CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF AIRBNB REVIEWS: EXPLORING VALUE CO-CREATION

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to find out perceived value creation while engaging with the Airbnb business. Whilst values have been found leading to participation, values resulting from actual participation are yet to be explored. By taking the approach of service-dominant logic and cocreation, topped with the discourse analysis of the written accounts of Airbnb guests, this study has discovered several values that result from cocreation during participation in Airbnb business models. Several avenues for the continuation of this study are suggested to build upon the acquired knowledge from this exploratory research.

Keywords: Airbnb; discourse analysis; qualitative research; value cocreation; service-dominant logic and communities

INTRODUCTION

Developments in information technologies (IT) together with the emergence of the Web 2.0 have opened the way for new online platforms that make use of user-generated content, sharing and collaboration (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This has caused the rise of the ‘Gig Economy’, which led to new ways of consumption, empowered by continuous development of IT and digitalization in general, growing consumer awareness and the rize of collaborative online communities (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019).

The gig economy is seen as a game changer in the modern business world, with the term ‘gig’ meaning fixed-term tasks, activities. Many scholars debate how it aids in several contemporary issues such as the transition towards a sustainable society; inducing economic gain or developing social connections. However, as Meijerink and Keegan (2019) notice, the largest portion of scholarly debates is dedicated to understanding of the nature of work relationships and job contracts, including studies about workers as self-employed contractors and their work for a firm or consumer as episodic rather than indeterminate
The uniqueness of the gig work is rooted in the platform-enabled work environment, calling for scholars to investigate platform ecosystems (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). Generally speaking, participants of such platform-enabled work environment provide services on demand for different customers through fixed-term activities by individuals (gig workers) (Jansen, 2017; Kuhn, 2016; Stanford, 2017), coordinated by an intermediary platform firms – such as Uber or Deliveroo (Aguinis & Lawal, 2013).

Popular literature has documented a lot of negative attention as of late. According to the media, Uber has repetitively shown aggressive behaviour to penetrate and dominate the transportation market. Uber has used data analytics to prevent officers from tracking down illegal Uber drivers (Camarda, 2017), has allegedly committed patent infringement on software for self-driving cars (Carson, 2017) and has been accused of stealing drivers from competitor Lyft (Shontell, 2014). Airbnb has also received negative attention from the media. Airbnb has also been struggling with legislative issues since its launch, and municipalities have only recently stepped up to pass new laws regulating Airbnb accommodations (Coldwell, 2014). Amsterdam, for example, allows rental for up to two months a year. However, data have shown that accommodations in Amsterdam are rented for an estimated 96 nights a year (Airbnb, 2017a). Airbnb refuses to share the information of violators, making it hard for legislators to combat the violations.

There is no consensus among researchers whether Airbnb belongs to the gig economy or to, for example, sharing economy. Attempts to clarify this issue result in a scholarly argument and discussions. For example, proponents of Airbnb as a gig work environment would say that what Uber does for a car, Airbnb makes possible for your property. Whether it is a single room or your entire apartment, condo, RV or home, you can use this app to rent it with a free listing. It does not sound yet as gig work yet. However, latest developments that penetrated the Airbnb business model allow us to position it among gig platforms (so does the Wikipedia source – Airbnb is listed among 130 gig platforms). For example, the company can send a photographer to get the best image for the space property owners want to rent, selected from the pool of gig-working photographers. Or, the company has a subplatform for individual workers, who offer cleaning services for the properties owners.

Recent studies have shown why people participate in the gig economy (De Stefano, 2015). These studies have investigated the values that are important for the decision-making process and motivation to participate in gig platforms: community belonging, cost savings, familiarity, service quality, trust, utility, enjoyment and sustainability. However, how these values manifest has yet to be explored (Hamari, Sjøklint, & Ukkonen, 2015). The purpose of this study is to explore how values manifest themselves during the cocreation process between users in Airbnb. Values can be cocreated, but do not necessarily manifest themselves in different ways. Reviews from several Airbnb profiles are analyzed from the perspective of critical discourse analysis (CDA). In the end, more detail about values resulting from the value cocreation in the gig economy is acquired.

Below we first share some information about Airbnb, to introduce the focus of our research.

**Airbnb as the Focus of the Study**

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familiarity, service quality, trust, utility, enjoyment and sustainability. However, how these values manifest has yet to be explored (Hamari et al., 2015).

The purpose of this study is to explore how values manifest themselves during the cocreation process between users in Airbnb. Values can be cocreated, but do not necessarily manifest themselves in different ways. Reviews from several Airbnb profiles are analyzed from the perspective of CDA. In the end, more detail about values resulting from the value cocreation in the gig economy is acquired.

Airbnb is an online community marketplace facilitating short-term rentals ranging from shared accommodations to entire homes. Airbnb had a significant impact on the tourist industry, and substitution patterns are observed where rentals from Airbnb increase competition for hotels, especially lower-end hotels and hotels not catering to business travellers (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2015).

Airbnb started as an initiative by two recently graduated university students, who put their apartment on a self-developed website for conference delegates looking to avoid the city’s high hotel prices (Gebbia, 2016). The two felt like they had a strong business case, recruited another friend and turned their business into a service to also advertise their rooms as shared accommodations for tourists. First, they focussed on major events that required a cheap alternative to hotels to host visitors for these events. In 2009, they relaunched as airbnb.com and ever since then, Airbnb has grown fast as a platform and became a major player in the travel industry. ‘...Airbnb stands at the forefront of the gig economy...’ (Airbnb, 2017b). ‘Airbnb is a trusted community marketplace for people to list, discover and book unique accommodations around the world – online or from a mobile phone or tablet’ (Airbnb, 2017a). These accommodations involve apartments, villa’s but also castles. Airbnb not only allows people to find cheap places but also allows people to monetize their extra space and ‘showcase to an audience of millions’ (Airbnb, 2017a).

There are several other companies using the concept of accommodation sharing, such as CouchSurfing. Airbnb, however, remains the most dominant company in its market (Guttentag, 2015).

**Theoretical Framework**

To demonstrate how value is created in Airbnb from a service-dominant logic perspective, a theoretical framework was developed to connect the theory from the literature review. This framework involves an adapted form of the spheres of value creation developed by (Grönroos & Voima, 2013) to capture cocreation in the value creation process of the gig economy. The interaction between the platform, provider and consumer is shown. Inside of the sharing platform, value is cocreated between platform and provider and platform and consumer. Outside of the platform, value is cocreated between provider and consumer. In this framework, a P2P configuration of the sharing platform is assumed (Fig. 1). Within the platform, provider and consumers are only able to reach each other through the sharing platform. To do this, participation is required. The relevant values, in this case, have already been shown in previous research (Hamari et al., 2015; Möhlmann, 2015). However, the value cocreation occurs outside of the platform, between the provider and the consumer. Between these two actors, values manifest.

Based on the literature review, we identify five main categories of value creation: material, mobility, transaction, social and sustainability. The material category relates to the value created by the goods that are shared, as the gig economy involves both sharing of service and goods.
Whilst quantitative research has been done on which values are relevant for the attitude and motivation leading to participation, the manifestation of these values during the sharing process has yet to be described. In this study, we attempt to discover more details about how values cocreated between provider and consumer manifest.

**DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS THE CORE METHODOLOGY**

In traditional content analysis, values are conceived as part of the contextual dimensions of discourse (Fairclough, 1992). Texts can represent values embedded in ideology, attitudes or power relations outside the text (Sulkunen & Törrönen, 1997). Thus to discover which values manifest themselves among consumers, one needs to apply discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis is present in different forms. In this study, we assume a socio-cognitive interface when people leave a review on Airbnb. By doing this, we assume that ‘a person is very aware of the consequences, plans, intentions and goals of certain actions’ (Van Dijk, 1993). By taking this approach, we can view reviews as legitimate expressions of values related to the service the consumers received using Airbnb, a sharing platform.

The type of discourse analysis that is performed during the study is CDA. Whilst CDA is commonly associated with the analysis of serious social or political experiences or events, CDA can also be used to look at other social phenomenon (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). In
CDA, one takes a critical look at a text and perform both textual analysis to uncover values of individuals and intertextual analysis to identify groups or clusters. Stating that we use CDA instead of other forms of discourse analysis is necessary, as this shows that our discourse analysis will look at values present in a larger construct and involves the sociocognitive interface we assumed before.

The scope of this research remains on the organizational level, thus larger constructs, such as the influence of culture or religion will not be taken into account. However, as ideology is one of the main aspects of the gig economy, if any ideological values are present within the community, then these will be taken into account.

**Operationalization of the Main Categories**

In the framework, five different categories are identified as embedded values in the gig economy. In this section, we operationalized the several categories that will be used to perform the discourse analysis. Economic values have been seen as values related to utility and cost. Whilst values related to cost and saving of time are easy to identify, values related to utility should be clearly defined. To do this, the economic values have been split into three categories: material, mobility and transaction, based on the utilities defined by Lamberton and Rose.

**Material**: Values emerge from the goods that are shared, in the case of Airbnb from the accommodation and everything that the user is allowed to use. These values might be unique to the type of accommodation that is available at Airbnb and could thus be a benefit of the gig economy. To explore the way material values influence the customer experience of Airbnb customers and create value for the customers, the category material is used.

**Mobility**: Mobility utility was used by Hennig-Thurau, Henning, and Sattler (2007) in the context of digital file sharing, but Lamberton and Rose (2012) also utilized the concept with physical goods. Mobility utility involves the availability of a good. Airbnb was created to make up for a lack of hotel rooms during a conference and allowed people to open their accommodation to host people, solving the problem of the availability of goods (Gebbia, 2016). Values associated with mobility utility relate to the absence of limitations on product use within a sharing system (Lamberton & Rose, 2012). These values can be related to unique locations in which accommodations are available, and the variety of options the accommodation offers based on the location that this accommodation resides in. Therefore the category ‘mobility’ is operationalized as ‘location’, in which we identify all value creation related to the location in which an accommodation resides.

**Transaction**: Transaction utility was identified by Thaler (1985) as an important factor in consumer decision-making. Transaction utility is measured by comparing the price the individual pays for some good to a reference price. A value that can be associated with this is the ‘fairness of the price’.

**Social Values**

Social values refer to the perceived value creation between an interaction between the consumer and other individuals during their use of an Airbnb accommodation. These values could manifest themselves as trust, community belonging and enjoyment (Hamari et al., 2015; Möhlmann, 2015). The reviews will be scanned for signs of these values. Values that are related to human interaction, but that do not fit with the already identified
categories of trust, community belonging and enjoyment, are also categorized. Thus under the categorization social, all value creation processes that occur due to human interaction between provider and consumer are explored.

As stated before, this study will not attempt to identify different cultures or ideologies that dominate in the gig economy. This study will look at ideological values in the context of sustainable development and environmental issues.

Research, however, has expressed that sustainable values, whilst important for the attitude towards the gig economy (Hamari et al., 2015), this value might only be relevant for participation when self-serving values, in this case, social and economic values, are fulfilled (Schuitema & Groot, 2015).

In this case, it is of importance to look if self-serving values are already fulfilled before we associated mentions of sustainable behaviour with an expression of sustainable values. For example, if in a review the sentence ‘the room had everything we needed, and public transport was easy to reach’ appears, we will first state that, even though public transport shows an example of ‘green’ behaviour, this value is mainly related to mobility utility, and thus involves an economic value. However, if the consumer also states that he/she is in possession of a car, and then states that it was handy that public transport was easily accessible, their self-serving value was already fulfilled (they require transport) and in this case, the value of sustainability is expressed (the accommodation was close to public transport).

Data Collection and Analysis

As stated before, the data in this study involved reviews from various Airbnb profiles. The Airbnb profiles can be seen as the providers in our framework, creating value for the consumers on the Airbnb platform. The reviews were pulled from profile pages from all over the world with popular accommodations.

The reviews were selected based on two criteria: one of the accommodations associated with a profile page must have at least 100 reviews and the reviews must have at least five proper English sentences to qualify for data collection. These criteria ensure that enough reviews have been left on a profile to ensure that enough data can be collected for each respective profile and the minimum of five sentences were set to ensure that the quality of the data remained high overall and that the experience during the stay at the Airbnb accommodation has been properly expressed in the review.

For each profile page, 15 reviews were thoroughly analyzed to establish indicators for the main values and collect associated words with these values. In total, 25 reviews were collected for each profile to allow for a larger selection of comments to describe the manifestation of values with.

To make sure that the difference in countries, price and location did not bias the values that were expressed in reviews, accommodations were selected in different countries within a similar price range of other accommodations in a certain city. In addition, due to the recent controversy of Airbnb investors, who buy real estate in cities with the only purpose of advertizing them on Airbnb, the amount of accommodations per profile has also been collected to make sure that no bias could originate from this factor.

In total, 20 different profile pages were checked, selected randomly from the pool that met the requirements stated in the previous paragraph. A detailed overview of the reviewed profiles can be seen in Table 1.

The price given in the table is the price per person per night for the lowest amount of people that can rent the accommodation, excluding cleaning costs. If there are multiple
accommodations, the minimum and maximum price is given. Some profiles with multiple accommodations had a large gap in prices. In those cases, only prices within a certain price range were analyzed.

The data were analyzed by looking for values expressed in the discourse of each individual review (Fairclough, 1992; Van Dijk, 1993). The resulting values from this analysis were categorized using the five categories, material, mobility, transaction, social and sustainable, and collapsed per profile. This resulted in a quantitative measure of occurrence of each category and several indicators were identified for each category. In addition, phrases and words used to describe or identify a value were collected. Collecting all words and phrases used to describe these indicators allowed for the collapsing of these indicators across profiles and the creation of a general overview of relevant indicators per value and how these manifested in the discourse of the reviews.

**RESULTS**

People hiring an Airbnb have different styles of reviewing. Whilst some mention one thing that specifically stood out for them in great detail, another would mention a whole range of goods and services that created value with less detail. These two type of reviews together ensure that both the whole spectrum of values could be identified and also allowed deeper insight on how these values manifested. On overview of the results can be seen at the end of this section in Table 2. In the following section, the manifestation of different values is explained in detail. After this section, several relations between values are explained.

### Table 1. An Overview of the Analyzed Profiles on Airbnb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Country and City</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Number of Accommodations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AU1</td>
<td>Australia, Melbourne</td>
<td>€18,75–e24,—</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU2</td>
<td>Australia, Melbourne</td>
<td>€34,—</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA1</td>
<td>France, Paris</td>
<td>€35,—–e50,—</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA2</td>
<td>France, Paris</td>
<td>€29,50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HK1</td>
<td>Hongkong, Hongkong</td>
<td>€36,—</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HK2</td>
<td>Hongkong, Hongkong</td>
<td>€28,50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HU1</td>
<td>Hungary, Budapest</td>
<td>€13,50–e18,—</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HU2</td>
<td>Hungary, Budapest</td>
<td>€17,—–e20,—</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT1</td>
<td>Italy, Rome</td>
<td>€42,50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT2</td>
<td>Italy, Rome</td>
<td>€26,67–e37,—</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JP1</td>
<td>Japan, Tokyo</td>
<td>€26,—–e37,—</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JP2</td>
<td>Japan, Tokyo</td>
<td>€25,50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK1</td>
<td>United Kingdom, London</td>
<td>€38,50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK2</td>
<td>United Kingdom, London</td>
<td>€53,—</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US1</td>
<td>United States of America, New York City</td>
<td>€26,50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US2</td>
<td>United States of America, New York City</td>
<td>€43,50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US3</td>
<td>United States of America, San Francisco</td>
<td>€69,—</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US4</td>
<td>United States of America, San Francisco</td>
<td>€37,—–e69,—</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZA1</td>
<td>South Africa, Cape Town</td>
<td>€22,50–e23,50</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZA2</td>
<td>South Africa, Cape Town</td>
<td>€42,50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the analysis, several indicators for value creation were deduced from discourse. These indicators have been sorted in the five categories that were discussed in the theoretical framework. An overview of all indicators of value creation can be found in Table 2. The values, indicators and manifestation of values are discussed in this section.

In their reviews on the respective Airbnb profiles, people referred to several aspects of the goods that were shared during their stay in over 80% of all reviews. The values associated with shared materials are categorized in the three categories: quality; essentials and Extras.

**Quality:** The perceived quality of the accommodation was important in more than three-quarter of all reviews that involved shared goods. The perceived quality of the accommodation was determined by the overall cleanliness of all facilities, the comfort of the accommodation, the size and the style of the accommodation.

Whilst not unique to the gig economy, guaranteeing quality is more difficult in the gig economy opposed to hotels or traditional B&Bs, as Airbnb accommodations do not have to qualify to official regulations. Unique to the gig economy, however, was the style of the accommodation. The style was commonly associated with a modern, stylish and most importantly, a homely feeling:

>The apartment was very clean and we really liked the homely touches [HOST] has put to make his place modern and homely. [JP2]

Associations such as ‘a second home’, ‘just like home’ and ‘feel at home’ are not uncommon in the discourse of the reviews. As we pass to the other categories in material values, we notice that this type of discourse is omnipresent.

**Essentials:** Having access to essential equipment similar to home played an important role in value creation for consumers and creates the same associations with a ‘homely’ feeling as quality:

>All the equipment was complete, just like at home, which was why we really love this place. [JP1]

[HOST]’s place was lovely - clean, well equipped (even better equipped than my own home!!) and very tastefully designed. [ZA1]

Place is excellent for its price, equipped with all the necessities for a short and pleasant stay. [US1]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Manifestation of Value in Discourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Familiar, clean, comfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Essentials</td>
<td>Familiar, freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extras</td>
<td>Familiar, professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility (location)</td>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Quiet, safe, nontouristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connectivity</td>
<td>Convenient, relaxing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transaction</td>
<td>Fairness of price</td>
<td>Inexpensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge sharing (F2F)</td>
<td>Personal, local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge sharing (digital)</td>
<td>Freedom, convenient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Green choices</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.** An Overview of All Values, Indicators and Manifestation of Values in Discourse.
These essentials mostly involved kitchen and bathroom equipment. Interesting enough, consumable goods such as food and drinks were not mentioned as essential, but as an extra, which will be discussed later. Whilst washing machines and dryers were seen as handy, they were not seen as essential in creating the ‘homeliness’ of the accommodation.

**Extras:** Under extras, we qualify all the food, drinks and entertainment the accommodation provided. Previously, material values manifested as a ‘homely’ feeling; however, providing these extras is also compared to the service at hotels:

[…] they provided a hotel-like service, food and beverages were replaced and refilled every day. [US2]

[…] it’s homely with welcoming flowers and drinks from [HOST] which is surprising. [IT1]

One of the parts of the room that delighted me was the smart TV. I could watch Netflix, Hulu, and more from my own accounts on the TV in my room. [US4]

What can be concluded from these examples is that the core value of the sharing of goods in Airbnb lies in providing a familiar feeling. Whilst travelling abroad, far away from home, people still value similarities to home in the Airbnb accommodations.

Within the category of location, two factors are prevalent: setting and connectivity. With setting, reviews referred to values created by the direct surroundings of the accommodations, such as the neighbourhood, the restaurants and cafes in said neighbourhood, etc. With connectivity, reviews referred to values created by the connectivity with different modes of transportation to reach other destinations beyond the direct surroundings of the accommodations, like landmarks in the city and around.

**Setting:** The setting of an accommodation can impact the customer experience during a stay significantly, both in a positive and negative way:

[…] this was apartment was not a good fit for our family. To small and location was in the red light district. I think we would have preferred to be in a different area. [FA1]

We loved the location and the peaceful setting living like a local for the week we were here. [ZA2]

What customers value in general from the setting of the accommodation according to the discourse in their reviews is living like locals, safety and quietness. Whilst safety and quietness are not particularly new values, being able to live like a local is unique to the sharing experience of Airbnb.

In general, living like locals is perceived as valuable as one gets to get closer to the local population and get a different experience from other touristic areas. One quote captures this value excellently:

Overall the thing is the the neighborhood is really nice, not at the tourist center (which is really good if you like your stay to be less ‘touristic’ and to see more of the local population) but on the other hand very ‘happening’. [UK2]

**Connectivity:** At first glance, connectivity might appear to be just a practicality. Whilst connectivity is commonly associated with convenience, reviews show that the way one travels to and from their location during their stay can create unique customer experiences and thus value for consumers:

Enjoyed the ferry trip over and back each day as it provided a bit of ‘wind-down’ time after the hustle and bustle of the city. [US2]

Thus having a location close to several forms of transport leading to important locations for the consumer is seen as good connectivity. This leads to the manifestation of values in discourse in the forms of not only convenience but also relaxation.
In less than 10% of the reviews, transaction value manifested. When transaction manifested, it manifested as a sense of fairness of price:

2 minutes walk to exhibition centre so if you looking for place to stay while visiting any exhibition at designer centre this would be great choice in comparison to overpriced hotels. [UK2]

If you’re looking for something cheap and in a great location in Tokyo, this is your place. [JP2]

[…] but this is an amazing place to stay if you’re looking for a cheaper place that’s still super close to everything and you are open to sharing space and meeting new people. [US4]

When transaction value was present in the discourse, it was not directly related to their experience during the stay but was mentioned in relation to the decision-making process whilst searching the Airbnb sharing platform. From this research, however, it could not be deduced that transaction value contributed to the customer experience during the sharing process.

The social aspect of value creation manifested itself most frequently in two ways: flexibility and knowledge sharing.

**Flexibility:** Flexibility in check-in and check-out times created a lot of value for the consumer.

They were very flexible with me checking in and even more so when I spontaneously needed to stay an extra night. [US4]

[HOST] is very flexible, easy-going and chill [US3]

Flexibility in check-in and check-out times results from the informal environment in which the sharing takes place in the context of Airbnb. One is hosted by an individual opposed to a larger organization. This flexibility creates value for the consumer by giving more freedom to create an experience that fits the individual, expressed by the appreciation of the flexibility of the host in the reviews.

**Knowledge sharing:** Consumers experienced two different types of communication during their stay at the Airbnb accommodation: face-to-face (F2F) communication and digital forms of communication. Whilst both resulted in knowledge sharing between provider and consumer, the values manifested differed. In F2F communication, consumers gained information about the local surroundings of their accommodation in a casual way, describing the knowledge exchange as passionate and related to the location:

[HOST] is very passionate in what he does and his passion is evident in his energy in engaging with new people and sharing of information. [HK1]

[HOST] met us at the apartment and gave us great information and tips about Rome, […] his local knowledge was excellent. [IT1]

In digital forms of communications, information that was shared could also relate to local knowledge; however, discourse leant more towards information about the accommodation opposed to detailed local information:

The place was extremely easy to find thanks to the hosts’ instructions, although we didn’t meet in person. No problem with communication, though, at all. [HU1]

Getting into the studio/loft was super easy, we had codes so there was no need to meet up. [FA1]

We actually never met, because getting the keys and entering the apartment was handled with codes, which was great due to the flexibility of arrival. [HK1]
Aside from digital, information was sometimes also given with guides spread throughout the apartment, similar to hotels.

There are lots of guides with pictures throughout the apartment to help you use the TV, toilet etc. [JP1]

The value in knowledge sharing through F2F communication manifests itself in the more personal touch to the information that is shared.

One values the friendly, social contact with the host, as well as the richness of the information about the location of stay and the locals.

In communication through digital methods, one values the ease of the exchange of information and the fast response time. Whilst the exchange of information is less rich and personal, the value gained from flexibility is even further enhanced.

Thus, while F2F communication causes the value of knowledge sharing to manifest in a more personal, friendly and warm way, knowledge sharing through digital communication enhances the manifestation of flexibility, which creates value for consumers in freedom to do their own thing.

Less than 5% of the reviews contained discourse hinting at the manifestation of the values related to sustainability:

Not only cozy but also warm during Tokyo cold rainy day even though we did not switch on the heater. The building insulation must be very good. [JP1]

The apartment is very well located and we walked everywhere, although there is public transport very close too, we thought it would be better to walk. [IT1]

These few examples indicate that value is created only for those who already have a sustainable attitude. In these cases, having the freedom to make a sustainable choice over a nonsustainable choice added value.

Mechanisms Influencing Value Cocreation

While the last section gave an overview of values, indicators and the manifestation of values in discourse, in this section, the underlying mechanisms that influence the value cocreation process are described. These mechanisms give more insight in the several factors that influence the cocreation process.

In the theoretical framework, the focus of the research was put on value creation during the actual sharing process, not during the virtual interaction. However, from analyzing the reviews, part of the manifestation of value cocreation between consumer and provider was influenced by external factors: expectations created within the sharing platform and uncertainty outside of the sharing context. Things such as communication prior to arrival and expectations of the accommodation created by pictures online influenced the customer experience during their stay at the Airbnb accommodation. Both positive and negative examples can be retrieved from the reviews:

The description was very very detailed, which was comforting. [AU2]

Much worse than expected and described [...] hot water supply ran out very quickly. Few hot water in spring/winter time is a very horrible experience [...] [IT2]

The place is exactly as described. It is clean, warm and cozy. [IT2]

As can be seen here, a good and accurate description from the provider’s side can establish a feeling of trust, described as comforting in the first quote.
The other two reviews belonged to the same accommodation, however, both describe a completely different experience, both related to expectation. While one describes a ‘horrible experience’, the other describes a ‘clean, warm and cosy’ experience. Uncertainty plays a large role in the manifestation of values during the cocreation process. The total experience of sharing can be devalued by temporary external factors, such as renovations, problematic neighbours and repair of the accommodation during the stay of consumers.

Causes of the problems resulting from misalignment in expectations due to temporal issues lie both in the way an Airbnb accommodation is presented on the Airbnb webpage and the communication between host and consumer. The description of an Airbnb accommodation can be changed, but it can be a hassle to adjust the description during small renovations. In these cases, however, proper communication between the host and consumer would have changed expectations and either resulted in acceptance of the situation or cancellation of the reservation.

In both cases, the customer experience of value cocreation in the gig economy would have improved, and the misalignment between expectation and reality would have been dealt with.

A good example of how insufficient communication can create negative associations towards the host as a result of temporal issues, we expand the quote mentioned earlier from IT2 about the hot water supply:

I have tried to contact [HOST] with no feedback, […] few hot water in spring/winter time is a very horrible experience […]. All in all, everything good, except very few hot water and hard to contact host and take long time to reply. [IT2]

The fact that the host did not reply on time and thus was too inflexible to solve the problems of the consumer resulted in both a negative manifestation of material values indicated by quality and negative manifestation of social values indicated by knowledge sharing (digital). Thus a combination of not being able to provide high standards with respect to the indicators can result in negative value, and a combination of negative value results in an accumulation of negative values:

However, surprizes aren’t always unwelcome, as can be seen from a quote of UK1:

We got a (unexpected) breakfast, so that’s also really nice. [UK1]

In this case, the unexpected event was related to the indicator extra and manifested itself in a positive way. However, the unexpectedness of the breakfast did not add more value to the breakfast, as the breakfast itself was mentioned in half of the reviews and the unexpectedness of the breakfast was only mentioned once. In all other reviews, the breakfast was simply indicated as an extra and value manifested in a similar way as other extras.

Thus, whilst unexpected events can result in negative manifestation of values, they can also result in the positive manifestation of values. However, the negative manifestation of values is enhanced due to the unexpectedness, whilst positive manifestation is not enhanced due to the unexpectedness.

In addition to expectations created on the platform, consumers experience uncertainty outside of the sharing context. This uncertainty was mostly related to a delayed arrival at the accommodation, which occurred at least once in half of the reviewed profiles.

In case of a delayed arrival, good communication by the host turned a negative experience as a result of the travel into the manifestation of positive values indicated by flexibility:

[HOST] is such a flexible and thoughtful host. Our flight […] got delayed […] however she was more than accommodating with still greeting us and everything. [UK1]
As a result of good communication of the flexibility of the host, the consumer projected positive characteristics towards the host. The increased freedom is valued as the stress of being late due to external factors is removed.

In these cases, flexibility of the host played a significant role in creating value from a negative external experience.

The Influence of Connectivity on the Manifestation of the Setting
A mode of transportation that is mentioned in about 40% of the analyzed reviews is walking. Having main attractions, restaurants or supermarkets within walking distance is frequently mentioned in the reviews. In the following review, one even valued being able to walk over the quality of the accommodation:

My room was small, I didn’t needed more because I just wanted to walk around the city and go to places. [UK2]

Whilst walking itself is seen as valuable, descriptive details on why walking is such a valuable experience compared to public transport are not present in all reviews.

However, walking does impact the importance of the setting of an accommodation. As people tend to walk around more in the nearby area, the manifestation of values related to the setting is intensified:

But one thing at night time is a bit of walking distance and also need to pass through some quiet places […] [UK1]

[…] the location of the Airbnb is perfect to walk to everywhere almost its very quiet and very safety to walk […] [US3]

Thus walking can enhance the manifestation of values related to the setting. This can have both a positive or negative effect according to the discourse of the reviews. A quiet environment is normally seen as a positive aspect of the setting; however, when people had to walk through a quiet setting, feelings of safety manifested in a negative way.

Whilst section ‘Social’ might indicate that profiles with a lot of listings become less personal in communication, reviews from the profile with the largest amount of accommodations, ZA1, contradicts this assumption:

[…] he did make it a point to come by and say hi towards the end of our stay, and I am very glad we got to meet him as he was very sweet :-). [ZA1]

This indicates that the number of accommodations is not causing the increasing problems due to the lack of control by the host on unwanted behaviour by the consumer. Instead, there might be different types of hosts: ones that combine both digital and personal communication and ones that only seldom meet the consumer in person. Suspected is that the values motivating the provider to participate in Airbnb differ, creating one or more groups of providers.

DISCUSSION
In existing literature, satisfaction of consumers in Airbnb resulted from cost savings, familiarity, trust and utility (Möhlmann, 2015). Our research shows that indeed, trust and utility are important during the customer experience. However, values related to transaction such as fairness of price did not play a significant role during the cocreation process between provider
and consumer. It seems that this value is mostly expressed when the consumer is back within the sphere of the sharing platform. In addition, value from sustainability did manifest itself; however, the amount of times the value manifested was very low.

Whilst familiarity was one of the manifestation of the material values, Möhlmann (2015) refers to familiarity with the sharing platform itself, whilst we discovered another type of familiarity to play an important role: familiarity with home. This corresponds with existing research in novelty and familiarity in travel, as familiarity in accommodation has been shown to be relevant for both familiarity seekers as novelty seekers (Basala & Klenosky, 2001).

The mobility value also manifested itself as being able to stay in a nontouristic area. According to Basala and Klenosky (2001), the type of travellers that preferred more local areas were novelty seekers. However, as the gig economy is expected to grow, other types of travellers must also be involved in Airbnb. Again, this indicates that different populations must exist within Airbnb in which for each population values will manifest differently.

Hamari et al. (2015) has indicated that enjoyment plays an important role in the attitude and behavioural intention of consumers. The way enjoyment is described can be best described as the value that is created during the sharing process. In this study, several indicators have been revealed related to a multitude of values that can be related to increased enjoyment or values created during the sharing process. Only the transaction value could not be related to enjoyment.

The gig economy has been seen as a movement with the potential to introduce sustainable values into society (Kramer & Porter, 2011; Prothero et al., 2011). From the results, however, it cannot be stated that this is actually happening in Airbnb. It appears that the focus within Airbnb is mostly on economic and social values. However, as can be seen from the few occurrences of sustainable values in the discourse, the potential to introduce sustainability into Airbnb exists. Thus it is suspected that the gig economy is capable of creating sustainable values and that the lacking manifestation of these sustainable values can be related to the lack of a sustainable agenda within the gig economy. As of now, customers have no expectations of sustainability within the gig economy, thus no negative values or positive value creation as a result of sustainability is pushed.

There are several limitations to the results of this research. First of all, the reviews pulled from the twenty Airbnb profiles that were analyzed all fell in the lower price bracket of their respective city. In addition, only accommodations located in an urban environment were chosen; more secluded locations might result in the expression of different values. It is thus difficult to generalize these data to the whole user base of Airbnb. However, this research does create a starting point for future research in value creation within Airbnb. At the start of this research, it was stated that the goal was to discover which values manifest in the gig economy. By using Airbnb as a case study, only a small part of the gig economy has been explored. Airbnb, being a P2P, for-profit organization, may result in different values manifesting compared to other platform configurations in the gig economy. On top of this, the gig economy involves several different industries. Differences are present in which values are important to consumers depending on the industry or market in which sharing takes place (Möhlmann, 2015). Thus value from sharing might manifest differently in other industries.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The purpose of this study was to enhance our understanding of the value creation process in the gig economy. We investigated how values manifest among consumers during the
The value cocreation process in the gig economy has received little attention in existing research. Whilst research has been performed on why people participate in the gig economy, research regarding the experience within the gig economy had yet to be done. By performing discourse analysis, more detail has been revealed about the manifestation of values during the cocreation between provider and consumer. In relation to service-dominant logic, more insight is gained in how service and goods offered by the provider influence the customer experience by mapping out what value was created, in what way values are perceived by or manifested in the consumers and how different factors influence this value creation process. This furthers our understanding on the fast and destructive penetration of Airbnb into the traditional travel accommodation market.

As this study used qualitative methods and approached the problem in an exploratory way, it serves only as a starting point for future research in the gig economy from an S-D logic perspective, but also other fields. By developing a framework in which value creation in the gig economy can be approached, operationalizing the different values in the gig economy and exploring a new way of doing qualitative research in this area by using discourse analysis, the groundwork is laid for future research to explore value cocreation in the gig economy in different segments within Airbnb, different platforms in the gig economy and different industries in the gig economy.

By performing discourse analysis and describing indicators and manifestations of values in discourse, the base for text mining opportunities is laid. Text mining of reviews would allow for fast analysis of a large number of reviews and creates the possibility for both qualitative and quantitative data to be acquired. Thus, a combination of discourse analysis and text mining is a strong recommendation for large-scale continuation of this study.

On top of this, only the consumer side has been taken into account in discovering important values during the sharing process. Investigating the provider side is an important topic for future research. Discovering important values resulting from sharing for the provider will give insight into why providers participate and allow for the approach of this issue from a Human Resource (HR) perspective. Discovering the motivation behind participation in the gig economy builds upon existing motivation theory in the field of HR, however, the focus moves from a traditional business setting, in which a workforce is integral to the organization, to a P2P business setting, in which a mobile workforce is operating.

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