own drinks. They are more concentrated on drinking than eating. Rita, the 6 year old, drinks Sprite and tells about her experiences of Sprite, giving a detailed story on her first experiences with the drink, and the feeling of getting bubbles into here nose.’ (Field note, Family Red, 12.2.05)

The practice of ‘free selection and movement’ will be here described with the practice concept.

Table 9. The practice of ‘free selection and movement’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating &amp; drinking</td>
<td>The practice is somewhat hectic and requires ‘work’ for the adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving around</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The family eat together, but in practice most members of the family have their own sequence of eating | The family is not integrated as a whole in the practice  
This may make the practice less enjoyable |
| **Tools/ know-how:** | Current self-service concept does not allow for the adults to enjoy a dinner – adults have to pick the food and drinks for both themselves and their children  
Children appear to have few meaningful things to engage in after eating |
| Two caterings: 1st at 5.30 p.m. and the 2nd at 8 p.m.  
Most families attend the first serving  
A total self-service concept after being directed to a table  
Counters with a large variety of food and drinks  
People tend to be incorporated in a quick pace of eating  
There is a good know-how of how to eat in the buffet, for instance most people know that they should focus on starters. |                        |
| **Image**        |                        |
| The image of the buffet restaurant has long traditions on board the vessels. The image has both positive (‘a great selection to choose from’) and negative (‘abundance, waste and gluttony’) connotations | The image is controversial and does not perhaps serve the purpose it did earlier as a place to ‘try out new food’ |
The actions involved relate to the eating & drinking, getting food and moving around. The practice of free selection and movement is ambiguous in the sense that there are clearly elements that are not valuable related to disharmony coming from the need to move and not having clearly stated rules as in the alá carte restaurants. On the other hand, it is also valuable for the family to have a certain freedom in their eating practice.

The tools for carrying out free selection and movement are two caterings: 1st at 5.30 p.m. and the 2nd at 8 p.m. for a self-service buffet. The problem with the current concept is that it appears to invite the family to a very hectic form of eating, where there are few elements of ‘togetherness’. The families tend to have a good know-how of how to behave in the buffet. For instance, most families know what food one should focus on, and which food is not ‘worth’ eating. The current self-service concept does not allow for the adults to enjoy a dinner very successfully, as the adults have to manage the event by picking the food and drinks for both themselves and their children, and also ‘manage’ the family at the table.

The image of the buffet restaurant has long traditions on board the vessels. The image has both positive and negative connotations. Apparently the historical reason for providing the buffet is to give the customers access to ‘a great selection to choose from’, as the buffet before also represented a place where people ate things that they were not accustomed to eat. The image is, however, controversial, because most people are accustomed to the food in the buffet, and do not feel that it is very special. Instead, there appears to be an image of the buffet as ‘abundance, waste and gluttony’.

The physical space of the buffet is an open space with different sections with tables. Current problems relate to the lack of an overview of the places and elements that would support children in their ‘doings’.

In conclusion, it appears that the value formation in this practice is foremost a matter of balancing between the freedom the practice gives and the want to have a dining experience. The apparent problems relates to the concept of the buffet, and the controversial images of this practice.

### 6.2.3. Mediating wants and splitting the family

There is a family practice that relates to joint planning, mediation between parties and splitting into different subunits of the family in order to make the cruise pleasant for everybody. In most cases the children are prioritized, especially regarding how people talk.

The families studied did not do any extensive planning beforehand. The planning was done during the trip in the form of continuous mediation between parties. Brenda states this in the following way.
‘… we pack the night before and that is it [concerning planning]. We plan on board what we are going to do [in Stockholm].’ (Video interview, Family Brown [Brenda], DVD5a, 0:12:36-0:14:10)

This is a rather extreme approach (which is perhaps due to the fact that they only have one child) which they can adapt to in all situations, or perhaps because the family has a developed routine for practicing the cruise.

There are in most cases some minor plans done before the trip, which usually relate to Stockholm, and to what should be done there. The plan made beforehand does not seem to be finalized in some cases, and can be altered during the trip. It seems that the families are simply not prepared, or able to make plans. As Grant says:

‘We have never been that organized.’ (Video interview, Family Green [Grant], DVD6a, 0:56:15-0:56:20)

Lucas gives a similar answer (Video interview, Family Lilac [Lucas], DVD4b, 0:26:45-0:27:05). Paulina recognizes that there might be some opportunities to do novel things both on board the ship and in Stockholm if a little more effort were put into planning (Video interview, Family Pink [Paulina], DVD2a, 0:11:20-0:11:30).

In the case of Family White there is a video sequence showing how the family uses the information desk to make final adjustments to their plan of visiting a certain place in Stockholm. In many cases plans are left open, and stated on board. For instance, family White was not sure whether they could borrow a baby sitter from the cruise line, which eventually turned out to be a rather critical matter for the success of their cruise (Video, Family White, DVD1a, 0:05:41-0:08:00).

The lack of planning, and the lack of possibilities to plan beforehand results in lengthy queues and the need for personnel to help with the planning on board of the ship as can be seen from a number of photos (Photo, non-participant observation 6.12.2004, IMG_0346; IMG_343).

![Picture 5. People queuing to the info desk.](image-url)
The families tend to plan and stick to the plan concerning places to eat. They decide that they are going to eat in separate places on the way to and from Stockholm. Vanessa explains this by simply stating that it is dull to eat in the same restaurant on consecutive evenings. She wants to have different food and a different environment (Video, Family White, DVD1a, 0:05:39-0:05:46).

In addition there are a whole range of actions which are tacitly decided upon by attending the cruise context. A field note was made on this issue.

‘I have all the time waited for the next thing to happen. There have actually been very few plans made. It appears that the whole family, at least the parents, know what should be done without talking about it... The sequence is not important, but there is a tacit list of things to be done.’ (Field note, Family White, 30.1.05)

This is, however, not the case with everybody. Less experienced travellers can be rather confused, because they do not possess the tacit ‘task list’, as in the case of family Red.

‘The adults were starting to discuss what to do, and grabbed the ‘manual’ of the vessel. The manual lacked the information of when to attend the buffet. They did neither learn that one has to reserve a place in the buffet.’ (Field note, Family Red, 12.2.2005)

In these cases it would be necessary for the family to prepare for the trip, and to get the needed support for preparations from the cruise line. The parents had in three cases searched the Internet in order to come up with some ideas of what to do on board. They were unable to make any detailed plans, but reviewed the options they had in very general terms (Video interview, Family White, DVD1b, 0:30:40-0:32:00; Family Green, DVD6a, 0:55:25-0:55:39; Family Red, DVD7a, 0:11:30-0:15:00).

It appears, however, that most families would be prepared to make some plans regarding the vessel and Stockholm if they were given suggestions. Although some of the families had put an effort into understanding what happens on board, the information they got appeared to be rather general and not exact enough to actually make detailed plans.

It is difficult to say whether it is more valuable for the family to have a clear plan or not. Paulina and Brenda who are both very experienced cruisers, stressed the value and importance of not planning.

‘You do not have to think so much, and plan. The only thing that changes is the weather. We are doing the things we are used to.’ (Video interview, Family Pink [Paulina], DVD2a, 0:11:08-0:11:35)

‘The cruise is more about being together than doing together... you do not have to plan and think. Everyday life is that. I want to do what pops into my mind.’ (Video interview, Family Brown [Brenda], DVD5a, 0:10:35-0:10:46)

In both of these statements it appears that planning is a very tiresome and hard task to carry out. During the observations and discussions with the families it was, however, noticed that there may also be difficulties that are caused by the lack of planning, especially with a larger family with various wants and needs.
Parents put a lot of effort into ensuring the experience for the children. It appears in some cases that it would have been more beneficial for some of the families to have a sort of predefined structure for their travelling in order to get maximum value out of it. This would not necessarily mean that the family as such would need to restrain itself or put more time into planning; it is rather a practice in which the cruise line can be more active concerning information and suggestions about alternative ways of doing the cruise. The cruise line could also help the family see new opportunities on board that are currently not a part of the routine. A certain element of novelty would perhaps make the cruise more valuable.

It is also typical to split into different subunits, which need to be managed in order to be integrated later. A lot of phone calls were made and SMS’s were sent during some of these occasions. Nervous comments were also given if a particular party had not heard the phone or answered it. Splitting seemed to be a way of giving different persons in the family a possibility to focus more on what they preferred, and was in that sense a good strategy for creating a pleasant experience for everybody.

‘In the cabin they already decided to split in the sense that Walter was going to make reservations for the restaurant, whereas Vanessa and the children went to stroll around, meaning at this time, to check out the different kinds of games on board, because of the pressure their son put on this issue. Before Walter came to the playroom, there was some communication with mobile phones. First, he sent an SMS to Vanessa to say that the queue is rather long, and it might take some time. After he had got the places for the buffet he had tried to call twice in order to ask where they were. Vanessa did not hear the phone, and phoned him back as soon as she noticed that somebody had phoned her. Walter was a little bit annoyed by the fact that Vanessa had not answered his phone call straight away.’ (Field note, Family White, 29.1.05)

The current situation when families tend to travel with very few direct plans leads to a continuous mediation of different opinions and wants, which also results in splitting the family into subunits. There may be different reasons for dividing the family into subunits. One reason is the division of ‘work’ when there are some routines that have to be taken care of. Another reason is the various interests of the persons in the family and, finally, the need to give somebody a ‘break’ from the family unit. (Field note, non-participant observation, 6.12.04).

In conclusion, ‘mediating wants and splitting’ will be here described with the practice concept.

Table 10. The practice of ‘mediating wants and splitting’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The flow is very much determined by the cruise context, except from some clear decision-making concerning eating and perhaps Stockholm</td>
<td>Families are not using all the opportunities to carry valuable practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family is together doing just-in-time planning and making decision about splitting the family</td>
<td>The fact that everybody in the family is involved in planning makes it, in some cases, somewhat complicated and time-consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools/ know-how:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A cruise programme, which is in the cabins but not distributed beforehand</td>
<td>The family cannot always see the opportunities to carry out the cruise in the best way for them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWW site with general descriptions</td>
<td>The families tend to follow the routine, and thus do not extensively use the different tools for planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families tend to let the situation steer their activities, and are thus affected by different tools on board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The know-how of ‘the way to cruise’ is good, but prevents perhaps the family from trying out new options. Some families miss good and exact tools for planning. The image is ‘easy travelling, without extensive planning’; it is perhaps a little bit ‘worn out’ and does not support more ‘creative’ travelling and tends to direct the families into the routine of ‘cruising’. The physical space: Currently the info desk, the cabin and also other places on board function as places for planning. Planning can perhaps also to some part be carried out before the trip at home.

The practice of mediating wants and splitting the family is a practice that surely needs to exist, in the sense that there is a need to take everybody’s wants and needs into consideration while cruising. Currently it is the routine that to some extent steers the actions carried out on board.

The subject of the practice is currently the whole family. The whole family is doing last-minute planning, where they constantly take different persons’ situational needs and wants into consideration. The fact that everybody in the family is involved in planning makes it, in some cases, somewhat complicated and time-consuming. It surprised the researcher how much of the time spent on the cruise consists of different kinds of negotiation of what and how to do things.

The tools and know-how of the practice does not support the planning in an extensive manner; instead families are forced into the routine. There is a cruise programme with different events, which although exact is not used extensively by the families. It is neither given to the families beforehand in order to make it possible for the families to do some plans beforehand. The know-how of ‘the way to cruise’ is good, but perhaps prevents the family from trying out new options. The family cannot always see the opportunities to carry out the cruise in the best way for them. The families tend to follow the routine, and thus do not extensively use the different tools for planning in order to try out new options on board and in Stockholm. Some families say that they miss good and exact tools for planning their trip.

The image of the cruise and the planning is related to an easy way of travelling, which does not require extensive planning, but can be administered during the trip. The image does not support more ‘creative’ travelling, but tends to direct the families into the routine of ‘cruising’. ‘Creative’ travelling refers here to the practice of doing something out of the ordinary. This form of travelling would give opportunities for families to use travelling in more creative ways.

The physical space of the practice of mediating wants and splitting the family is mainly the vessel, although the practice of cruising could in some cases benefit from more detailed planning already at home.

Conclusively, the dynamics of the value formation in this practice tend to relate to the family’s ability to rather swiftly move between different ‘doings’ on board the vessel and take different parties’ needs into consideration while constructing the cruise. The ethnography also shows that the families would be prepared to engage in new practices which would deviate from the ‘normal’ routine.
6.2.4. Routines in travelling

The cruise context is typically a hedonistic landscape. Cruises cannot be understood only in rational terms. In some cases there may be an instrumental value in for instance ‘keeping your family happy’. The overall appeal is, however, more in the dwelling and in the enjoyment of being together with the family. The cruise is a collection of practices which makes it possible for the family to escape everyday life.

Although this is the case, there are some more routine practices in travelling. This practice refers to tasks that have to be done by the cruising family, not because they would be fun and nice to do, but rather as enablers of other experiences which are clearly in the forefront of the experience. I will here review different actions which tend to be forms of routines related to the travelling: arriving in the cabin, settling down, preparing for the next action, and queuing on board. There are also other routines related to living on board, which will be discussed separately in the next section.

Arriving in the cabin is many times accompanied by a sigh: now we are here. The journey starts by the packing of luggage at home, which is usually done just before or the night before, it continues with the transportation, parking of the car, the arrival at the terminal, the arrangements at the ticket office, the boarding and finally, arrival in the cabin. Although there are a number of different steps and these are many times done in a hurry, many of the families think of the cruise as a rather convenient and easy way to get away. Especially so for the customers who live near Helsinki who do not have to travel extensively in order to get to the ‘destination’.

During the discussions some of the informants stress the importance of getting the practice of routines right. For instance, Walter said that it was very important for him to get the parking right, so that his family can arrive and easily access the vessel with his family (Video interview, Family White, DVD1b, 0:07:44-0:08:14). It appears clear, however, that the actual value from the cruise does not emerge from this practice. This is something everybody just has to get right, and carry out. It is a sort of an enabler which has to work in order to make the actual experience possible.

I will start the description of the routines from the terminal. There are mainly three different practices in the terminal.

1) Waiting in the line to get boarding cards. The lines are at least 15 metres long when we arrive at approximately 4.10 p.m. at the terminal. 2) Standing in smaller groups making conversation. It seems that there are people standing in different arranged groups either waiting for other fellow passengers or standing with people saying goodbye to passengers. 3) Going on board. There are groups of people every now and then walking through the terminal and entering the vessel…’

(Field note, non-participant observation, 6.12.04)

Due to the two first actions mentioned, it is crowded and not very pleasant in the terminal. It is reminiscent of a train station with people waiting for their train, purchasing tickets. There are hardly any seats. As Brenda said:

‘It is all about standing. We stood in a queue for ages… I was afraid that my child would get lost in the crowd’ (Video interview, Family Brown [Brenda], 0:04:35-0:4:43).
Family Lilac was also strained by the waiting in the terminal (Video interview, Family Lilac [Lydia], 0:01:05-0:01:31). Many families decide to arrive early in order to avoid the crowd. From the terminal, the families enter a ‘tube’ to the actual ship. On the way there is a photographer taking pictures of the families. When entering the ship, it seems to be surprisingly self-evident for the family where to go, as a mother said ‘we have lift 1, we should go right’. There was no need to ask the personnel the way to the cabin—this is perhaps because of the competence the customer has concerning the cruises. When walking in the tube and arriving at the vessel, children usually make comments about the vessel, and the magnitude of it. All children I travelled with were commenting the vessel in an enthusiastic voice: ‘This boat is sooo big’ was an enthusiastic comment by both Vera and Victor. Also Livia concluded that the vessel is really something for the children (and adults). She was especially referring to the ‘largeness’ of it (Video interview, Family Lilac [Livia], DVD3a, 0:02:53-0:03:05).

After this, the families arrive at the cabin and start settling down. I made the following field note on one occasion when we came to the cabin.

1) ‘Check out the beds. Walter showed the upper reclining beds by temporarily taking them down. There was a discussion about who should sleep where. The upper beds were exciting for the children, who were in the end sleeping in the lower beds. There was a discussion about the rather low supports, which would perhaps cause the children to fall down from the bed. 2) Taking off the overcoats. Everybody took off their overcoats and put them into a cupboard, which was in the cabin. 3) Changing shoes. The children were changing shoes. The six-year-old girl put her lacquer shoes on, which is a symbol for a festive occasion. There was a little hassle about where the other shoe was.’ (Field note, 29.1.2005)

The families were in all cases observed not doing any actual unpacking, but keeping most of their belongings in their suitcases, with the exception of some toiletries. This was also verbally confirmed by Family Lilac (Video interview, Family Lilac [Livia & Lucas], DVD3a, 0:06:30-0:07:11). Family Brown mentioned that they also prefer to watch the vessel embark as a part of their ‘arriving’ practice (Video interview, Family Brown, DVD5a, 0:17:50-0:18:20).

The practice of settling down can be seen in a number of video sequences. Family White gets familiar with the cabin fast and decides to as quickly as possible ‘circulate the boat’ (Video, Family White, DVD1a, 0:00:00-0:03:57). Family Red takes their time to get acquainted with the cabin and the written material on the possibilities to engage in different practices on board (Video, Family Red, MVI_2856.AVI). Family Red was not aware of the need to quickly make reservations for the restaurant.

A similar routine was to some degree done every time the family arrived at the cabin and left the cabin. It was considerably easier for the family to leave and arrive in the cabin when they were doing something on board, in comparison to the case of leaving for Stockholm for the day and arriving. This routine included putting on/ taking off shoes and overcoats, going to the toilet, remembering to take the boarding card with you and discussion about connections to the place they were going (Video, Family White, DVD1a, 0:25:10-0:42:00; Family Red, DVD7a, 0:07:00-0:22:08).

Already during the first 15 minutes in the cabin there is a tendency to start discussions about the reservations for the dinner (if it has not been done beforehand, which is
possible for one of the á la carte restaurants). Especially if the family is aiming for the buffet, this causes some anxious moments - as Walter commented before the actual trip.

‘We then have to immediately go and queue for the buffet, the trip is ruined if we do not get a place in the first (5.30 pm) catering.’ (Video interview, Family White [Walter]. DVD2b, 0:21:00-0:22:00).

Queuing is most definitely a part of the routines which one currently needs to perform.

The ‘routines in travelling’ are described below according to the practice concept.

Table 11. The practice of ‘routines in travelling’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actions:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrive at the cabin</td>
<td>The practice of routines is per se not very valuable, but more or less something that has to be done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settling down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for next action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queuing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family is carrying out the routines</td>
<td>Queuing for the buffet reservations tends to be a reason for splitting, which could perhaps be arranged in another way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In some cases the family can be split, so that for instance only one parent takes care of queuing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td>Practical arrangements seem to take surprisingly much time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal: arranged transportation to the terminal, possibility to park under the terminal, ticket office in the terminal, photographers, gate to the vessel, service personnel on board</td>
<td>Many families would like to see this taken care of fast and conveniently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabin: sweets in the cabin, champagne in some cabins, brochures, own clothes, toilet, information on weather by looking outside, possibility to buy tickets for the destination, services to help with the arrangements at the destination</td>
<td>Some actions could perhaps be taken care of beforehand (reservations etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants (concerning queuing): reservations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image of cruising is that it is very ‘convenient, easy and suitable for families to attend’</td>
<td>The image of ‘long queues and masses’ is not valuable for the family, but tends to be approved by the families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is also a controversial image of ‘long queues and masses’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td>For instance the physical arrangement for queuing does not improve the cruise experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal, tube, promenade, elevator and cabin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice of ‘routines in travelling’ is necessary to have, as they relate to arriving in the cabin, settling down and making preparations for other practices during the cruise. The actions are not very enjoyable, but nevertheless necessary.

The subject of the routines is the family, and in some cases the adults who split from the group in order to carry out a routine. The splitting of the family would perhaps be necessary if the arrangements concerning for example dinner reservations were arranged in a different way. Currently there is a need to physically stand in a queue to reserve a place for the buffet. This is critical as it is very important for the family to attend the first catering because the second catering is too late for small children.

The tools today for carrying out the routines of travelling relate mainly to the terminal concept, the cabin concept, and the queuing in the restaurants. The problems of this practice relate to the lack of tools that would make the cruise even more convenient and easy.
The image of cruising is that it is ‘convenient, easy and suitable for families to attend’. There is also a controversial image of ‘long queues and masses’. The families are accustomed to this paradoxical nature of the cruise, and tend to adjust to some problematic situations related to the fact that the cruise is a form of mass event. In many cases the families comment on the problematic situations of for instance queuing, and have expectations concerning the improvement of the service on those points.

The physical space is in some specific places problematic. Especially the terminal and the arrangements of queues for the restaurants do not in any extensive way add to the value of the cruise.

The dynamics of the value formation in the practice of travelling routines relates clearly to matters of convenience for the family. It should be pointed out that the family tends to be prepared to go through rather inconvenient phases as long as other practices are enjoyable for them.

6.2.5. Compact living

As mentioned above, the cabin is the destination when arriving, as is commented by Brenda.

‘When we go to the cabin, it may take thirty minutes before we go anywhere. We relax – we are here.’ (Video interview, Family Brown [Brenda], 0:20:00-0:20:15)

Paulina talks about a similar experience.

‘We spend a little time in the cabin after rushing from work to get to the vessel at 5 p.m.’ (Video interview, Family Pink [Paulina], DVD2b, 0:02:27-0:03:09)

During the trip the cabin has a certain meaning for the family, which is very much different from spending time at home, or even in a hotel room. As a space, the cabin represents very much a close ‘togetherness’, which is often strived for during the cruise. The cabin is rather small, and in all cases in this study only one room. There are different classes of cabins, which range from extremely cramped cabins with no window to more open spaces with glassed balconies and several rooms.

All the families I travelled with ‘lived’ in a cabin either having a window to the sea or a window to the open street in the middle of the ship. The cabins are 11 m², furnished with 4 beds, which can be folded up against the wall in order to provide more space during the day. The cabin has a small table, a chair and a bathroom.

During the trip, the size of the cabin appears to be a little ambiguous. This appears to be true especially for families with children due to, on the one hand the element of positive ‘closeness/ togetherness’ and on the other hand the negative feelings about the cabin being cramped and hard to move in. It may be far-fetched, but the closeness of the cabin has certain commonalities with what some Finns and Swedes do on their summer holidays. Finns and Swedes sometimes live closer together in the summer time by either spending a lot of time in a summer cottage, or in a private boat. In these cases, there is an element of the family being together, and even sleeping in the same room. Although
nobody commented on this, it appears that the compact living in the cabin has a positive impact on the family: children in particular seem to enjoy the attention and closeness of their parents. In this case I am referring to younger children under the age of appr. 7. The fun of being and moving around in the cabin can be viewed from several photos (Family white, photos, IMG_2778; IMG_2776; IMG_2774; Family Pink, 119_1918; Family, Brown; PICT_2975; Family, Red, IMG_2930; IMG_2925; IMG_2934). The parents may feel differently, and also give some negative accounts on the design of the cabins.

The fun of being and moving around in the cabin can be viewed from several photos (Family white, photos, IMG_2778; IMG_2776; IMG_2774; Family Pink, 119_1918; Family, Brown; PICT_2975; Family, Red, IMG_2930; IMG_2925; IMG_2934). The parents may feel differently, and also give some negative accounts on the design of the cabins.

Picture 6. Children in the cabin.

The value of compact living depends on the actions carried out. The practice of compact living on board consists of different actions. Most intriguing for me is probably the way children use the cabin for play, and use the cabin as a form of play. I will discuss this form of play in more detail in the section on embodied ship usage. Here is, however, an example of how Ridge transforms the bed in the cabin into something totally different than a mean for sleeping. This was what Ridge, his mother and his sister said:

‘Ridge: I want to go to sleep
Regina: But, the time is not 8 p.m. yet, it is only 6.30.
Rita: He just wants to go and try out the bed.’ (Field note, Family Red, 12.2. 05)

In this case, Ridge’s twin sister makes an analysis of the situation. In all the cases with children between 2-6 years the cabin involves a lot of jumping up and down on the bed. In this section the focus will, however, be on the practices that are done jointly by the family concerning living in the cabin. There are some different actions which describe compact living: resting, spending time, going to sleep, sleeping, and waking up.

The family uses the cabin as a home base and it is also used as a place to rest during the day. This occurs especially in the case that the family has small children. Lucas was surprised by the lack of things to do on board when the others in the family was sleeping at approximately 3 p.m.

The cabin is also used as a space for spending time together. The adults were in many cases lying on the bed reading a newspaper, or discussing with each other, whereas the children were according to one field note doing several things which all reminded me of some kind of play: moving in the cabin; up and down in the bed; playing with their toys; walking in the corridor (Field notes, Family Red, 13.2.2005). Especially the window
was mentioned as an important part of spending time in the cabin. For some the window was preferably to the sea, which increased the sense of being on the sea, whereas other preferred the view into the vessel with people walking on the promenade. For the kids, the window was also a part of the spatial experience, as many of the children were rather fond of sitting in the recess of the window.

In one of the cases another family was invited to the cabin for champagne (Photo, Family Pink, IM000272). In another case a toast was proposed as a part of spending time in the cabin (Photo, Family Red, IMG_2968). In many cases, when there are not ready drinks in a refrigerator, families tend to buy some drinks for the cabin.

There is also a custom to buy sweets on the vessel, which are then eaten in the cabin and after the trip. In most cases there are very free rules concerning when and what to eat during the cruise. In one case, the child was eating sweets at the same time as going to sleep (lying already in the bed with their pyjamas on). This is presumably not allowed outside the vessel. (Video, Family Pink, 119_1943.AVI)

Sleeping is in some cases a little problematic from the parent’s point of view. There are clearly those parents that do the cruise for the children, and do not really in discussions or even actions take into account their own wants. On the other hand, there are families that would like to, for instance, go to the bar after the children have gone to sleep, as in the following case.

‘It is a little problematic – when the children go to sleep one cannot really do anything. We could next time go with another family in order to switch turns. One of the nights would be the night out for men, and the other night the night out for women.’ (Video, Family White, DVD1b, 0:13:25-0:14:35)

Family Brown mentioned a similar arrangement, but also added the possibility to engage grandparents or a sister (Video interviews, Family Brown [Brenda & Brandon], 0:07:35-0:08:30). The families presented this as a good way to also get some time for one self. It would be a way to split responsibilities and meet friends. In instances when the family is travelling alone, most of the families tend to go to sleep at the same time, engage in a conversation or watch TV (if there is a TV) in the cabin when the children have gone to sleep. In some cases, one of the parents goes for less than an hour to sit in the bar.

In the morning, it appears that there is a similar kind of inconvenience for the parents, but in reversed order. The children wake up earlier, and are eager to start carrying out different forms of practices. This is, however, not very different from the way it happens anywhere. The problem may once again be related to the fact that everybody sleeps very tightly together. As there is in some cabins a TV, it is used as a tool for keeping the children busy during some time in the morning while the parents are still in bed. In the case of family Red (who did not have TV) the mother commented that the children were already at 7 o’clock climbing up and down in the beds, and moving the ladder from one bed to the other (Field notes, Family Red, 13.2.05).

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26 This was confirmed by Paulina when she read the accounts approximately 5 months after the empirical study.
Most families I discussed with did not put much effort into packing; it is more something you do either the night before or just before.

‘We would think the packing through carefully if we would go on a longer vacation (week in the Canary Islands or similar); now we are only taking an overnight bag and swimming suits with us.’ (Video interview, Family White, DVD1b, 0:19:05-0:19:20)

The children were in all cases more eager; and it is somewhat typical that a child over 4 would like to have his/her own luggage. Packing and carrying the bag is a sort of fun thing to do (Video, Family Red, DVD7b, 0:20:00-0:21:45). I asked all the children to list what they had with them. Some children had with them things they could use during the cruise such as pens, pads, teddy bear (soft animal), toys and books. Most of the older children had their own money with them in a wallet or purse. The children were allowed to use their money to buy something during the trip.

I will below describe ‘compact living’ according to the practice concept.

**Table 12. The practice of ‘compact living’**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resting</td>
<td>The actions per se are valuable for all family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time</td>
<td>The problems relate to the different times members of the family would prefer to for instance go to sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to sleep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waking up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The practice is typically carried out by the whole family at the same time, although there are opportunities for adults and children to engage partly in their own activities</td>
<td>Activities related to going to sleep, sleeping and waking up are to a great extent shared by the family unit due to the small space. This may prevent adults from doing things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beds, a small table, chair with shower, alarm clock + phone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV and extra space in some cabins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luggage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image is somewhat controversial due to the small space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compact living represent ‘togetherness’ regarding certain actions, ‘cramped’ regarding for instance the practice of certain routines in travelling, and ‘lack of personal space’ concerning for instance more intimate practices.</td>
<td>The images of ‘cramped’ and ‘lack of personal space’ are somewhat problematic for the adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabin</td>
<td>Cabins are not, for understandable reasons, designed to be optimal for all the different actions carried out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compact living consists of things done in the cabin, except for the routines of travelling, which are different in their nature. Compact living consists mainly of resting, spending time, going to sleep, sleeping and waking up. The practice becomes in many cases a practice of ‘togetherness’ and can give a good opportunity to be ‘close to each other’. The actions per se are valuable for all family members. The problems relate to the different times members of the family would prefer to, for instance, go to sleep. The parents would perhaps like to engage in some actions after the children have gone to sleep, which is not possible if the children get disturbed by noise or light.
The subject of the practice is typically the whole family, although there are opportunities for adults and children to engage partly in their own activities. Activities related to going to sleep, sleeping and waking up are dictated by the family unit due to the small space (e.g. the whole family has to go to bed at the same time). Spending time in the cabin can in many cases give opportunities for actions that are separate for all family members (e.g. the children can play with their toys, whereas adults can read a newspaper).

The tools relate to the items in the cabin, which varies somewhat from different classes of cabins. In the upper classes there is for instance a refrigerator with refreshments and a TV, whereas the other cabins lack both. The ‘smallness’ of the cabin may in some cases disturb the parents. Children, on the other hand, appear to find the ‘smallness’ valuable, which may also relate to child practices of enjoying ‘play houses’ of their own, which usually are ‘small and safe’ places for the children.

The image of compact living may represent ‘togetherness’ concerning certain actions, ‘cramped’ concerning for instance the practice of certain routines in travelling, and ‘lack of personal space’ concerning for instance more intimate practices. The images of ‘cramped’ and ‘lack of personal space’ are somewhat problematic.

The physical spaces of the cabin are not designed to make ‘family life’ efficient on board the ship.

In conclusion, the dynamics of value formation concerning compact living is complex. There is clearly value formed in the social and material relationship in the ‘cramped’ cabin that clearly constructs ‘togetherness’. Even so, there is especially from the parents’ point of view perhaps a lack of privacy and opportunities to engage in adult-like doings. Value formation can probably be enhanced by taking into consideration both of these aspects.

6.2.6. Circulating the boat

‘I overheard one father in the playroom saying, ‘Boys, let’s go and circulate the ship’.’
(Fieldnote, Family White, 29.1.05)

Circulating the boat is a practice which is very dominant on board the ship. Each family, and other passengers also, have a tendency of ‘going through’ the whole ship and making a form of inspection before going to dinner the first night on board. This practice may also relate to the fact that it is neither very convenient nor entertaining for the family to stay in the cabin for a longer period of time. A field note on the actions of Family Red was made.

‘They were talking about eating. The mother said ‘First, we go and check out the vessel’. This is a very dominant pattern of all families studied. Perhaps due to the restricted area and the span of time one is going to be there, there is a need to ‘check out’, ‘circulate’ the vessel.’ (Field note, Family Red, 12.2.05)
This form of practice has been captured on both photographs (Photo, Family White, IMG_2722; Family Brown, PICT3983; Family Lilac, IM000276) and video sequences (Video, Family Green, DVD6a, 0:01:17-0:03:39) concerning all the families observed.

![Picture 7. A family circulating the boat.](image)

A characteristic of this behaviour is that the family tends to look from a distance on different shops and activities, in order to later perhaps attend a certain practice.

‘We looked at what there is… We got familiar with the place, as the children may have forgotten the different locations. We checked out all the places.’ (Video interviews, Family Green, 0:10:00-0:10:26)

It appears after observing the promenade deck for several hours on several different occasions that the ‘circulating of the boat’ is very much in line with other things on board, which in most cases are a form of ‘subtle hedonism’. The circulating of the boat is a form of non-utilitarian behaviour. It appears to be a very liberating experience to actually do something without any direct aims. This is something which is rather different from the typical everyday doings of the family, which relate to a great extent to tasks that should be done. Circulating the boat is by no means a task; it is a liberation from tasks. There seems to be a time for wandering, and a time for shopping. During the time of wandering the families may buy something, but in those cases it is clearly a form of impulse buying, which may be fun to do at the spot. The circulating may turn into a shopping process, but in that case the family changes its practice into another mode of doing. I made another field note on the same practice.

‘We went down to the promenade deck. Strolling around the promenade deck, stopping occasionally looking at different merchandise, restaurants etc. Not in any intention of buying, but more just looking. The 7 year old was saying that she wants to have a certain DVD, but did not really assume that she would get it. We walked up the promenade once, and then halfway back and down one floor to the à la carte restaurant.’ (Field note, Family Green, 22.1.05)

The practice of circulating the boat is a form of familiarization, when you are prepared to build a good understanding of the whole vessel: what there is, and where to go? This is repeated, although the family has been there several times before.
‘There are parents with their kids walking around looking at things. Orientating, looking at what there is. Shops, restaurants and all facilities seem to have a rather similar role during this walk. Some might touch merchandise but not very many are actually buying. It seems so.’ (Field note, non-participant observation, 5.12.04)

The vessel is designed to support this kind of practice, which in one way is a gateway to other practices. The circulation of the boat is a form of preparation for other practices such as eating, playing, and exploring merchandise. This practice is usually done at least partly immediately after the family has taken care of the routines related to travelling in the cabin, after which it is switched into another practice. One example of the switch to other practices can be very explicitly seen on the promenade when people gather around menus in order to prepare for dinner.

‘In addition to those strolling around, there seem to be families in a negotiation mode, looking at restaurants, making choices of what to eat and so on. I got the impression that it is not at all unusual to plan for the dinner on board instead of before, and actually plan in combination with circulating the boat.’ (Field note, non participant observation, 5.12.05)

The so-called promenade, which is a street-like open space reaching from stem to stern, is the main tool and ‘space’ for doing this activity. This ‘street’, open but still restricted, puts demands on the passengers to walk up and down it. There are shops, restaurants, a games arcade and the children’s playroom on both sides of the stroll. This is very similar to a sort of covered city landscape. In the cases of the shops, merchandise has been put out on racks, so that it is possible to see and touch merchandise when walking down the promenade. The restaurants have their menus visible to the people walking by. In some cases there are groups of people standing around menus; some people have already changed into another practice and queue for restaurants; other are rather peacefully walking around.

I experienced the ‘demand’ the street put on the families in a contradictory way with Family Red. As this family was not that experienced with this specific vessel, the family started to stroll on the 6th floor, looking at the restaurant on that floor, peeping into the store on that floor. I was surprised of my own feeling that this was not done in the right order. I was to such an extent socialised to the practice on board that I was determined that this kind of activity should be started and mainly carried out on the 7th floor where the promenade is.

I will below describe the practice of ‘circulating the boat’ according to the practice concept.

Table 13. The practice of ‘circulate the boat’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strolling around on board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at views and merchandise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time with the family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family engage together in the practice of circulating the boat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The street-like environment with opportunities to stroll around and look</td>
<td>The service environment does provide a limited number of interesting things to see, which means that the practice is rather short-lived, although</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other parts of the vessel also function as a tool for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The practice per se appears to be very enjoyable and relaxing for most families, especially if it does not relate to the practice of making reservations or other routines on board. The practice consists mainly of the actions of strolling around and looking at merchandise and views on board.

The subject of circulating the boat is the family, which appears to be one elementary part of the practice, and one of the positive practices the family can jointly engage in on equal terms.

The tools used in the practices are mainly the elements of the street-like promenade on board the ship. The families tend to use the ‘views’ on board, shops, restaurants and also a map of the route the vessel travels as tools for circulating the boat. The problems relate to the limited number of things to see.

The image of ‘circulate the boat’ relates to an urge to make a sort of inspection of the vessel. Most families tend to see that as a natural and important part of the cruise. This image is positive and also gets experienced ‘cruisers’ to circulate the boat.

The physical space of the street-like promenade invites people to walk along it, and appears to be an excellent design for this positive practice.

In conclusion, this practice is an example of a practice in which the actual physical space has a very dominant role regarding the formation of value. The promenade invites people to participate in a ‘street walk’, which clearly helps the family to integrate.

6.2.7. Being a passive spectator

There are different programmes arranged on board which put the passenger into the practice of being a spectator. There are also programmes for children that require different kind of participation - a kind of play. The reference here is to the programmes which require a form of passive watching - not to, like for instance, the forms of being a spectator Holt (1995) reviews in his article on watching baseball. The baseball fan is prepared to engage in different cultural practices in order to engage with the team, whereas the cruise passenger has a more distant relationship to the programme.

The entertainment programmes are arranged on different locations on the vessel. There are teasers for the night programme performed on the promenade. These events gather people from the promenade, but are also mentioned in a handout, which can be found in the cabin. In all the cases I travelled with the family, the practice of being a spectator was not planned. If the family happened to see a teaser, it was bumped into while circulating the boat. As mentioned, the circulation is not rigidly planned, but rather a
form of wandering, which allows amendments and changes. The families were in many cases stopping their circulation and becoming spectators. The teasers were, however, not followed with a very high interest. The fact that the crowd around the teaser also made it impossible to pass made it even more clear that one had to stop and watch what was happening. In the case of Family Red the mother lost her children, because of the crowd standing around a teaser. The reason was that the children could not see, and therefore ran to be in the first row of people. A line of children was thus standing in the front of the audience in order to be able to see the programme. The mother did not run there and suddenly lost sight of her children (Fieldnote, Family Red, 12.2.05).

There are a number of photographs (non-participant, IMG_0352; Family Green, IMG_2837; IMG_2836) and a video sequence (Video, Family Red, DVD6c, 0:05:05-0:06:25) that display people standing passively watching a certain event, and at the same time blocking the promenade for other passengers.

There are a number of photographs (non-participant, IMG_0352; Family Green, IMG_2837; IMG_2836) and a video sequence (Video, Family Red, DVD6c, 0:05:05-0:06:25) that display people standing passively watching a certain event, and at the same time blocking the promenade for other passengers.

The actual programme was at midnight. None of the families I discussed with were allowing their children to stay up that late. One of the parents decided to go and watch the show for a while. The show imitates a form of Las Vegas style show, with dance, music and glitter.

Other shows, an acrobat show for instance, are performed during the evening at a time when the family is usually awake. This show is breathtaking in the sense that it is really making use of the high space on the promenade. Acrobats are performing stunts at a height of approximately 10 metres from the floor level.

I will below describe ‘being a passive spectator’ according to the practice concept.

Table 14. The practice of ‘being a passive spectator’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching teasers and shows</td>
<td>Problems may occur when the programmes are not suitable for the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopping to watch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking to watch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Subject:
The family bump into the teasers
The actual shows may be separately attended by adults and children

Tools/know-how:
The teasers and the shows on the promenade deck are mainly available for the families
The actual ‘midnight show’ is too late for most families
The shows on the promenade were ‘attended’ deliberately in very few cases
For instance the ‘acrobat show’ was many times missed

Image:
The image of the show is a rather traditional ‘show’ in Las Vegas style.
The image does not suit all families

Physical space:
Different places on board
The promenade is used very effectively for ‘being a passive spectator’

The practice of being a passive spectator consists of the actions of watching teasers and shows, stopping to watch while circulating and walking to the site especially to watch the event. Most of the families I studied did not reserve some specific time for being a spectator, but more or less bumped into the events. The events arranged on the promenade give, however, the vessel a vibrant atmosphere and create some motion.

The subject of the practice is mostly the family as whole, which during the practice of circulation bump into the opportunity to engage in practice of being a passive spectator. There are also programmes especially designed for children, which the families I observed did not experience. It appears that these programmes are not arranged on a continuous basis, and that there are perhaps some seasonal differences in the programmes.

The tools for the practice are the teasers and shows presented at hours when the family is awake. The shows on the promenade were ‘attended’ deliberately in very few cases. For instance the ‘acrobat show’ was many times missed. The actual ‘midnight’ show is too late for most families, which prevents the families from watching it. One of the fathers went to see the midnight show by himself, after the rest of the family had gone to sleep.

The image of the show is a rather traditional ‘show’ in Las Vegas style, which is actually rather rare ashore, for instance in Helsinki. The image does clearly not suit all families. Some families tend to think it is too traditional or ‘vessel-like’ (that is traditional in the specific context), and not applied to the needs of the family.

The physical space of the vessel has been used to a large extent, as the shows are presented in different locations and also make use of the whole open space of the promenade deck.

In conclusion, the value formation of this specific practice is somewhat questionable. It appears that the most valuable characteristic of this practice is its ability to interrupt other practices, and thus create a feeling of ‘much happening’.
6.3. The adults as subjects

As mentioned already in the beginning of this chapter, there are practices which are carried out by adults only. In most of these cases, the adults have a need to separate themselves from the children, do something on their own, or practice different kinds of responsibilities parents have. The practices described here are the following: taking time off, negotiation of duties, slowing children down, being in a standby mode, must-do shopping, ensuring the child experience, practicing responsibility, and exploring merchandise.

From a value perspective, one could question whether these practices are optimal for the adults travelling with their family. Most practices tend to be steered by the children, and do only to a very small extent make ‘egoistic’ adult enjoyment (other than through their children) possible.

6.3.1. Taking time off

Especially during the first night, it appears that the family stick together during the evening and night. The pattern is usually that one arrives at the cabin, circulates the boat, engages in children’s play, dines and goes to sleep. There are, however, in most cases opportunities and apparently also a need to ‘take time off’ from the unity of the family and the family practices. The practices are in some cases uninteresting for adults, although the adults seem to put a lot effort in showing interest and being ‘good parents’.

The adults take breaks from the family. These breaks tend to be shorter the first evening, and in most cases longer during the second evening. This depends on whether such a break is possible. For instance, in the case of single parents, it appears to be a rule that they would like to have another adult as company during the trip, partly so as to be able to do some things on their own. Grant took a short break during the first evening.

‘Grant went to the stores during our stay in the play room. He negotiated with Grace about him going and checking out the store. Grace commented in a little nervous manner: go, if you have to go.’ (Field notes, Family Green, 22.1.05)

This occasion can also be briefly spotted on one of the video sequences (Video, Family Green, DVD6a, 0:08:32-0:08:40).

It tends to be more acceptable to do things on one’s own during the second evening, when the family is also otherwise ‘split’ into different subgroups engaging in different actions. During the first evening Vanessa plans a more thorough visit to the clothing store, alone.

‘Mummy will come here on her own later.’ (Field notes, Family White, 29.1.05)

Brenda had a very clear plan for taking her own time, and even notifies her friend that it will only take her 15 minutes to buy lipstick. In this case we decide to meet up with her in a bar in the front of the vessel. Conclusively, it is in most cases a matter of short moments to visit a certain place, buy something specific.
Paulina, as she has older children in the age of 7 and 9, leaves the children in the cabin playing when she is leaving the first time for the shop for cosmetics. She said that she went to take a ‘preliminary’ look at the merchandise, but that she will come back later (Video, Family Pink [Paulina], DVD2b, 0:03:15-0:03:30). It was accentuated in the account by Paulina that it is really a matter of taking time off, using a specific short moment most efficiently for shopping. It appeared that this was especially true with women, who maybe also found an interesting assortment of merchandise in the shops (cosmetics, clothing and shoes). Men tended to use their free time in a more restrained way, taking a more general look rather than going straight into a process of touching, selecting and perhaps buying things. I will discuss this more thoroughly in the section of ‘exploring merchandise’.

Brenda, who was rather bound by her three-year-old child, explained that the cruise cannot be only for the children, but that there should be something for everybody.

‘Of course, there is a short moment when I say: stay here at the ball pool. I will go shopping… The cruise has to be a little on everyone’s conditions.’ (Video, Family Brown, DVD5a, 0:09:25-0:09:59)

The actual distinction is not dramatic in most cases, but rather explained, as a suggestion like: what if I went and checked out the store for a couple minutes. Typically this happens in the playroom when the parents are rather passively watching the children play. Lucas explains that he does not think it would be nice to leave the children to a sort of childcare in order to get some time for oneself. Livia disagrees and claims that he is the one who is saying to her that she should be with the kids while he walks away on his own (Family Lilac, DVD4b, 0:22:05-0:22:20).

There is also some separation happening between both parents and the children. For instance family White took some distance from their children in the clothing shop.

‘Walter and Vanessa engage in an adult discussion about clothing. Vanessa says to the children: you can go around the corner and look at stuff. Mum & dad will look at clothes. This is clearly in intention to get some time to engage in an adult discussion about clothing.’ (Field note, Family White, 30.1.05)

In the case of family Green this also happened during the evening when the children went to sleep. In that case they gave their oldest daughter (9 year old) a mobile phone and instructed her to call them if there were any problems. In that case Grant explains the reason for doing so in the following way.

‘We usually go to the pub. There is live music. We hesitated if we should go, we were very unsure. It was more to give some time for each other, so you do not get the feeling that we are here only to watch over our kids.’ (Video, Family Green, DVD6a, 0:30:50-0:31:48)

There are very few natural moments for the parents to actually do something on their own, and engage in an adult practice which does not involve the responsibility for the children. It appears, however, that most parents are prepared to travel on the children’s conditions, and do not for instance want to leave their children in a place where the cruise line would take responsibility for their children. Many explain that this is just the way you have to, and want to do it, when you have kids.
This is, however, contradictory and the use of different techniques in the ethnography shows some disjunctures. Although the parents signal that they want to spend the time on board together with the family, one can notice that the rules of the game in some cases are changing during the cruise, and that parents would in practice many times already during the second day be happy to engage their kids in something meaningful which they would not have to be a part of. The adults appear to become a little tired of cruising so intensively based on the conditions for the children. This can be recognized by the ‘loosening up’ of the rules – children are left alone in the playroom and also otherwise allowed to move more freely on board. This does not apply to all families under scrutiny. It appears, however, to me that the adults would in many cases be quite happy to be able to sit together, and engage in something more adult-like. This can partly be done in the cabin after the children have gone to sleep, especially in the larger cabin where there is room to sit down. One can spot from a number of photographs a situation when an adult has taken time to read a newspaper or magazine after the children have gone to sleep (Family Green, IMG_2682.JPG; Family Pink, 119_1920.JPG) or when being in the cabin during the day (Video, Family White, DVD1a, 0:43:00-0:44:05).

Table 15. The practice of ‘taking time off’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action:</td>
<td>Problematic, as there are not many natural ways to split from the rest of the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momentary separation from other parent and children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both parents separating momentarily from children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>The adults/ adult make an attempt to take a break from the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools/ know-how:</td>
<td>Fewer problems when two families travel together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently the tools for adults and children are in different places, which makes the need for separation apparent</td>
<td>The adults are in most cases reluctant to leave their children in the care of the cruise line personnel, although there in some cases is a ‘need’ to do so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The parent normally uses the other parent or a friend as a means for taking time off</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events arranged for children make it possible to take time off</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are family specific rules of how one is allowed to take time off</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image:</strong></td>
<td>It is not always acceptable to take time off, which makes the need for negotiation more apparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image of the practice is problematic as it is seldom very clear what one is allowed to do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is partly ‘acceptable to take time off’, but partly also unacceptable as the other parent or the children are ‘left alone’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td>Current physical spaces does not allow children and adults to do separate things in the same place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults and children practices currently carried out in different places</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice of taking time off is a matter of momentary separation from the other parent and the children, or the separation between both parents and the children. It is clearly valuable for the parent(s) to get some time off from the rest of the family to focus on his/her own preferred practices. The practice is problematic as there are not many natural ways to split the family unit up. The assumption seems to be that the family should be together for most of the trip.

The subject of the practice is the adults that have the need to take some time off during the trip in order to carry out practices that they prefer and they have a hard time to carry out if accompanied by the family.

Currently the tools for adults and children are in different places, which makes the need for separation apparent. For instance the playroom is solely planned for the children; the cosmetics shop, and most restaurants are solely planned from the perspective of the adults. The parent normally uses the other parent or a friend as a means of taking time off. There are fewer problems when two families travel together as responsibilities can be shared. The adults are in most cases reluctant to leave their children in the care of the cruise line personnel, although there is a certain need to spend time without the children. Events arranged for children make it possible to take time off, and replace in some cases the need for childcare.

The image of the practice is problematic as it is seldom very clear what is allowed during the cruise. It is partly acceptable to ‘take time off’, but partly also unacceptable as the other parent or children are ‘left alone’, although the cruise is usually planned to be an act of being together. There is a need for negotiation as it is not always acceptable to take time off.

The physical space can be significantly improved to support a more integrated way of spending time during the cruise. Different forms of play, for instance, could be combined with adult practices of exploring merchandise, and having drinks.

The value formation concerning this practice relates to the need of adults to have time on their own, also during the cruise. Enhanced value formation would appear if the
tools/ know-how, images and physical space would be arranged in a way that makes it easier for the family to both separate and integrate.

6.3.2. Negotiation about duties

As mentioned above, there are many practices which relate to the planning of the cruise. One practice already mentioned is the rather constant process of mediating wants and splitting the family into subunits. In addition, there is a practice that is related to the negotiation between adults. This practice is based on the rather straightforward negotiations about who should do what during the cruise.

This is a typical practice that is very hard to understand without using participant observation. None of the families interviewed reported that negotiation would be a sort of ‘doing’ on board the vessel. In practice, this appears to be a rather time-consuming practice.

Some families transfer the rules for negotiation from everyday life. For instance Lucas and Livia explained that they both have every other night the responsibility for putting the children to sleep (Video interview, Family Lilac [Lucas & Livia], DVD3a, 0:38:39-0:39:59). This was directly transferred to the cruise context and thus did not apparently require any form of negotiation between the parents. In some cases the rules for negotiation are created from the particular context the family is in. For instance Vanessa and Walter negotiated on the basis of their situation when they are coming home. Vanessa had a day off on the day after we arrived, which made it possible for her to rest the day after they arrived.

‘Walter: I will go and put them to sleep, can you then come and release me.
Vanessa: Yeah right, you have to get to work on Monday, therefore you can stay up later now on Saturday
Walter: Exactly
Vanessa: OK, I will go with the kids, and you can go shopping, remember to come.’ (Field notes, Family White, 29.1.05)

Other rules for negotiation seem to be tacitly clear. One of the parents may have stated very clearly that she/ he is not prepared to do a certain activity, as in the case of Family White.

‘Vanessa had already before said that she does not come to the vessel in order to swim in some small pool. So it was rather clear that it was Walter who was the one to join his daughter for the pool and sauna. Walter did not seem to be that enthusiastic and told his daughter that he is not going to stay for a very long time in the Sauna.’ (Field notes, Family White, 29.1.05)

In most cases the negotiations are rather non-dramatic in the sense that the parents and children are together on board and the parents do not have very high expectations of what they can do on their own. An example of a straightforward and unproblematic negotiation is the following which I overheard on board.
‘Son: I want to go to sleep
Father: Hmm. The time is 8.20 p.m., it is really starting to be your bedtime.
Mother: If you go now, I will come at 9.30 with the other kid.
Father: [silent OK].’ (Field notes, Family Red, 13.2.05)

According to Family Lilac’s story it seemed to be rather self-evident that the mother is given some time to herself to go shopping. This appeared to be something which has been repeated several times, and thus does not acquire any lengthy negotiation and explanations.

This negotiation is different if there is a larger group travelling. I did not participate in any such trips, but according to a number of accounts, it appeared that this constellation means that there is a negotiation between men and women, in the sense that both men and women can spend a night out one of the nights. In this case the negotiation is about which one of the nights is lady’s night and vice versa.

I will below describe the practice of ‘negotiation about duties’ according to the practice concept.

Table 16. The practice of ‘negotiation about duties’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td>Negotiation is necessary in some cases, but does not really enhance the value of the cruise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation about duties of parents (if there are two parents)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td>The adults engage in a negotiation and makes decisions about who should do what</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td>There are several situations that require negotiation, which in many cases are problematic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are rules that have either been transferred from ashore, created for the cruise context or have been tacitly decided on the basis of the wants of one of the parents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image:</strong></td>
<td>There is a danger that the adults do not find the cruise valuable by only adapting to the children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The children are put first’, that is a parent cannot drive very strongly egoistic needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td>Children and adult ‘spaces’ are separated, which require negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults and children practices currently carried out in different places</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice of negotiation about duties comes from the need for parents to negotiate about their duties during the cruise. This is somewhat similar to the practice of mediating wants and splitting the family, but does not involve the children. This negotiation tends to be more straightforward and carried out according to specific rules.

The subjects of this practice are the adults who engage in negotiation and decide upon who should do which usually to the children related duty.

The tools used for this practice appear to be a set of rules that are applied differently for different situations. There appear to be rules applied for ashore, which means that if it is ashore decided that the mother will read for the children every other night, she will also do it on board the vessels. There are also rules related to the background and wants of the persons involved that means that if for instance one of the parents is interested in shopping, he/ she is usually allowed to do it. In addition, there are also rules that come
from the routinization of the cruise that are specific for the cruise. For instance, Grant is allowed to go for a drink with Gwen because it has been done before.

The image of the practice relates to children. It is in most cases assumed that ‘the children are put first’, that is, a parent cannot force through egoistic needs very strongly. This is especially applicable to the first day of the cruise when there seems to be an accentuated need to be a good parent. The image is somewhat problematic for adults as it is unclear whether one should do things one likes or not. There is a danger that the adults do not find the cruise valuable by only adapting to the children.

The physical space of the negotiation is everywhere on board, although the separation of adults and child practices in different places on board appears to increase the need for negotiation.

6.3.3. Slowing children down

As already discussed regarding the practices of eating and drinking, one practice adults are forced into is a practice of slowing children down. This practice refers to the different tactics adults use in order to keep the pace of the cruise down, and for instance, eat in a slow and enjoyable manner (for them).

It appears to be rather typical that children are looking for new actions during the cruise. The family is engaged in different practices, which are decided upon through a continuous mediation of different wants. In the cases of family White and Green it appeared that the children were in almost all cases rather quickly starting to look for a new action while still doing the previous. Take for example the case where the child would like to have a drink. The child does in many cases come up with the new suggestions for actions while carrying out the practice of drinking. It is perhaps natural, but still problematic in the sense that the cruise can easily become a continuous event of mediation in which the role of the adult becomes the one that keeps order and in many cases the one who slows children down. This practice may be less strong in families where there is only one child or where the children are older.

This practice was rather easy to capture on photographs (Family Red, IMG_2868; IMG_2872; Family Green, IMG_2679), because it was in all the families a repeated pattern of behaviour that was especially well represented in the restaurants.
There are mainly three different actions or strategies in this practice, which are taken into use when the adult finds it necessary to slow the children down: telling the children to take it easy, bringing their own tools to keep the children busy, and finding elements in the context which would keep the children busy.

The obvious strategy is to tell the children to take it easy and wait for the parent(s) to finish his/her practice of eating, shopping, sleeping etc.

Regina was very efficient in telling her children to simply wait in the restaurant in order for the adults to finish their dishes. The principle is that only after everybody has eaten the first course are the children allowed to start with the next course (Field notes, Family Red, 12.2.05).

In some cases the parents tend to refer to some kind of fairness in order to be able to focus on their food. For instance Walter throws in an argument when his son wants to leave the buffet restaurant.

‘You have eaten dessert twice, daddy has not once.’ (Field notes, Family White, 29.1.05)

The more typical situation is, however, that the parents appear to start thinking of optional things the children could do. One typical way to approach this problem is that the parents tend to come up with different things to do in order to get some peace. Unfortunately the restaurants are not very good for this purpose, as there is not so much to attach a child’s focus on. The playroom is also in most cases so far away that a parent cannot send off their children there.

I will here give some examples of what kind of optional ways there were in order to keep the children happy in the restaurant. Walter came up with these different suggestions for his 3 year old son:
‘Go and look at the miniature train.
Come with me to get some more food.
Look, a baby. Go and tell your name to her.
Wave to the baby. Look she waves back.’ (Field note, Family White, 29.1.05)

All of these suggestions were more or less desperately created out of the available things in the restaurants. Regina was using similar attempts to keep her children busy:

‘Hey, walk around the room twice, and come back.
Go and see what dessert they have, and come back to tell us.’ (Field note, Family Red, 12.2.05)

Brenda said that the most effective way to keep the children at ease is the involvement of unfamiliar persons, as for instance representatives of the cruise personnel. In some cases the families have had very positive experiences of the cruise personnel engaging the children in some action, for instance walking with the representative of the cruise personnel to a bowl of sweets and picking one (Video interview, Family Brown, 0:28:25-0:28:45). As somebody said, ‘that makes the children really quiet.’

As mentioned, there is not so much for the children to do in restaurants, in the shops, and not perhaps in the cabin either. Therefore many parents choose to equip their children with some tools for doing things. As for instance Walter mentions to Vanessa in the restaurant.

‘We could have bought some Lego.’ (Field notes, Family White, 29.1.05)

One friend of Regina whom we met on the vessel told about their way to carry out a similar practice:

‘We had to buy this awful plastic dragon before dinner in order to have some peace.’ (Field notes, Family Red, 12.2.2005)

In many cases toys are bought on board, both as a positive surprise for the children, but also more implicitly as a mean to keep order and make it possible to carry out certain practices related to dining.

Almost all the families involved in this study spoke about their good experiences of restaurants with playrooms. There is one specific restaurant chain called Rosso which was mentioned many times during the discussions and observations (e.g. Video interviews, Family White, 2b, 0:33:00-0:36:00).

I will next review ‘slowing children down’ according to the practice concept.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ Disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling the children to take it easy</td>
<td>There are problems to be successful in the attempts to slow children down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing own tools to keep the children busy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding out elements in the context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The adults try to slow their children down</td>
<td>The cruise personnel could in some case more actively engage in the practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools/ know-how:</td>
<td>Image:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The adults are rather imaginative in using different objects, other people and suggested actions as tools for attaching their children’s attention</td>
<td>There are not many elements in the surroundings that would help the parent to successfully attach their children’s attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Image:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image of the practice relates to a permission to ‘fool’ the children in order to gain some time for oneself</td>
<td>The image of the practice allows the parent to use all tools available to keep their children busy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image is ‘do whatever needs to be done in order to buy time’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical space:</td>
<td>The physical spaces are in most cases not planned to support parents in their practice of slowing children down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few opportunities to slow down the children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A miniature train in the buffet restaurant that is placed too high up for children to see it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice of slowing down children consists mainly of the practice of telling the children to take it easy, bringing along the children’s toys, and finding out elements in the context to keep the children busy. The practice of slowing down children can be handled if the children are kept busy in a natural manner, without the parent’s active involvement. For instance, the participation of the cruise personnel is according to one of the mothers extremely efficient.

The subject of the practice is the adult who tries to bring some peace to her own practice of for instance fine dining. The task is, however, many times overwhelming, and the parent would be glad to get some assistance from the cruise personnel.

The tools used currently are different objects, other people, and suggested actions in order to attach the attention of the children. The adults are rather imaginative in using different objects, other people, and suggested actions as tools for attaching their children’s attention, but appear in many cases to run out of ideas. The cruise company could have a significant role in supporting the family with new imaginative tools to make the practice of for instance eating more interesting for the children. It should, however, be kept in mind that the restaurants should probably not be designed as only ‘playgrounds’ for children.

The image of the practice relates to a permission to ‘fool’ the children in order to gain some time for finishing a dinner or similar. This practice allows the parent to use all necessary tools to keep their children busy. The attempts to slow children down are, despite eager efforts, not always successful.

The physical space does not currently provide enough natural elements to slow the children down. There is an opportunity to improve the surroundings in this perspective.

In conclusion, the value formation of this practice relates to the adults’ ability to either raise their children so as to minimize the need for this practice, or then find the best ‘tactics’ for keeping the children happy with the situation as it is in for example the restaurant. There are obvious opportunities to enhance the value formation of this practice by improving the tools/ know-how, images and physical space for the children.
6.3.4. Being in stand-by mode

Children’s and adult’s play are metaphorically speaking divided into different places on board, which makes the practices of both kind of playing rather difficult. In the cases when the adult is playing, for instance exploring and trying out merchandise in the shop for cosmetics, children are in a kind of a standby mode that in reality is in most cases a practice of ‘looking for new actions’. The children are simply assumed to wait, which means that the family is usually divided into different subunits in order to make it possible for the adult to engage in some action which is predominantly targeted to him/her.

The same logic applies to cases of children playing, which is foremost planned to happen in the playroom or, in the cases of older children, in the games arcade. The playroom in particular is solely planned for children, although the cruise line assumes that the parents should be there and watch their children. This can be seen on several video sequences (Video, Family Green, DVD6b, 0:09:36-0:09:05; 0:16:30-0:18:20; Family Red, DVD7a, 0:02:30-0:03:00).

The playroom is designed in the following way. There are three different rooms which are all in a row. The entrance to the playroom is through the room in the middle, where there is a ball pool (a pool full of plastic balls) with a slide. There is also a giant plastic head of a shark which a child can enter. In this room there are also a number of small tables with chairs. Children usually sit around these tables and make drawings. In addition, there is a small ‘office’ for the people working in the playroom. To the right of the entrance, there is a room with another ball pool, slide and a pirate ship with the steering wheel and a mast. This room also has some free floor space with different kinds of toys such as Lego and small mopeds. In addition there is a giant open shell with soft cushions. This room is mainly meant for younger children less than 4 years old, whereas the room where the entrance is located is meant for older children. To the left of the entrance, there is a room with video games and a place with sofas and cushions for watching films.

The playroom is as mentioned planned for the children. Only a few benches around the walls are reserved for parents.

I made a field note about the problems related to being an adult in the playroom:

‘The room is planned for kids. You have to lower your head to go inside the rooms on left and right. It feels cramped and you are not sure how you should behave as an adult. It is not planned for an adult, although they have to be here. It feels that the kids are somewhere safe when the children are in the ball pool. Otherwise you are constantly following them around…. There are lots of people and I feel a little stressed every now and then that I am in the way of the kids. It is their place and I am in the way rather than helping out.’ (Field note, Family Green, 23.1.05)

It is self evident that the playroom should be made for the children, and that the adults are merely bystanders in that space. It is, however, unfortunate that the practices of children and adults must be so separated that it seems as a sacrifice to be involved in one another’s practice. The standby mode involves waiting, following your children and giving instructions on how to behave for the parents. None of these practices are particularly valuable for the parent. The waiting was captured on photographs (Family
Especially from the video, one can see how adult people seem to feel a little out of place in the playroom environment. Some of the parents were really annoyed by the motion, heat, noise and cramped spaces of the playroom, and saw a lot of opportunities to develop the playroom to something more valuable for both children and parents (Video interview, Family Lilac [Livia], DVD3a, 0:12:35-0:12:47). Others on the other hand claim that an adult should have the right attitude and accept that the practice in the playroom is the ‘thing’ for the children, and that adults should adjust to that fact (Video interview, Family Brown, 0:11:35-0:11:50).

As it is currently, some parents decide to leave their children alone in the playroom. Concerning older children as in the case of family Pink it is probably quite obvious that one can leave children over 8-9 years alone in the playroom for half an hour. But, in the case of smaller children the rules are not that clear, and parents tend to have different perceptions of what is the right thing to do.

I made a field note of the reactions of Grant and Grace.

‘A parent said to his child: we will come and fetch you after a while. This comment caused a discussion between Grant and Grace. They just left her here. This was clearly not according to the moral standards of this family, although the child was perhaps 7-8 years old.’ (Field notes, Family Green, 22.1.05).

Also, family Brown was shocked by a similar incident and these children were younger.

‘One mother came to the playroom to say that she and her husband are sitting in a restaurant close by, come there if there is something wrong. The children were approximately 2 and 4. It
would never have entered my mind to leave children of that age alone in the playroom.’ (Video, Family Brown [Brenda], DVD5b, 0:12:34-0:13:00)

The rules are apparently not that clear. The same kind of standby behaviour also occurred in the sauna and pool department (Video, Family Green, DVD5b, 0:28:23-0:30:50). The parents are assumed to join their children for the sauna and the pool, although many parents tend to be rather reluctant to attend the practice. It is made impossible to watch over your children without getting undressed and visiting the sauna.

I will below discuss more thoroughly the practice of being in stand-by mode.

Table 18. The practice of ‘being in the stand-by mode’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td>Waiting is not very valuable for the adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following your children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving instructions on how to behave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td>The adult does not always like to engage in the practice, and could perhaps be replaced by cruise personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults are assumed to be in a standby mode in the playroom and other places (e.g. sauna &amp; pool)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td>Tools lacking for practicing something meaningful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The practice in the playroom is not assisted in any other forms than by a number of benches to sit on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image:</strong></td>
<td>The image of the practice is not very meaningful for the parents. ‘Watching over the children’ could perhaps be accompanied by an image of ‘possibilities to engage in adult practices’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Watch over the children’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘In the way for children’s play’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td>The playroom does neither provide an overview nor a sense of security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The playroom is designed for play</td>
<td>There is a need to follow your children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice of being in a standby mode consists of the actions of waiting, following your children, and giving instructions on how to behave in, in this case, the playroom. Waiting for children is not always valuable for the parents, but still naturally a part of being a parent.

The subjects of the practice are the adults who are assumed to be in a standby mode. It can be questioned whether the parent could in some cases be replaced.

The tools for the practice are very scarce in the sense that the playroom is purely designed for children and leaves the adults with only a couple of benches to sit on. The practice of being in a standby mode can be changed into a more meaningful practice by providing tools (e.g. newspapers and coffee).

The image of ‘being in standby mode’ is controversial as the parents are ‘required to watch over their children’ and similarly tend to feel that they are ‘in the way of children’s play’. This image of the practice is not very meaningful for the parents. ‘Watching over the children’ could perhaps be accompanied by an image of ‘possibilities to engage in adult practices’. Most parents would at least partly like to watch over their children, but would still certainly appreciate a playroom that also takes into consideration adult needs.
The physical space does not currently allow the adults to feel secure concerning their children, as the space does not allow the parents to have an overview of the place. The children are also in practice hard to watch over, especially when having several children of different ages as the space is designed in the manner that the children play in different rooms.

In conclusion, the dynamics of value formation in this practice relates only to the possibility for the parents to rest and the value formed from practicing responsibility. It is questionable whether this practice should exist on board the vessel.

6.3.5. Must-do shopping

The practice of shopping has changed during the last decades. The so-called tax free shop was much more attractive before in the sense that much of the assortments of spirits, tobacco and sweets were considerably cheaper on board, also in some cases special, and could not be found ashore in Finland. As Vanessa remembers:

‘When I was a kid, we bought candy from the vessel, a good buy and perhaps stuff one could not get from ashore. Nowadays we hardly go there. I am at least not interested.’ (Video interview, Family White [Vanessa], 0:27:06-0:27:24)

The tax free can provide some experiences for both children and adults today also, but in all the cases I studied I got the feeling that the shopping in that specific store with the traditional assortments of spirits, tobacco and sweets was more something which one is accustomed to and has to do. It is a part of the cruise experience; although it has lost some of its appeal due to the fact that the things you buy there are only somewhat cheaper, and rather ‘standard’ for the families. It is nothing special, except for some sorts of sweets, which cannot be purchased from ashore as Livia pointed out. Livia calls the tax-free the ‘compulsory’ tax-free (Video interview, Family Lilac [Livia], DVD4b, 0:25:05-0:25:19).

Some also tend to make the buying of for instance whisky and wines a special experience, but in most cases it is more a matter of ‘fulfilling your duty’ and grabbing a bottle.

‘There seemed, especially for the families, to be a form of shopping which was rather seen as a nuisance. I overheard a discussion between two parents; the man was with the kids at the pool, whereas his wife or girl friend with one kid (a baby) was outside engaging in a discussion:
Father: How long are you going to be there?
Mother: We are now for the last time in the pool. We will get in the sauna and come to the cabin. By the way have you had time to go shopping for the things….
Father: No, I can’t do it with her (the baby).… Will you be back in half an hour?
Mother: Yes, of course. We will. See you in the cabin.
When listening to the discussion, it was clear that the shopping they were discussing was not a part of the fun, rather something they just had to do.’ (Field note, 6.12,2004)

As Babin et al (1994) concluded in their article on shopping, in this case Christmas shopping, shopping could be viewed both as work and/ or fun. ‘Must-do shopping’ here refer to a sort of work-like shopping, which is almost a burden in the similar way as people ‘have to’ buy Christmas presents. Tax-free shopping has at least partly lost its appeal in the situation where most merchandise is also available ashore.
Livia describes the difference between work-like and fun shopping.

‘Maybe it is like that if there is something you have to buy… that is a more negative incident. If it is something that you do not ‘have to buy’, looking around and wandering then it is … if you find something then it is really nice.’ (Video interview, Family Lilac [Livia], DVD4a, 0:32:23-0:33:15)

I can also remember from my own childhood the experience of entering the tax free with enormous amounts of sweets in huge packages. Children, at least the one I have studied, seem to have a much higher threshold for getting excited. There are some elements in the tax-free context which has been applied to a more demanding consumer. For instance, there are sweets regarding which the emphasis has been put more on the packaging and the way the sweets are presented. It is for instance possible to buy sweets that are packaged into a plastic treasure trove, or a small backpack that looks like an animal. In these cases the sweets are not mere sweets, but toys that can be used after the sweets have been consumed. On video one can see the excitement and the way in which the children of Family Red automatically approach the shelf with the more exciting toy-like sweets (Video, Family Red, MVI_2956.AVI). In the case of family White the parents direct the children toward the toy-like sweets in order to ensure the experience of the children (Field notes, Family White, 30.1.05)

It is also possible to buy the wines which are sold in the restaurants on board. This means that the buying of a wine can be a process of tasting, exploring and buying, which can be rather interesting for some adults. Only Grace mentioned this opportunity. (Video interview, Family Green [Grace], DVD6a, 0:17:00-0:17:10)

I will next describe in more detail the practice of must-do shopping.

Table 19. The practice of ‘must-do shopping’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td>Must-do shopping is sometimes seen as a drag and in most cases as rather neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop for friends, relatives and colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Grabbing a bottle’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping as a part of the cruise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td>In some cases it would perhaps be possible to let somebody else take care of the must-do shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The adults take care of the must-do shopping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td>The ‘standard’ products in the tax free do certainly support a form of ‘must-do’ shopping, but do not provide the necessary tools for more experiential shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly the tax free shop concept with ‘standard’ products is used as a tool for this shopping practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This does not mean that other forms of shopping would not take place in the tax-free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image:</strong></td>
<td>The practice is somewhat ambiguous – people are similarly forced by the historical meaning of the tax free and by the realization that the tax free is not that cheap and special</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image of this practice has an historical background usually in the parents childhood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image relates to a form of ‘compulsory’ visit to the tax-free shop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td>Some customers would perhaps like to see more space put on more exciting products/ services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tax free shop is currently a large shop in comparison to other shops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice of must-do shopping consist currently mainly of the practices of shopping ‘cheap’ merchandise for friends, relatives and colleagues, ‘grabbing a bottle’ or shopping according to the cruise routine. ‘Grabbing a bottle’ refers to the must-do action of buying a bottle as it is a little bit cheaper than ashore. Shopping as a part of the
cruise, on the other hand, refer to the action of buying, because one is accustomed to do so as a part of the cruise.

The subject of must-do shopping is the adult, who in some cases together with the family or alone enters the tax-free shop. It would in some cases perhaps be an opportunity to let the cruise line staff take care of the shopping.

The tools used are the products in the tax-free shop that are ‘standard’ and can be found ashore. It would in some cases be more valuable for the family to arrange this must-do shopping in a more efficient way through ordering the merchandise from a catalogue or some other way. This practice is, however, one of the more routinized practices, which means that this behaviour may stick for a long time.

The image of this practice has a historical background usually in the parents’ childhood. The image relates to a form of ‘compulsory’ visit to the tax-free shop. One needs to do this kind of shopping practice according to the routine. The image is somewhat problematic for people that do not see the excitement in buying ‘standard’ products for a little cheaper than ashore. The practice is ambiguous – people are similarly forced by the historical meaning of the tax-free and by the realization that the tax-free is not that cheap and special.

The physical space is currently rather large for the practice of tax-free shopping. Customers would in many cases prefer to have a larger assortment of for instance clothing.

Conclusively, it appears that the formation of customer value comes many times from repeating a behaviour that one is accustomed to. Including experiential elements to the merchandise can perhaps enhance the value formation.

6.3.6. Ensuring the child experience

Parents appear to suffer if the child/children do not get a ‘good enough’ experience from the cruise. Take for example Walter who said that the most important thing for them is to easily get on and off the vessel, get the car parked etc. Although this was apparently important for him, the more important factor appeared in practice to be that the children could enjoy the cruise.

The parents want mainly to give their children a good experience from the cruise. Regina helped me to understand this by pointing out that the cruise is so much more for her children than for her.

‘The cruise is not that special for me. It is much more special for her kids, and the ways they tell about the trip for their friends afterwards.’ (Video interview, Family Brown [Brenda], DVD7b, 0:39:00-0:40:00)

In that sense, the cruise should be an event which creates stories for the children to tell other children. The value of the cruise may appear at least partly in the aftermath of the cruise when the stories are told. Maybe partly because of this, but also because of the
child experience per se, the parents want to give the children a special memory from the trip.

It appears that parents are making a lot of effort to ensure this experience. One downside of the fact that the trips are often poorly planned is that the parents at some point of the trip may be a little concerned regarding whether they will be successful in providing their children that special experience. This practice seems to relate to two different things. First, parents tend to do things on board on the conditions of the children. These actions of being in the playroom, being in the pool department etc. are very much appreciated by the children. Second, purchasing some merchandise usually complements the value coming from the actions.

In some cases, the children have also clear expectations that they will get something special, which makes it even harder for the parent to exceed the expectations and create an experience of something special.

‘In this case it was about buying them toys, in other families it may be enough to do something special in Stockholm, or swim. For family White it was to buy the soft animal backpack with sweets from the tax-free. For Gloria (9 years) it was to allow her to buy make up, for Gwen (7 years) it was clearly to go for a drink with dad.’ (Field notes, Family Red, 12.2.05)

In some cases, it appears to be a little bit contradictory for parents trying to ensure the experiences through buying merchandise. I overheard one father saying to his child.

‘I am just thinking, you have so many of these (soft animals).’ (Field notes, Family Red, 12.2.05)

He was clearly tempted to buy something for his daughter, but was similarly painstakingly aware that she already had an abundance of things. Therefore it appeared many times that the parents were more positive about doing something special together, which on board is still restricted to certain known practices.

I will below review the practice of ensuring the child experience.

**Table 20. The practice of ‘ensuring the child experience’**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td>The problems may occur when the actions are not ‘enough’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing actions preferred by children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying children merchandise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td>In some cases parents tend to have to come up with ‘special surprises’ that ensure that the children get a ‘good enough’ experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The parents have the practice of ensuring the children experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The service and merchandise on board is used as a tool for ensuring the child experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image:</strong></td>
<td>The image may be hard to achieve in some cases, especially if the children have been in other places that may be even more exciting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image of this practice is related to the children.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The adults are driven by the image of ‘children should have fun and good memories’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td>Few places for children to get the experiences the parents would like them to have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All different locations at the vessel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The practice of ensuring the child experience puts the children first. Children are given the opportunity to do what they prefer. This practice is, many times, enhanced by buying the children merchandise, or letting the children buy something by themselves.

The subjects of the practice are the parents who put much effort into letting their children enjoy the cruise.

The tools used currently are the whole spectrum of different services suitable and interesting on board. It is a matter of combining the experience with some actions that are interesting for the children usually with the purchase of some merchandise. In some cases the parents become a little bit hesitant about whether they will be successful in delivering the experience.

The adults are driven by the image of that ‘children should have fun and good memories’. The image may be hard to follow in some cases, especially if the children have experienced similar and more exciting things earlier in other contexts.

The physical space is the whole vessel. The vessel is not primarily designed for children, which means that there is limited space for children to get the experience.

In conclusion, value formation in this practice is very much dependent on the ability of the parents to be able to construct the cruise for the children. The value formation can probably be enhanced by introducing elements to the practice that would help the parents to beforehand ensure the necessary actions for the children to enjoy the cruise.

6.3.7. Practicing responsibility

The parents practice a sort of responsibility towards their children, which perhaps is not that different from the practice elsewhere. There are, however, some elements of the cruise that makes it a little bit different.

The vessel is a closed environment in the sense that during the trip nobody new is entering the vessel, neither is anybody leaving the vessel while it is sailing. The vessel may thus provide some security that allows the parents to loosen up their principles for practicing responsibility. On the other hand, Grant points out that the vessel is dangerous for children especially if they go out on the deck (Video interview, Family Green [Grant], DVD6a, 0:38:15-0:38:40)

This has an effect on the way parents practice their responsibility. In many cases it appears that the parents become gradually more familiar with the vessel, and can thus find new and perhaps freer ways to practice their responsibility.

The cruise line provides nametags which can be put on the children’s back with contact information to the parents. Many children on board walk with these stickers on. In the case the child gets lost, the cruise line personnel are able to contact the parents. This is only for emergency, but still clearly helps the parents to practice their responsibility. A number of photographs and a video sequence were taken both of a parent writing the
nametag and children wearing them (Photo, Family White, IMG_2731; Family Green, IMG_2675; Video, Family Green, DVD6a, 0:04:10-0:04:20).

As mentioned, there is a tendency to become more relaxed overtime about practicing the responsibility during the cruise, especially with children a little bit older. Paulina takes it for granted that she can leave her children (7 and 9 years) alone in the playroom, whereas for instance family Green seems to be stretching their rules during the cruise. During the second day of the cruise, it appears that it was all right to leave their 7-year-old daughter in the playroom for shorter moments, when this was not done on the first day. Even the rules for younger children were loosened up a bit. For instance Family White watched over their children all the time during the first day of the cruise, whereas they made some minor amendments to this rule during the second day (Field notes, Family White, 22.1.05).

In one case Vanessa went out of the games arcade without having her child in sight, but still making sure that Victor will not get lost. A field note was made on this.

‘I walk outside with Vanessa, sitting on a couple of stools at the promenade. One can recognize that Vanessa is getting more at ease with the idea of not having her child in sight all the time. We can, however, see him if he comes out of the game arcade.’ (Field notes, Family White, 30.1.05)

The same kind of behaviour appears when the family is having dinner in a restaurant on the other side of the promenade. The children are allowed to run across the promenade to the playroom, while they are waiting for the food to arrive at the table. This is, however, on the borderline, because the parents are constantly looking in the direction of the playroom, walking over the promenade to see the children inside the playroom. Vanessa and Walter pointed out that travelling with another family makes this easier, as not everybody has to look after the children all the time (Video interview, Family White, DVD1b, 0:40:10-0:42:25).

I will below describe the practice of ‘practicing responsibility’ according to the practice concept.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching the children</td>
<td>The adults may have problems to constantly have their children in sight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring that the children are safe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The adults are practicing responsibility</td>
<td>In some cases the adults tend to be willing to move the practice of responsibility to somebody else (cruise personnel or friend)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name tags</td>
<td>There are unclear rules on how to practice responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant presence</td>
<td>The rules tend to change during the cruise as the environment becomes more familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear rules</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The children are put first’</td>
<td>The image may be problematic, but nevertheless an essential part of family life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The vessel tends to give a more secure feeling than other public spaces, although the sense of security could even further be improved</td>
<td>Bad overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities for children to get lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adult and child spaces are not aligned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The practice of practicing responsibility consists of the actions of watching the children and ensuring that the children are safe on board the ship.

The subject is the adult that is practicing responsibility. The parents would perhaps be willing to give the responsibility away for shorter periods of time.

The tools used currently are the nametags put on the backs of the children, which are a kind of action of caution. In most cases the nametags are not needed, because the children are kept under supervision during the whole course of the cruise. The rules tend to be unclear, and change during the cruise.

The image of this practice is in line with other practices that put children first. The image is related to the very basic instinct of parenthood, to watch over and ensure the safety of the children. The image may be problematic, but nevertheless an essential part of family life that can perhaps not be questioned.

The physical space is interesting from this practice point of view. The vessel tends, for most families, to provide a safer environment than most public places, which gives both adults and children interesting opportunities to test their limits of separation. This feeling could be enhanced by giving some specific places on board a better overview, fewer opportunities for children to get lost and perhaps also more aligned spaces in which both parents and children can engage in practices.

The value formation concerning practicing responsibility is foremost a matter of constructing a feeling of security for the parents in an environment that is partly unsafe due to the sea and drunk people, and partly safe due to the closed environment. The enhancement of value formation would appear from strengthening the elements for constructing the feeling of security.

6.3.8. Exploring merchandise

As described above, there are shopping on board that is a form of must-do practice which does not provide that much pleasure to the one shopping. There are, however, more experiential forms of shopping both for children and adults, which I here call ‘exploring merchandise’. This form of shopping relates to the process of exploring cosmetics, clothing, shoes, in some cases spirits, and for the children toys, DVDs, and also toy-like sweets in the tax free shop. These activities are mainly centred around the promenade deck.

As mentioned earlier, there tends to be a time for shopping and a time for ‘window shopping’, which in many cases relate either to the circulation of the boat, or the movement from one place to another on board. Shopping usually relates to a parent taking time off from the family.

The experience of exploring merchandise tends to relate to three different aspects: time for exploration, a permission to explore, and restricted number of items. All these elements together constitute a pleasant practice of shopping, especially for women with
interest in ‘efficient’ shopping. It appears that the aspects mentioned above make it possible, especially for family mothers, to have a valuable shopping experience.

‘Especially in the cosmetics shop there seemed to be a lot of hassle and almost some sort of game of trying out different make-up, lotions and stuff. It looked like an enjoyable experience for the ones involved, especially for women... On the basis of one interview I made before, it is perhaps so that this is the share of time women take for themselves. The similar kind of exploration could in some cases be seen in the tax-free shop where men were having the same practice with bottles. This was, however, not that clear.’ (Field note, non-participant observation, 5.12.04)

Regarding time for exploration, there seems to be a true dimension of liberation for the adults. As Grants comments:

‘There is nothing else to do, we have time to look around.’ (Video interview, Family Green [Grant], DVD6a, 0:16:00-0:16:19)

This aspect is seen in the ways the adults approach shopping. The adults usually do their shopping in stages, starting with looking and coming back to go further into the buying process. The parent first takes a look together with the family during the circulation, and later continues the process alone. In the case of Paulina, she went to look at some ‘preliminary’ shopping with a friend while the children were playing in the cabin (Video interview, Family Pink [Paulina], DVD2b, 0:03:05-0:03:11).

A long video sequence gives a good example of how Vanessa explores merchandise and almost assumes from the beginning that she will buy something. Vanessa looks systematically through all the merchandise in the clothing store (Video, Family White, DVD1a, 0:54:07-0:56:07). A field note was made of this occasion.

‘Vanessa goes to the shop with clothes and starts directly to ‘shop’, looking and touching clothing. She aims at buying something. She is alone finally! ‘Now I can do some shopping’. She is a little hesitant if she will find what she is looking for, but is definitely prepared to buy it. I believe she was rather determined to find something. She ends up with a pair of trousers after 30 minutes in the shop.’ (Fieldnote, Family White, 29.1.05)

This sort of exploration can be seen in a whole range of photographs taken of women shopping (Family Pink, 119_1933; 119_1936; Family White, IMG_2765; IMG_2740).
Men, at least those I observed, tend to be more cautious and distanced from shopping than women. This can also be seen in shops where the clientele is mostly female. Vanessa’s husband later gets the opportunity to practice some shopping, but the tempo is different, as described in my field note.

‘5:41 p.m. Walter gets his turn and goes shopping. It appears that he is not that determined. Watching things more from a distance. Touching very few things. Definitely not feeling forced to buy something.’ (Field notes, Family White, 30.1.05)

Vanessa claims that she never otherwise has time or even makes the effort to go to a ‘real’ cosmetics shop, but usually buys her cosmetics from a normal supermarket. In the supermarket there is no personnel and not a as large an assortment of merchandise they have on board (Video interview, Family White [Vanessa], DVD1b, 0:29:10-0:29:50). On board she really puts an effort into it; looking at jars, sniffing and educating herself in cosmetics (Field notes, Family White, 30.1.05). Paulina says:

‘You are legitimized to shop; you are supposed to shop on board the vessel.’ (Video interview, Family Pink [Paulina], DVD2a, 0:06:30-0:06:45)

It appears that adults travelling with their family mostly appreciate the rather narrow selection of merchandise in the shop.

‘There [on board] you see immediately the assortment and you see what they have; if it interests you or not.’ (Video interview, Family Brown [Brenda], DVD4a, 0:32:00-0:32:33)

‘It is easier to buy on board when there are not that many goods… They have done a good job in doing the selection. You can always at least buy a scarf.’ (Video interview, Family Pink [Paulina], DVD2b, 0:23:45-0:24:40)
As one of the informants commented, the situation may be totally different when the context for travelling is different. Vanessa claimed that the selection of merchandise in the shops is too narrow for her, when travelling with a group of women (Video interviews, Family White [Vanessa], DVD1b, 0:22:35-0:23:15). When travelling in that constellation, she would have more time to shop, and the selection is not extensive enough. The selection is clearly more suitable for parents with smaller time slots to reserve for their own shopping.

I will below describe ‘exploring merchandise’ according to the practice concept.

**Table 22. The practice of ‘exploring merchandise’**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking from a distance</td>
<td>The only problem there appears to be is that the adults would like to have more of this practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at packages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching, testing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sniffing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating oneself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td>Adults have their own personal practice of exploring merchandise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise and setting</td>
<td>Women find often a good enough assortment for their limited time for shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time for exploration</td>
<td>Men may have problems to find suitable items to shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission for exploration</td>
<td>Time is a problem – how to get time to shop?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-selected and restricted items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image:</strong></td>
<td>There may be some problems to achieve this image if the parents are not given enough time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image of this shopping is specific for the vessels, as the context for shopping is so specific for the cruise concerning the time for shopping and the limited assortment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image is ‘permitted shopping restricted to the items available’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td>The shops are rather small with a very well selected set of merchandise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different shops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice of exploring merchandise consists currently of a whole range of embodied forms of consumption: looking from a distance, looking at packages, touching, testing, sniffing and educating oneself.

The subject of the practice is currently the adult, who in many cases is interested in a personal practice of exploring merchandise. Parents do this practice in most cases separately because one of the parents has the responsibility of the children.

The tools for the practice are currently the merchandise, setting and the conditions related to having time for exploration, permission to explore, and a pre-selected range of items. The tools and the conditions are very good for the practice at hand, especially from the women’s perspective. The assortment is good for the families studied, as the time allocated for shopping is rather scarce, and thus a very vast assortment would perhaps make it more difficult to allocate the time available. Men may have problems finding suitable items to shop. The problems relate to finding time to do the shopping.
The image of this shopping is specific for the vessels, as the context for shopping is so specific for the cruise regarding the time for shopping and the limited assortment. The image is ‘permitted shopping restricted to the items available’. There may be some problems in achieving this image if the parents are not given enough time.

The physical spaces for this practice are rather limited. More explorative forms of shopping would perhaps in the future need more space in order to meet the expectations of the family. It would also be valuable to combine child and adult practices regarding shopping.

Conclusively, the dynamics for value formation in this practice relates foremost to the construction of experiences from doing the shopping. This practice can be enhanced by all the different elements of the practices.

6.4. The children as subjects

The children have certain practices on board the vessel, which are in most cases very distinctive for children, and impossible to be carried out by an adult. The following practices of children have been identified: using play templates, embodied ship consumption, creating a context for security and play, adult imitation, looking for new actions, and acquiring toys.

The description of these practices in a credible way is rather challenging, due to the somewhat restricted number of children and families participating in the study. I make this note concerning children, due to the fact that children and their practices change in different ages. I will therefore here simply review practices I have come across during this study.

6.4.1. Using play formats

The most challenging practice to understand for me is the practice of play carried out by the children on board. Holbrook et al (1984) refer to play as having a clear intrinsic motivation: play is carried out for the sake of play. There appears to be many different ways of practicing play, ranging from bodily experience of the vessel (feeling the size of the vessel, the height from the elevator etc.) to actions defined as play also by the cruise line, which mainly takes place in the playroom.

‘This is probably a self-evident thought, but it appears that the most important practice of children is play. I do not know what play is, but I think of it as being something which lacks a clear beginning and end, and is by no means utilitarian. Playing can be everything from sitting on the windowsill in the cabin, playing with one’s own toys to being in the ball pool.’ (Analytic note, 2.1.2005)

At least five forms of playing which are relevant to understand, from a service development perspective, could be observed. First, using play formats that is the most typical form of play and is strongly dictated by pre-defined templates or formats such as the ball pool in the playroom. Second, embodied ship consumption that refers to the children’s usage of the ship as a playground. Third, creating a context for security and
play, which refers to the practice of children transferring their own play to the context of the ship as for example in the cases when children build Lego on the floor of the cabin. Fourth, adult imitation that is the practice when children copy their parent’s practice, and make an exciting game out of it. Fifth, acquiring toys, when the children engage in a game of shopping, surprisingly similar to the adult’s practice.

Although there are different practices of play, I have decided not to restrict the image of children as practitioners to players, as discussed in the following research note.

‘Is everything play? I have thought about making a distinction between work-like actions which are ‘must-dos’, and play being something that is more or less free to orchestrate. In that sense the children also have certain actions that they are doing according to their parent’s will during the cruise. For instance getting on board, brushing teeth, eating when one does not feel like doing so, getting to bed etc. can be understood as non-playful things. Another idea relates to the different forms of play for the children. I was surprised yesterday by the great variety of ‘playful’ things for children, which actually go together quite well with the adult’s way of running his life. There are forms of play which seem to be in practice adult life. For instance going for a drink and shopping for make-up are all playful things done by the children in order to be more like adults.’

(Analytic note, 23.1)

The practice of using play formats will be reviewed closer here in this section. Using play formats refers here to that practice that is planned to be a form of play and gaming on board for children. The obvious place for using play formats is the playroom with various accessible ready ‘templates’: using the ball pool, making drawings, playing with toys, using the pirate ship, jumping in the giant shell, and video gaming.

These are all tools intentionally planned by the cruise line to be used by the children. The whole space is as mentioned reserved for child play with easily accessible play practices. There is in most cases a lot of motion and noise in the playroom, adults trying to communicate with their children and vice versa. The motion and noise can be seen from some photographs (Photos, Family White, IMG_2730; IMG_2768; Family Lilac, 29) and video sequences (Video, Family Red, MVI_2883.AVI; Family Green, 0:09:08-0:10:11). There are also children sitting in peace making drawings or concentrating on for instance building with Lego. This can also be seen from photographs (Photos, Family Red, IMG_2879; IMG_2843) and video sequences (Video, Family White, DVD1a, 0:21:28-0:22:28). Children are also waiting in queues for, for example face painting (Photos, non-participant observation, IMG_0338; family white, IMG_2766).
The young children appear not to make any calculations or judgments regarding what kind of play they should or should not engage in. I made a field note on Victor’s focus on a very similar play as at home, although there are opportunities to use formats that could be assumed to be more exciting in the sense of novelty.

‘Victor starts by playing with the Lego. Vanessa comments: He is playing exactly in the same way as at home. Sitting down on the floor concentrating on his Lego.’ (Field notes, Family White, 30.1.05)

There also appears to be different levels of involvement in play for young children between approximately 2-7 years. The least involved level is to practice a private play of building Lego, keeping at a distance from other children. In these cases the child has a very private and concentrated form of game, probably rather similar to that at home. The older children, especially boys, engage in a similar practice when they use the video games available in one of the sections of the playroom. These are private activities. The next level of involvement would probably be the more social form of being engaged in the formats of the ball pool and the pirate ship where the child is not perhaps directly engaged with other children, but amongst other children. In addition, there are practices which not only involve children, but also the personnel of the cruise line. These are the games which require high involvement of the children, like masquerades, bingo, treasure-hunting, quizzes and other arranged activities. These activities do not only happen in the playroom but also outside the playroom.

The ball pool is a classic playing format on board, and comes up almost in every case in discussions with children, less than 8 years. Brenda gave some insight to this theme.

‘It is the same if we go to McDonalds or on board... One is allowed to jump; it is a place where limitless joy is acceptable.’ (Video interview, Family Brown [Brenda], DVD5a, 0:33:35-0:34:30)

The children were mostly unable to give any explanation on why the ball pool is fun. Rita was, however, an exception as she gave a thorough explanation.
‘The ball pool is the most fun. There is a slide, and different tunnels. It is fun to go in the slide and fall into the balls. It is so fun to walk in the balls. It is hard to walk, and then you can cover each other in balls.’ (Video, Family Red [Rita], 0:06:33-0:07:43)

In most cases, children under approximately 8 years have a very good time in the playroom, and the parents have to use different methods of negotiation in order to get the children out of the ball pool or other activities in the playroom. For instance Brenda told her son that they would be coming back tomorrow. I overheard some cases when the parents were clearly annoyed by the disobedience of the children who were not willing to come out of the room without having an argument.

Family Lilac had some insightful comments about the playroom which confirmed my ideas and also helped me to articulate the problem of the playroom, in addition to the lack of activities for adults. Livia explained that she has the feeling that there is much going on in a space that is too small. There is simply not space for instance to give out costumes for the masquerade, although it is done; it becomes too hectic and she feels sorry for the children who have to wait in line for a long time due to the activity not being well-organized (Video interview, Family Lilac [Livia], DVD3b, 0:10:36-0:10:55).

The similar practice of using play templates can also be practiced in other parts of the vessel. The games arcade is a thrill for children a little bit older, but also for instance for Victor, who did not have the competence to play due to him being only 3, but who was nevertheless extremely interested in video games.

‘I asked Vanessa in English in order to keep it a secret from the children, whether one has to put money into the games. Vanessa said that it does not matter. It appeared to me that the children are pleased to just imitate the actual play. This was, however, proved wrong quite fast when Victor started to ask for money. He was, however, too young to play, so as soon as Walter arrived he played and Victor was sitting with him on a “motorcycle”.’ (Field notes, Family White, 29.1.05)

In some cases Victor was happy with just watching other people play.

‘I look at Victor as he sits beside three older boys who know the games and play them. Victor has a certain look of admiration in his eyes. The father strengthens it by commenting: go and look at the big boys playing.’ (Field notes, Family White, 29.1.05)

The slot machines are also a form of play which attracts children. In many cases the parents allow the children to insert a couple of coins in their company. Another place for children’s play according to predefined formats is the pool and sauna department which is open for both adults and accompanied children. I made a short description of the department in one of my field notes.

‘In the pool and sauna department there are five smaller swimming pools, not meant for swimming but more for hanging out, maybe sipping a drink while sitting in the pool. Almost all of the pools, especially the warmer Jacuzzis, are filled with people. It is very hard to find a place.’ (Field notes, Family Green, 23.1.05)

This appears to be one of the more problematic spots, as there is clearly a ‘clash’ happening between two very different customer groups. The families are, because the children insist, users of the pools, whereas groups of adult travellers also tend to be interested in hanging out in the pool. The adult groups observed were in many cases
quite intoxicated and drank beer in the pool. It is not clear in the pool area which facilities are reserved for children, except for a small water slide. For instance Grace feels a little bit awkward with the children in the company of a group of ‘drinking’ males (Field notes, family Green, 23.1.05). It appears that there is a need to make some kind of separation between families with children and the ones using the pool area for drinking. Both Paulina and Vanessa are simply not prepared to go to the pool and sauna department. Grace joins the children in the pool area, but ends up in a standby mode and does not enter the pools (Field notes, Family Green, 23.1.05).

The unwillingness of some adults to join in the pool and sauna makes this practice in some cases a little problematic. For instance, Paulina did simply not inform her children about the option to swim on board (Video interview, Family Pink [Paulina], DVD2a, 0:17:05-0:18:00).

Play is a practice which really distinguishes the adults from children, in the sense that the adult is not really able to experience value from engaging in using play formats. This was discussed by several of the families and it appears that there are better opportunities to integrate child and adult practices in a sort of joint form of play. Three different forms of practices were mentioned during the discussions, which could be new alternative forms of play that would be more interesting for adults. First, Walter mentioned a recreation park for families that has a lot of different slides and small cars that are planned to be used for a parent and the child jointly. Walter thought this would be a good way to do something together. Second, both Grant and Lucas referred to two different places, Junibacken and Vimmerby (both family recreation parks in Sweden), as very nice places to jointly experience something with their children. Both places appear to be made with such careful attention to details that they are interesting both for adults and children - perhaps for different reasons, but still the same.

I will below describe the practice of using play formats according to the practice concept.

Table 23. The practice of ‘using play formats’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> Carrying out play according to the formats available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> The children have their practice of utilising the existing play formats on board</td>
<td>Few opportunities for adult people to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball pool and other ‘toys’ in the playroom</td>
<td>Play formats are concentrated to the playroom. In some specific cases it may be important to support play in other spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events for children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauna &amp; pool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slot machines &amp; video games</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image relates to the fun of using the specific play formats accustomed to on board the vessel. The image is ‘the ball pool is such fun’</td>
<td>Most play formats exist also in other places outside the vessel that make perhaps the vessel less attractive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The play formats are mainly in the playroom, games arcade, sauna &amp; pool department</td>
<td>For instance the restaurant have very few formats for play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice of using play formats is about children carrying out their play according to a predefined format. The practice per se is valuable for the children.
The subject of the practice is the child who takes on the practice of utilizing the existing play formats on board. There are very few opportunities for adults to engage in the practice of using play formats.

The tools used for the practice of using play formats are currently the ball pool, ‘toys’ in the playroom, events for children, sauna and pool, slot machines and video games. In some specific cases it would be beneficial to support child practices of play in spaces where the adults engage in their own practices.

The image relates to the fun of using the specific play formats accustomed to on board the vessel. The image is ‘the ball pool is such fun’. The image of the play formats does not relate to something surprising and new, although for instance the ball pool still attracts younger children to a great extent. Most play formats are, however, either available in the homes of the families or other places outside the vessel.

The physical space is currently mainly the playroom, games arcade and the sauna & pool department. It would be possible to add different play formats in different places on board in order to make it easier for adults to engage in adult practices.

The value formation in the practice of ‘using play formats’ comes from the interaction with ‘tools’ of play and partly the social interaction in the playroom. The value formation taking place on board is different form other contexts, although the ‘tools’ would be similar.

6.4.2. Embodied ship consumption

Embodied ship consumption is different from using play templates in the sense that it appears to be more creative for the child.

Children appear to at least partly view the vessel as a form of interesting playground. The children carry on practices related to play by using the vessel as a form of ‘toy’ by interacting with the vessel in an embodied manner. The vessel becomes a spatial and active experience for the children. Bodily movement and the ‘usage’ of the vessel is a way to link senses together (cf. Merleau-Ponty, 2004[1962]; Joy & Sherry, 2003).

For children, the experience of the ship is constructed in at least three different embodied ways. First, it appears that the vessel is an experience per se. As already mentioned above, when walking in the ‘tube’, and arriving at the vessel, children usually make comments about the vessel, and the ‘largeness’ of it. ‘This boat is soo big’ was an enthusiastic comment by both Vera and Victor. All the children I travelled with commented the vessel in an enthusiastic voice.

‘There is enthusiasm of the ship. I heard the following comment in the elevator! ‘Look at that view’. The vessel was decorated with Christmas decorations, which perhaps made the ship even nicer. Most people seemed to be enthusiastic about getting on board. One small boy was a little afraid of the height in the glassed elevator.’ (Field notes, non-participant observation, 5.12.04)

‘The kids were also rather enthusiastic about the view, looking out from the window of the cabin. We are so high up said Rita.’ (Field notes, Family Red, 12.2.05)
‘One could already when walking aboard notice the importance of the experience of being on board. They were excited about the colour of the vessel, and for instance the picture of the Moomin characters on the side of the vessel.’ (Field notes, Family Red, 12.2.05)

There is something exciting about being next to the vessel, approaching the vessel, being in the vessel, and moving inside the vessel.

In addition to the embodied experience of the ship per se, it appears that children in practice are using the vessel for play. As Paulina said:

‘Children enjoy themselves anywhere, if there is just some small thing to use there will be some play; on the windowsill, or in the playroom.’ (Video interview, Family Pink [Paulina], DVD2b, 1:06:00-1:07:00)

This is really true in the sense that there are many different things on board which are probably not designed for play, but still seem in many cases to be the most fun forms of play. The use of the beds and cabins in play was already earlier mentioned. Several of the children were somewhat drawn to the practice of using the bed as a tool for play, as mentioned in a field note on Family White.

‘Vera starts a discussion: when are we going to sleep? Her mother says: what! Do you want to go to sleep’ Vera’s intention was not to go to sleep, but rather to try out the beds, and the excitement of how to get to the upper bed etc.’ (Field note, family white, 22.1.05)

A similar field note was made of Ridge’s eagerness to use the ladder which is used for climbing up to the upper bed in the cabin. A video sequence of this was captured (Video, Family Red, MVI_2858.AVI).

‘Ridge started to ‘use’ the ladder up to the upper beds, and wanted to put it ready for him later, when he was going to enter the upper bed. This was clearly exciting, and he remembered the similar occasion when he was travelling with his father and they did not find the ladder. He told and showed us how he had entered the bed without the ladder.’ (Field note, Family Red, 12.2.05)

In addition, most children used the windowsill in the cabin for sitting and standing. These are excellent places for the children to have a good view either toward the inside of the ship, down the promenade or down to the sea. One of the disadvantages of the cabin with windows to the sea was the smaller windowsill, which did not give as good possibilities to sit down, stand, and move as the cabins with windows to the promenade. The play in the cabins was captured on video (Video, Family Red, MVI_2936.AVI) and photographs (Family White, IMG_2774; IMG_2779; IMG_2781; Family Red, IMG_2982). For instance watching vessels passing by during breakfast could also be found interesting by the children (Video, Family White, DVD1a, 0:11:05-0:12:30).
Outside the cabin several different places were used for play. For instance the long corridors on the cabin floors functioned as excellent running tracks (Video, Family Red, MVI_2951), the stairs between floors were fun to jump on (Video, Family Red, DVD7a, 0:05:53-0:06:25), the signs on the promenade gave excellent opportunities to hide from the parents. All of these actions appear to be exciting for the children.

I will below describe more thoroughly the practice of embodied ship consumption.

Table 24. The practice of ‘embodied ship consumption’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling the size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the vessel for play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td>Not many opportunities for the family as a whole to experience the fact that they are on a vessel in some sort of activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The children use the vessel for play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td>The tools for playing with the vessel could be even more accentuated in order to bring out the possibilities for embodied engagement with the vessel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The vessel per se is the tool for the practice: beds, staircases, the promenade, corridors, windowsill etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The practice of embodied ship consumption consists of different actions related to being on board a large vessel. The children tend to use the vessel for play, and be enthusiastic about the size of the vessel.

The children are clearly the subjects of this form of ship consumption. Adults are also in more subtle ways engaged in experiencing the ship. The vessel and sea could perhaps be used in better ways for the whole family.

The tool of this practice is the vessel per se. A wide range of different elements is used in a joyful manner in the practice of embodied ship consumption. For example the beds, staircases, the promenade, the corridors and the windowsill were all rather actively used as tools for play. The tools for playing with the vessel could be even more emphasized in order to bring out the possibilities for embodied engagement with the vessel.

The image of the practice is related to the abnormal setting of the vessel, which makes a clear distinction from everyday life. The image relates clearly to the ‘specialness’ of being on board a large vessel: ‘this vessel is huge and an exciting place’. The cruise line can perhaps utilise the vessel as a source of positive practices in more ways than currently, and strengthen the image of ‘boat life’ for adults also.

The public places of the vessel are utilised for embodied ship consumption. The public spaces are naturally a restricted area. Perhaps the ‘backstage’ of the vessel would provide an additional source of excitement.

In conclusion, the value formation of the practice of embodied ship consumption comes from the highly embodied interaction between children and the exciting context of the vessel. The children construct a playground out of the vessel, which could be enhanced by accentuating the ‘playfulness’ of the vessel.

6.4.3. Creation of a context for security and play

‘One kid is playing with her own toys at the table in the cafeteria. It fits well into this surrounding. One could perhaps not lay out dozens of toys in the à la carte restaurant, but here it is OK. One other kid is learning to write with the assistance of her mother.’ (Field note, Family Green, 23.1.05)

Children have in most cases either some toys with them, or buy some toys or soft animals for play or security. They implant these artefacts in the context of the cruise, arrange room for them in order to create a context for both security and play. In the excerpt from my field notes above, a girl is laying out her toys on the table of the cafeteria and engages in a focused form of play.
The most popular toy amongst those boys I travelled with was Lego, which was laid out in different places. The bed in the larger cabin was popular to use as an arena for play. In two cases the children begun to play immediately after arriving in the cabin.

‘We just came to the cabin. We watch when the vessel is leaving… The toys were immediately laid out… He had to get to play immediately.’ (Video interview, Family Brown, DVD5a, 0:05:30-05:45)

In another case, in a smaller cabin, the play was carried out in between the beds on the floor, which appeared to me as a hopelessly dark and narrow place to put together Lego. This can be seen from a photograph (Family Red, IMG_2970). Also other families were engaged in different forms of play transferred to the cabin (Family Brown, PICT3974; Family Lilac, 119_1932).

Ridge was putting up his play in a pub while his mother was having a drink (Family Red IMG_2887; IMG_2888). Although many children in different ages were creating these contexts for play, it did not apply to everybody. Many of the children did not have any toys with them, which some of the parents were actually regretting in retrospect, due to the fact that there are many places on board that are dull for the children. For instance, it appears to be almost impossible to sit for longer than 30 minutes in a bar without having some of the children’s own toys brought along.

It appeared, however, that it is a rather normal practice on board to let the children buy toys with their own money, or for the adults to buy toys for the children, which they then usually immediately start to use.

‘Regina bought each kid a toy, which they now intended to use: Lego and a Barbie. We found a quiet corner in the bar, and the kids sat down on the floor and started to play with their toys.’ (Fieldnote, Family Red, 13.2.05)
There are not very good opportunities for children to put up the context for play, due to a number of restrictive elements. The cabin is small, but similarly it would hardly be a high priority for the family to have room to engage in extensive play in the cabin. More problematic things for the family appear to be the lack of elements of interest for children in the restaurants, in the drink bar etc.

Children have also a habit of creating a context of security, which appeared to me unproblematic. Usually children bring along some soft animal or similar which they use as comfort and also to apparently build some kind of security in an unfamiliar environment. Ridge started to build his own security by asking for his teddy bear immediately when the family arrived in the cabin (Video, Family Red, MVI_2856.MVI).

I will below describe ‘creating a context for play and security’ according to the concept of practice.

Table 25. The practice of ‘creating a context for security and play’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing to play with toys</td>
<td>The practice is needed in the current setting - few locations with practices for both children and adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing with own toys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The children are engaged in their own play transferred to the vessel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toys taken from home (Lego, Barbie etc)</td>
<td>In some cases the adults have forgotten to bring along toys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toys bought on board</td>
<td>For most families, it appears to be a necessity to have own toys that can be used on board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft animals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image of ‘creating a context for play and security’ is not very specific for the cruise, but relates to the child’s independent practice of playing with his or her own ‘stuff’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different physical space</td>
<td>The physical spaces on board are not deliberately designed to support the practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few of the physical spaces gives good conditions for play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice of creating a context for security and play consists of the actions of preparing oneself for playing with toys, playing with one’s own toys, and the building of security. The practice of creating one’s own context concerning play is in most cases needed, because there are currently very few places where both adults and children can engage similarly in their own practices. Therefore, it appears that this practice is needed especially in the places that are designed for adults.

The children are the subjects of their actions, engaging themselves in their own play. In most cases the children copy a practice that they are doing at home and build a personal context for doing that.

The tools used for play are the children’s own toys, both brought from home or bought on board the vessel. Soft animals are used for building security. Problems may occur if the parents have not brought toys with them or allowed for new toys to be bought.
The image of ‘creating a context for play and security’ is not something that children only do on board the vessel. It relates to a certain kind of independent form of play, when the children are engaged with their own projects, thus distancing themselves from the spaces usually built for adults (pub, cafeteria, restaurants etc).

The physical space for this practice is different. The most typical place for creating the context for play and security is the cabin, especially concerning security. Other spaces are the pub and the cafeteria.

Conclusively, the value formation of the practice of creating a context for security and play comes from the ways the child uses different elements of the vessel and his own ‘things’ to create a personal arena for play and security. There would be an opportunity to replace the practice of creating their own arena for play with another if the children were taken more into account in the design of spaces and tools on board the ship.

6.4.4. Adult imitation

In addition to the forms of play mentioned above, there is a form of play carried out by children that helps the family to integrate their practices of doing. It appears that children are willing to take on and carry out practices which are ‘originally’ perhaps designed for adults. In these cases the children enter the context of adults and take on modified tools, images and physical spaces to make adult practices, practices of their own.

One example is the action of having a drink, which was very briefly described earlier regarding ritualized eating and drinking. This is a very interesting action, which is also very well orchestrated by the cruise line currently.

‘… It was already earlier decided that Grace is going to stay with Ginger in the cabin and that Grant will go with Gwen for a drink. Grant and Gwen going for a drink was clearly a practice, which was important for Gwen. They had done it before, and she was waiting for that. They were drinking drinks side by side in the night club. Gwen apparently enjoyed the atmosphere and the monopoly of her father’s attention. She had a drink, which had a glowing neon stick in it.’ (Field notes, Family Green, 22.1.05)

The possibility for the children to ‘join’ their parents in adult practices appears to be surprisingly valuable, especially if they are supported with elements like the neon stick in the drink, which makes it glamorous for the children. Gwen said before the cruise that ‘sitting in bars’ was something she looked forward to (Family Green, DVD6a, 0:02:50-0:03:20).

Afterwards or during drinking the drink, the children usually use the neon stick in different forms of play which are also valuable, as there are very few other elements to attach the focus of the children on during the stay in a bar. A number of photographs (Video, Family White, IMG_2654; IMG_2656) were taken of these occasions.

Gloria, the 9-year-old sister to Gwen, on the other hand, was more into shopping. This was in a very similar way a form of imitation of the practices of the adults, especially as she had high hopes of having the opportunity to convince her mother to buy her some
make-up. This seemed to be some kind of ritual of growing older for her (Photographs, family white, IMG_2685; IMG_2683). One important element of this practice appeared also to be the different tools for carrying out an imitation of adulthood. In the case of Gloria, she had a handbag she used on board with her own money (Photographs, Family Green, IMG_2690; IMG_2684).

Picture 17. A girl and her handbag.

I asked Gloria whether she had used a handbag otherwise. She told me that she used it when going to Helsinki to shop, not otherwise. The handbag was a tool used on board which tended to help Gloria to engage in forms of independent actions also without the direct involvement of adults.

This could actually be seen in more general terms on the promenade (which I had an opportunity to observe from above several times during my trips). During the first trip that I was making as a part of the actual study, I could already notice a kind of a ‘walk of independence’ carried out by older children. There were groups of children that were on their own, usually on their way somewhere, walking at a rather fast pace.

‘I see several groups of children, who are doing a kind of independence walk.’ (Field notes, non-participant observation, 5.12.04)

The typical action for the children is to walk with determination in one direction alone without adults, as they would have been asked to move from a place to another and not stop on their way. The vessel appears to be somehow in-between a totally public place like a street and the privacy of the home when considering the adults’ willingness to let their children move and practice independence on board. I made a field note on this.

‘The promenade can be easily compared with a street or a shopping mall. There is, however, a big difference. You can see older children being on their own. Especially these groups of children walking independently are typical and not something, which can be seen otherwise. The
Different forms of adult imitation could be seen in the dance restaurant and also in the sauna and pool department. For instance, children tend to want to get involved in the practice of dancing in the restaurants on board. In the pool and sauna I realized that children were fascinated by the opportunity to have a drink in the pool, and begged to get the possibility to engage in this practice, in the same way as groups of adult males were doing.

I will below describe ‘adult imitation’ according to the practice concept.

Table 26. The practice of ‘adult imitation’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action:</td>
<td>The imitation of adult practice may perhaps also have negative influences – children get accustomed to for instance the habit of drinking according to a ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a drink</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having dinner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping according to adult practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing in the night club</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>The children make the cruise a context for imitating adult life, practicing adult life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools/ know-how:</td>
<td>Unclear rules of the degree of independence that the children are allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different rituals originally designed for adults: versions of drinks for children, dance floor, opportunity to walk alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image:</td>
<td>The image of this practice relates to the independence and the opportunity to practice independent adult behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical space:</td>
<td>‘Adult imitation’ is currently taken into account only in parts of the vessel, although it is clearly valuable for the child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The bar, the restaurants, the night club</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shops for adults (cosmetics)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice of adult imitation consists of actions where children take on a practice which is usually performed by adults. It appears that the context of the cruise allows children to test new practices. Children are excited about engaging in practices that they are not allowed to do normally. The imitation of adult practice may perhaps also have negative influences, as children perhaps get accustomed to for instance the habit of drinking according to a ritual.

The subject of the practice is the child, who looks forward to carrying out the practice of adult imitation in different forms. This naturally also depends on the age of the children.

The tools for the practice are the different rituals originally carried by adults related to having a drink, dancing, and perhaps the opportunity to walk alone on board the ship. The rules regarding how much independence is given to the children are sometimes problematic for the parents. For instance, the ‘independence walk’ requires negotiation between parents, and parents and children.

The image of this practice relates to independence and the opportunity to practice independent adult behaviour. The child can do ‘adult stuff’, which is exciting and new. This image is clearly attractive and exciting for the child.
The physical space for this practice is the bar, the á la carte restaurant, the nightclub, shops for adults (cosmetics), and the promenade for walking. This valuable practice could be more systematically taken into account on board the vessel.

The value formation of this practice relates to the context of the cruise that allows children to be together with their parents, but similarly engage in a practice for building their own independence. The practice is embedded with value that can be further enhanced in order for children of different ages to experience independence.

6.4.5. Looking for new actions

It was already earlier described that the adults in the family are engaged in a practice of slowing down children, convincing the children to wait, and trying to come up with alternative practices in order to maintain for instance the practice of eating.

The practice of looking for new actions dominated some families’ cruises. Other families were not that influenced by the constant questions of the children. This practice was typically something, which did not appear from the interviews with families out of context, but required observation in order to be revealed. For most families this kind of behaviour by the children seems to be normal and not something specific for the vessel, and thus is not perhaps ‘worth talking about’ in an interview. These situations were, however, rather easy to capture by participant observation. A number of photographs (Family White, IMG_2748; Family Green; IMG_2679; Family Red, IMG_2868; IMG_2872), video sequences (Video, Family White, DVD1a, 0:21:02-0:21:28; 0:52:00-0:52:31) and several field notes were captured of the practice.

![Picture 18. A girl is desperately ‘looking for new actions’.

From a service development perspective there is an opportunity to arrange the cruise in a manner which perhaps could make this kind of behaviour easier to cope with. The cruise line should focus on minimizing the conflicts between adult and child practices. As mentioned, looking for new actions was in some families very dominant and gave the parents very little peace.
‘A kind of ‘begging’ was very typical for this trip. Can we go there? Can we do that? As soon as we were doing one thing one of the children was already asking for something else. There was not any discussion during the first day about getting some stuff, but more of going to different places. ’ (Field notes, Family White, 22.1.05)

There is a sense of urgency in the behaviour of the children; they would like to have time to do everything on board. This makes the need for looking and asking more apparent. A field note was scribbled regarding Vera who was clearly struggling with how she would have time to do everything there was to do on board.

‘Vera seemed to be a little concerned whether the family will have time to do all that they would like to do, but comforts (herself) by saying to her brother: we will have time, do not worry.’ (Field notes, Family White, 22.1.05)

Dining appears to be the most typical situation where the children carry out the practice of looking for new actions. There is a certain pattern repeating itself in relation to dining, and perhaps also in instances when the adults would like to spend some time in a shop, in the event that it does not interest the child.

‘The same pattern repeated itself, as many times before, when we had eaten. The children were busy with their drinks and food for about 15 minutes, after which they started to demand things to be done.’ (Field notes, Family White, 30.1.05)

I will below describe ‘looking for new actions’ according to the practice concept.

**Table 27. The practice of ‘looking for new actions’**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking to do the next thing</td>
<td>The practice prevents the family from enjoying the practices, and forces the family to rush through their doings on board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being impatient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The children are impatient and want to engage in new practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different arguments</td>
<td>A lot of time and energy is put in the negotiation with the parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of the same argument</td>
<td>A lack of clear plans of what to do makes the urgency more apparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearing out the parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Excitement of the vessel’</td>
<td>The cruise does apparently not give the image of certain things happening at certain times; rather it is a matter of constant negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Urgency to do things on board’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical space:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole vessel</td>
<td>The vessel’s spaces are divided between adult and child ‘doings’, which means that usually some family member impatiently waits for the others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The different restaurants are the typical places for this practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice of ‘looking for new actions’ consists of doings such as asking for the next thing to do and being impatient. The practice per se appears not to be very valuable for anybody, but is seemingly tiresome for both the child and the parents. It appears to be possible and also beneficial to minimize this practice by developing the service to make it easier for the family to arrange their activities on board.
The subject of the practice is the child, who is impatient and wants to engage in new practices.

The tools used for the practice are various ways of making it possible for the child to engage in the practice he prefers. The child uses different arguments, repeats the argument over and over again, and wears out the parents, who in many cases give up their practice of slowing the children down. A lot of time and energy is put in this discussion, which creates minor conflicts in the family. A lack of clear plans of what to do makes the urgency worse.

The image relates to the excitement of the vessel and the urgency related to the opportunities to do things on board. The cruise does apparently not give the image of certain things happening at certain times; rather it is a matter of constant negotiation.

The physical space of this practice is the whole vessel. The most typical place is, however, the restaurant. One can assume that this practice could be minimized mainly through rethinking the public places of the vessel so that they would give opportunities for children to practice something valuable also in the places where adults spend their time.

This practice is carried out partly because the children feel that they do not have time to do everything that there is to do, and partly because it is a completely natural way to behave. The value of this practice relates to the fact that the children tend to get things done in the way they prefer. The value could be enhanced by structuring the cruise in a way that minimizes the need to constantly look for new actions.

6.4.6. Acquiring toys

‘Children were heavily involved in shopping - mainly toys and perhaps sweets. When observing this it seemed to be rather much driven by kids and their wants. This seemed to be an important part of the experience and fun for the kids.’ (Field note, non-participant observation, 5.12.04)

The practice of acquiring toys was, although children were free to make selection, in most cases clearly orchestrated by the parents, as the children were given clear instructions of how to do their shopping.

‘We negotiated that they could buy something small.’ (Video interview, Family Lilac [Lucas], DVD3a, 0:09:20-0:09:40)

There were typically two different strategies for doing this: giving the children permission to buy a certain number of items or allowing the children to use their own money. For instance in the tax free shop, where most kids ended up choosing toy-like sweets, the children were given a simple rule of how many items they can purchase. In these cases when the children were either allowed to buy one or two items, children were walking in the aisle picking up different items in order to ask their parents whether the item at hand was acceptable. In one case the children were actually proposing rather dull and normal sweets which could be bought anywhere with the consequence that the mother was suggesting that the child would buy something more exotic. In this case the
children bought small backpacks that were similar to soft animals and could function as toys (Field notes, Family White, 30.1.05).

The practice of looking for and selecting toys in the store was captured by camera (Family Lilac, IM000289; family White, IMG_2744; IMG_2743; Family Red, IMG_2860; IMG_2886) and video (Video, Family White, MVI_2746.AVI; Family Green, DVD6b, 22:49-0:24:36; Family Red, DVD6c, 0:06:36-0:08:55).

Older children get weekly pocket money from their parents, which they are allowed to use on board. In one case, the children had got 5 euros each from their grandparents in order to buy something nice on board the vessel (Video, Family Red, DVD7b, 0:21:30-0:22:30). In the cases when the children have their own money and are not able to read or calculate, the children tend to move rather independently in the store, but show up to their parents occasionally to ask whether it is possible for them to buy the item at hand.

In some of the cases, the children were allowed to buy for their own money, and also get something paid for by their parents. In one of the cases, one of the girls had already planned beforehand to buy a certain soft animal which she had seen in one of the cruise line’s brochures. The items were unfortunately out of stock, which caused a disappointment for her (Video interview, Family Lilac, DVD2b, 0:09:20-0:10:55).

‘Acquiring toys’ is next described according to the practice concept.

Table 28. The practice of ‘acquiring toys’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current practice</th>
<th>Problems/ disjunctures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving the children permission to buy a certain number of items</td>
<td>This practice was perhaps earlier (when the parents were children) a sort of surprise for the child - currently, it appears that both children and adults assume that they are going to buy something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing the children to use their own money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The children engage in the practice of acquiring toys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools/ know-how:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules for carrying out the practice of acquiring toys</td>
<td>The tax free does not extensively support this practice (except for toy-like sweets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money of their own/ selected number of items that can</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
be bought
Merchandise
The store with souvenirs and toys is much more suitable for this practice

**Image:**
The image of this practice relates partly to independence as the children are allowed to use their own money/ select items by themselves

**Physical space:**
The physical space for this is primarily the toy store, and secondarily the tax free shop
The physical spaces only partly support the experience of shopping

The practice of acquiring toys consists of different actions related to giving the children permission to buy a certain number of items, and allowing the children to use their own money to buy toys. In some cases this relates also to the opportunity to use the purchased toys as a way of keeping the children busy during a dinner or other practices.

The subject of the practice is the child, who engages in different actions related to acquiring toys.

The tools of the practice are the rules for carrying out the practice, which is mostly dictated by the parents. Either the children have money of their own to be used, or then the children are allowed to buy a certain number of items by themselves. There would naturally be an opportunity to increase the number of attractive merchandise for the children in order to further develop this practice. The tax free shop does not extensively support this practice, except for toy-like sweets that apparently are considered more like toys than sweets. The store with souvenirs and toys is much more suitable for this practice.

The image of this practice relates partly to independence as the children are allowed to use their own money/ select items by themselves.

The physical space is currently primarily the toy store, but also the tax-free shop. There would be an opportunity to make the physical space more attractive in the sense that it would support the experiential nature of acquiring toys in better ways.

In conclusion, value formation in this practice comes mainly from the excitement of engaging in a rather independent practice of shopping that is either already decided beforehand or a surprise for the child. The child uses certain techniques for acquiring toys that certainly could be better understood in order to enhance the value formation.

### 6.5. Summary of family cruise practices

21 practices have been presented above concerning all the different elements of the current practices. These practices are categorized according to the three subjects of the practices at hand: children, family, and adults.

Most practices are spatial in the sense that they are located in specific places on board of the vessel. The figure below demonstrates roughly the location of each practice on board of the vessel. As mentioned practices are mainly carried out on four different floors on the vessel. It is, however, impossible to locate exactly each practice in a
specific location, as there are practices that are not carried out in certain places, but can have an ubiquitous nature.

Figure 5. Practices identified on board the vessel.

As mentioned already in the introduction of this chapter, there are links between different practices. These are discussed on a general level in the introduction to the empirical research results (chapter 6.2.3.) and will not be further elaborated on here, although it would clearly be interesting. The task would probably in practice be too complex to carry out due to the systemic, and not processual, nature of the practices and their links to each other.

6.6. Customer value and the cruise practices

The ethnography above concerning the family cruise practices gives a description of the current practices on board a vessel travelling between Helsinki and Stockholm. The researcher has been rather cautious in discussing the value of those practices and the opportunities to enhance the value of the practices on board.

As mentioned earlier, customer value formation in this thesis is seen as being embedded in the practices, and possible to enhance through positive changes either by interventions in or other development of the practice.

This implies that each practice is constituted of an arrangement of element and dynamics between the elements that is embedded with customer value. The interesting question from a managerial perspective is whether the value can be enhanced through
interventions in the practice regarding one or many of the elements of the practice. It is assumed that a company can gain a valid understanding of the opportunities to enhance a certain practice through ethnographic understanding, although there would not be any exact definition (in traditional terms) of the absolute amount of value embedded in a certain practice.

There are only a limited number of opportunities to enhance customer value formation, which also apply well to the context of family cruise consumption.

First, **improvement of practices**, there is naturally an opportunity to improve the practices at hand by asking oneself the questions listed in chapter 4.3. The provider should, if the practice at hand per se is valuable for the family, focus on finding opportunities to strengthen the practice and make it more attractive to perform. The problems/disjunctures identified above concerning each practices would in this case function as a natural starting point for improving the practices at hand. This would function as an insight for thinking about new opportunities for providing the customer with new tools, images, physical spaces, and actions.

Second, **reduction of practices**, there are also practices that are not as valuable per se and not attractive to carry out. In these cases, the provider should aim at either undoing the practice, or find opportunities to gradually change the practice at hand into a more valuable constellation. For instance, the practice of being in a standby mode tends to be, by definition, a somewhat questionable practice that adults have to carry out. Introducing new tools, images, physical space and actions for adults in the playroom, can in this case, diminish the practice.

Third, **transfer/creation of practices**, there are practices that exist outside the context of cruise consumption that can perhaps be introduced to the context. The provider has thus in this case the opportunity to ‘benchmark’ for best customer practices outside its own immediate industry. For instance, the cruise line can use amusement parks as a context for finding best customer practices for ‘queuing’ and learn from them.

This thesis will not go into detail about outlining the opportunities for enhanced value formation for families in a cruise context. The researcher will, however, suggest a model of how to approach this question on a more aggregated level for the specific context under analysis.

There appears to be two dimensions in a family cruise context that have potential for enhanced customer value formation (amongst others). Both of these dimensions emerged from the aggregated understanding of the practices built on the basis of the ethnography.

The first dimension is the matter of **integration and separation**. This refers to the division of practices that either integrate or separate families on board the vessel. It is

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27 Best practice is an often-used word to indicate that a certain provider on a certain market possesses a way of working that is the best on that market. There are also according to this thesis in society certain good ways for human beings to act, which can function as a starting point for business development. These practices are here referred to as ‘best customer practices’. The concept of best customer practice has to my knowledge not been used in the literature before.
here argued that both types of practices are valuable per se, and that the current problem is that there are neither practices that would successfully integrate the family, nor practices that would help the family to momentarily separate and give a certain person opportunities to carry out their own practices. The current practices on board, except for a couple of exceptions, are practices that are somewhere in between.

The second dimension is the matter of *existing and transferred/new practices*. This refers to the divisions of practices that already exist in the cruise context and those practices that perhaps could be transferred or be created in the cruise context. This dimension does not come directly from the ethnography, but more or less from the notion of the high routinization of current practices in the cruise context. On the basis of the literature of experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) it can be concluded that new opportunities for experiences would perhaps make the cruise context even more attractive than before.

These two dimensions mentioned above can be put into a 2x2 table illustrating four different areas of opportunities for enhanced value formation. There are opportunities to form enhanced value in all four areas. See below figure 6.

![Figure 6. The opportunities for enhancing value formation.](image)

Each of the four areas of value formation will be discussed here.

(1) **Integrated existing cruise practices.** The ethnography carried out implies that there is a lack of opportunities for the family to jointly carry out practices which would attract all parties of the family. For instance, the practices of the fine dining ritual, free selection and movement, mediating wants and splitting the family, routines in travelling, circulating the boat and compact living could perhaps all be developed partly towards a more integrated constellation between the different parties of the family by critically exploring the different elements of these practices (tools/ know-how, images, physical spaces, and actions). These are all existing practices that can be improved to be more valuable for the families.
(2) Separated existing cruise practices. The ethnography also showed a number of different existing practices, which for one or another reason do not attract the family as a whole. This is probably something that must be accepted and thus these practices can be further developed to make the separation of practices between different parties of the family less dramatic and natural. For instance, different forms of children play and adult exploration of merchandise are assumingly practices that are valuable per se and can be further improved to form more value. In addition there are practices that are not especially valuable, which have to do with the adults trying to manage the family as a unit.

(3) Integrated new cruise practices. The logic of separation and integration is also suggested to apply to new practices that can either be transferred from another context or developed as a new practice in the cruise context. There are many examples of doings that are suitable for adults and children to do together, and which are attractive and interesting for all parties. For instance, the practice related to two different amusement parks/ theme parks were mentioned in the interviews. Walter mentioned an amusement park with different sizes of ‘toys’ arranged together, which were both fun to use for children and adults. Grant mentioned a theme park in Sweden that has authentic details and old buildings, which both for him and his children were meaningful, although in different ways. The new cruise practices can only be implemented on the vessel by taking carefully into account all the different elements that constitute that practice. It is not sufficient to only implement new tools on the vessel, but the usage of the tools must be supported by the right images and physical spaces.

(4) Separated new cruise practices. The same logic goes for the separated new cruise practices. It is rather easy to examine different free-time practices of both adults and children in order to look for practices that would perhaps be possible to transfer onto the vessel. More challenging would obviously be to create a totally new practice on the cruise vessel on the basis of the historical understanding of the development of the practices on board the vessel.

It is suggested that the cruise line could find new ways to develop their service on the basis of an examination and development of customer practices in all four areas.

The way to approach this task would be to investigate, define and implement new forms of practices. In this task it is important to consider all the different elements of practices in order to create new more valuable constellations of practices for the specific context under scrutiny.
7. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTION

I will in this chapter make the conclusions of the research, and discuss the implications of the research done. The contributions made are listed, after which the managerial implications outside the immediate scope of the research are elaborated on.

7.1. Conclusions and implications of the research

As stated in the definition of the aim of the research, the main purpose of the research was to introduce a new approach to customer value in the field of service marketing and management based on a practice-theoretical stance, operationalise it into a methodology to be used in service development, and illustrate the methodology in a context of consumer services.

This purpose was divided into four research aims, which also reflect the structure of the report.

- Research aim #1: To introduce a practice-theoretical perspective to service marketing and management research.
- Research aim #2: To develop understanding of how value emerges according to the practice-theoretical stance.
- Research aim #3: To develop a method (prototype) for understanding customer value for the purpose of service development.
- Research aim #4: To use the method in a selected context of practices, and to use that in the thesis as an illustration.

The research aim and the understanding of each research aim are here discussed separately according to how well the research achieves the aims defined. The discussion here tries also to tackle some of the questions that academics, practitioners, colleagues, and friends have raised in discussions.

7.1.1. Research aim #1: To introduce a practice-theoretical perspective to service marketing and management research.

It is more a rule than an exception that service marketing and management have viewed the customer as an active co-producer of services. This argument can be found in most contributions from the first contributions (Rathmell, 1966) to recent contributions to the field (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004). In that sense it is not distant to introduce a metaphor of the customer as a practitioner in the specific field of service marketing and management.

There is, however, a significant difference between the traditional view of the customer as an actor and co-producer and the perspective introduced here. The current service logic tends to explain the customer in the terms of work-like actions (Normann & Ramirez, 2001; Storbacka & Lehtinen, 2001) and thus according to the arguments presented here is unable to explain human actions as contextual - sometimes playful and
game-like, sometimes object oriented. Currently it appears that the customers are seen more as ‘partial employees’ that take on some of the actions of the firm (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004). This has the consequence that the actions of the customer are described as work-like resources employed to do a certain task, which in the analysis carried out in this thesis tend to tell much more about provider value formation than vice versa. It is self-evident that a ‘consumption-centred view on service marketing and management’ cannot start its analysis by seeing the customer as a partial employee, but must change the constellation around and see the provider more or less as a ‘partial agent that empowers’ the ‘good life’ of people. As mentioned, the concept of practice is believed to be a good starting point for carrying out the latter task.

According to the ontology selected for this thesis, the interest lies in the constitution of practices, and how meaning is constructed in those practices. The unit of analysis is the practice, which is a counter reaction to individualistic cognitivistic world-views; the human being is not interesting, the practice is (cf. Schatzki, 2001a; 2001b; Schatzki, 2002). Practice is not synonymous with action, but enlarges the unit of analysis to a totality that explains the systemic whole that fosters action (cf. Dourish, 2001). This is a very important distinction between action and practice that is the main ontological and epistemological starting point for this work. For the purpose of this thesis, a materialistic approach to practice theory has been used, in opposition to for instance discursive approaches to practice represented by authors such as Foucault (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). This means that practices are seen as very concrete constellations when different tools and competences are used for the purpose of doing something. In for instance ethnomethodology and discourse analysis, practices are more skewed towards different ways of speaking which also reflect different methodological choices.

Coming back to the task of introducing the practice-theoretical stance to service marketing and management, it is more than fair to say that the thesis has scratched the surface of a, to my knowledge, novel (for service marketing and management) theory of services. The field was approached from the perspective of the value concept, and thus the discussion on the service paradigm overall has not been extensively carried out.

It should, however, be mentioned that one conclusion is that the practice-theoretical starting point can have implications on the way we would define a service per se, and also the way we assume that services can be marketed and managed. Services are not always clearly separated, observable, and consciously chosen engagements of the customer. On the contrary; it is suggested that services are foremost non-separable from the customer’s overall life practices, and thus cannot be detangled from everyday life in the analysis. The argument goes even further and claims that services could be defined as the enabled practice of the customer (from the customer’s perspective) with indications of the involvement of the service provider (from the provider’s perspective). Services are embedded in practice and gain their value from this embeddedness, and can be defined according to its context of usage, that is the practice.

Similar thoughts have earlier been initiated by Normann & Ramirez (1993; 1994) in service-influenced strategy literature and by Suchmann et al (1999) in the field of human-computer interaction literature. The role of the company becomes rather one of a developer of the whole system of practice than one of an entity pleasing customer needs and wants (cf. Suchmann, 1999; Shove et al, 2004). This means that the focus of service
development should be on the contextual issues of service consumption, the creation of the prerequisites for actually consuming resources of a specific provider.

Suchmann et al (1999) propose in their article that technology can be reconstructed as social practice, meaning that technology per se loses ontological status, and the practices around usage gain a centred position. In similar ways one could argue that the literature on service logic has partly suffered from a missing extreme consumption-oriented/ contextual position that would define services according to the practice the service provider enables. This is clearly a shift from a logic of interaction and co-production towards a consumption-centred logic of services, in which service providers are only one domain that enables customer practices (see figure 3 in chapter 2). This has implications on the way we develop services and how service development is planned and managed. A discussion on the implications to service development will be further elaborated on in the section on implications.

This does not mean that the customer-focused companies should not engage in production-related contemplation; the point is more that the relevance in the practices of consumption should be the starting point for the analysis, both on a strategic level concerning positioning and strategic intent, and more operationally in gaining insight for service innovation and the development of existing services.

The aim of this thesis was to investigate the practice-theoretical stance and discuss its implications for the concept of customer value formation. Further research will include a more general discussion on the possibilities to build a service logic that takes customer practices as its starting point. If the suggested approach were to gain support, there would be a shift on at least the following aspects.

- **From interactions to practices:** Literature on service puts the interactions between the customer and the provider into focus, and in many cases promotes a discourse that suggests that interaction per se is valuable. The thesis at hand reduces the role of interactions, and claim that the actual practice of consumption carried by the consumer is where value is embedded (this may, however, include interactions with providers).

- **From individualism and subjectivism to contextualism:** The customer is considered to be a co-producer of services, but still an independent decision-maker and agent in the market place. The individual customer is neither perceived as embedded in the social nor the material context. This also implies that the customer is highly subjectivistic in his being in the world. The thesis at hand suggests that the customer or the human being is interesting only as a decentred carrier of practices, not as the king and judge as he is presented in traditional service marketing and management. The practice-theoretical stance can be categorised as a form of contextualism.

- **From cognitions to practices:** The customer is mainly viewed as a ‘thinking person’, whereas the body appears to be a sort of appliance for implementing the thinking of the customer. This can be seen in most methods and techniques in marketing as an urge to get into the customer’s head. This thesis proposes that it may not be important in all cases to understand what the customer thinks. Rather
one should view the customer as situated in practical terms, and investigate the value forming in the world. This thesis proposes that the customer should be foremost viewed as a practitioner, and meaning as constructed in the practices of that practitioner.

The foremost objective and hope is that this thesis (or the publications based on this thesis) would have the implication that it would introduce an option to mainstream service marketing and management literature. Customer value is a central concept in current literature of service marketing and management, and is thus chosen as a concept to be investigated in more detail as a part of a practice-theoretical and consumption-centred view of service marketing and management.

The thesis at hand will hopefully partly provide the tools for creating an optional and additional stance to mainstream service marketing and management. The benefits of this would be that service marketing and management would gain an optional perspective that would reveal aspects of consumption and how value is formed in the practices of consumption that have not perhaps been revealed before.

7.1.2. Research aim #2: To develop understanding of how value emerges according to the practice-theoretical stance.

As mentioned already in the introduction, value appears to be a relevant concept in current marketing discourse. For instance, AMA’s (2004) new definition of marketing is basically founded on the concept of value. That was not the case in the earlier definition. Also practitioners use the concept frequently to mean a range of different things.

‘What is valuable?’ or ‘What is value?’ are basic philosophical questions that have been contemplated for nearly two millennia. Marketing seems to have been gradually developed to stress that marketing should be valuable for both the customer and the provider that is carrying out marketing activities.

This appears currently to be one of the most central questions in marketing and also service marketing and management, from both a theoretical and practical perspective. The provider’s main task is to ‘deliver’ value. The discussion on customer value is surprisingly fragmented and ill-grounded in the historical development of the concept. The most disturbing thing when reading the literature is the ambiguity of theoretical starting points in the same article or textbook. For instance, value is discussed as being delivered to the customer, perceived by the customer, created or produced by the customer in conjunction by the same authors without acknowledging the somewhat problematic position to triangulate different paradigmatic starting points without practicing extreme reflexivity.

Customer value represents a concept for understanding ‘worth’: how can we understand what something is worth and how this worth is constructed? Different theories on customer value have clearly different areas of interest concerning this philosophical problem. For instance, the cognitivistic approach aims at understanding what something is worth, that is how much value has occurred from a certain product, service or
relationship. In this tradition, measurement becomes central and it can be read from the literature that much effort has been put on the development of instruments for making conclusions of how much something is worth. The resource-based view, and partially the experiential view, has focused on building understanding of processes for how value is created, and ignores the discussion of the outputs of these processes. It appears that the resource-based view tends to find it more interesting to understand the dynamics of value creation than the quantity of value resulting from this process.

This thesis has a similar interest as the resource-based view. The thesis has been built on the assumption that each practice is embedded with value, and that the important thing is to understand how the logic of how the value is formed can be improved. Therefore the focus of the management of customer value becomes the aspiration to increase the value of a certain practice, not to gain knowledge of how much value is embedded in the practice now and how much more value will be in the practice in the future when the provider has intervened in that practice. Therefore the focus of building a practice-theoretical approach to customer value stresses the dynamic nature of practices and the opportunities for providers to interfere in that practice in a positive way, rather than stressing the importance of creating routines for measuring value. Practice theory and ethnographic methods are certainly not the right paradigmatic starting point for building instruments as SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985; 1988) or other context-independent methods for the measurement of social phenomena.

It was suggested that customer value according to the practice-theoretical stance should be built on the basis of a number of assumptions of how value is formed. First, customer value is assumed to be embedded in practices that refer to the practical and contextual nature of customer value formation. Second, it is assumed that customer value is neither subjectivistic nor objectivistic, but a combination of these. This implies that customer value is neither constructed ‘alone’ by the customer nor ‘delivered’ by the context as something that cannot be reformed or altered. Third, customer value construction can thus be best described by the verb ‘formation’, instead of by the verbs used in the literature such as delivered, perceived, experienced, created and co-created. Fourth, it is assumed that customer value and the practices the value is embedded in are dynamic and can thus be intervened by a provider or developed by other means.

This approach to customer value is new to the literature, and represents a practice-theoretical approach to customer value formation that has not earlier been discussed in the literature. The most important conclusion is that customer value is, on an ontological level, neither subjective nor individualistic, but embedded in the holistic integration of minds, bodies and society overall. This provides the literature with a holistic explanation of market phenomena (cf. Zaltmann, 2003).

This holistic approach to managerial concepts as customer value is somewhat different from the current discourse in service marketing and management, and therefore I would like to separately conclude the discussion on the practice-theoretical stance of customer value by presenting a list of FAQs (frequently asked questions).
Table 29. FAQ regarding the practice theoretical stance to customer value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you really mean that it is not the customer who decides what is valuable or not?</td>
<td>Customer value is not only what appears for the customer, but a sociological phenomenon that is constructed in the combination of people, people and material, and culturally embedded rules, images etc. In order to understand what is valuable, the researcher has to understand the dynamics of the arrangements of practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why have you decided to view customer value in that manner?</td>
<td>Customers, or subjects of doing, are not independent from their context, but are affected by the context similarly as they affect the context themselves. This interaction is interesting to understand in order to improve services. The research also shows that the customer is not aware and able to express his needs and the opportunities for improvement of practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that you know better than the customer?</td>
<td>No, the researcher does not on a general basis think that he knows better than the customer of the customer’s own ‘reality’, but the researcher thinks that the ethnographic method and empirical research combining both emic and etic perspectives provides insights of what is valuable for the customer. In addition, it should be mentioned that ethnographic research includes emic perspectives that are claimed wrong only if there is disjuncture between what the customer says he is doing and what he actually does.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you measure the value?</td>
<td>Customer value is not measured, because the aim is to understand the dynamics of how value is formed, which is believed to be an important insight both in an academic and a managerial context. In the spirit of both practice theory and ethnography the interest lies in ‘how’, not in ‘how much’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What about the customer’s thinking and his decision-making?</td>
<td>I stress the pragmatic nature of human life, but do not exclude mentalistic processes. Customer thinking, for instance decision-making, appears in the practice and is thus not disconnected from the practical being in the world. Some practices may include a bigger portion of conscious contemplation, whereas other practices are bodily routines or any combination of these two extremes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.1.3. Research aim #3: To develop a method (prototype) for understanding customer value for the purpose of service development.

The failure rate of new products or services is over 80 % during the first two years of implementation (Zaltmann, 2003). This implies that there are serious limitations in companies’ capability of gaining insight into their customers. It is here proposed that the prototype of the method for mapping practices can give a more realistic and contextual understanding of the customer of a specific service. More importantly, it prevents companies from developing services that are not applicable to the customer’s ‘way of doing things’ and helps companies to create new services that renew customers’ practices.

It is well established that market orientedness is assumed to have a positive impact on provider performance (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Atuahene-Gima, 1996; Slater, 2001). Hence, customer orientation in service development is also emphasized (e.g. Bowers, 1989; de Brentani & Cooper, 1992; de Brentani, 1993; 2001; Edvardsson & Olsson, 1996; Alam & Perry, 2002). Some claim that customer input is even more important concerning services than tangible products (Martin & Horne, 1992). De Brentani & Cooper (1992) claim in their study that the degree to which a service meets the
customer’s needs is the most important factor explaining the success of service development. One weakness of the current literature is, however, that it does not give a clear indication of what customer insight can and should be developed in the different stages of the service development process (Alam & Perry, 2002). There are, however, some exceptions in the service development literature (Alam & Perry, 2002; Edvardsson et al, 2000). De Brentani & Cooper (1992) conclude that customer orientation should be present throughout the development process. First, studies are needed to pinpoint customer needs and wants in the early phases of the process. Second, the service concept should be tested before extensive development together with potential customers. Third, customer tests and field trials are needed to validate the service before a full-scale launch. The same conclusions have also been made concerning product development (Brown & Eisenhart, 1995; Li & Calantone, 1998).

In the practice-oriented view the emphasis should be on the understanding of those practices in which needs, wants and perceptions appear. It is thus argued that the restriction to cognitivistic concepts related to the ‘voice of the customer’ limits the opportunity to get in-depth understanding of the customer for service development purposes. The concept of customer practices can function as the unit of analysis when pursuing new kind of understanding of the customer’s life. This gives, instead of an individualistic understanding, a contextual and practical understanding of how life is constituted in the social and material life of the customer. This is argued to be a fruitful approach to develop proactively services to improve the life of customers in various ways.

It was argued in the chapter on the theoretical starting point of the thesis that ethnography applies very well to the construction of an empirically based knowledge of practices. Swidler (2001) argues that Geertz (the renowned ethnographer) has been one of the great influences in the development of practice theory as he pointed out that cultural understanding is an observable symbolic and ritual practice that structures the possibilities of meaning in a given ‘cultural system’ (Geertz, 1973). The link between practice theory and ethnography is not self-evident, but is in this work argued to be a good starting point. For instance, ethnomethodologists that examine practices often tend to use conversation analysis as a technique for understanding practice (although discursive).

The ethnography used in this thesis is applied in the sense that it uses managerial credibility as its foremost criteria for validity. In addition, the ethnography uses the practice concept as a unit of analysis in a stricter manner than most ethnographers.

The method is described in practical terms in-detail, in order to be tested in several empirical contexts. The objective in the next phase of the research is to constitute an ethnographic method that can be specifically used in commercial terms as a means of mapping and developing customer practices.

The empirical work done showed that the empirical research process and the utilisation of multiple techniques for investigating social phenomena on the basis of a grounded
The concept of practice is plausible at least in the context of family cruises. One should, however, mention that for instance the utilisation of the personnel as a source of tacit insight was only partially functional, and provided in this case only a sort of pre-understanding and was not used as ‘empirical data’ in the actual analysis.

What does the prototype of the method proposed then provide the researcher and the manager with, in comparison to other methods used? The foremost benefit of the method is that it investigates the ‘real’ behaviour of the customer, not the reported. There is a great difference between what people say they would do and what they actually do in practice. Different interview techniques and focus groups tend to focus on (because of natural reasons) issues that the customers know about, can and are willing to speak about. The method used here provides understanding of the mundane, routine behaviour which constitutes everyday life. The strength of the ethnography is most obvious in those behaviours that appear for people as non-problematic and self-evident. The limitation of the method is that it requires a lot of resources, and the credibility in traditional statistical terms is hard to measure.

The method proposed gives especially valuable for the first phases (idea generation and concept definition) of the services development process. It is, however, important to further test and use the method several times in order to actually state the prototype a method. It would also be interesting to utilise the prototype in the context of different services, and thus investigate empirically the applicability of the method in different service domains. See below for a discussion on the applicability of the method for different kinds of services.

**7.1.3.1. The applicability of the method**

Gummesson (1993) made a distinction of ten different kinds of services, which he presented in the form of different cases. Symptomatic of the research in the field, these categories mainly refer to production-related issues rather than consumption related, but give despite this a good overview of different forms of service consumption.

Each category will here be briefly discussed concerning the opportunity to use the practice-theoretical approach in conjunction with ethnographic research for the purpose of getting better customer insight when developing services.

First, the model of ‘manufacturing refers to service encounters that take place after the actual ‘product’ has been finalized in manufacturing facilities’, before the customer enters. Service elements, according to Gummesson, relate mainly to the intermediary who sells the product. As mentioned already in the introduction, a strict division between services and products is not made here, rather both services and products are used in an interactive process and thus become ‘services’ (cf. Vargo & Lusch, 2004a). Naturally, the mapping of practices should in these cases focus on the practice relating to the product, for instance mobile phone manufacturers should thus focus on

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28 The practice-theoretical approach to studying customer value formation with an ethnographic method has been used in two other cases after the empirical research for this thesis was finalised. The method has proven to be appropriate to study other than cruise or family related cases. These cases are not further described in this thesis.
understanding ‘mobile phoning’ (Kelley & Littman, 2001) or any other practice that the mobile phone manufacturer would perhaps like to enter (e.g. gaming, working).

Second, the model of ‘service production that takes place at the service provider’s site’ refers to services which are produced in a context that is controllable by the provider: hotels and cruise vessels are good examples of this kind of service production and consumption. This thesis provides some evidence of the opportunities to use the method in these kinds of services. In retrospect it could even be claimed that these kinds of services can be very efficiently investigated with the method proposed as the context is limited and gives good opportunities for successful observation, in opposition to services that can be consumed occasionally in any place. It should, however, be mentioned that the investigation of practices only in the ‘closed’ environment does not give enough raw material for the innovation of services. For instance, it would be very fruitful to study other contexts of family ‘togetherness’ than the cruise context in order to find new ideas for service development.

Third, the model where ‘the service provider offers an arena for service consumption’ refers to a somewhat similar form of service as the one in the previous section. The main difference is that the supplier remains passive and provides only the ‘space’ for the customer to perform their practice of, for instance dancing, doing gymnastics, or swimming. In the practice-theoretical view, the difference between the previous category and this one becomes a little bit fuzzy. Naturally, there are for example elements on board the cruise vessel which do not involve the active engagement of the service personnel. It could be assumed that this is the case with the hotel or other examples of services in the previous category. The principle of using the method for mapping practices remains the same as in the previous category.

Fourth, the model where ‘the service production takes place at the customer’s site’ refers to a category of services that is performed on the premises of the customer. In consumer markets this would imply a service carried out, for instance, in the home of the customer by workmen, repairmen, or perhaps a cleaning firm. This would imply that the mapping of practices should involve the practices in the home and the opportunities for the provider to improve, change or reduce a certain practice carried out currently in the home by the customer himself. This would require access for researchers to the homes of the people under scrutiny. It would perhaps be possible to use video cameras and audio recorders to document the doings of people in their homes. This is ethically problematic, and for instance bedroom cameras would be, for most people, unthinkable. For instance, architecture gains significant insights by taking a close look at the practices of habitation in order to provide customers with better architectural solutions for domestic life. The concept of ‘home’ can naturally also be enlarged depending on the needs for insights to the neighbourhood, the city, the country you live in etc.

Fifth, the model where ‘service production is carried out at a distance via information-conveying media such as phone, internet, e-mail, mail etc’ refers to services carried out via a sort of intermediary media. Physical contact between the customer and the supplier is lacking. Especially in the cases of mobile telephony the consumption is not limited perhaps to a specific location of either the producer or the customer. The same goes for the Internet, as the Internet can nowadays be accessed from various different places both in public and private spaces. This would not mean that the provider should not focus on
specific practices in specific environments - on the contrary. A mobile service provider may have the objective to, for instance, increase the use of mobile telephony in a certain context (shopping mall) concerning a certain practice (shopping). Nevertheless, there may also be interesting practices that are not attached to a certain physical context, but are rather defined by their ubiquitous nature. This may call for services that are also ubiquitous and delivered thus through some sort of ever-present media like mobile phones, PDAs, MP3 players and perhaps clothing in the future. Concerning the mapping of practices, the researcher should in these cases rely on participant observation and gain access to follow the customer through a range of different context.

Sixth, Gummesson (1993) mentions the model of ‘service production via intermediaries and subcontractors’. This implies that the service is provided through an intermediary, but usually involves direct contact between the customer and the intermediary. Gummesson uses the examples of tour operators selling through travel agencies and car manufacturers selling through car dealers. This does not imply any radical differences from a service-consumption perspective from the categories mentioned above. The method of mapping practices can be utilized, and is perhaps even more important than in the other cases as the manufacturer have no opportunities to gain consumer insight through everyday interactions with the customer.

Seventh, the model where ‘service production takes place on the premises of the third party’ refers to services that are carried out neither on the customer’s site nor on the provider’s site. Gummesson mentions the example of the training company arranging training for a company at a conference hotel. Similarly there are numerous different examples of consumers consuming a service of a provider in another provider’s premises. For instance many mobile services are consumed outside the home of the consumer, and naturally not in the premises of the mobile service provider. This was already discussed concerning the fifth model.

Eighth, the model ‘service production takes place at several sites and with several parties’ refers to rather complicated service solutions that may occur in different channels on different premises and involve several parties in production. An example would be a bank that provides services on several sites, and involves a network of providers for the delivery of that service. From a service-consumption perspective this usually refers to a combination of services that involve domestic, public and ubiquitous consumption. The task for service producers in these cases is usually to create and manage the complex network of providers and make the consumption of the service easy to use for the consumer. The mapping of practices can naturally be used also in this model.

Ninth, the model ‘service at a distance without interaction between the provider and the customer: interaction occurs between the provider and the third party’ refers to the special case when the consumer at times is not directly involved in production or consumption. One example would be defence activities in both peace and war times. A similar category is the tenth ‘Service at a distance without interaction between the provider and the other persons’ that is from the customer’s view similar to the previous. The difference is that the provider is not involved with other persons concerning the

29 All these different forms of service consumption have been discussed above.
production (e.g. garbage collection, mail collection and distribution). It is somewhat questionable whether the method of mapping practices can be used in the cases when the consumer is not in any contact with the service. In some cases, it could be argued that some of the services are ‘outsourced’ tasks earlier taken care of by the consumers themselves. It would be in those cases perhaps interesting to look deeper into the logic of the practices of the consumer related to those tasks.

The tenth model defined is a ‘hybrid’ model that is a combination of some of the models mentioned above.

In conclusion, it appears that there are opportunities to use the method of mapping practices in most different kinds of services. More empirical research is, however, needed in order to make judgments of the applicability on a more detailed level.

7.1.4. Research aim #4: To use the method in a selected context of practices, and to use it in the thesis as an illustration.

The context of family cruises was selected as a case for illustrating the method defined in the thesis. It should, however, be pointed out that the focus of the researcher is on developing the new theoretical starting point for service marketing and management, the practice-theoretical approach to customer value, and the methodology for understanding customer practices in empirical work. The empirical research is an illustration of how the methodology can be used.

The aim of the research was to make descriptive accounts of the practices and how the dynamics of customer value is represented in these accounts. There were several empirical conclusions made which can be found interesting both from an academic and a managerial point of view.

The distribution of practices according to three different subjects (adults, children and family) is interesting. It is apparent in the empirical research that the family does not attend the cruise context as an integrated subject, but carries totally different practices which are more or less valuable to the people involved. It appears that the vessel and the service are constructed in a way that seldom makes joint practices possible. It is also apparent that most of the ‘physical spaces’ are adapted to either adult or children practices, and very few spaces support joint doing, either in the form of joint practices or separate practices that can take place in the same place.

The specific nature of the practice on board the vessel constitutes a specific micro culture. The cruise context is somewhat detached from the culture the families experience in their daily life. The context of a cruise is special for the family, and has a reasonable number of interesting characteristics all worthy of their own study. The historical development of cruise practices is somewhat slow. Most families tend to be accustomed to a certain way of cruising and do not consciously try to change it, although they would be used to something quite different outside the cruise context. For instance, the practices related to shopping in the tax free shops (must-do shopping) and dining in the buffet (free movement and selection) have considerable historical baggage,
and could even be interpreted to be sort of relics from another time that are attended due to a custom.

The dynamics between different subjects in the form of integration and separation happening on board the ships is a conclusion that provides interesting opportunities to develop the context of cruises. It appears that the family as a unit would prefer to attend both practices that help them to integrate the family, but on the other hand also practices that help them to separate. There are opportunities to both develop current practices that help the family to achieve both integration and separation, and also opportunities to transfer new practices on board the vessel from other contexts. These aspects were chosen in order to develop an aggregated model of customer value formation for the specific case under scrutiny.

In addition, each practice per se is interesting and could be further studied from a historical and less context-specific perspective. For instance, the practice of family dining could be studied as a practice that appears in different ways in different contexts, and clearly has a historic explanation of the ways children are for instance taught the practice ‘eating’.

Finally, the empirical research gives a rather concrete starting point for service development and thus according to the arguments presented here the definition of which practices would be valuable for the customer. The empirical description provides the cruise company with the opportunity to decide whether they want to strengthen or diminish a certain practice, or transfer a certain practice to the vessel. The empirical results provide also an academically interesting account in which practices are described.

### 7.2. Contributions to the field of service marketing and management

Listing the contributions of the thesis at hand will summarize the conclusion of the thesis. The contributions are divided into theoretical, methodological, local empirical, and general empirical contributions.

The theoretical contributions are the following: 1) the use of practice theory as an ontological starting point for service marketing and management (discussion on pp. 29-31), 2) the new practice-theoretical approach to understanding customer value formation (pp. 44-51), and 3) the categorization of the current and historical perspectives on value theory in marketing (Table on pp. 42).

The methodological contributions relate to the use of the ethnographic method for understanding and developing practices, and are the following: 1) academically speaking, ethnography has seldom been used in service marketing and management and never as a method for understanding customer practices and value interlinked (pp. 54-
80)\textsuperscript{30}, 2) managerially speaking, the specific method for mapping practices is relevant for service development (see pp. 54-80).

The local empirical contributions may perhaps be found less interesting, as they are solely restricted to the context of family cruise consumption concerning a specific vessel design. The main contribution is, however, the illustration it provides for the theoretical and methodological contributions. There are a number of local empirical contributions that can be mentioned: 1) the consumer insight gained from the research concerning the specific context is unique (pp. 81-156); 2) the consumer insight gives a credible basis for new service development (pp. 157-160); and 3) the consumer insight does also contribute to the consumers, because some of the problems customers of the cruise line have has now been revealed.

The empirical research can also contribute on a more general level to the understanding of family dynamics (how families are constructed and deconstructed).

Next, the managerial implications will be discussed concerning aspects related to service development processes, service strategy and segmentation.

### 7.3. Managerial implications of the research

There is currently an ongoing discussion regarding future directions of service research (e.g. Vargo & Lusch 2004a; 2004b; Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004; Grönroos, 2005). In the debate among leading service researchers, fundamental questions like, ‘how should services be defined’ and ‘what are the characteristics of services’, are scrutinized. The discussion reveals how service researchers see the role of the customer and how they assume that customers behave. In most cases, the views are taking a provider centred view on services (Edvardsson, 2005). As discussed already several times, this thesis aims at questioning the current discourse on services and services marketing and management.

In addition to the more theoretical discussion on what a service is, and what the dynamics and value formation in service consumption is, there are some rather pragmatic managerial issues that can be stated as implications of the research.

I will mention and discuss three aspects that have not been discussed before in this thesis: service development processes, strategy, and segmentation. By discussing briefly some of the most central concepts of service marketing and management, I will open up the discussion of the managerial implications of a consumption-oriented service logic.

#### 7.3.1. Implications for service development processes

There is an opportunity to use the thesis rather directly for the purpose of developing and using a new form of service development process. The understanding of consumption practices can function as a starting point for service development.

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\textsuperscript{30} Hoolbrook (2005) has in a recent publication explored customer value with autoethnography, but represents clearly the experiential theory of value.
Currently, service development processes are conceptualized in different ways. Edvardsson et al (2000) propose a process of four phases: 1) idea generation, 2) the service strategy and culture gate, 3) service design, and 4) service policy deployment. Service idea generation naturally refers to the phase in which ideas are created and screened. Next, the service strategy and culture gate refers to the task of checking that the service to be developed fits the strategy and culture of the company. The phase called service design implies the actual work done in order to design and define the service at hand. Finally, the phase called service policy deployment and implementation is about implementing the service in the company, including training of the personnel and implementation of the service system. Other authors have similar process descriptions but with some differences in both the number of phases and the conceptualization of phases describing a similar path from idea to launch (e.g. Bowers, 1989; Grönroos, 1990; Christopher et al, 1991; Scheuing & Johnson, 1989). Many of these models are based on practices in product development (Johne & Storey, 1998; Syson & Perks, 2004). Edvardsson et al (2000) stress perhaps more than many others, the organizational aspects of service development. It seems to be especially important in service business to view development in a holistic manner.

Some researchers are skeptical to the sequential order of the service development process (Edvardsson et al, 1995; Dolfsma, 2004). Especially if we define service as the total offering as it is done in this thesis, it is probably reasonable to be critical towards a sequential model. However, it is claimed that a structured process is needed in order to develop successful services (Scheuing & Johnson, 1989; de Brentani, 1993).

Conclusively, there are, despite an increasingly active discussion on service development, few contributions that would suggest new and innovative ways of gaining and using customer insight in the process. Currently it appears that most literature on service development tends to discuss consumer insight in very general terms. The literature on both product and service development mostly refer to the voice of the customer (Griffin & Hauser, 1993; Johne, 1994) as being the source of insight. There are also exceptions where ethnography-inspired research has been utilized in this context (Swan & Bowers, 1998; Harris & Baron, 2004). It is here suggested that one implication of the research done can be a new service development process that starts from the investigation of how value is embedded in practices and continue with an analysis of how these practices can be improved, renewed or reduced.

The suggested service development process can be stated in four different phases:

1. **Investigation of current practices**: Examine the current practices the customer carries out in conjunction with the services. The objective would be to understand how practices are constituted of subjects, tools and know-how, images, physical spaces and actions. For instance, a bank could study the practices of saving money, and gain understanding of the logic of that practice.

2. **Selection of practices**: A provider should define the practices it wants to be engaged in. A review of the business potential in the practices should be carried out. In addition, benchmark studies of practices outside the context of the provider could be carried out in order to gain more insight about new opportunities.
3. **Definition of new practices/ possibilities to improve current practices:**
Definition of the practices that should be created, empowered and redefined for enhanced value. A provider should define the objective to develop the practices at hand, which in this case is not only related to the usage of the service at hand, but more or less life overall. The bank would look for opportunities to support its customers better concerning the practice of saving money.

4. **Service concept definition and implementation:** At this phase, the provider can go further to define the process and systematic capabilities for supporting, empowering, and redefining practices. This thesis does not focus on this theme. There is a range of scholars examining the provider perspective to service development (e.g. Edvarsson, 2000; Grönroos, 2000).

The logic of starting the inquiry of service development in the practical understanding of customer practices is not suggested in the current literature of service development. Overall there is surprisingly little research done in the field of service development (Martin & Horne, 1993; Alam & Perry, 2002). Academically speaking this means that there would be opportunities for further research in the implications of a practice-theoretical approach to service development processes.

### 7.3.2. Implications for service strategy and segmentation

Service strategy and strategy are concepts that are rather hard to define as they are ‘… both plans for the future and patterns of the past, including norms and values’ (Edvardsson & Enquist, 2002, 159). It seems, however, that strategy usually means a sort of mission, goal, direction or calling that binds the organisation together into a sort of joint doing. Berry (1995) writes that a service strategy captures what is valuable for the customer in a service. Therefore it seems appropriate to actually link strategy to the contextual understanding of service consumption and the value forming in consumption practices.

A consumption-centred approach to strategy would be to start the ‘making of the strategy’ from an analysis of customer practices, and analyze the potential in each practice. Each customer practice can clearly have commercial potential, and each provider can build an understanding of their ‘share’ of a specific practice in the same way as traditional market strategy is done concerning customer segments.

The main difference, and suggestion, to current ways of defining market strategy, is that it is more credible to do it by using practices, than by using customers, as the unit of analysis. Thus, strategy work would become the work done in the company in order to ensure a position in certain selected practices that would later ensure the commercial success of the firm, and thus help the provider in his value formation. This would give the needed goal, direction or calling, that binds the organisation together.

The strategy logic above would also imply that market segmentation would take practices rather than clusters of customers as the starting point. The research done concerning cruise practices of families showed that it is almost impossible to describe the family in general terms and create groups of customers that would have a similar
approach to cruising amongst the families. The families simply appear to be constructed through their practices, and do surprising things that would hardly be predictable by a general profile based on traditional segmentation models. It seems to be clear that the people attending the cruise are in some cases willing to lose their own subjectivity (agency), and give the context of the cruise power to act upon them.

Because of this effect, it appears that the families are not actually an integrated family with certain approaches to life, or even cruises. Rather, the concept of family is constructed along the way through the ‘carrying’ of different practices and letting different kinds of subjectivity (and objectivity) influence their doings. The family is not a family in the sense that it would ‘own’ an undisputable identity; it is rather an ever-changing family that becomes meaningful in different constellations of practices.

Segmentation usually refers to a classification of customers, which means that the provider identifies similar customers and groups them together. The customers may not be identical, but have so many commonalities that they are perceived as similar from the perspective of the provider (Söderlund, 1998).

The basic logic behind segmentation is that there are differences in a population concerning certain chosen and identifiable parameters which, in some group of customers have similarities to some extent, and can thus be defined as a specific customer segment. Traditionally, this exercise is done on the basis of viewing customers as individual and stable units of analysis that can be determined to belong to a certain segment with similar characteristics. There are authors criticising the basic assumption of grouping customers according to the traditional routines of segmentation (e.g. Holt & Sternthal, 1997).

The practice-theoretical approach to market phenomenon would most certainly object to segmentation in traditional terms, and claim that subjects are determined by their practices and cannot be defined on a generic level. When I write my thesis I have a certain subjectivity (and objectivity), whereas last weekend when I was enjoying a summer weekend with my friends, I was ‘somebody else in a different objective context’. It appears that it would thus be from a practice-theoretical approach more credible to segment ‘the market’ (read: the life of the customer) into different practices and prepare a strategy for gaining the position in the practices you have selected to be a part of. The customer appears to be somewhat too fragmented and dynamic to be defined according to more traditional forms of segmentation.

It should, however, be mentioned that the starting point for approaching a market phenomenon can be to use more traditional segmentation. As done in this dissertation, the starting point was to examine family cruise practices. The concept of family refers to a traditional demographic concept.

The implications of the practice-theoretical starting point on the service logic, and both strategy and segmentation, and other central concepts in marketing and service marketing and management are interesting areas for further research, and will not be discussed in more detail here.
7.4. Further research

Practice theory provides research in service marketing and management, and perhaps also marketing and consumer behaviour research an interesting angle to view market phenomena.

A number of ideas for further research are summarized below.

- **Practice theory and customer value.** The thesis at hand is aimed as a first attempt to examine customer value according to a practice-theoretical approach. The thesis is limited to discuss the dynamics of value formation, and does not attempt to define customer value as practice.

- **Practice theory and the service logic.** The recent discussion on service logic initiated by Vargo & Lusch (2004a) can gain a new perspective by applying a practice- and consumption-centred approach. This link requires further research.

- **Practice theory and marketing management.** The practice-theoretical approach to market phenomenon has implications on managerial issues of marketing that should be studied further.

- **Practice theory and consumer behaviour.** Practice theory also needs more research in the field of consumer behaviour. The work of Holt (1995) is one of the few contributions that explicitly takes a practice-theoretical approach, and has been able to create a typology of different practices.

- **Practice theory and empirical research.** The empirical investigation of practices revealed interesting aspects of cruise consumption. The same practice theoretical approach would be possible to apply to other empirical contexts, or to other practices in the cruise context than those carried out by families.

- **Practice theory and the ethnographic method.** The method used in this research was named an ‘applied ethnographic’ method. The research carried out was using prototype to a method that can be further developed into a managerial method to be used in service companies.

- **Practices and ethical considerations.** The stance taken in the thesis has effects on the ethical responsibilities of the firm. It is suggested that the firm needs to take more responsibility of the development of customers’ practices. This has ethical implications that need to be further elaborated on.

7.5. Epilogue: reflections on the scene

I mentioned in the prologue that the research as a practice per se has actually fostered the ideas and openings documented in this thesis.

The consciousness of the problems defined to be important in this thesis appeared for me in the practice of the research. Only after using the necessary tools and embedded
know-how in academia, the images of good research, the physical and digital spaces of CERS, libraries, EBSCO, ProQuest and Google, and acted upon them, was the practice of doing research able to produce an output here labelled ‘customer value formation in practice – a practice-theoretical approach’. Therefore I do not claim agency of my research, although the researcher can, of course, be held responsible for all the stupidities and misunderstandings in the report.

Whether this report has been valuable is for others to decide (in the spirit of my research). I would, however, like to address an issue related to the ‘doing’ of this research that I feel is as an important result of the research as the specific results documented in the seven chapters above (whatever that tells about importance).

During my research I have been advised to not go into ontological and epistemological questions of marketing. It has also been implied many times that the empirical research of ‘real problems’ (referring often to empirical issues as they would be more real than theoretical) is the contribution academia can provide the managerial world. Interestingly enough (for me), I found this absurd both from an academic and managerial point of view. When reflecting on the scene from the scene, that is the scene of service marketing and management and the literature of customer value, there seem to be, in addition to the testing of meaningful existing theories and making additions to them, ‘space’ and a need for reflexivity and radical re-thinking of the basic foundations of the field.

Traditional exchange marketing is rhetoric, a habit, a way of speaking, a discursive practice that can be criticized easily by choosing any argument that proves the rhetoric to be ‘wrong’. The service logic and relational approaches to marketing have been very successful in providing this criticism. One should, however, keep in mind that the fields referred to are as false. The relational perspective is rather another discourse that has picked its ideals from another context (e.g. social relationships and co-operation). It is a new rhetoric that has functioned as a counter-reaction towards the dogma of mass marketing, which became the ‘villain’ that every good story needs.

The disturbing aspect of this development is that the new rhetoric is presented as a new doctrine that is proclaimed as a ‘truth’ amongst students, scholars, and practitioners. I get the feeling that this rhetoric is even more devious than the previous one of traditional exchange marketing, due to its compelling figurative language and usage of highly emotional metaphors as relationships, which can provide new ways of thinking about the market place, but also mislead us to make unreasonable judgments of it (for example by assuming the market relationships have the same characteristics as personal relationships and usually forgetting the ‘dark side’ of those).

Thus self-awareness and reflexivity of optional ways to view the world feels to be at least as important before. Marketing is relationships, interactions and co-production (or whatever concepts you chose to pick) only if you choose to view the world as such. In my work I have chosen to view the world as practices, and apply the approach to the field of service marketing and management, which I sincerely believe can bring forward some new insights into the nature of services.
My attempt has been to maintain my reflexivity through the whole process and not present the practice approach as the only one, rather as a humble attempt to question the dominant discourse on services and relationships today, present an optional discourse and thus prove that multiple ‘truths’ can exist.
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