

Value creation in commercial pop-up activities

A qualitative study of value co-creation from a consumer perspective

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Abstract

I det moderne samfund bliver forbrugere eksponeret for reklamebudskaber i så høj grad, at de ikke alene er meget dygtige til at afkode budskaber, men også i højere grad er i stand til at afvise reklamer, der ikke interesserer dem. Denne forudsætning gør at virksomheder både skal kæmpe for at bryde igennem 'reklamestøjen' og for at fange forbrugernes opmærksomhed. Dette er medvirkende til at nye, innovative marketing metoder tages i brug, og guerilla-marketing er en af disse metoder. Herunder er det muligt at kategorisere kommercielle pop-up aktiviteter, som med deres midlertidige levetid og ekstraordinære set-up forsøger at skabe høj opmærksomhed og attraktivitet blandt forbrugerne. Det er en generel opfattelse i litteraturen om kommercielle pop-ups, at aktiviteten har en iboende eksklusivitet, som skaber værdi for forbrugeren. Denne værdiskabelse er imidlertid anskuet fra et virksomhedssynspunkt. Dette studie udspringer af en ambition om at undersøge hvordan kommercielle pop-ups skaber værdi for forbrugeren fra et forbrugersynspunkt. Studiet belyser værdiskabelse i kommercielle pop-ups fra et nyt perspektiv, og forsøger dermed bidrage med nye indsigter til den nuværende litteratur om emnet.

Studiet anvender kvalitative interviews til at undersøge, hvordan værdi skabes gennem konsumering af kommercielle pop-up aktiviteter. Gennem tematisk analyse af seks interviews (en fokusgruppe og fem interviews) konkluderes det at værdiskabelsen fra et forbrugersynspunkt sker gennem en fortløbende konsumeringsproces. Dette tilføjer et nyt perspektiv til den nuværende teori om kommercielle pop-ups, da den nuværende litteratur primært fokuserer på den værdi, der kan skabes i pop-up aktiviteten. Dermed bidrager studiet med indsigter angående værdiskabelse fra det øjeblik forbrugeren eksponeres for pop-up aktiviteten via kommunikation fra brandet, massemedier eller sociale relationer. Ligeledes belyser studiet hvordan pop-up aktiviteten fortsat kan skabe værdi for forbrugeren efter vedkommende har besøgt aktiviteten, når oplevelsen og viden om pop-up'en muliggør samtaler med andre i forbrugers interessefællesskaber.

En stor del af den værdi, der skabes ved konsumering af en pop-up aktivitet identificeres som værende skabt mellem forbruger-til-forbruger eller brand-til-forbruger. Studiet indikerer dermed at virksomheder, der ønsker at skabe en pop-up aktivitet, kan drage fordel af at anskue værdi som noget de skaber sammen med forbrugeren, eller lader forbrugerne skabe med hinanden, i stedet for at anskue værdi som værende noget, der kun skabes i pop-up aktiviteten.

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1. Introduction

Contemporary consumers in the Western world are used to navigating and interpreting marketing messages. With an average exposure of three thousand marketing messages each day, it is fair to assume that much of this interpretation happens unconsciously (Hutter, 2015). In other words, consumers are interpretation-savvy, and corporations are struggling to cut through the clutter and gain or retain the much-desired consumer attention (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997). The solution to the struggle is often new, innovative means of marketing employed in order to find alternative ways of creating awareness about a service or product.

The concept of guerilla marketing is perceived to be one of these new marketing strategies, which seek to create surprising and innovative marketing activities. The elements of surprise can take form as a previously unseen location, set-up or message. Due to the innovative aspect, the marketing initiatives can take many conceptual forms; for example flash-mobs or by creating experience scapes for the consumer to become emerged in (Hutter, 2015). Within the latter, the past decade has seen a steady increase of commercial pop-up activities used as a strategic marketing tool with the purpose of creating an all-round branded experience for consumers (Surchi, 2011). The pop-up activity appears in a limited timespan lifespan and this is presented as creating a sense of urgency that induces consumers to visit the pop-up before it is too late (Surchi, 2011; Gonzalez, 2014). Moreover, Gonzalez (2014) state “customers are at pop-ups for experiences, not products” (p. 21) and thereby indicates that getting the consumer’s attention relies on the brand providing a valuable experience to the consumer. However, when addressing the concept of value creation, literature on commercial pop-ups reveal an underlying assumption of the company as being the main beneficiary of the pop-up activity. Thereby, the purpose of utilizing pop-up activities is the same as traditional marketing messages, despite the new, innovative construct used to keep up with the interpretation-savvy consumers. This firm-centric perspective is found to neglect showing the consumer’s perspective on value creation in commercial pop-up activities. Putting the consumer at the center of the present research enables an investigation of value creation in pop-ups that also opens up for more participants in value creation than just the company.

The research departs from a Consumer Culture Theory perspective. This is an approach to consumer behavior research rooted in anthropology and cultural studies, which argues that consumption is an ongoing process that consumers engage in order to make meaning of the world (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). When consumption is understood as utilized in identity

construction and in making meaning of the world, it is interesting to investigate consumption of pop-ups from this consumer-centric perspective. Consumer culture theory emphasizes that consumption can construct consumer identities as well as create a sense of belonging to a community through consumption of shared symbolic meanings (ibid). It is found that Arnould (2007a) addresses the underlying curiosity of the thesis by asking: “How do marketers manage to create “value” consumers recognize as such? And where does “value” come from and what makes that “value” worth coproducing?” (p. 71). By departing from these questions, the thesis seeks to contribute with a new perspective to theory on commercial pop-ups by answering the research question presented below.

In order to create pop-ups that succeed in cutting through the advertising clutter, the thesis seeks to investigate value creation from a consumer perspective. Besides from seeking to contribute with new, theoretical knowledge on commercial pop-up activities, the study also seeks to contribute with insights to how consumers perceive value to be created in a commercial pop-up activity that can be beneficial for companies organizing pop-ups in the future.

1.1 Research question

Departing from the initial curiosity about value creation in the pop-up phenomenon utilized as a strategic marketing tool, the thesis investigates the following research question:

From a consumer perspective, how does consumption of commercial pop-up activities create value, and how is this interesting to marketers?

To answer the research question, the sub-questions presented below are explored:

- *Which role does co-creation play in the value creation process?*
- *Are other factors influencing perceived value creation besides from the on-site consumption of the pop-up activity?*
- *Does the temporality of the commercial pop-up activity carry value implicitly that is experienced through consumption?*

1.2 Delimitations and clarification of terms

The exploration of the research question is delimited to investigate value creation through consumption of pop-up activities in a Danish context and from a perspective of Danish consumers.

The thesis investigates value creation in commercial pop-up activities utilized as a marketing tool. The term 'pop-up' can refer to everything from a window popping up on the computer screen, to two-dimensional children's books with cardboard figures popping up from the pages, to shops or events that are only available for a limited timespan (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). In the scope of the thesis, the term 'pop-up' is limited to concern commercial use of pop-ups. Therefore, the literature review presents research in the commercial sphere where temporary stores, events or activities become part of a company's marketing initiatives.

Creation of value through consumption of commercial pop-ups is also one of the central concepts in the thesis. When mentioning value, it is in the form of a mass noun, depicting "that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth or usefulness of something", as opposed to a count noun, that depicts "material or monetary worth of something" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). Moreover, when mentioning value throughout the thesis, it is related more to value-in-use than value-in-exchange, as the latter is primarily concerned with monetary value exchange (Humphreys & Grayson, 2008). Exploring the perception of value creation in the thesis focus on intangible value, which can take a symbolic and social form in its ability to be 'worth' something or be 'useful' to the individual consumer.

2. Literature review

The literature review provides an introduction to the pop-up phenomenon within the scope of commercial use and the research conducted in the field. Further, aspects concerning communication, purpose and consumers in pop-up literature are emphasized. The review of these aspects illuminates the area, to which the thesis seeks to contribute to the existing theory on commercial pop-ups.

2.1. The pop-up phenomenon

Historically, pop-up activities have happened for many years in the form of e.g. fairs and flea markets, but the past decade's use of pop-up stores and events as a strategic marketing tool is

a recent take on the phenomenon (Thomsen, 2011). Scholars agree on the definition of the phenomenon as having a limited lifespan from a few hours to 40 days and pre-determined timeframes (Surchi, 2011; Colomb, 2012; Gonzalez, 2014; Spena, Caridá, Colurcio & Melia, 2012). Generally, it is found that pop-ups either close down entirely, move to a new geographical location or morph into something new after the predefined lifespan ends. Pop-ups are as such never described as static entities like regular retail stores (Thomsen, 2011). Another characteristic that is attributed to pop-ups is being innovative in nature and seeking to create experiences that are extraordinary for consumers (Thomsen, 2011; Fetz & Fieseler, 2014; Gonzalez, 2014). This characterization helps situate commercial pop-ups in the sphere of guerilla marketing or ambient advertising (Hutter, 2015). The two terms are used interchangeably and denote the “placement of advertising in unusual and unexpected places (location) often with unconventional methods (execution) and being the first or only ad execution to do so (temporal)” (Luxton & Drummond, 2000, p. 735). It is further noted that two of the three parameters (unexpected location, unconventional execution and being temporal) need to be present in ambient advertising and further, that ‘temporal’ in this connection connotes ‘being contemporary’ and not a temporal lifespan (ibid).

The body of literature on commercial pop-ups presents varying terminology to describe the marketing activity. In the UK, the scholars and practitioners refer to it as a ‘pop-up shop’, whereas the US counterpart presents it as ‘pop-up stores’. The ‘temporary store’ seems internationally used. Further, the term ‘nomad store’ and ‘guerilla store’ is found to describe the phenomenon, which supports positioning pop-up activities in the guerilla-marketing sphere (Surchi, 2001; Gonzalez, 2014). When referring to pop-up events and uses of urban spaces, the term ‘interim uses’ is found alongside ‘temporary use’, which emphasizes the importance of communicating temporality in the definition (Spena et al, 2012). The terms are used interchangeably and the literature does not allocate greater meaning to one term over another, as long as the essence of the temporality is conveyed. Therefore, the term ‘pop-up’ is found to adequately denote the phenomenon throughout the thesis.

The literature agrees that from the outset in early 2000, pop-ups are heavily represented in the fashion industry as a marketing activity with a focus on launching new collections and products (Surchi, 2011; Spena et al., 2012; Gonzalez, 2014). Here, it is stressed that “[t]emporary stores [in the fashion industry] are distinguished by their exclusivity and style

and by word-of-mouth promotion” (Surchi, 2011, p. 260). However, the presentation of pop-ups is found to be applicable across industries (Gonzalez, 2014).

The pop-up literature agrees that pop-ups in commercial use are primarily an urban phenomenon and found in larger cities around the world (Thomsen, 2011). Although the fashion industry has presented a large quantity of pop-ups over the past decade, the restaurant industry has also been fast at implementing the pop-up phenomenon as an innovative way of developing business partnerships (Fetz & Fieseler, 2014). Other studies show that pop-ups can support changes in the way city spaces are consumed and perceived by the public (Thomsen, 2011; Colomb, 2012). The study by Colomb (2012) shows how pop-ups in abandoned areas in Berlin have influenced city branding and presentation of Berlin as a creative city.

In sum, the scholarly definition of a commercial pop-up activity is found to be in the form of a temporary shop or event that seek to connote a sense of exclusivity both through an experience element and through limited lifespan (Surchi, 2011; Spina et al., 2012; Colomb, 2012; Gonzalez, 2014;).

2.2 Pop-ups and purpose

The overall purpose of a corporate pop-up activity is that of a marketing tool. Gonzalez (2014) presents several goals that a pop-up can seek to meet in her book: “The Pop-Up Paradigm: How brands build human connection in a digital age”, which all departs from seeing the corporation as the main beneficiary of the pop-up. Some of these goals are presented as testing a potential location, new concepts or ideas as well as gathering data on consumer preferences or launching new products (Surchi, 2011; Gonzalez, 2014). By stating: “Customers are at pop-ups for experiences, not products” (Gonzalez, 2014, p. 21), it is emphasized that pop-ups should seek to create an experience for the consumer, which is generally supported by other authors (Surchi, 2011; Thomsen, 2011; Fetz & Fieseler, 2014). Although creating an experience for the consumer visiting the pop-up is interpreted as having the consumer’s interest at heart, Gonzalez (2014) highlights that creating a unique experience is with the purpose of attracting consumers in order to meet a corporate goal. A similar account of the purpose of pop-ups is found in Surchi’s (2011) article on the temporary store in the fashion industry, as it is stated that pop-ups serve “to transmit brand values in the most effective way possible” (p. 259). This highlights an important communicative purpose of commercial use of pop-up activities.

The literature presents the purpose of commercial pop-ups as inherently rooted in an economic marketing perspective where value is detected on the bottom line (Ellis, Fitchett, Higgins, Jack, Lim, Saren & Tadajewski, 2011). The present research seeks to contest this presentation of the firm as being the primary beneficiary of a pop-up activity by exploring how consumers find value created in consumption of pop-ups.

2.3 Pop-ups and communication

Utilizing pop-up activities as a strategic marketing tool indicates that communication is entailed in the activity. The literature argues that the pop-up can serve as a holistic vehicle for communication of brand values by its mere existence (Surchi, 2011; Gonzalez, 2014). Carpenter, Moore and Fairhurst (2005) state that the store is the new vector for conveying the abstract attributes of brands, which it does through the medium of location, services, interior design and visual merchandising. In this respect pop-ups are to be perceived as a holistic piece of communication that support the brand message strategy.

In the literature explored, the symbolic meanings of 'pop-ups' are not elaborated on specifically, but as the terms 'temporary store' and 'pop-up' are used interchangeably, the distinct exclusivity connoted by temporary store is found to be current for the term pop-ups as well (Surchi, 2011). This is supported by the account of how temporality is commonly communicated at a display in the pop-up space (ibid). Also, it indicates that merely communicating the termination date and time of the pop-up activity connotes the temporality and sudden appearance. Thereby, the term 'pop-up' is interpreted as being able to communicate exclusivity. As consumers find more and more pop-ups in (primarily) urban areas, it is assumed that the understanding of the pop-up phenomenon is tacitly communicated through usage of the term in connection with a store or other activity (Colomb, 2012). None of the studies on pop-up activities reviewed have focused on the consumer perception of the temporality and how this is interpreted; however, scholars commonly assume that it is interpreted as being exclusive and unique (Surchi, 2011; Gonzalez, 2014). In line with this, the current body of literature does not touch upon promotion or advertising of pop-ups, besides from proposing that the exclusivity of the pop-up experience fosters word-of-mouth promotion (Surchi, 2011). Moreover, the literature suggests that many pop-ups benefit from being located in an urban area where consumers are able to walk in from the street (Surchi, 2011; Gonzalez, 2014).

The assumption of an inherent communication of exclusivity is interesting to the research at hand. It is questioned whether the temporality of the pop-ups is interpreted as exclusivity, and further, whether this is considered a value-creating factor by the consumer.

2.4 Pop-ups and consumers

More scholars highlight consumer experiences as key aspects of a pop-up activity (Surchi, 2011; Thomsen, 2011; Gonzalez, 2014). However, it is evident that consumers are seen as only that; people who consume the experience or product being marketed in the pop-up. Here, a relation to the economic marketing perspective can be made, as the consumer role in pop-ups is to meet a need through consumption (Ellis et al, 2011). Consumption of pop-ups is presented as attractive for consumers due to the exclusivity and opportunity to get a unique experience (Surchi, 2011; Gonzalez, 2014). For example it is put forward that “meeting the designer or the person behind a brand [...] makes customers want to buy into the story and the process, as they feel important and lucky for getting the opportunity” (Gonzalez, 2014, p. 41). This statement indicates that value creation from a consumer perspective is taken into account. However, the firm-centric value perception is reaffirmed by the conclusion of how it “contributes to customers becoming what brands really treasure: an ambassador” (ibid, p. 42). Ultimately, the presentation of the consumer’s role in value creation is in the current body of literature on commercial pop-ups is found to be minimal. By addressing value creation from a consumer perspective, the current research seeks to emphasize the benefit of understanding consumers as co-creators of value through consumption.

2.5 Gap in pop-up literature theory

Commercial pop-ups are described as experiences and are part of the marketing sphere of guerilla marketing (Hutter, 2015), Arnould’s (2007b) comment on the need for more knowledge about “the ways in which [consumers’] narrative frames and devices facilitate value-adding performances by firm-provided resources and how marketer-provided resources cue consumer narrative practices that turn performances into experiences” (p. 191) supports the need for investigating value creation in commercial pop-ups from a consumer point of view.

Spena et al. (2011) support the need for future research “to investigate the Temporary Shop from the consumer perspective” (p. 36), but continue the notion with a list of consumer perspective topics also investigated from a firm-centric outset such as “understand[ing] the

communicative efficacy of the Temporary Shops as compared to traditional communication tools ” (p. 36). Hence, the effectiveness is investigated as a mean to enhance corporate communication tools. Conversely, the research at hand explores value creation or ditto co-creation occurring in the consumption process of commercial pop-ups in order to illuminate the contextual factors of the phenomenon that consumers find valuable. The intention is to contribute with a novel approach to value creation by focusing on the consumer’s role in this process. Thereby, co-creation of value is introduced as an important aspect in consumption of pop-ups. In succession of this, the thesis also seeks to contribute with reflections on the managerial implications brought about by the findings.

3. Theoretical framework

An introduction to the theoretical field, Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) is provided in order to illuminate the approach to consumer research that the thesis departs from, as this is found to divert from the common perception of brand-consumer interaction and roles. As the thesis seeks to explore value creation in relation to pop-ups, the concept of value is also elaborated on. The theoretical concept of value co-creation is introduced with a focus on the change in value perception put forward in the Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic), which is found to resonate with the CCT perspective. As CCT takes an anthropologic approach to understanding consumers and the S-D Logic supports the research question’s implicit quest of understanding value as being co-created by the consumer, the two theories are found useful as the foundation of the theoretical contribution. Further, an account of servicescapes is made as this theoretical construct aids in illustrating how co-creation of value in commercial pop-up activities can occur in contextual factors. Finally, the concepts and theories in the theoretical framework are summed up in Figure 2. In doing so, key theoretical points of interest with regards to creation of value in commercial pop-ups from a consumer perspective are presented. These will serve to guide the qualitative data collection as well as make up the theoretical perspective for the later discussion of research findings.

3.1 Consumer Culture Theory

The rise of CCT introduces an anthropological approach to consumer behavior that emphasizes understanding consumption as a constructive process (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Moreover, CCT is found to be very inclusive in its approach to understanding consumer behavior, why it will be the guiding perspective for the thesis' theoretical framework. This inclusiveness is apparent as the studies within the field investigate consumption processes and allow a macro-perspective to consumer behavior in order to explore how consumption helps consumers make sense of the world (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

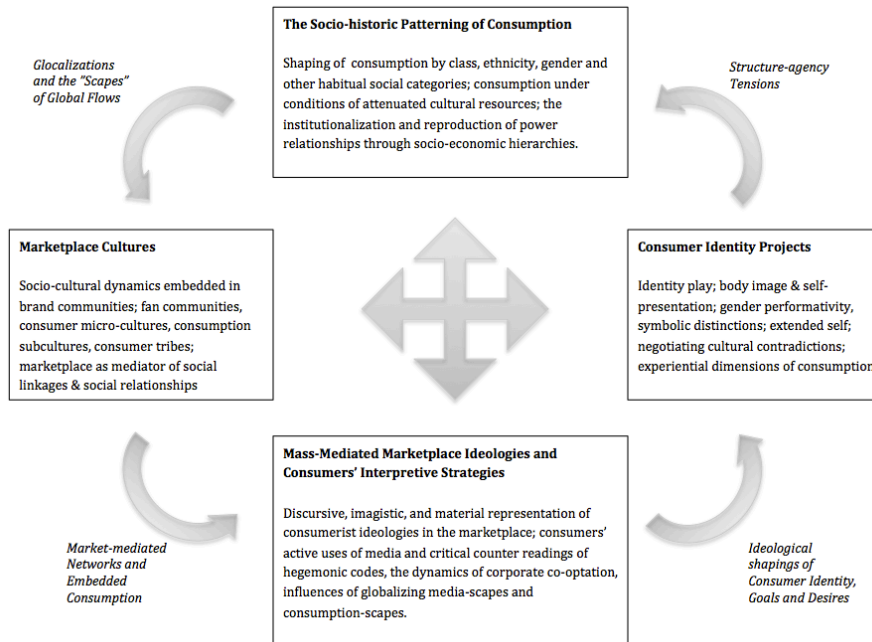
The CCT research proposes that consumption is an ongoing process. This means that consuming a product does not stop with the mere purchase of a product or service, but in fact, occurs throughout the consumer's possession of the product, displacement of the product during ownership as well as in the process of disposing the product (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Epp, Amber & Price, 2009; Turley & O'Donohoe, 2012). The inclusiveness of the approach is also evident from the holistic view on aspects that influence consumer behavior, and through its aspiration to "address the dynamic relationship between consumer actions, the marketplace and cultural meanings" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868). Consumption can be influenced by symbolic meanings imbued by a given culture or subculture, currents and trends in the marketplace as well as social relations (ibid). As the CCT approach claims that consumption is a value-creating process, consumer research conducted in this field diverts from the traditional marketing perspective (Ellis et al., 2011). CCT seeks to understand value as produced in consumption processes by more actors than the company, as opposed to being embedded in a product (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Humphreys & Grayson, 2008)

3.1.1 CCT research domains

The academic duo, Eric J. Arnould and Craig J. Thompson, who are acknowledged as important contributors to the CCT field (Ellis et al., 2011), put forward four overall domains that CCT researchers explore. These four are presented as "1) consumer identity projects, 2) marketplace cultures, 3) the socio-historic patterning of consumption and 4) mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers' interpretive strategies" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 871). The holistic scope of the research tradition is highlighted as it is stressed that the four domains appear in an interrelated manner and are not to be interpreted as four discrete domains. This interrelatedness is visualized in Figure 1. Following this, an account of each CCT domain is made in order to 1) show how each domain contributes to the understanding of consumers and consumption practices in the thesis and 2) to be able to situate the present study in one of the domain, while still acknowledging the interrelatedness of the domains.

Eventually, it is the holistic understanding of CCT domains that contributes to the approach to value creation in consumption taken in the thesis.

Figure 1: The four CCT research domains



Source: Arnould & Thompson (2007, p. 10)

3.1.1.1 Consumer Identity Projects

In the CCT approach, it is argued that consumers use physical and symbolic objects to create the narrative of their individual as well as collective identity (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). This highlights that CCT scholars investigate identity as much through the individual as through affiliation to consumer communities. These communities are perceived as units for organizing belongingness the same way social class once did, but with a much greater opportunity to express affiliations to various tribes or communities (Cova, 1997). Bauman (2004) puts forward that there are two kinds of communities: Those of "life and fate whose members 'live together in an indissoluble attachment' and communities that are 'welded together solely by ideas or various principles'" (p. 11). The type of community where people feel a sense of belongingness only based on the affiliation to certain symbolic meanings is found interesting, as this is where the brand tribes and communities are established (Cova, 1997). According to Bauman (2004), this belongingness and sense of identity is never final, and can be influenced

by many parameters; a notion that is supported by the CCT literature (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

The ever-changing and under-construction consumer identity is highly defined by what is possessed by the consumer (Belk, 1988). Belk (1988) introduces the notion of being the sum of your possessions by referencing Tuan (1980) who argues “our fragile sense of self needs support, and this we get by having and possessing things because, to a large degree, we are what we have and possess” (p. 472). In alignment with the CCT approach, Belk (1988) uses *possession* as an inclusive term and categories of possessions include “body, internal processes, ideas, experiences, persons and things to which one feels attached” (p. 141). As part of the extended self, these possessions enable “creation, enhancement, and preservation of a sense of identity” (ibid, p. 150). Belk (1988) presents three ways of actively and intentionally extending the self through possession: 1) appropriation/controlling it, 2) creating it or 3) knowing it. In relation to the CCT perspective, it is important to emphasize how merely possessing intimate *knowledge* of an object, be it an experience, a community or a book, can become part of the extended self (ibid). Later, Belk (2013) argues that when considering extended selves in contemporary society, it is important to also encounter online representations of selves. It is argued that “the self is much more actively managed, jointly co-constructed, interactive [...] and influenced by what we [...] do online” (ibid, p. 490). Here, it is important to emphasize the co-construction of the extended self. Co-construction illuminates that the identity narrative can be influenced by other people’s comments, which is a feature enabled by social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram. Further, it is added to the presentation of possession that an individual can perceive to possess online photographs, blog posts, emails, and videos in the same manner physical products (Belk, 2014). Miller (1995) states, “consumption has become the main arena in which and through which people have to struggle towards control over the definition of themselves and their values” (p. 277) as he argues that social and cultural structures of a society shape identities. In this, consumption becomes a mean for consumers to gain power of their own identity construction. Following Belk (2013), this struggle should include online as well as offline possessions. Further, CCT research presents consumption of objects as strategies for making meaning of the world, as “[consumer] identities, then, come to be inscribed in objects and are meaningful to ourselves and others through shared codes of understanding” (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 181).

Finding that an individual's identity is an on-going narrative construction influenced by consumption is interesting with regards to understanding how consumers perceive value creation in pop-up. It is indicated by identity theory that value depends on the role that the possession plays in identity construction.

3.1.1.2 Marketplace cultures

Within this domain, the scholarly interest is focused on how consumption produces culture, as opposed to the common perception in cultural studies where people and artifacts are bearers of cultures (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Understanding consumers as culture producers is another aspect where the inclusiveness of the CCT approach to the consumption phenomenon is emphasized.

The act of consumption lies within consuming everything from physical objects to pieces of popular texts to symbols and other intangible measures found in the consumer's local environment. Here, the community thought is reflected in this domain as consumption becomes a means for negotiating belongingness to tribes or communities, as well as blue printing behaviors and attitudes in order to foster "collective identifications grounded in shared beliefs, meanings, mythologies, rituals, social practices, and status system" (ibid., p. 874). These are all qualities found to guide social class, but according to CCT literature, community membership has now exceeded this (Cova 1997; Arnould & Thompson, 2005). It should be noted that another important way of expressing social status for postmodern consumers lies in the expression of "localized cultural capital" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874). Research in this area clarifies that negotiating belongingness to a certain consumer culture is multifaceted, and further that social status hierarchies exist within these communities. These hierarchies are organized by perceived cultural capital (ibid). In this, a relation to identity construction appears, as it was just presented how possession of cultural knowledge can influence a consumer's perception of a community affiliation as being part of an extended self (Belk, 1988). In that respect, showing affiliation to a community with specific cultural values is possible by consuming culturally embedded goods (McCracken, 1986). In the light of the present research, marketplace cultures provides an understanding of how social linkages and cultural capital in a consumer community can influence perceived value of a consumed object, or as in this case, a commercial pop-up activity.

3.1.1.3 The socio-historic patterning of consumption

Social and institutional structures are inevitably part of consumer society, which is the main question investigated by CCT scholars in this research domain (Arnould & Thompson, 2005.). The domain addresses “the institutional and social structures that systematically influence consumption, such as class, community, ethnicity, and gender” (ibid, p. 784). These underlying structures influence consumption as found in the case of social class. Further, communities are shaped and aspire to cross-geographical borders and social class through consumption of e.g. brands or symbols (ibid.). Here, a reference to the cultural capital within a community or tribe should be made. Cultural capital is a way for consumption to help distinguish members in a community. This differentiation is by German philosopher and sociologist, Georg Simmel, referred to as imitation occurring between various classes in society, which he calls super- and subordinates (Simmel, 1998). Although acknowledging the lack of social class’ role in defining an individual’s identity in contemporary society, the notion of super- and subordinates is transferable with regards to consumption practices and production of cultural capital in a community. The mere fact that super- and subordinate groups exist is due to cultural capital, and in the relation between them, the subordinate group will attain to fashion trends after it has trickled down from the superordinate (ibid). The social class system is permeated by cultural belongingness and tribalism as the subordinate groups consume objects in order to employ the symbolic cultural value that the superordinate groups have produced (ibid).

This domain is found helpful in illustrating how societal structures can influence consumers’ perception of value creation in consumption of pop-ups, and will serve as a theoretical construct that can aid in providing nuances of a macro-perspective in the discussion of findings.

3.1.1.4 Mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers’ interpretive strategies

The fourth and final domain, *mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers’ interpretive strategies*, is exemplified by the consumption of popular texts to make meaning of the world (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997; Arnould & Thompson, 2005). The inclusiveness of the CCT tradition is noticeable here too, as consumption of popular texts (be it novels, music, advertisements, movies, etc.) happens in actual consumption, e.g. reading a book, as much as it happens in rejecting a book. In this, the underlying assumption of a consumer as an interpreter of mass-mediated consumption is indicated. In elaboration of this thought, the CCT re-

search rooted in on this domain investigate the meanings and values incorporated in mass-media messages in order to develop an understanding of how media instructs or attempts to instruct consumer behavior. Moreover, the domain investigates how consumers act and react to this, as they are perceived to be interpretive agents, not marionettes (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). One example of this research is by Mick and Buhl (1992) whose findings reveal how consumers' life themes and life projects shape how they read and interpret advertisements. With this, the classic understanding of an advertiser being able to send a message to an audience with an encoded message for the audience to decode becomes inadequate in describing how the consumer will understand a message (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997). The economist and sociologist, Thorstein Veblen, puts forward a theory that illuminates cultural capital and how consumption of messages can reinforce this (Veblen, 2007). In his theory of status symbolism, Veblen argues that an object's meaning is not decoded by the consumer, but rather inferred (ibid.) The symbolic messages sent to the public when consuming (or rejecting) a book is inferred with symbolic meaning both by the actual consumer as well as by other consumers. This resonates with the initial account of consumers taking part in constructing their individual narrative through consumption, and is found interrelated with the importance of cultural capital (Cova, 1997; Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Certain symbolic values are inferred to objects, and consumers interpret these based on their social affiliation and shared codes as part of making sense of the world they live in.

In sum, the four domains depict the underlying quest of CCT research; illuminating and understanding how consumers make sense of the world through consumption of products and services as well as symbols, subcultures etc. Moreover, it clarifies the interrelatedness of the four domains, and how consumption of symbolic messages and shared codes play an integral part in identity construction as well as in showing community affiliation. This is informative to the need of investigating factors surrounding the actual pop-up activity when assessing how it creates value from a consumer perspective.

3.1.2 Positioning the thesis in the CCT research domains

The research domains show how the CCT considers consumers as producers of meaning, culture, identity, and value. With regards to the present research project, this is an important notion, as it opens up for the actors that can take part in value creation in relation to pop-up

activities. This is in opposition to the marketing perspective where consumers are merely possible receivers and beneficiaries of the value produced by the company (Ellis et al., 2011).

CCT is perceived to be very inclusive, and have particularly interesting perceptions of identity, value creation and community belongingness. Here, the interrelatedness between the three aspects should be stressed, as value creation through consumption becomes part of both constructing the individual identity as well as showing community or group affiliation. Finally, CCT scholars suggest that value creation lies in the social sphere where it is inferred with meaning through consumption. This is an important notion with regards to value creation in commercial pop-ups, as it indicates a need for considering social relations in the investigation (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Veblen, 2007).

The investigation of value creation in commercial pop-up activities is situated in the domain of *marketplace cultures*, as the domain empathizes with the importance of cultural capital in consumption practices. Further, it emphasizes the importance social linkages in consumption through group belongingness and identity construction. Due to the interrelatedness of the four domains, it should be noted that the research draws extensively on theoretical contributions made within *consumer identity projects* and *consumers' interpretive strategies in the mass-mediated marketplace* as well. As mentioned, the theoretical contribution of the last domain, *socio-historic patterning of consumption*, aids in understanding how societal structures can influence consumption practices, but is not exhaustively included in the present study.

3.2 Value and value co-creation

The marketing and the CCT approach provide two different understandings of value creation in consumer research. The first investigates how to increase tangible exchange value and the latter how to produce intangible use value (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Humphreys & Grayson, 2008). When denoting value in the thesis and in relation to commercial pop-up activities it reflects the novel stream of research on value production as being intangible and emphasized as value-in-use (Humphreys & Grayson, 2008). The intangibility of the value concept that the present study investigates is found to influence the research method, as a qualitative method will allow for deeper interpretation and notion of nuances in the participants' responses. Making quantitative analyses is hence found less efficient in understanding the contextual factors influencing perception of value in the form of usefulness or worth.

It was earlier identified that the literature focusing on pop-ups as a strategic marketing tool emphasize the value that pop-ups can create for the firm. This firm-centric approach of creating value relates to the definition of value-in-exchange, that “in essence concerns resources used as value foundation which are aimed at facilitating customer’s fulfillment of value-in-use” (Grönroos, 2008, p. 298), Thereby, it relates to a numeric version of value as is found in increased sales or results of a market research conducted in connection with a pop-up activity (Gonzalez, 2014). The present study explores value from a CCT perspective supported by foundational premises of the S-D Logic as the notions found in this stream of research is closely linked to CCT approaches (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2008). In fact it is argued by Akaka, Schau and Vargo (2013) that “[the] service-dominant logic and its service-ecosystems approach, [...] has been recognized as a “natural ally” for CCT” (p. 266) and the suitability of the two approaches in the investigation of value creation and co-creation will be demonstrated in the following by accounting for the S-D Logic while making references to the previous account of CCT.

3.2.2 Changing the perception of value in marketing

In their initial work on the S-D Logic, Vargo and Lusch (2004) make clear that with time passing, it is only natural for the purpose of marketing to evolve. Further, they stress that a change requires new terminology to help the evolution become integrated in marketing research as well as in society. Arnould (2007a) elaborates on this thought by also emphasizing the need of a new terminology to describes consumers and consumption in academic articles and among marketing practitioners. For example, he highlights that “needs, wants, motivations” should be replaced by “intentions, life projects, and desires” (ibid, p. 67) and thereby, emphasizes the consumer as partaking in creating value through consumption and not merely seeking fulfillment of a need state. The two sets of terminologies structure our understanding of ‘value’ as “language does not reflect a pre-existing social reality, but constitutes and brings a framework to that reality for us” (Burr, 2003, p. 52). And so, the language framework used to describe value needs to be changed in order for the perception of value to be changed. Vargo and Lusch (2004) set out to do this by changing the terminology of marketing from goods-centered to service-centered.

Resources are perceived to be finite and termed operand in the marketing management approach. Operand resources hold value due to this finiteness, but they are in need of being

acted on in order to be valuable to consumers (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). And as such, they are embedded with value through knowledge, which is an operant resource. With this distinction, operant resources hold value in their ability to act on something. Examples of these infinite resources are knowledge or skills (ibid.) Seeing that the thesis' investigation of value creation in pop-ups is not monetary or numeral, but rather with regards to *worth* and *usefulness*, it is related to the understanding of value production as found in the CCT literature and the S-D logic; created or co-created by the consumer's operant resources (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Arnold & Thompson, 2005; Grönroos, 2008). On the contrary, when talking about value in the marketing era, it is found that "marketing inherited the view that value (utility) was embedded in a product from economics" (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p. 5) and not something created by other actors than the firm. Vargo and Lusch (2004) denote this perspective the goods-centered or goods-dominant logic and it correlates with the firm-centric value perception currently detected in pop-up literature. In this, value is perceived to be produced by or in the pop-up activity and the experiences embedded in it. Moreover, value is created when meeting the corporate goal of the pop-up. The notion of operand and operant resources is interesting with regards to the research question as the move towards understanding value creation as relying on infinite, operant resources enables the consumer to play a part in co-creating value.

The proposition of changing the value perception is supported by ten foundational premises of the S-D Logic. These are accounted for in the following with the purpose of emphasizing the five premises that are deemed useful in supporting the CCT approach to make up the foundation of the theoretical framework.

3.2.3 Foundational premises of S-D logic integrated in the CCT approach

Vargo and Lusch (2004) present eight foundational premises (FP) that make up the "patchwork of the emerging [service] dominant logic" (p. 6), and four years later, an additional two premises are presented (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). These ten foundational premises all support the move from a goods-dominant logic to a service-dominant-logic by a change in the value terminology. As with the four domains of CCT research, the foundational premises are found to be interrelated and supportive of each other as a holistic contribution. However, for the present study, five premises are found to be more relevant with regards to the research topic. The five premises are: FP₅, FP₆, FP₇, F₉ and FP₁₀, and they are found to be an interesting unit

that can contribute to the exploration of how value is created through consumption of commercial pop-ups. In the light of this, the five premises of special interest is highlighted in Table 1, and the following account focuses on explaining how they make up the primary contribution of the S-D Logic in the thesis.

Table 1: Foundational Premises of the S-D logic

FP ₁	The application of specialized skills and knowledge is the fundamental unit of exchange
FP ₂	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental unit of exchange
FP ₃	Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provision
FP ₄	Knowledge is the fundamental source of competitive advantage
FP₅	All economies are services economies
FP₆	The customer is always a co-producer
FP₇	The enterprise can only make value propositions
FP ₈	A service-centered view is customer oriented and relational
FP₉	All social and economic actors are resource integrators
FP₁₀	Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary

Source: Vargo & Lusch (2004, pp. 6-11; 2008, pp. 8-9).

In the service-dominant logic, the infinite, operant resources are key to competitive advantages, which is expressed in FP₅: “All economies are service economies” (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p. 10). As service is considered an operant resource due to its origin in knowledge, the statement in FP₅ is closely connected to the notion of tangible goods as deemed secondary to services in the exchange process. Moving on to FP₆, a close tie to the CCT literature is detected, as it is stated “[in the] service-centered view of marketing [...], the consumer is always involved in the production of value” (ibid, p. 11). Further, the continuous consumption process, which is one of the key aspects in CCT, is supported as Vargo and Lusch (2004) present the consumer role as “when using a product, the customer is continuing the marketing, consumption, and value creation and delivery processes” (p. 11). Moreover, it is central to note that the authors denote customers as operant resources in the S-D Logic. This is oppositional to the goods-dominant perspective where customers are considered a finite resource of which the corporation should aim at having as big a share of as possible (ibid.). FP₆ is highly relevant with regards to exploring value creation in pop-ups from a consumer perspective, as it supports the CCT position of consumption occurring continuously and consumers can create that

value (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Humphreys and Grayson, 2008). In continuation of the consumer participation in value creation, it is stated in FP₇ that the only value a corporation can provide is a value proposition. Thus, corporations are not able to embed value in tangible goods in order to increase exchange value as is found in the goods-centered paradigm (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Vargo and Lusch (2008) add the final two FP's, number 9 and 10, as they argue that some aspects in their initial article of 2004 should be elaborated on. One of these aspects is denoted in FP₉, where it is emphasized that not only economic actors (corporations) are able to integrate operant resources (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Thereby, it is found that along with FP₁₀, the consumer-to-consumer value creation is highlighted in the S-D Logic, and this supports the integrative abilities with CCT approach. The two latter FP's illustrate both the resourcefulness of consumers and the importance of perceiving value as created in a given context, which is supported by research on consumers' interpretive strategies (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

As revealed in the literature review on pop-ups, the S-D Logic and CCT approaches will be rather novel in exploring value creation in pop-up research, as the present literature is rooted in the economic marketing perspective, which corresponds to the goods-centered logic. The theoretical contribution to changing the value perception is found useful as an outset for discussing the findings of the present study.

It is acknowledged that some authors explored in commercial pop-up literature emphasize that the pop-up should facilitate 'customer experience' and 'customer engagement' (Surchi, 2011; Gonzalez, 2014). Merging pop-up spaces as facilitators of consumer engagement with the S-D Logic, the following section elaborates on the interplay between these notions by accounting for the impact of surroundings in servicescapes (Bitner, 1992).

3.3 Value creation in pop-ups

3.3.1 Pop-up activities as servicescapes

The work on servicescapes initiated by Bitner (1992) is focused on exploring the impact that physical surroundings have on customers and employees in service organizations. A service organization in Bitner's (1992) work is described as for example a hospital, a bank or a retail

store, but subsequent research in servicescapes highlight how these can be defined as merely commercial places where themed experiences take place (Arnould, Price and Tierney, 1998; Mossberg, 2008). Thereby, the servicescape can include spaces that go beyond the brick-and-mortar understanding that is implicit in Bitner's (1992) presentation of service organizations, and further, it enables servicescapes as a frame for investigating pop-ups.

All aspects of a servicescape are considered to be communicative (Bitner, 1992). This resonates with the presentation of a pop-up store as being a good vehicle for marketing communications (Surchi, 2011; Gonzalez, 2014). By arguing that the physical space of a store serves as the new vector for transmission of abstract brand attributes through the location, services, employees, and interior design, the relation between tangible and intangible objects in a servicescape are found to be similar in a pop-up store (Carpenter et al., 2005). Although 'everything communicates' is an appealing outset for considering pop-ups as servicescapes, the communicative aspect should be elaborated. Research in experience servicescapes emphasizes the difference between *substantive staging* and *communicative staging* within the servicescape (Arnould et al., 1998). Substantive staging refers to the physical environments of the servicescape and communicative staging considers "the transmissions of servicescape meanings, both those directly related to service delivery and those transcending the instrumental context" (ibid, p. 90). The two staging types can appear in combination with various levels of importance. However, separating the physical setting from the communicative efforts is interesting in relation to the CCT and S-D logic approach to understanding value creation. As both approaches regard value as being produced or co-produced by the consumer, finding that "communicative staging moves servicescape meanings from service provider to customer, between customers, and potentially at least from customers to providers" (ibid, p. 90) is informative with regards to communication flows, as consumers are considered active participants in this. Mossberg (2008) also stresses the consumer role in value creation of experiences facilitated by a servicescape. With a focus on the role of storytelling in servicescapes, her findings imply that two preconditions influence the extraordinary consumer experience in a servicescape: 1) that the experience takes place in a hedonic service consumption setting and 2) that this setting allows for the consumer to step away from everyday reality (ibid). With the purpose of pop-ups in mind, which was primarily described as e.g. product launches, market research, sales or creating brand experiences (Gonzalez, 2014), it is interesting to see how hedonic benefits are found superior to functional benefits in servicescapes (Mossberg,

2008). This resonates with Campbell's (1995) proposition that modern consumption can be described as "imaginative hedonism" (p. 116) as consumers are anticipating extraordinary experiences through consumption of novel activities, such as pop-ups. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982a; 1982b) support the importance of considering fantasies and imagery as an important part of consumption practice. Arnould, Price and Tierney (1998) also emphasize communicative staging of the servicescape as instructive for value creation as this can ignite the consumers' fantasies, which are based on cultural understandings of the product or experience in question.

The applicability of servicescape theory in investigating pop-up activities from a consumer perspective is illuminated as it is found that consumers evaluate products more positively when exposed to them in a pleasing environment (Bitner, 1992). This finding indicates, as supported by Arnould and Thompson (2005), that the physical product (or pop-up activity) itself may not elicit so much emotion or affiliation, but the experience and contextual factors of the service consumption setting does (Bitner, 1992; Mossberg, 2008). This reflects the underlying perception of consumers that is taken in this research: Consumers are not blank canvases when entering a commercial pop-up space. They bring all kinds of information about the location, the brand, the social context they are in at the moment and other aspects that influence their interpretive strategies, which influence how they make meaning and value of what they are consuming (Cova, 1997; Hirschman & Thompson, 1997; Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Bitner (1992) supports this by arguing that consumers bring with them expectations when entering a consumption space and these expectations are influenced by "their past experiences in the environment or in similar environments, as well as what they have heard or read about the place" (p. 65). This resonates with the CCT perspective, where it is argued that consumers are interpreting and making sense of the world based on their socio-cultural context (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997; Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Further, it supports that the interpretive ability is influenced by the anticipation of the particular activity, and that consumption of the activity starts already with imagining consumption of the particular activity (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982a; 1982b; Campbell, 1995)

3.3.2 Co-creation of value in servicescapes

Integrating servicescape theory in investigating the consumer perspective of value creation in commercial pop-up activities emphasizes the possible value creation based on the physical

surroundings and communication of the activity. It is acknowledged that the pop-up literature does focus on these physical settings, but it is found that they do so from a firm-centric perspective of e.g. controlling brand image communication (Gonzalez, 2014). Implementing notions of servicescape research on the importance of communicative staging adds a perspective to investigating the consumer's value creation process that resonates with the CCT approach (Arnould et al., 1998; Arnould, 2007b). More to this, servicescape theory allows for pop-ups to be situated in the service economy and thus supports the move from the economic, goods-centered marketing perspective to the S-D Logic.

Grönsroos (2008) makes a distinction between perceiving value co-creation from a provider (company) or consumer perspective in his conceptual development of understanding value creation from a S-D logic perspective. The provider service logic is described as "creating interactive contacts with customers during their use of goods and services, the firm develops opportunities to co-create value with them and for them" (ibid, p. 299), whereas the consumer service perspective is put forward as "[when] using resources provided by a firm together with other resources and applying skills held by them, customers create value for themselves in their everyday practices" (ibid, p. 299). Although the provider service logic definition resonates with pop-ups as being interactive and creating experiences for consumers, the thesis resides in the consumer service logic, as it is found to support the theoretical departure from the CCT approach. The thesis further acknowledges utilization of the commercial pop-up activity as a value facilitator, which makes co-creation a relevant term as opposed to merely creation, which implies one agent in the process (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Grönsroos, 2008). In sum, the thesis understands value creation as possibly occurring between brand-to-consumer and consumer-to-consumer in the consumption of commercial pop-up activities. These relations can be influenced by various contextual factors as presented in the theoretical framework in Figure 2.

3.4 Exploring value co-creation in pop-ups

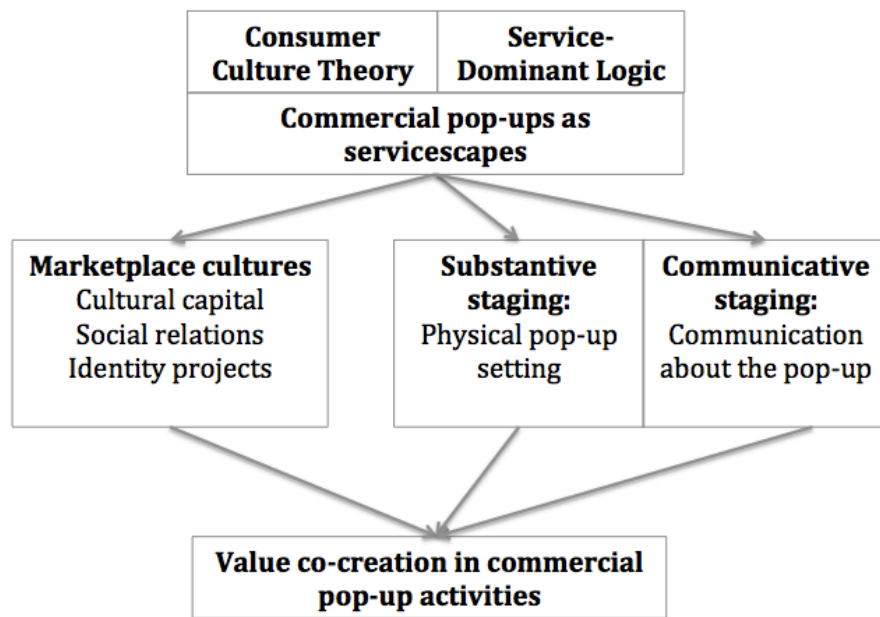
Summing up the theoretical threads is found beneficial before moving on to the next section in the thesis in order to stress how the various approaches contribute to the understanding of value co-creation in pop-ups that is to be investigated.

First, the literature review of the current academic contribution to the field of pop-up activities reveals that when addressing value, it is commonly firm-centric goals that are emphasized. Although creating experiences for customers is highlighted as an important means for a successful pop-up store and that engagement with the brand is emphasized as a valuable output, the literature fails to address how, what, why and where value is created in connection with consumption of pop-up activities (Gonzalez, 2014). Thus, the contribution of the CCT perspective is to emphasize that value is co-created throughout the entire consumption process, and not restricted to the money exchange between producer and consumer in a purchase. Rather, consumption is an ongoing activity that entails consumption of symbols as well as physical products in a quest of making meaning of the world.

CCT researchers perceive consumers as cultural producers through their consumption and community affiliation, as cultural capital is found to precede social class in contemporary consumer identity projects (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Establishing the consumer, as a co-creator of value, is further supported in Vargo and Lusch's (2004; 2008) articles on changing the dominant logic in marketing from an economic, goods-dominated perspective to an S-D Logic. The CCT and S-D Logic are found to be interrelated, especially in the approach to the consumer role in value creation (Arnould, 2007a; Akak et al., 2013). Both perspectives argue that value is not embedded in an object, or in this case a pop-up activity, but created by resource integrators and through consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2008). The consumer-centered focus that the thesis takes, is summed up in Grönroos' (2008) distinct description of customer service logic: "When using resources provided by a firm together with other resources and applying skills held by them, customers create value for themselves in their everyday practices" (p. 299). This resonates with consumers applying their operant resources to the value proposition put forward by the company (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2008) as well as acknowledging that a consumption process should be considered in a consumer's given social and cultural context (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). As stated by Grönroos (2008) consumers are to be perceived as value co-creators when accepting value-in-use as a foundational value-creating concept, which the interrelated use of CCT and S-D logic proposes.

The relation of the concepts in the theoretical framework is visualized in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Theoretical framework



Source: Own creation (2016)

Having situated commercial pop-ups as servicescapes within the CCT and S-D logic umbrella, three main themes for investigation are emphasized; Marketplace cultures (hereunder cultural capital, social relations and identity projects), Substantive staging (the location and physical facilities of the commercial pop-up) and Communicative staging (communication from brand-to-consumer, as well as consumer-to-consumer and offline/online about the pop-up). The investigation takes a clear consumer perspective departing from the customer service logic (Grönroos, 2008).

4. Method

4.1 Philosophy of science

The research at hand is conducted within the field of social science, which resides in a paradigm that strives to *understand* expressions of life rather than *explain* these as found in natural sciences (Young & Collin, 2004). A research paradigm focuses on answering three foundational questions that reveal the basic beliefs of the scientific philosophy. These three questions concern the research ontology, epistemology and methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The ontology describes how the scientific philosophy sees the world the epistemology defines how knowledge is created and who is perceived to be able to participate in knowledge creation. Finally, the methodology is naturally influenced by the previous answers as it seeks to describe “how [the researcher] can go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?” (ibid, p. 108). Within social science research, the thesis is situated in a constructivist paradigm. The following account draws on notions from social constructionism, as the two terms are closely linked (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Burr, 2003). The term constructivism will be used throughout the paragraph.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) put forward four paradigms that are most prevalent in contemporary research: Positivism, Post-positivism, Critical theory and Constructivism. The critical research tradition is identified as being situated in cultural and historical realism and the tradition emerges in the same time period as postmodernism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, the critical theory diverts from the constructivist approach in its perception of the individual’s role in both knowledge creation and reality perception. In critical theory the world is shaped by history and cultural structures, whereas the constructivist ontology presents an understanding of the world as being “apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature [...], and dependent for the form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions” (ibid, p. 110-111). That being said, constructivism does not reject historical and cultural structures but rather acknowledges that all means of understanding are historically and culturally relative. Thereby, social constructivism emphasizes that something cannot be investigated without considering its context (Burr, 2003). Thus, the ontology of constructivism is defined as relativist; the perception of reality is based on alterable constructions that are influenced by interactions in a given context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In support of this, Burr (2003) argues that there is no essentialism in social constructionism. This means that as people are not perceived to have essentially one identity, neither does the scientific philosophy believe that there is essentially one version of reality. Here, the correlation between the scientific philosophy and the theoretical foundation in CCT research is evident.

The epistemology of constructivism perceives knowledge to be created through social transactions as it is derived “through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life” (Burr, 2003, p. 4). This inclines a subjective approach to knowledge creation, which is supported by the argument that “knowledge is [...] seen not as something that a person has

or doesn't have, but as something that people do together" (ibid, p. 9). The role of language is emphasized, as Burr (2003) states "when people talk to each other, the world gets constructed" (p. 9). The account of constructivism's epistemology highlights that "'findings' are *literally created* as the investigation proceeds" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111, italics in original).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that constructivism's methodology is "hermeneutical and dialectic" (p. 111) suggesting that the constructs of reality are to be investigated through interaction between the researcher and respondent. Hermeneutics is the philosophic discipline associated with interpretation and finding meaning within a text (Bauman, 1992). In this regard, a text is merely the term used to describe the item investigated, as it can be an interview, pop music or an actual written text. Guba and Lincoln (1994) put forward that "conventional hermeneutic techniques" (p. 111) are utilized in constructivism methodology, and here, the hermeneutic circle should be emphasized. The hermeneutic circle suggests that the understanding of a phenomenon does not proceed in a linear process. Instead, knowledge becomes more sophisticated and elaborated through a circular process (Bauman, 1992; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This points to the interrelatedness with the ontology of constructivism, as reality is ever changeable and relative; influenced by the sophistication of knowledge held by the individual.

Taking a point of departure in constructivism and social constructionism, the thesis accepts that "all knowledge is derived from looking at the world from some perspective or other" (Burr, 2003, p. 6) and thereby implicitly that one truth is not found. Knowledge is produced through the investigation of social practices in a cultural context and the language is used to express respondents' understanding of reality (ibid.). In that perspective, the constructivist approach acknowledges that the theoretical framework of the thesis is not the absolute truth. This allows for an exploration of the research topic through dialogue with respondents in order to develop a new layer of sophistication to the current knowledge about commercial pop-ups.

4.2 Qualitative research

With the methodology being "hermeneutical and dialectic" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111), an interpretive approach is taken to analyze the respondents' description value of co-creation in commercial pop-up activities. This is made through a dialectic consultation of the emerging

data findings and the theoretical framework in order to seek a better understanding of the phenomenon (Tracy, 2013).

Tracy (2013) presents three concepts that are vital in a qualitative study: self-reflexivity, context and thick description. 'Self-reflexivity' entails for the researcher to be aware of his or her own influence on the research through possible biases and the approach used in the research. This is supported in the hermeneutic approach to creating new knowledge in refining what is currently known about the phenomenon by adding new layers of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). 'Context' is concerned with the interrelatedness of social contexts and emerging theoretical constructs as it is found that social theories can emerge from observing and seeking to understand the social world. Finally, 'thick description' refers to accounting for data as accurately as possible by including information about the research site, context of the respondent, information given before-hand and other measures that are found to describe the scene in which data is collected (Tracy, 2013). The three concepts are encountered throughout the decisions and actions taken in data collection and analysis in order to enhance reliability and validity of the research. Considerations regarding these notions are elaborated on in the following.

4.2.1 Reliability and validity in qualitative research

Reliability refers to "the stability and consistency of a researcher, research tool, or method over time" (Tracy, 2013, p. 228). Thus, in reliable research designs, another researcher would be able to make the same findings applying the same methods to the same data. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2008) highlight that within qualitative research, it should be taken into account, that the data set will provide a temporary and realistic perspective of a given subject in the time of investigation. Reliability should be ensured through a clarification of choices and strategies chosen for the research design in order for the audience to follow the consistency and stability of the research (Saunders et al., 2008; Tracy, 2013). Due to the constructivism paradigm, this thesis acknowledges a certain level of subjectivity and bias from the researcher's perspective. However, reliability is sustained through an account of methodological decisions, which enables the audience to understand how these lead to the research findings.

Validity in qualitative research is achieved by enabling the most accurate presentation of the research findings through various measures. These measures are presented as "listening more than talking; recording accurately; beginning writing early [...]; letting readers 'see

for themselves'; reporting fully; being candid; seeking feedback; trying to achieve a balance through rigorous subjectivity; and, writing accurately" (Ali & Yosuf, 2011, p. 32). Data extracts are used to attain descriptive validity through accurately describing what is found in the qualitative interviews. This increases the ability of the audience to understand how the researcher has arrived at the presented findings, and moreover, enables the two parties to understand the data on the phenomenon in the same way (Ali & Yosuf, 2011).

4.3 Applied method

In the investigation of value creation in commercial pop-ups from a CCT perspective, the study explores the pop-up phenomenon from a novel approach. Therefore, the research design is structured in two consecutive rounds of collecting empirical data through qualitative interviews in order to increase reliability and validity of the findings. First a focus group interview is conducted and analyzed through thematic analysis. Then five in-depth interviews are conducted and go through the same method of analysis. The two analyses are both inductive in nature, as they allow for themes and codes to emerge from the data (Brinkmann, 2014).

The interview guide for the focus group is rooted in the theoretical framework and the initial analysis reflects the characteristics of an iterative approach. As such, the analysis will go back and forth between the theoretical contribution and the emerging data (Tracy, 2013). The iterative approach allows for the theory to support and enable a framework to understand the data findings, and let new contributions emerge from the data, which is a structure associated with grounded theory (ibid.) Where the theoretical framework guides the broad topics covered in the focus group interview, it is the findings from this first round of analysis that inform the interview guide for the in-depth interviews. In this, the inductive nature is evident, as theoretical constructs are allowed to emerge from the data and contribute to a more refined understanding of the theoretical outset (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

4.3.1 Grounded theory approach

Grounded theory is founded by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and has since then been much applied in qualitative research (Floersch, Longhofer, Kranke and Townsend, 2010). The methodology of grounded research is inductive as it entails generating theory from data; the so-called bottom-up approach (Brinkmann, 2014; Tracy, 2013).

The thesis applies a grounded theory approach having its origin in Corbin and Strauss' (2008) understanding of the method. This entails that theoretical constructs emerge from the data set but these constructs are recognized as being influenced by the researcher's interpretive stand and theoretical insights. Thereby, the method allows for both new theoretical constructs to emerge from the collected data while still acknowledging the theoretical outset as a point of departure for the research. Further, this understanding of grounded theory makes it applicable in connection with thematic analysis, as both methods emphasize the researcher's prior knowledge as influential on the analytical findings.

4.3.2 Thematic analysis

Coding and analyzing the interview data sets through a thematic approach is chosen due to the inherent interpretive aspect of the method, as this corresponds to the epistemology and the methodology that guides the research (Crowe, Inder & Porter, 2015). Braun and Clarke (2006) present thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 79). Utilizing thematic analysis in the research is beneficial due to its flexible approach to organizing, describing and interpreting qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Crowe et al., 2015). Moreover, thematic analysis is found to correlate with the hermeneutic circle through the iterative coding process.

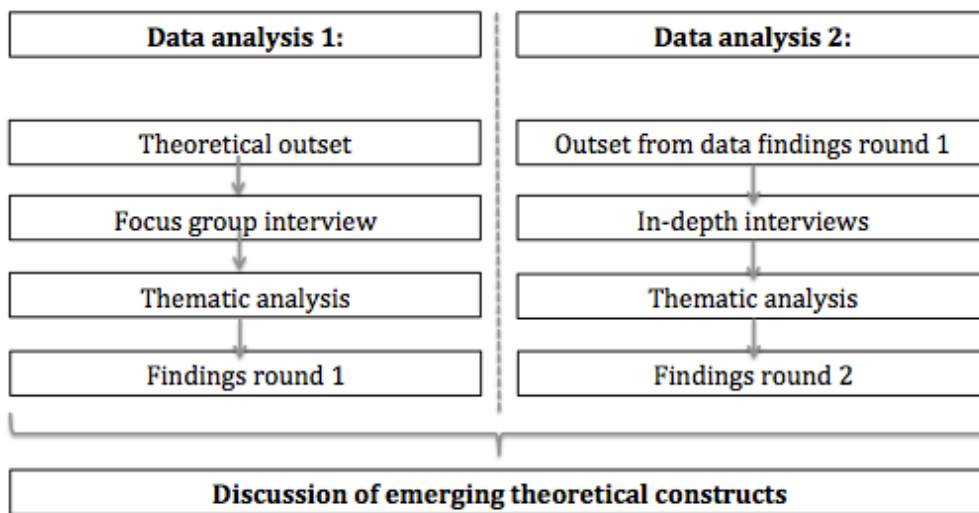
Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasize that although themes emerge in the data analysis of the, the researcher plays a significant, interpretive role in the process. Thereby, the researcher is acknowledged as an active participant in the knowledge production, which resonates with the hermeneutic methodology of constructivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Further, it supports Ali and Yosuf's (2011) notion that enabling the researcher to account for all methodological choices made throughout the study will increase validity in qualitative research.

Braun and Clarke (2006) introduce six phases of thematic analysis that are applied in the research are: 1) familiarize with the data, 2) generate initial codes, 3) search for themes, 4) review themes, 5) define and name themes and 6) produce the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The six phases ensure a thorough familiarization with the data through transcription, which enables the researcher to review, redefine and re-read the analytical findings before presenting them in the report (Floersch et al., 2010; Braun & Clarke, 2006). These steps are found to increase reliability and validity of the study.

4.3.3 Research design

The research design is illustrated in Figure 3 in order to account for the application of the methods for data collection and analysis. The discussion will refer to both the researcher's prior theoretical knowledge as well as the findings from the two rounds of data analysis. This enables an understanding of how the present study contributes with new theoretical constructs to the existing theoretical framework. Further, the discussion seeks to highlight findings that are inexplicable in relation to the theoretical framework in order to point towards areas of future research.

Figure 3: Research design



Source: Own creation (2016)

4.4 Data collection

The empirical data is collected through two rounds of interviews. First, an explorative focus group interview is conducted based on concepts from the theoretical framework presented in chapter 3. Next, in-depth interviews are made in order to develop further on the themes that have emerged from the focus group data analysis.

4.4.1 Qualitative interviews

Both the focus group interviews and the five in-depth interviews are characterized as qualitative in nature, why a brief introduction to the data collection method is provided here, before accounting for the purpose of each method in the subsequent paragraphs.

An interview is a conversational situation. Emphasizing *situation*, Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) stress that the interview conversation is a construction, where the interviewer and respondent(s) are not equal. The conversation is structured and guided by the interviewer and the respondent can be asked to elaborate on topics, which alters what is considered a normal conversation flow (Brinkmann, 2014). Despite this construction, conversations are rich sources of knowledge with regards to personal and social aspects of peoples' lives, why they are found beneficial in seeking to understand how consumers perceive value in relation to commercial pop-up activities.

Both rounds of interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner, meaning that an interview guide covering topics of research interest is prepared beforehand, but not necessarily followed strictly. The benefit of the semi-structured interview is that it enables the knowledge producing potential of the dialogue during the interview (Brinkmann, 2014). Further, the semi-structured interview acknowledges the researcher as participating in the knowledge production, as the researcher can ask respondents to elaborate on statements that especially support interesting aspects of the research project (ibid).

The following paragraphs elaborate on the two interview methods and the concrete decisions taken in collecting the empirical data of the present study.

4.4.2 Focus group interview

The purpose of conducting a focus group study is centered on gaining insights about respondents' perception of the overall topic of commercial pop-up activities. Further, the focus group study allows for a pre-understanding of how the participants will respond to themes indicated as important in the theoretical framework before embarking on in-depth interviews. Hence, the focus group has an "explorative purpose, to inform the development of the later stages in the study" (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001, p. 9). Tracy (2013) further support the use of focus groups prior to other data collection methods by emphasizing that "accessing language in vivo is also useful for developing subsequent interviews or questionnaires" (p. 167). The term *in vivo* is elaborated as "speech that is genuine and specific to a group in its

local context” (ibid, p. 182), which is found to sympathize with the research epistemology that highlight knowledge as created in and influenced by a given context.

The researcher role in the study will be to moderate and facilitate dialogue in order to ensure coverage of the predetermined theoretical concepts of interest. Taking a moderator role entails providing an overview of the research topic and ditto purpose (Tracy, 2013). In this particular study it is important to make clear to the respondents, that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions asked, just like there are no right or wrong interpretations of an individual experience of a pop-up activity. With regards to the questions asked, it should be noted that the interview guide is not to be presented as a sequence of questions to be answered one by one, but rather open-ended questions that stimulate dialogue and discussion (Bloor et al, 2001; Tracy, 2013). Bloor et al. (2001) recommend focusing exercises in order to “attempt to concentrate the group’s attention and interaction on a particular topic” (p. 43), and they put forward four different types of exercises: Ranking, vignette, news bulleting and photo interpretation. For the purpose of exploring the research topic, it is found beneficial to prepare ranking and vignette exercises prior to the focus group study. Vignettes are employed as “hypothetical cases or scenarios with particular features which make them suggestive of real life situations to respondents, who are then asked what course of action should follow” (ibid, p. 44-45). The ranking exercise is included in the interview where listed statements are ranked in order to encourage the respondents to consider the importance of the rankings (ibid). Both are prepared beforehand and displayed in the interview guide, however, not necessarily employed if the discussion moves without complication and the topics are covered in the dialogue already (App. 2).

There are certain measures that should be taken into account when assembling a focus group. First, the number of participants are chosen. Academics suggest 6-9 participants as the ideal size of a focus group while stressing that they should not be too large in order to ensure room for everyone to articulate their opinion (Tracy, 2013; Bloor et al., 2001). Furthermore, Tracy (2013) explains that participants should view each other as similar others in order to improve the outcome of the focus group. Now, this does not mean, that the respondents are screened with regards to their opinion or perception of commercial pop-ups beforehand, but their similarity is ensured by their age and local geographical context.

The present focus group study was conducted with five female participants in the age 24-28 (App. 1). Seven people had agreed to participate, but two cancelled on the day of the

study. The study was continued despite of this, as five participants are considered satisfactory when considering the ideal number of six participants (Bloor et al., 2001; Tracy, 2013). In order to meet the 'similar others' criteria, all of the participants are in a similar stage of life being students or having recently finished studying. In a study of demographic influence on the assessment of pop-up stores, it is concluded that young consumers and female consumers are most involved with experiential marketing such as pop-ups, and this has guided participant recruitment (Niehm, Fiore, Jeong & Kim, 2007). Choosing young females for the focus group study further supports the criteria of similar others in order to create a room where the participants feel safe to reflect on issues that they may or may not have discussed with others before (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009). All participants are living in Copenhagen and have done so for a minimum of two years to ensure, that they have lived in an urban area for a considerable period of time as it is established that pop-ups are primarily an urban phenomenon (Colomb, 2012; Thomsen, 2011). Finally, all participants have previously attended a pop-up activity. Participant information is provided in Appendix 1.

The focus group was conducted in an office facility situated in central Copenhagen in order for the respondents to meet at an easily accessible, neutral ground. It was conducted in the evening to respect the respondents' study and work hours and the duration of the study was 58 minutes. Prior to the opening question, the respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study and introduced to the study's understanding of the two key terms; value and commercial pop-up activities. Moreover, the respondents were informed prior to the interview that the focus group was audiotaped and transcribed afterwards in order to enhance the analytic process. After the interview the researcher debriefed the participants emphasizing how the interview data is only used in the current study, and that their first name, job status and age will appear from the description of participants, allowing for them to express a wish to be anonymous in the thesis. The transcribing was carried out within the first 24 hours of the focus group by the researcher. Tracy (2013) highlights an immediate transcription as beneficial as it becomes a part of the analytic process. Further, this is aligned with the first of Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis.

The focus group participants are all Danish speaking, and hence, the interview is conducted in their native language. This choice allows the participants to use their full vocabulary to describe their lived experience of the pop-up phenomenon.

4.4.3 In-depth interviews

Collecting data through in-depth interviews allows for a deeper investigation of the themes emerging from the focus group data analysis. Brinkmann (2014) highlights that the benefit of the in-depth interview is that it allows for the researcher to steer the conversation in the direction of the research topic. In the current study, the in-depth interviews are semi-structured, which is what gives the interviewer leeway for asking probing question that are “used to explore responses that are of significance to the research topic” (Saunders et al., 2008, p. 338)

The questions in the interview guide are formed by the findings of the focus group study, and they set out to investigate the respondents lived experience (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009). Therefore, the candidate themes of the first round of thematic analysis are not introduced explicitly. Instead, they are embedded in the interview guide through broad questions that provide room and flexibility for the respondent to reflect on when answering the question (App. 3).

In order to provide the best possible setting for the in-depth interview, certain contextual factors as well as the actions of the researcher must be taken into account. The researcher must guide the interview and provide a comfortable environment to make the respondent feel confident about answering questions, and elaborate on aspects, that he or she may not have thought of beforehand (Tracy, 2013; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009). Saunders et al. (2008) suggest that the researcher provides a couple of locations for the interview and allows the respondent to choose another if preferred.

A pilot interview was completed in order to test the interview guide in the face-to-face context. Though the interview guide was only adjusted to a minor degree afterwards, the pilot study was informative with regards to highlighting possible pitfalls in the interviews. The data from the pilot interview indicated that talking about the intangible concept of value creation in pop-ups was difficult. It was found that the respondent had never reflected upon many of the questions asked. This primarily influences the researcher’s behavior and active participation in the interview by asking probing questions. Moreover, it emphasizes that the researcher’s main role in in-depth interviews is to make the respondents feel comfortable exploring the value concept while talking about it. This was attempted in the briefing prior to the interview by emphasizing that all answers are valuable to the research and that no wrong answer exists. Further, the pilot study indicated a need for the researcher to ask more probing ques-

tions. This was adjusted in the following interviews, while being aware it may influence the conversation flow and reflect an interview situation more than a conversation between the two parties (Saunders et al., 2008; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009).

The five respondents were invited to participate in the interview at an office space, the researcher's home, or a quiet place of their own choice. Two interviews were then conducted at the researcher's residence, one at the respondent's home, one in the office facility and one at a university. As with the focus group study, all interviews were conducted in Danish in order to allow the respondents to use their full vocabulary and prevent restraints from language barriers. All respondents were informed that the interview would be audiotaped, transcribed and used in analysis of the research topic, and further, they were informed about respect for their anonymity in the debrief. The researcher transcribed the interviews within 24 hours after they had been made. In order to support the descriptive validity of the data items, interview notes were made immediately after the interviews had taken place (Tracy, 2013). The interview notes are presented in Appendix 12.

The interviewees were recruited according to the same demographic criteria and were required to have attended a pop-up activity. Participant information is provided in Appendix 1.

4.4.4 Limitations to the data collection methods

All of the data are collected, transcribed and analyzed in Danish as it is assumed, that the respondents are enabled to provide a fuller account and be more reflective in their answers using their native language. Although the applied methods acknowledge the researcher as being influential in the interpretation of data, it should be noted that the data extracts provided are the researcher's own translation. Considering that the researcher is present in all parts of the study, and thus, deeply embedded in the context of what is said in each interview, the translated data extracts can carry researcher bias.

With regards to both of the interview methods, it is acknowledged that the interview situation is constructed and may influence the answers provided by the respondents. The interview guide seeks to minimize the occurrence of respondents feeling like they have to give a certain answer by not revealing the specific themes of interest in the research. Yet, the interview construal can influence the answers given by respondents (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009). It

is assumed that this will occur less in the focus group interview, as meaning is created through the participants' dialogue here, than in the respondent-interviewer construction.

A limitation to the focus group study is the possibilities of group think, which can occur if consensus about a topic is easily reached leaving little room to express an opposite opinion (Tracy, 2013). Therefore, the findings of the focus group are tested in the in-depth interviews in order to increase validity of these as well as getting elaborate insights on the themes.

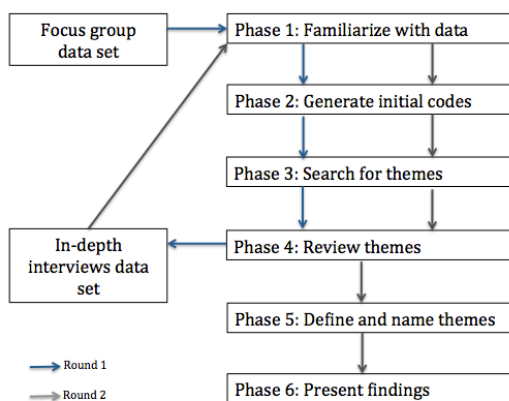
The generalizability of the study can be contested, as the group of respondents represents individuals with similar demographics (Ali & Yosuf, 2011). However, in the light of the CCT approach taken to the research, it can be argued that the findings will provide insight to how value is created through the intention of showing community affiliation through consumption. The data reveals insights about community consumption that may contribute with findings that are informative in other relations than the present research.

In sum, limitations to the research methods as well as possible researcher bias are found but the combination of the two rounds of data collection seeks to decrease these limitations and increase reliability and validity of the study.

4.5 Data analysis

To ease comprehension of the analytic process, Figure 4 is developed and illustrates how thematic analysis is applied in the two consecutive rounds of data analysis. The application draws on the method's flexibility in order to include the theoretical framework in answering the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Crowe et al., 2015)

Figure 4: Analytic process



Source: Own creation (2016) with phases adapted from Braun & Clarke (2006).

The first step in a thematic analysis is identified as becoming familiarized with the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This phase starts during the transcription of the interviews as interesting data extracts are already noted in this initial part of the analytic process (Tracy, 2013). Braun and Clarke (2006) also highlight the transcribing process as being informative of the early stages of analysis as it develops an elaborate understanding in the data.

Familiarization is also gained through re-reading the data sets in full length, whilst making notes and getting an overview of the various topics covered in the conversation. Next, the initial coding starts and this can be either theoretically or data driven (Crowe et al., 2015). In the present analysis, the first thematic analysis is theoretically driven, as it notes the important themes from the theoretical framework. However, it is simultaneously respectful to the grounded theory approach as codes emerging from the data are registered as well. Through the iterative reading of data other codes of importance are registered and noted alongside the theoretically informed ones, when found to illuminate emerging aspects of interest in the data. Moving on from the initial coding, the codes are organized into emerging overarching themes. In the present research, the themes identified in the analysis of the focus group data set are those that may form the interview guide for in-depth interviews. Therefore, the process of defining themes in the third and fourth phase is not re-iterated as rigorously in the first round of analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). In the fifth phase, defining and naming themes, the primary focus is to ensure that the themes are distinct from each other and internally presenting coherent data extracts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is important that the theme titles are “concise, punchy, and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about” (ibid, p. 93). Sub-themes are included to provide structure in a large and complex theme (Crowe et al., 2015). Finally, the themes and sub-themes are presented as findings. However, each of the analytics processes are accounted for in the following paragraphs in order to increase comprehension of the presented findings in chapter 5.

4.5.1 Focus group

4.5.1.1 Thematic analysis 1

The first coding process is made with regards to the codes of importance defined in the theoretical framework; cultural capital, identity projects, social relations, communicative staging

and substantive staging. The analysis shows that most prevalent codes in the dialogue on value creation in consumption of commercial pop-ups are cultural capital, identity project and communicative staging. Data coded as social relations and substantive staging are also found, but in a significantly lesser extent than the aforementioned. However, as the analysis is qualitative and not quantitative, the quantum of mentions of a theoretically driven code is not found to be decisive in forming the themes (Tracy, 2013).

Therefore, the second round of coding diverts from the theoretically informed codes in order to allow for emerging codes to be detected. In this second round, the most prevalent codes are: exclusivity, hype, temporality, pre-affiliation with brand, engagement, news value, and resonance between brand values and pop-up activity. In reviewing the themes, the data extracts are organized under each of the candidate themes to ensure that they are distinct and not inherently describing the same theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The candidate themes of the focus group analysis are presented with data extracts in Appendix 10.

Thematic analysis 1 is conducted until phase five, why the candidate themes are not defined with finalized names. Instead, the following candidate themes are investigated further through in-depth interview:

Table 2: Candidate themes from thematic analysis 1.

Perception of exclusivity	Support of identity construction	Communication about the pop-up	On-site engagement
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Source: Own creation (2016)

Further, thematic analysis 1 results in a realization about the participants' understanding of the pop-up phenomenon. Although the focus group study was initiated by a clarification of how the concepts of commercial pop-ups and value are understood in the thesis, the participants express confusion about whether some of the discussed activities and events are actually pop-ups. In light of this, the introduction of pop-ups is altered in the in-depth interviews to eliminate confusion on the phenomenon.

4.5.2 In-depth interviews

4.5.2.1 Thematic analysis 2

The analytic process of phase 1-4 is similar to the above-described steps and considerations made in the focus group analysis. The transcribed in-depth interviews display a much larger number of ‘uh’ and ‘uhm’-expressions. These sounds are found to denote the thinking-periods in the answers, which are more frequent in the in-depth interviews. It is generally noted from the in-depth interviews that the concept of value in commercial pop-up consumption is a very intangible construct, which the respondents have never explicitly talked about before and find it challenging to describe. Therefore, the breaks in the answers are found to be a sign of more thorough reflection on the answer provided or finding it hard to put their experience into words.

The candidate themes of the first part of the analysis are found to be insufficient in covering the data from the in-depth interviews. This is interpreted as a difference in the two interview settings. In consequence of this finding, the candidate themes are applied as codes, which enables new overarching themes to emerge. Four themes are defined and named after having reviewed the themes with a focus on ensuring that they adequately describe all data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis is presented in appendix 11 with data extracts to support the themes. The four overarching themes and sub-themes are named:

Table 3: Overarching themes and sub-themes

Theme	Pop-ups as a unique opportunity	Value starts with knowing	Pop-ups as a cultural experience	I was (not) here.
Sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Perception of exclusivity- Accessibility- Tapping into personal interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Third party endorsement- Pre-affiliation with brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cultural event association- Social occasion- Atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Communication about the pop-up- Role in identity construction

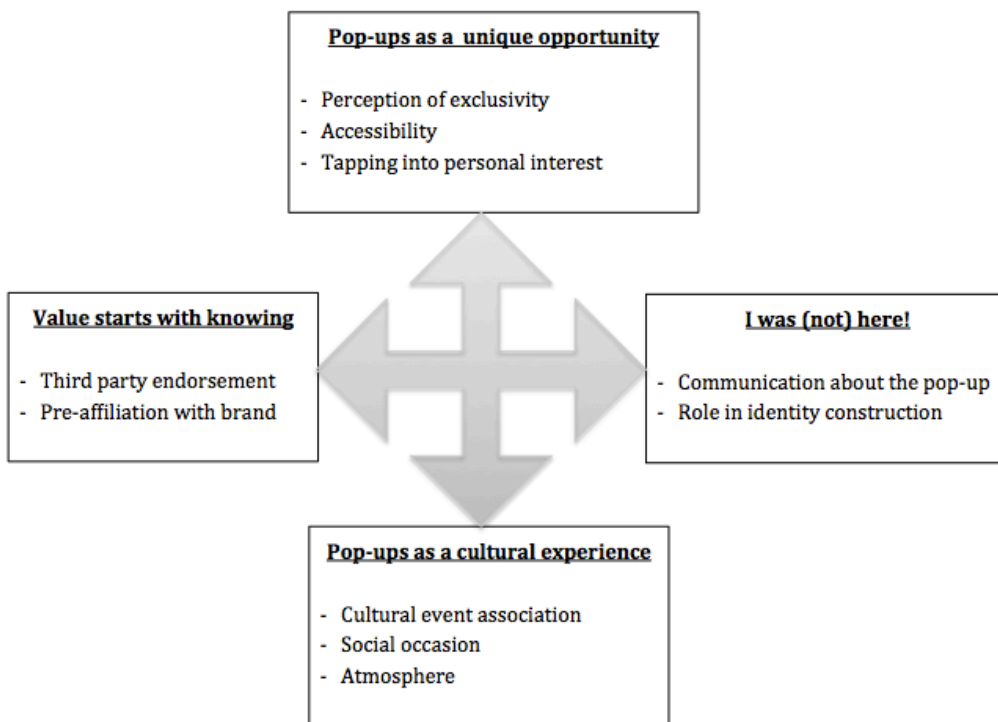
Source: Own creation (2016)

Phase six in the thematic analysis entails presentation of findings, which is done in the next chapter, where a model illustrates the interrelation between the themes as well as the ten supportive sub-themes that are defined.

5. Findings

The thematic analysis results in four overarching themes: *A unique opportunity*, *Value starts with knowing*, *Pop-ups as a cultural experience* and *I was (not) here*. Each of the themes holds a number of sub-themes, which in total makes up ten sub-themes. Figure 5 displays the four themes and their respective subthemes. In the current analysis, the themes are interrelated, which is illustrated by the double-side arrows in the figure. This further corresponds with the interrelatedness of aspects within consumer behavior and consumption as found in the CCT approach (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). The distinctiveness is achieved through naming the themes and ensuring that the coded data extracts are supportive of each theme or sub-theme. The presentation of the findings illustrates aspects that the respondents relate to as creating value in consumption of pop-up activities. The aspects display various notions from the theoretical framework. Thereby, the theoretical framework aids in explaining the findings, as well as highlight when findings oppose current theoretical constructs or suggest new ones. The findings are presented along with a reflection on how essential points in each theme can enable better value creation for consumers in future commercial pop-up activities.

Figure 5: Themes and sub-themes



Source: Own creation (2016)

5.1 Pop-ups as a unique opportunity

The analysis reveals that the respondents generally are positive towards the concept of commercial pop-ups as it fosters unique opportunities for both experiences and product purchase. This is illustrated in the top of figure 5. Considering the respondents as reflecting the characteristics of modern consumers also supports the notion of them being very aware and decoding-savvy with regards to marketing messages. More respondents in both the focus group and the interviews talk about pop-ups as a valuable asset for the brand before they start reflecting upon how it creates value for them as individuals (Focus group, App. 4; Pernille, App. 6; Sofie, App. 7). The three sub-themes each elaborate on an aspect that influences the respondents' evaluation of pop-ups as providing a unique opportunity for either acquiring a product or an experience.

5.1.1 Perception of exclusivity

The main attractive feature of commercial pop-up activities is perceived to be the exclusivity connoted through the temporality of the branded experience scape (Surchi, 2011; Gonzalez, 2014), and the analysis supports this to the extent that exclusivity is a part of the consumer interpretation of pop-ups. The word 'exclusivity' appears explicitly in all data sets (App. 4-9). Besides from this, the words 'unique', 'special experience' and 'extraordinary' are also used to describe the pop-up experience. One respondent expresses her consumption of pop-up activities as influenced by the interplay between temporality and perceived exclusivity:

I [go to pop-ups] because I feel that it is a special experience that is a bit exclusive, actually, and that you have to be lucky to make it before it closes and moves on. It's a once-in-a-lifetime thing to do, right? (Pernille, App. 6, l. 32-34)

Another respondent supports the notion of temporality as linked to the perception of exclusivity: *"I think it is really cool that it becomes available to the consumer but only for a period of time, which still makes it exclusive, right? So that's what I think [about pop-ups], something with exclusivity"* (Caroline, App. 8, l. 26-28). However, the analysis also reveals that the perception of exclusivity can be influenced by how hyped the pop-up is. As 'hype' seemingly decreases the perception of exclusivity, it is indicated that the temporality of the pop-up alone does not ensure value creation. This respondent reflects upon the influence on her own imagined will-

ingness to attend a pop-up activity that has reached much hype and attendees on a Facebook event:

If you want to stick to pop-ups as appearing as some kind of exclusive moment, then [...] it is a shame if everyone can have a piece of the cake. [...] If everyone can have it, then I would probably opt out, I think.. Yeah, I think, I would. (Cecilie, App. 5, l. 279-287)

The consumption of novel products or experiences is much contingent on the anticipation of the act. In this respect, consumption begins before even entering the pop-up space, as the consumer start imaging and anticipating what the experience will be like (Campbell, 1995; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982a). This resonates with findings of how the respondents mentally construct the pop-up activity as something you have to be lucky to experience due to the limited lifespan (Pernille, App. 6, l. 32-34). In this respect, it is interesting that the mental construct and imagery of the experience seems inferior to the perception hype. Several respondents reflect upon pop-ups as being a good way for companies to transmit their message to many consumers, but are also showing resistance towards hyped pop-ups (Focus group, App. 4; Sofie, App. 7). This is an indication of how modern consumers are skilled in interpreting marketing activities and fully aware of the purpose of marketing as constructed in the dominating goods-centered logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Rejecting hyped pop-up activities is still to be considered as consumption according to CCT literature. When perceiving consumers as interpretive agents, it is indicated that they employ interpretive strategies to mass-mediated consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). The analysis indicates that the respondents' might find a dissonance between attending a hyped pop-up activity and their identity narrative construction. Thereby, consumption occurs through the interpretation of the communication about the pop-up and is practiced through the rejection of attending.

5.1.2 Accessibility

Although the analysis shows that the respondents largely express unique experiences as creating value in the consumption of commercial pop-up activities, it is also emphasized that ac-

cessibility of products does too. Pop-ups providing access to products considered inaccessible are perceived as a unique opportunity, which creates value for the consumer.

If it is a product – not like a cactus or an icecream (reference to other product pop-ups mentioned in the interview) – but if for example, it is clothes that so far have been difficult to access. For example Cecilie Copenhagen [...] you can buy her clothes online, but it is nicer to see the thing in real life (Sofie, App. 7, l. 101-107)

[...] I think that sometimes with online goods, especially clothes, it is kind of annoying that you can't try it on, so it was a really nice opportunity to get out there to feel the materials, see the clothes and try it on before you purchased it. So in that way, I thought it was really nice that it got a bit more tangible than online (Sofie Mathilde, App. 9, l. 118-121)

Both of the respondents use clothes as a reference, but other products such as sofas, art, jewelry and crafts are also highlighted as products that the respondents would be more comfortable purchasing after having seen and felt it (Focus Group, App. 4; Pernille, App. 6).

The unique opportunity with regards to accessibility is also found as respondents address geographical locality of the pop-ups. One participant in the focus group study expresses that a feeling of geographical locality would be important, if she was to design a pop-up that would create value for her as a consumer:

As I've mentioned, if it is something you can get online that is made more accessible in some pop-up [then it is nice and then], I would find it pretty neat to take a store into the city that is normally located a further away. Or actually not into the city but closer to where I live. That's something I would consider (Focus group, Amanda, App. 4, l. 837-840)

The value inherent in local access is elaborated on, as the same participant expresses excitement as she is informed that a cactus store she likes has a pop-up in her neighborhood (Focus group, App. 4, l. 128-132).

Another respondent also emphasizes local accessibility as a feature of a pop-up store that would make her visit the temporary activity:

For example it could also be an international brand that makes a pop-up in Denmark. Then I would feel like "Okay, this is really nice for me, because it gives me access to something that I normally don't have access to (Caroline, App. 8, l. 52-55)

The analysis shows that the perception of accessibility mainly concerns commercial pop-ups with a product focus. Consumption of everyday goods, such as a plant, is attributed more value through the novel consumption scape of the pop-up. The importance of local, geographical accessibility contributes with a novel insight to the current literature on commercial pop-ups. The literature on commercial pop-ups emphasizes location as being part of the holistic message that the pop-up communicates (Surchi, 2011). However, it neglects to address how a regular store can create value for consumers by opening a pop-up in a new part of the city. The present study illustrates that consumers feel affiliated with their local environment in urban areas, and therefore, attribute value to local, geographical accessibility of products.

5.1.3 Tapping into personal interest

The respondents all express that in order for them to attend a pop-up activity it is crucial that the theme of the pop-up is something that lies within their individual range of interests (App 4-9). It is clear from the data that the respondents find Copenhagen to be somewhat crowded with cultural offerings and initiatives, such as commercial pop-up activities. As a consequence of this, it is found that getting the respondent's attention is contingent on tapping into their personal interests. Consumption is part of the continuous construction of a consumer's individual and collective identity narrative, and objects or symbols consumed or rejected become part of this narrative (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). One respondent reflects upon making the choice to actually go to a pop-up activity as being dependent on her personal interest and gain from it:

It does take quite a lot to choose to go to [a pop-up] actually. You know, there has to be something... You have to have a special interest in it or feel that you gain something from it, I think (Pernille, App. 6, l. 236-239)

The analysis indicates, that substantive staging of a pop-up is more important if the topic does not tap into the consumer's personal interest. One respondent says that the pop-up activities she prefers entail an exclusive access to products “[...] but I could definitely also go to an art pop-up event or whatever, but it would need a bit more, I think” (Caroline, App. 8, l. 61-62). The ‘bit more’ is quite intangible. However, across the data sets, it is found to indicate that when a pop-up falls outside an obvious field of interest, features such as novelty and exclusive access are required to get consumer attention (Cecilie, App. 5; Pernille App. 6; Caroline, App. 8). As mentioned, this indicates the need for considerations concerning the substantive staging of the pop-up. However, it is also found interesting to consider the communicative staging of the pop-up, as this parameter can have more or less influence on the pop-up perception among consumers (Arnould et al., 1998). The finding that hype decreases the perception of exclusivity does, however, contest how communicative staging should be utilized with the purpose of getting attention from and attracting consumers.

5.1.4 What does this mean for brands utilizing commercial pop-up activities?

The relation between positive and negative evaluation of exclusivity is closely related to hype about the event. This proposes a possible paradox for brands wishing to utilize pop-ups as a part of their marketing strategy. The paradox lies in wanting as many participants as possible, if this means that the hype potentially decreases the value of the pop-up. Two participants in the focus group are reflecting on this possible dilemma:

Sofie: But I think that at the same time, it will be incredibly hard to create a pop-up that you want to be successful, and then think...

Henriette: We can't have too many showing up...

Sofie: I think you just want visitors... So, I guess, that's why it clashes... When someone thinks that [the message of the pop-up] just needs to get out there...

Henriette: Somehow, that is always the hurdle when something becomes popular, because you make more money, but you also lose your niceness among people like us... But I guess it's hard... (Henriette and Sofie, App. 4, l. 941-954)

This reflects the consumers' ability to understand marketing behavior utilizing their abilities as interpretive agents (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), as well as their ability to see the dilemma, as it is acknowledged that hyped pop-ups are not desirable to 'people like us'.

For the brand that wants to create a commercial pop-up activity that targets consumers in a specific community, this finding is informative. The finding indicates that to create value for the consumer, the corporation should not aim at skyrocketing numbers of attendees. Rather, it is suggested that focusing communication towards a limited group of consumers creates value through a sense of 'feeling special' (Focus group, App. 4, l. 703-717). This specified group of consumers should be decided on by means of the topics that the brand has in common with the consumers. The analysis indicates that a personal interest in the pop-up's theme, product or experience increases chance of attendance among the respondents. Further, it fosters an experience that creates value for the consumer, as it is considered exclusive and a unique opportunity to engage with the brand in the pop-up setting.

Finally, the findings indicate that making a product or experience accessible, creates value to the consumer if it is normally considered un-accessible either geographically or due to online shop only constellation of the brand.

5.2 Value starts with knowing

As illustrated in the left side of Figure 5, the analysis finds that the respondents plan to go to pop-ups they have become aware of through media, social relations or through the brand's own promotion efforts. While some respondents agree that they might walk into a pop-up they pass by (Pernille, App. 6; Caroline, App. 8; Sofie Mathilde, App. 9), it is found that commercial pop-ups are in need of communicative staging in order to attract consumers. This finding opposes the proposition made by commercial pop-up scholars, who argue that pop-

ups attract consumers from the street, as they are inherently interesting due to their ambient location, setup and temporality (Surchi, 2011; Gonzalez, 2014). The analysis indicates that in the relation between communicative and substantive staging, the pop-up facilitator should focus on communicative staging which includes “[moving] servicescape meanings from service provider to customer, between customers, and potentially at least from customers to providers” (Arnould et al., 1998, p. 90).

The findings regarding communication about the pop-up activity support the notion that value creation in the consumption process of commercial pop-ups begins the first time the consumer becomes aware of the pop-up. The analysis shows that there are two factors that are more prevalent in influencing the value creating process as beginning by merely knowing: Third party endorsement of the pop-up (not brand as sender of communication) and a pre-affiliation with the brand.

5.2.1 Third party endorsement

The analysis suggests that value creation does not only start with knowing about the pop-up, but also with knowing the third party endorser of the pop-up. The consumer interprets the symbolic value of the media endorsing the pop-up or the person in their respective social network, who talks about it, as this influences the perceived attractiveness of the activity (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). This first encounter with the pop-up is found to be instrumental in the respondents’ assessment of the value that the pop-up will create for the individual consumer.

5.2.1.1 Media endorsement

The analysis reveals that media channels perceived to hold a highbrow cultural position influences the interpretation of a pop-up activity’s relevance. This is found as the respondents express that endorsement from a medium they find attractive act as a preliminary curator of the pop-up and increase their interest in the activity (Focus group, App. 4; Sofie, App. 7; Caroline, App. 8). While some media are found to have the ability to make valuable and trusted recommendations, two of the respondents also describe the contrary. Media, which are perceived to be unattractive senders of a message about a pop-up activity, create reluctance to investigate more about a pop-up if their first encounter with it is from this media:

Well, naturally it depends on who is in charge of the pop-up, but I definitely think that if I hear about it on Alt for Damerne's website, then I would probably think that the activity is not really for me. (Caroline, App. 8, l. 99-101)

I think that if I hear about it in Go'Morgen Danmark, then I would probably choose not to go. And maybe also, you know, if it is really hyped. (Cecilie, App. 5, l. 110-111)

Referring to media that are found to be unattractive as endorser of cultural events in Copenhagen is informative about the respondents' relationship to national media and the symbolic value attributed to these. The symbolic values are inherently the cultural capital of the media, which the respondents find reflected in the pop-ups that they endorse. By visiting or attending the pop-ups endorsed by attractive media, the consumer seeks to enhance their individual cultural capital, which according to CCT scholars is the predominant status symbol in contemporary society (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Thus, consumption of pop-ups can create value for the consumer, if it is perceived to increase his or her cultural capital due to the symbolic values attributed the event by the third party media endorsement. In this relation, the media takes the role as the superordinate group that produces cultural values that the subordinate group can employ through consumption of the pop-up activity (Simmel, 1998)

In opposition to the media highlighted as unattractive endorsers of a pop-up, several other are referred to as channels where the respondents go to actively find out what is worth experiencing currently in the city (Focus group, App. 4; Sofie, App. 7; Caroline, App. 8). One respondent reflects on how media endorsement helps her evaluate whether a pop-up with an unknown brand is worth visiting:

With the Magnum [Pleasure Store pop-up] I wouldn't really care if my friends or the company told me about it, because Magnum is an established brand that I know already, but with Cecilie Copenhagen, I think it is kind of cool that Soundvenue and Cover also support it. Just so that you get confirmation that it is a good brand, and that this pop-up is where you are supposed to be (Sofie, App. 7, l. 258-262).

The respondents utilize media consumption in the process of choosing between the multitudes of cultural offerings in Copenhagen. This strategy is found to enable them to easily make

meaning of the symbolic and cultural value of a pop-up activity, and infer meaning to consuming or choosing not to consume the activity in question (Veblen, 2007). Thereby, the media endorsement is employed as a tool for navigation and ensuring that the pop-up consumption supports the ongoing narrative construction of the consumer's identity.

5.2.1.2 Social relations

Another important aspect of the value creation is found in being made aware of the pop-up by a trusted member of the respondents' personal social network. More respondents in the focus group emphasize how a personal recommendation from a friend will have a great influence on whether they actually attend. Similarly, colleagues are highlighted as people who are able to make recommendations about a pop-up that the respondents will find meaningful as both friends and colleagues are found to have the same or similar interests as the respondents (Focus group, App. 4, l. 514-557).

The analysis further shows that the respondents trust their friends' recommendations to an extent where they are willing to attend a pop-up only based on this, or attend the pop-up with a friend who asks them to come without looking more into it (Focus group, App. 4; Pernille, App. 6). This notion is important as it provides an insight into the hierarchy of trusted influencers when it comes to the first encounter of a pop-up activity. While some media are found to be able to make recommendations that start the value-creating consumption process for the consumers, the analysis suggests that consumers are more likely to actually attend a pop-up if they get a personal recommendation. This is especially apparent if the recommendation comes from a person who is considered to have satisfactory knowledge about the pop-up and insight to the consumer's preferences.

I am definitely more likely to go if I am asked by someone who knows more about it [...] because there is so much about [pop-ups] on Facebook, so often you just press 'attend' or 'interested'. But for me to actually go would probably entail that I know the person who is involved in it, or that I know someone who is going and says "Lets go there together". So in reality, it is probably more of a network-thing rather than Facebook that gets me to attend. (Pernille, App. 6, l. 97-104)

This indicates that word-of-mouth as a promotional means is supported as not only being important for consumers to pay a visit to a commercial pop-up, but also as an important component in creating value for the consumer. This is apparent as the personal recommendation is found to have a high level of trustworthiness among the respondents. This finding relates to the notion of tribes or communities where symbols are used in making meaning of a shared understanding of the world (Cova, 1997). Assuming that the respondents perceive themselves to be a part of the same community and thus hold similar values as their friends, the emphasis they put on reliability of recommendation made by social relations supports this point (Focus group, App. 4; Pernille, App. 6; Sofie Mathilde, App. 9).

The respondents all state that Facebook is the media where they are often introduced to the pop-up activity for the first time. However, none of them ascribe a particular importance to this media in the description of value creation. One respondent state that when Facebook sends her a notification about a pop-up event she has pressed 'attend' or 'interested' to, she has often forgot about the event in the meantime, unless she has already made an agreement to go to the pop-up with a friend (Sofie Mathilde, App. 9).

Social relations are found to have a dual impact on the value creation with regards to knowledge about the pop-up. First, the personal recommendation from a trusted member of the community is found to work in a similar, if not more, significant manner as the endorsements made by an attractive media. The analysis finds that the respondents trust their personal network to only recommend pop-ups they know the respondent will find interesting. The other important impact of social relations is found as the respondents state that they would typically go with a friend to a pop-up activity, as it becomes part of a social occasion. The pop-up is then considered to be adding value to the social occasion (Sofie App. 7; Caroline, App. 8; Sofie Mathilde, App. 9).

5.2.2 Pre-affiliation with brand

Besides from being introduced to the pop-up activity through a source that is interpreted as able to endorse it in a valuable way, the analysis also shows that value lies in knowing the brand prior to the pop-up. This is related to the finding on personal interest (cf. 5.1.3 Tapping into personal interest), but where the personal interest was focused on the topic or theme of the pop-up, the pre-affiliation with brand shows that brands are consumed as symbols em-

bedded in the pop-up activity. This is to be considered in relation to both the consumer's individual narrative quest as well as consuming objects and symbols that are interpreted as meaningful in supporting or enhancing the individual's cultural capital (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Lets just say that HAY was something that I already liked. Then I would be interested in the pop-up that they have made [...]. If it were a brand that you didn't really know that made a pop-up shop, then you would probably be there because of a recommendation, or because it was really nice. Or at least that you have heard about in some way. (Cecilie, App. 5, l. 165-176)

Comparable to how the right media endorsement can inform the consumer's interpretation of the value that the pop-up can create, the symbolic values that are attributed to a brand can endorse a pop-up. In that manner, brands that the consumers wish to affiliate with in their consumption process are able to disseminate values to a pop-up just like third party media endorsements.

If you like Nørgaard, then you kind of put them on a pedestal and you want to be identified with the brand. And [when they make a pop-up with Cecilie Copenhagen] then it is like they endorse Cecilie Copenhagen. So even if it's just a single girl who has created this [clothing brand] out of her creative restlessness or whatever, then they (Nørgaard) support it. And then maybe you also find that [Cecilie Copenhagen] is a good brand. (Sofie, App. 7, l. 44-48)

It is interesting how the respondent reflects on the aspiration to be affiliated with a brand as influential on the evaluation of the pop-up. This finding indicates that value is created as the main brand, in this example Nørgaard, and the values associated with this seem to spill over to the unknown brand. Attending the joint brand pop-up will allow the consumer to stay updated on what is worth knowing according to the main brand. Thereby, a pre-affiliation with a brand can carry value in itself the same way third party endorsement can. It is assumed that as brand images can create imagery consumption value the same way an attractive media endorsement can, the opposite holds true for brands as well.

Pre-affiliation with the attributed values and interpretation of the brand becomes part of the consumption process that starts when the consumer imagines what attending the pop-up will be like (Holbrook & Hirschmann, 1982a; 1982b). The presence of 'imaginative hedonism' allows for consumers to anticipate an extraordinary experience in the consumption of a novel pop-up created by a brand they find valuable (Campbell, 1995). Accordingly, the analysis suggests that a considerable part of the value creation in pop-up activity consumption lies in this pre-participation anticipation.

5.2.3 What does this mean for brands utilizing commercial pop-up activities?

The findings emphasize that the value created for consumers in the consumption of commercial pop-up activities begins prior to attendance, and that this phase is informative with regards to the consumer's probability of actually visiting the pop-up.

For the corporations considering to create a pop-up activity, the analysis suggests that they should focus on targeting their core consumers and find out what media channels they find reliable. Although, word-of-mouth promotion from personal social network is found to be a very important value creating means of communication for the consumer, the findings show that the pop-ups cannot rely on consumers discovering the pop-up without supportive communicative staging. Furthermore, the corporation should consider the extent to which they communicate themselves about the activity or benefit from a third party media endorser. The latter illuminates the need for a deliberate communication strategy around the pop-up. Further, it indicates that the pop-up will not be perceived so inherently interesting that it can create a word-of-mouth buzz solely by existing. The current body of literature on commercial pop-ups does not explicitly state that communication efforts are unnecessary when utilizing pop-ups as a strategic marketing tool. However, it does not emphasize promotion or advertising of pop-ups as necessary, as it highlights that many pop-up stores benefit from being located in a busy, urban area where many people are able to walk in from the street (Gonzalez, 2014; Surchi, 2011). The analysis indicates that when creating a commercial pop-up activity, the company should include advertising and communication efforts in the strategy. Moreover, the analysis suggests that companies will especially benefit from endorsement by media parties that the consumer group aspires to, rather than being the sender of the information themselves.

5.3 Pop-ups as a cultural experience

It is clear that the respondents' believe they have multiple cultural event offerings in Copenhagen to choose between. The analysis finds that pop-up activities are perceived to compete with cultural events such as regular gallery exhibitions, museums, restaurant visits and concerts.

5.3.1 Cultural event association

Most of the respondents refer to the pop-up concept as having event-like features:

[...] somehow there is a sense of a.. What is it called.. Not vernissage, but there is something about it. Like maybe there are some bubbles (drink) and some food and some small gift bags [...] so you feel like you are a guest at an event where a little extra effort is made (Pernille, App. 6, l. 61-64)

I have several times read about restaurants or the like that have [pop-ups], and here, it is the experience you get. You get to have a nice time with your friends or maybe you meet people you know at the pop-up, but it is probably primarily the experience – it is nice to go there with somebody. In a way, it is actually a small event you are attending, if you can put it that way. (Mathilde Sofie, App. 9, l. 90-94)

When the findings suggest that pop-ups compete with events such as concerts or art exhibitions in the mind of the consumer, this raises a consideration of what role consumers expect to have in the consumption process. The two data excerpts are important, as they are informative of how the respondents would consume a cultural event. For example, when consumers go to a concert they observe and listen to the music. They might have a drink and they probably share the experience with one or more friends. The only active participation in the on-site consumption is most likely applauding the band and perhaps singing along. In this example, the value created in the consumption of the concert is not contingent on on-site engagement, which is presented as a means of value co-creation in commercial pop-up literature (Gonzalez, 2014). Rather, as the findings show that the respondents relate to pop-ups as cultural events, it is beneficial to consider on-site co-creation of value from a consumer service logic perspective (Grönroos, 2008). This perspective presents co-creation to occur as the

consumers create value by applying their own interpretive skills and resources to the value proposition put forward by the pop-up (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

The findings suggest that value creation is interpreted differently among the respondents when considering pop-up's providing access to a product and ones providing an experience. However, the findings show that when the respondents describe value-creating factors, experiences related to cultural events are more prevalent than access to products.

5.3.2. Social occasion

The findings illuminate how the respondents perceive pop-ups as creating value by facilitating a social gathering with friends. More respondents even make a clear distinction between when they would go alone to a pop-up and when they would attend with friends. This indicates that events are closely linked to a social occasion and considering the pop-up as an experience. On the contrary, a commercial pop-up with a product focus does not necessarily hold the same social value:

[I could both go together with friends or alone] but if it is a bit more of an event factor, then I would definitely go with someone else. On the other hand, if it were a pop-up shop, then I would go by myself. (Caroline, App. 8, l. 147-149)

[I would] always go with someone [...] If I were to go alone it would have to be the day after the launch because it is kind of a friend-thing to go there and have a beer together, and [...] I often considered it to be a cool Friday bar [...] and then it is weird to go there alone. But then I would go there alone the day after to look at the clothes, but I wouldn't go in there alone when there was a crowd there together and then walk around alone. (Sofie, App. 7, l. 201-210)

A pop-up can both be the facilitator of making plans with friends as well as become part of plans that are made before the consumer is aware of the pop-up activity. Both ways are found to create value for the respondents, why it is assumed that it is in the shared experience with friends, supported by the pop-up activity, that value is created. One respondent expresses that a good experience at a pop-up adds value to an evening out with friends, but stress that the

success of the evening is not dependent on a good experience at the pop-up. In that manner, it is found that pop-ups can add value to social occasion, but not reduce the value of the evening. This indicates that the social relations are more important to the respondent than the pop-up (Caroline, App. 8, l. 162-173).

Moreover, it is found that the reluctance to walk into a pop-up from the street with no prior knowledge about it, is somewhat diminished if walking by the pop-up with a friend. This reluctance suggests a fear of not having the necessary knowledge and the right cultural capital. It is interesting to find that the social occasion diminishes the fear of 'not knowing' when entering an unfamiliar pop-up setting:

If I walk by something like a café or a gallery where something is going on inside, I don't think I would go in there alone, even if I thought it looked nice [...] but if I walked by with a friend, we would definitely consider going inside. (Mathilde Sofie, App. 9, l. 178-185)

This excerpt illustrates how the consumer feels less exposed and more adventurous when discovering a pop-up in conjunction with a social occasion. This is interesting as it is not seemingly easy to explain. One could argue that entering and experiencing a pop-up activity alone would enhance the individual's cultural capital as he or she would then be able attain a status position as a first mover. However, it is also expressed by several of the focus group participants that they have felt reluctance to enter specific pop-up activities in Copenhagen as they were not quite sure about what was expected of them inside. The insecurity created a fear that it would be awkward and intimidating to have to talk to the employees in the pop-up exhibition all alone (Focus group, App. 4, l. 577-605).

Finally, the analysis finds that the social occasion can entail participation in a pop-up activity in support of the organizer if he or she is a personal relation. The value created in this kind of pop-up consumption is rooted in the social relation and showing affiliation to the person organizing more than to the pop-up activity. One respondent elaborates on this:

Of course it is more compelling [for me to attend] if there is a personal relation, because I definitely think that I would go to a pop-up that someone I know [...] orga-

nized even though I would not have done it, if they were not in charge of it. (Caroline, App. 8, l. 106-109)

In this case, it is found that the pop-up is less likely to generate pre- or post-produced value to the consumer, as opposed to when he or she is consuming a pop-up based on personal interests or affiliation with the brand. Instead, the value creation lies in support of social belongingness, which is rooted in the community that the consumer and the organizer are perceived to share (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

5.3.3 The atmosphere

The atmosphere of the pop-up plays a significant role in the value creation according to the respondents. Many of them describe a pleasant atmosphere and making people feel welcome, as the key factors that create value for them as a consumer. When asked to describe how they would organize a value-creating pop-up themselves, several of the respondents describe the 'good atmosphere' as an important factor:

It just had to be a nice atmosphere. I think it is important to make everybody feel welcome, because I have experienced in some of those pop-up shops that it gets a bit stiff, you know. (Cecilie, App. 5, l. 249-252)

It would have to be really chilled and "come and have a beer after school-atmosphere", and then look at some nice things and some good music [...] Just like a nice garden party, totally informal, that you would just want to stop by. You know, not an actual garden party, but the feeling of just dropping by after school, because it seems really nice and cosy and [...] it's just a place where you can hang out with your friends and then also gain something from it [by seeing the exhibited clothes]. (Sofie, App. 7, l. 226-232)

Nice, intriguing, cosy surroundings and snacks of some kind, maybe. Something you could get together about and talk to other people about. Like, if you go and grab a

cake or have a glass of champagne or something, then it might seem a bit more relaxed and a cosy, social atmosphere. (Sofie Mathilde, App. 9, l. 211-214)

It is interesting how only the first of the three respondents cited, directly expresses that she stresses a nice atmosphere as being essential in creating value in a pop-up activity with a reference to having experienced the opposite. Although not explicitly expressed by the two other respondents, the analysis shows that the atmosphere and sense of feeling welcome is a recurring theme in the data.

I rarely feel like I am up to date with everything that is going on, in the course of a week. And if I was biking home through the city some day and saw that there was something going on, and it looked really open, then I would maybe take a look at it. Like if it is a store opening, then I would look into it. But I think it depends a lot on how much it kind of invites you to do so. Because, it is self-evident that if it looks like a closed event, then I would think it was pretty weird to just walk in, right? (Pernille, App. 6, l. 192-199)

Another respondent describes a similar feeling about entering a pop-up where it is not clear whether or not she is welcome:

I just think that I find it kind of hard to go into [an unfamiliar pop-up], because I feel that if I weren't aware of it, it would make me feel like I was just intruding, and that I wasn't invited for it, because I had not attended a Facebook event or something. (Sofie, App. 7, l. 193-196)

The findings are informative with regards to the substantive setting of the pop-up as being able to prevent people from visiting or attending the activity. Further, it allows an insight to how value creation is not possible before the consumer mentally perceives him or herself as being invited. The analysis shows that for the respondents, the invitation is tightly connected to knowing about the pop-up, even if it is through a non-personalized Facebook event invitation. This finding is important as it displays how the consumer employs interpretive strategies in consumption of mass-mediated messages. In this particular connection, meanings and

values inferred to the Facebook event provide an understanding of how the media consumption influences consumer behavior (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). From the analysis, it is then indicated that knowledge about the pop-up starts the value-creating consumption process, as well as instructing consumer behavior through feeling welcome or not. Ultimately, this has an influence on the consumer's evaluation of the atmosphere in the pop-up activity and the value that it is ascribed.

5.3.4 What does this mean for brands utilizing commercial pop-up activities?

Finding that consumers categorize commercial pop-up activities similarly to cultural events is important to organizers of pop-ups, as it is informative about the role consumers expect to have in co-creating value. Further, it provides valuable insights to the relation between substantive and communicative staging. The substantive setting creates value for consumers when providing a pleasant atmosphere and a sense of feeling welcome. The latter is, however, found to be somewhat contingent on the communicative staging as well. Consumers are aware that a Facebook event invite is not uniquely addressed to them. Nevertheless, it is found that being made aware of the pop-up by a Facebook invite fosters a sense of being individually invited. The analysis suggests that the feeling of being invited or feeling welcome is achieved through knowledge about the pop-up's purpose or topic, and can be achieved through various media as well as face-to-face conversations. The Facebook event invite is to be understood as an illustrative example of this finding.

5.4 I was (not) here!

Using '(not)' in the name of the fourth theme deliberately emphasizes the dissonance found between the respondent's description of pop-ups as being a unique experience and their reluctance to communicate about the attending the pop-up.

According to Belk (1988), possession become part of an individual's extended identity, and more to this, CCT scholars highlight how cultural capital becomes part of an individual's construction of social status (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Hence, finding that the respondents wish to possess the pop-up experience, but resist to utilize it as a means for establishing cultural capital is interesting. The analysis shows that communication about a commercial pop-up activity is a highly complex matter that requires different behavior in respectively

online and offline conversations. Finally, “(not)” also denotes the active use of rejecting certain pop-up activities as part of identity construction. These findings will be elaborated on in the following.

5.4.1 Communicating about the pop-up

The respondents all immediately reject the idea of communicating about a pop-up they plan to or have attended on their private social media channels. However, as the interviews develop, the analysis finds that more of the respondents reflect upon various social media channels and are open to the possibility of communicating about a pop-up on either Instagram or Snapchat. These channels are evaluated as being more personal than Facebook (Cecilie, App. 5; Pernille, App. 6; Sofie, App. 7). This finding reveals the respondents’ perception of each social media is presumably an expression of a temporary understanding of appropriate use of the media according in their specific community. This is an important finding as the respondents’ interpretation of mass media plays a big part in the role it plays in their identity construction. The data excerpt elaborate on the respondent’s interpretation of sharing communication about pop-up activities from her private profile. Further, it shows how she interprets an appropriate use of sharing on Facebook, which in the analysis is found to correlate with her personal interests and values:

I would feel that it was more self promotion for myself if [the pop-up activity] didn’t have some kind of good cause, because to me it is still a little like overstepping a boundary to share something I am doing on social media, unless it is to encourage others to do the same. And then it wouldn’t be like “I am nice, I am attending this pop-up”, instead it would be like “You should all do this, because it is a really good idea, because this artist is really cool and needs a lot of guests” or something like that. (Pernille, App. 6, l. 175-182)

The respondent clearly shows an interpretive strategy as to what purpose she finds that the use of Facebook in communicating about a pop-up event suits her identity online as well as offline. It is interesting, how ‘a good purpose’ is highlighted as criteria for her to share with her online social network, as this is informative about her narrative construction. Further-

more, it is generally found in the analysis that in order for the respondents to share something about the pop-up on especially Facebook, it is imperative that the information is considered to be relevant for the social network. One respondent reflects on the relevance aspect:

If it is something that I am sharing online, it will be because I think that it is something other people should see or do. And in that respect, I just don't think that there are very many people who will find it interesting to read about me buying a pair of pants in this pop-up shop and [saying] "you should all do that. (Cecilie, App. 5, p. 200-203)

The aspect of relevance is also a recurring theme for the respondents expressing a greater probability of sharing an image from the pop-up activity on Instagram or Snapchat. However, it is stated that those two media are considered more personal than Facebook, which makes the informative purpose less urgent (Sofie, App. 7; Caroline, App. 8; Sofie Mathilde, App. 9)

Where the respondents in the interviews all reject the idea of communicating about the pop-up activity on social media, the focus group shows a different result. It seems that the focus group setup facilitates a space where the participants are provided with a room for reflecting on the likelihood of communicating about a pop-up through dialogue with the other participants. This room for reflection is especially evident as one of the participants reject communication about pop-ups on own social media channels, but later adjusts her reaction after two other participants reflect on the possibility of communicating about a pop-up without rejecting it (Focus group, App. 4, l. 427-481). However, this can also be an example of groupthink in the focus group (Tracy, 2013).

The analysis also shows that in order to communicate about a pop-up, the experience needs to be closely aligned with the respondent's personal interest or beliefs:

I haven't [communicated about a pop-up] but I can see myself doing it. It wouldn't be the purpose of attending, but it is nice if there is something to share because it is something special, right? Then you feel like sharing it. (Sofie, Focus Group, App. 4, l. 436-438)

I would share a picture on Instagram from something I had attended if it was really special, but it would have to be something that I sincerely thought was cool myself. (Signe, Focus group, App. 4, l. 447-449)

It is clear that the respondents do not perceive the opportunity to communicate on social media about attending the pop-up activity as an aspect that create value for them. On the contrary, it is found that due to their interpretation of how social media are used, they feel resistance to adhere to and contribute to what one respondent notes as the 'glorified picture' of reality represented on social media:

I think that Instagram and Facebook are often glorified pictures of reality, and then I feel that I don't really have a need to contribute to that. (Sofie, App. 7, l. 187-188)

With this, it is found that all of the respondents are very aware of their social media usage and appearance. It is indicated that the only version of communicating from a pop-up activity that is socially accepted among the respondents is with a focus on the social occasion, e.g. by "[sharing] a picture I have snapped of my friend having a beer [at the pop-up event] [...] So it is not to show 'I was here' but more the nice atmosphere" (Sofie, App. 7, l. 157-161). The findings raise the question of whether the intention not to communicate, 'I was here', is in fact accomplished, or whether it is implicitly part of the communication despite other expressed intentions. As the respondents are savvy interpreters of media messages and ditto use, it is found difficult to believe that they are unaware of also communicating the presence at the pop-up event when sharing a picture of friends at the activity. The detected resistance to social media communication can be interpreted as a reluctance to allow others to co-construct the individual identity through comments on social media (Belk, 2013). Moreover, all of the respondents identify themselves as 'not sharing a lot on social media' (App. 4-9), which reflects Belk's (2013) notion of modern consumers managing their identities online.

The dissonance between online actions and the self-presentation constructed in the interview raises interesting questions to be investigated further by studying the blue printing of online behavior in the present community as the findings indicate that this is a recurrent struggle for all of the respondents.

5.4.2 Role in identity construction

The role that pop-up activities can play in identity construction has previously been touched upon in this chapter. It was found that rejecting a pop-up due to the perception of too much hype is as much an identity creating consumption practice as actually attending is. As the research is founded on CCT research, it is not really questioned whether consumers engage in constructing their identity narrative, it is merely perceived to be so (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). With this theoretical outset, it is even more interesting to find that the analysis shows how the respondents create a distance or no relation between consuming a pop-up that is perceived to be an exclusive opportunity and their personal identity. More respondents touch upon the theme of individual uniqueness, but with a clear resistance towards expressing that they consider themselves to be unique. One respondent makes a clear distinction between her self-perception of not being unique despite owning products she considers unique:

It's not that I think of myself as a very unique human being, but when you have bought something that is hard for others to get a hold on... If everybody else also goes to the pop-up shop and buys the same pair of sunglasses as you, then it doesn't really matter, if it was a pop-up shop, or if it was just there all the time. Does that make sense? (Cecilie, App. 5, l. 119-123)

The finding that the respondents find it hard to link the possession of something evaluated as being unique or exclusive and their self-perception is interesting when considering Tuan's (1980) proposition of "we are what we have and possess" (p. 472). It should be noted that in Belk's (1988) terminology an individual is able to possess physical objects as well as knowledge. This sheds light on the importance of knowing about pop-ups, as this becomes part of the cultural capital that the consumer possesses, and thus part of the consumer identity. It also helps illuminate why the respondents express that attending a pop-up activity gives you a special feeling, while simultaneously rejecting the idea of communicating about the attendance on social media (Focus group, App. 4, l. 91-93). Possessing the pop-up experience or a product bought in a pop-up store becomes part of the individuals identity construction, which is best expressed in the data as 'a special feeling' (Focus group, App., l. 91-95). One way in which value is created in consumption of a pop-up activity is hence rooted in possessing either the experience or an object from the pop-up. The value co-creation thereby becomes

apparent not through interactions or online communication, but through personal satisfaction as the consumer's resources are applied to the commercial pop-up activity (Grönroos, 2008). Moreover, the analysis indicates that recommendations made in face-to-face conversations are considered of higher value than online conversations. Hereby, being able to recommend a relevant pop-up activity to a member of a person's community is found to create value through expressing the possession of knowledge, and thereby appropriate cultural capital.

Pop-up activities are found to create value when they support the identity narrative that the consumer is constructing. The analysis finds this through several indications of out-groups that the respondents show resistance to be affiliated with. As mentioned previously, a media endorsement considered to be unattractive to the respondents can prevent them from learning more about the pop-up and also attending it (Cecilie, App. 5; Caroline, App. 8).

We like the exclusivity and when it is not the least hyped and when it is limited, and when it is not mainstream [...] [so] if our parents all of the sudden also picks it up [...] then I wouldn't... I know it is mean, but I wouldn't think it was very nice if my mom and dad go: "We are going to get a Magnum in that pop-up store". Then I wouldn't go visit it. It's simply a principle for me because then it has become a 'mom-thing'. (Henriette, Focus group, App. 4, l. 778-785)

Thus, when the respondent associates a pop-up with a group of people (in this case 'parents') that are considered to be an out-group with regards to knowing what is worth doing and experiencing, she simply rejects the pop-up in total. A respondent also elaborates on this by reflecting on how a pop-up activity has become less appealing after becoming mainstream:

After [Papirøen] became a more fixed event it has lost some of its niceness. [...] You just don't sit there thinking "Oh, how lucky I am to have found this little gem, where I can go out and then it's just me and my friend here enjoying a cup of coffee". Now it is in Lonely Planet, and we will be hanging out with the rest of the population and the tourists in Copenhagen. I mean, even my parents from Jutland had heard about Papirøen. (Cecilie, App. 7, l. 312-317).

Again, it is found that an out-group (in this case the tourists and parents) is used to emphasize how the pop-up experience deviates from what she finds attractive, and thereby reduces its importance as a possession to the identity construction. The change of scenery seems to also alter the story, and she reminisces about the times where the pop-up event had not become mainstream and reached 'the rest of the population'. This seems to be a story that supports an attractive identity construction to her. Considering the explicit mentioning of the perceived out-group, it is noteworthy that the in-group is not equally explicitly mentioned. This can be seen as having a relation to finding that the respondents resist talking about themselves as unique, and thus similarly resist talking about the superordinate group that can endorse a pop-up activity (Simmel, 1998). The closest the analysis is to finding an explicit expression of this lies in the mentioning of media that are found attractive and thereby possible endorsers of pop-up activities in a meaningful way.

5.4.3 What does this mean for brands utilizing commercial pop-up activities?

For the company organizing a pop-up activity, the findings in the fourth theme are informative as to what is to be expected of user-generated social media post, which, according to the respondents, is not a lot. It also illuminates that the consumers will attend the pop-up focusing on the party of friends that they are there with, if they choose to communicate about it. It is in the experience with friends facilitated by the pop-up activity that the consumers find value to be created.

The analysis also suggests that modern consumers are very sensitive in their perception of in- and out-groups, and that they easily write off a pop-up activity if it is affiliated with the wrong group. Ultimately, the implications for companies utilizing pop-ups in their marketing activities are rooted in knowing that consumption of the pop-up is associated with possessing the right cultural capital. Therefore, it can be beneficial to investigate what this entails for the community sought to create value for.

6. Discussion and implications

The theoretical framework suggests that value co-creation from a consumer perspective in consumption of commercial pop-ups can be structured as a consumption process rather than only on-site, which is in correlation with the CCT contribution to the study. It is found benefi-

cial to organize the discussion of findings according to the on-going consumption process. Thus, the discussion is presented with regards to the consumer perception of value creation occurring prior, during and after on-site consumption of the commercial pop-up activity. The findings are then discussed in relation to the proposed move from goods-centered logic to a service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Finally, the possible implications that the findings can have on managerial decisions are reflected on.

6.1 First impressions

The findings support that the consumption process and making meaning in pop-ups begins when the consumer is exposed to information about the pop-up. This also indicates that it can be discussed whether the value co-creation parties in the consumption process can be limited to business-to-consumer and consumer-to-consumer as suggested in the theoretical framework (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2008; Grönroos, 2008). It is found that the media endorsing the pop-up activity can have a great influence on how the consumer interprets the potential value of the pop-up. This finding suggests that value creation is contingent on the consumer's interpretive strategies, as the media endorsement attributes symbolic values that enables the consumer to make meaning of the pop-up (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Thereby, it is indicated that value creation starts in anticipatory consumption when the media introducing the pop-up to the consumer support the individual's identity construction. It can be contested whether medium-to-consumer should be added to the value co-creating structures. On the one side, this is supported as it is found that consumers typically learn about pop-ups through mass media such as Facebook and online sites of pop-cultural magazines (e.g. Cover, Soundvenue and Ibyen). On the other side, it can be questioned if the consumers' perception of these mass media is rooted in the cultural capital of the respective communities that they wish to be or are affiliated with. In that case, it is rooted in social constructions of the community. When cultural capital precedes social class as a status marker, it can be assumed that the mass-media, which the consumer is positive towards getting valuable information from, is already deliberately consumed. This mass media is thus consumed due to an evaluation of its suitability in providing knowledge found relevant in establishing or supporting a desired cultural capital. This explanation can also assist in understanding why some media are mentioned as

being able to decrease the chance of the respondents' attendance to a pop-up, without looking further into the actual content of the activity (Cecilie, App. 5; Caroline, App. 8).

The findings reveal that much of the value produced through the pop-up consumption process lies prior to actually attending the pop-up. This is a novel contribution to the pop-up literature, which emphasizes value as created on-site (Surchi, 2011; Gonzales, 2014; Spena et al., 2012). Instead, the study finds that value creation from a consumer perspective begins with the imagery and anticipation of attending or experiencing the pop-up (Campbell, 1995; Holbrook & Hirschman 1982a; 1982b). These anticipations are found to be influenced by the media endorsement as described above, but also by the pre-affiliation with the brand and by social relations. First, being familiar with the brand is found to be equally important as having a personal interest in the pop-up's theme or product. The study suggests that consumers are more prone to attend pop-ups created by brands that they already like and even that they are willing to follow the brand on social media or sign up to a newsletter in order to be informed about the brand's activities directly (Focus group, App. 4, l. 394-396; Sofie Mathilde, App. 9, l. 125-135). This finding leads to the question of whether the consumers are part of consumer or brand communities. The latter has a high degree of brand loyalty that the study does not set out to investigate and neither finds a satisfactory answer to. However, it is clear that much of the value creation lies prior to pop-up attendance due to brand affiliation. Next, social relations are also found to be important in creating value in the initial part of the consumption process. They are identified in two connections: 1) hearing about the pop-up from a trusted member of the consumer's community, which is found to be equally positively evaluated as a highbrow mass-media endorsement, and 2) pop-ups are predominantly considered to be a social event, why value creation begins when making plans with friends about attending. This suggests that pop-ups can function as a mediation of social linkages and social relationships, which is one of the research areas of the CCT domain, *marketplace cultures*, the study resides in (Arnould & Thompson, 2007). This notion leads to the second part of the discussion, concerning the consumer perspective on how value is created in or at the commercial pop-up activity.

6.2 Pop-ups as servicescapes

Understanding the pop-up as a servicescape is helpful in understanding the relation between substantive and communicative staging and how each of the concepts supports value creation in a pop-up activity (Arnould et al., 1998). The two constructs of a servicescape can occur in combination and have various levels of importance, and in the present study, it is found that the communicative staging plays a larger role in how consumers perceive value to be created in consumption of pop-ups. The communicative staging considers “the transmissions of servicescape meanings, both those directly related to service delivery and those transcending the instrumental context” (ibid. p. 90). However, the study suggests that the servicescape (pop-up) meanings are often not associated with the actual pop-up, but rather with factors surrounding it. This indicates that it is the transcending instrumental context that is most influential in the communicative staging.

The value created on-site entails co-creation of value between the brand and consumer according to servicescape literature (Grönroos, 2008). However, the findings of the study indicate that while being at the pop-up activity, the consumer will find value created through the social occasion rather than through interacting with the brand or employees at the pop-up as proposed by Bitner (1992). This challenges the perception in pop-up literature that value is created through constructing a brand universe that the consumer can be emerged in, and through which the brand message can be transmitted (Surchi, 2011). The findings do not reject the importance of substantive staging, but it does, however, show that this construct is found to be inferior to the social occasion. This is argued as the respondents emphasize that the pop-up is considered to be a valuable add-on to a night out with friends, but that a disappointing pop-up experience (e.g. if the substantive staging does not meet the consumer’s expectations) does not subtract value from the evening. The social occasion is emphasized when the respondents reflect on how pop-up consumption creates value for them.

When stating that the study does not reject the importance of substantive staging, it is especially evident considering the findings in relation to theory of hedonic consumption (Mossberg, 2008; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982a). It is found that hedonic consumption is superior to functional benefits, which might aid in explaining why the respondents primarily relate to value creation in pop-ups as if they are consumed like cultural events. Functional benefits such as physical accessibility of online products or easier geographical accessibility are also found to be value creating. Nevertheless, it is clear from the findings that other, more

intangible value creations such as a nice atmosphere, the social occasion or the perception of exclusivity are more prevalent in the descriptions and reflections on consumption of pop-up activities. As the findings show that consumers think of pop-ups as cultural events, a question of whether servicescapes should be replaced by experience scapes is raised. The consumption practice indicates that this might be a beneficial distinction in future research of pop-ups as value creating consumption scapes.

6.3 The identity struggle

The final part of the consumption process is considered with regards to how the consumer makes meaning of the consumed pop-up after having attended – or rejected to attend.

The findings show that for physical products, it is a recurring theme that the perceived good is remembered as having been acquired in a pop-up shop. However, it is not found supported that a product bought in a pop-up holds significantly more value to the consumer, than a product bought in a regular store. Rather, the purchase situation merely becomes part of that product's history. In correlation with the emphasis put on hedonic and intangible benefits over functional benefits, the reflections made on aspects in the last part of the consumption process also primarily concerns intangible constructs. This is especially prevalent when considering how the consumed pop-up becomes part of the individual's identity construction.

The study reveals how it is a general perception that there is many cultural events during a week in Copenhagen. Choosing to go to a pop-up activity is thus a very deliberate consumption choice that is typically planned ahead and considered an add-on to a social occasion. The deliberate choice expresses that the consumer wishes to possess the experience, which can be placed in the 'knowledge' category of Belk's (1988) three possession categories. This also falls in line with the CCT notion of cultural capital. Thus, possessing knowledge (or an experience) about a pop-up can be utilized in constructing the extended self (ibid.). It is interesting how actively communicating identity is reflected on, as the consumers find communication on social media to be a deliberate self-promoting action, while talking about the pop-up, and being able to join the offline conversation with peers, is not. It is clear from the findings that being able to join the offline conversation create value for the consumer. This opens a discussion of whether possessing the pop-up knowledge or experience is enough to support construction of the extended self as suggested by Belk (1988), or if the utilization of the pos-

session is what matters in creating value. The study finds that neither of the respondents express that they relate attending pop-ups to communicating about it online. However, all respondents describe social media as a platform that often informs about various pop-ups, and how using the 'attend' function on Facebook can create a sense feeling welcome. Neither reflects upon the fact that when they use the 'attend'-function, they are explicitly communicating affiliation with the pop-up. Nevertheless, many express that it is often through friends attending that they become aware of a pop-up activity on Facebook. This raises an interesting question of how aware the consumer is of utilizing consumption in identity construction. On the one side, the findings highlight that the respondents are able to reflect on how some brands are more interesting than others. But at the same time, the respondents are not reflecting much on their implicit communication and endorsement of a pop-up when pressing 'attend' on Facebook.

It is found that the number of attendees can influence the perception of hype, which ultimately is determined as value decreasing both prior and after having attended the pop-up. This is primarily rooted in loss of perceived exclusivity. Further, this finding supports the proposition that consumption becomes part of the identity narrative, as the consumers wish to stand out while still being part of a desired community. The respondents struggle with the representation of 'the right place to be' and their own identity narrative. When language is considered to shape reality (Burr, 2003), it is interesting how the respondents argue that they would not use social media to promote the 'I am here' but rather to portrait the social occasion. This can be interpreted as informative of what is attributed value in the contemporary marketplace culture, which in this case indicates collectivity over individuality. The respondents' resistance towards expressing a need to be unique is found as they linguistically distance themselves from the concept of uniqueness. This is done by using the pronoun 'you' instead of 'I' when talking about how pop-ups can create a sense of uniqueness. It is also found that 'other people' is used as a construction to denote a group that is considered to attend a pop-up activity because it is 'the right place to be' (Sofie, App. 7, l. 111-117). Instead it is found that the respondents construct a narrative of their own reason for attending a pop-up as based on their personal interests. It is generally expressed that they would only attend events that they really care about and ditto only communicate about these. It can be discussed whether the consumer are utilizing the narrative construction of their intentions as an identity negotiation, in order for consumption of pop-ups to make sense with regards to their individual iden-

tity projects. Thereby using the narrative construction to allow them to attend or visit commercial pop-ups while not thinking of themselves as the kind of person who just wants to be seen in 'the right places', which is the negative representation of other people attending pop-ups.

The discussion of how pop-ups can create value for consumers after the on-site consumption also opens up for questions of whether possessing the knowledge and experience will enable a durable extension of self (Belk, 1988). As the possession is not physical, it will not cease to exist or break. However, the findings suggest that the possession is fragile with regards to the on-going mental construction of its value. It is found that the respondents find most value through being able to recommend the pop-up activity to peers and through being able to join an offline conversation about it. This indicates that the pop-up's value is continuously consumed through utilization as a status marker in the consumer's cultural capital. Nevertheless, the study also finds that as the pop-ups are categorized as cultural events in the consumer's mind, they also compete with the multiple commercial events, concerts, exhibitions, etcetera, that the consumers are constantly exposed to. Therefore, the durable extension of self is contested as it is suggested that cultural knowledge, and hence capital, is not relevant for a very long period of time. New cultural experiences are required in order to stay up to date and enhance the cultural capital. The consumed pop-up experience will not be taken away from the consumer, unless it is devaluated due to contextual factors such as perception of hype or affiliation with a perceived out-group. However, it is argued that the continuous value creation of the consumption process may be less relevant as the pop-up activity becomes replaced by new pop-ups. This is supported by theoretical proposition of modern consumers primarily consuming novelty (Campbell, 1995).

6.4 From goods-centered to service-dominant logic

The final part of the discussion is focused on the proposal made in the theoretical framework of the necessity for companies to move from a goods-centered logic to the S-D Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The proposition is largely supported by the findings of the study, but another noteworthy result is also found; all of the respondents reflect upon the value created *for* the brand, not *by* the brand, at a point during the respective interviews. This is interesting as it implies that the consumers are not only savvy in interpreting marketing initiatives due to the

multiple advertisement exposures in contemporary society (Hutton, 2015), but that they also are familiar with the goods-centred logic of marketing. In this, the brand is a beneficiary by the value produced in the pop-up as it allows them to meet a corporate goal (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). For example the participants in the focus group study talk about the brand gains from a pop-up and one participant elaborates: *"It is also a good way to test something for a month or something, to see if customers are coming and if there is any potential. And then you can say: 'Oh well, it was just a month and then we'll close down again' without it being a failure"* (Line, Focus group, App. 4, l. 47-50). In the excerpt, it is proposed that the potential of the pop-up is evaluated based on the number of customers, and this is interpreted as buying customers, in that the company will be able to find out if the pop-up location is valuable in terms of creating monetary value. The reason why it is found interesting that the respondents all reflect upon value on behalf of the brand is that these expressions all lead to value in terms of money or being able to send a message to the consumer. But when starting to reflect upon the value that they consider pop-ups as being able to create for them, none of the respondents express value in relation to monetary value or being able to receive branded messages. Therefore, it is ultimately suggested that the finding illuminates how the consumers are finding surrounding factors of the pop-up to create value. Even though, they mentally relate to pop-ups as if they are cultural event, they are fully aware of the commercial setting they are in as well. The commercial aspect is just not a significant factor in the value production. It seems to be accepted as the substantive staging of a setting in which value is created through the social occasion. The findings indicate that branded scape only take part in value creation when the consumer is pre-affiliated with the brand and finds the symbols of the brand to be attractive and supporting the identity narrative construction.

The findings illuminate that the value creation factors presented by the respondents supports a move from the goods-centered logic to the S-D Logic. This is found despite the respondents' ability to reflect on how pop-ups create value for companies.

6.5 Managerial implications

The most important managerial implication of the study might be the understanding of how the consumers mentally construct commercial pop-up activities as cultural events, and that their consumption practice resembles this. From this, a line of implications can be outlined.

The pop-up should support the cultural capital of the community that the activity seeks to target, and by stating this, it is implied that having a success criterion of 'a high number of visitors' might not be the best target, unless the community is very large. The finding of the hype paradox also supports this, why it is an imperative question to address for the company. Other implications of pop-ups being understood as cultural events are found in the entire consumption process. Here, the pre-attendance consumption is found to have a great influence on value creation, and thus, this is an important phase in the pop-up consumption. Therefore, the marketer should encounter this anticipatory consumption in the planning of the commercial pop-up as well when seeking to create value for consumers.

Ultimately, marketing managers should be open to move their perception of value creation from something created on-site, to something that is created through multiple aspects and touch-points with the consumer. It is acknowledged that this is highly complex and intangible, why the main recommendation for marketers is to create pop-up activities that support the desired cultural capital of a specific community, in which the brand already has a presence and relevance. This is opposed to attempting to create a pop-up with the purpose of attracting new consumers. The study does not reject the opportunity of creating relevance to consumers who are not pre-affiliated with the brand, but it clearly suggests that the value creation from a consumer perspective is related to pre-affiliation with the brand. In that respect, marketers might succeed in creating commercial pop-ups that are perceived as creating value for the consumer by assisting individuals in enhancing their cultural capital in a community. For example it requires a shift from asking "What brand message do we want to send through the (substantive and communicative staging) of the pop-up?" and instead ask, "What is relevant/important image markers of the community we wish to create a pop-up for?".

7. Conclusion

The thesis sets out to contribute with a consumer perspective to value creation in consumption of commercial pop-ups. The qualitative research enables an understanding of how contextual factors influence value creation, and how consumers apply their own resources and become co-creators of value.

The study finds that value is co-created by consumers throughout the entire consump-

tion process; it begins when the consumer initially is informed about the pop-up, continues in the on-site consumption and also in the consumption practice after on-site consumption, e.g. through being able to recommend the pop-up to peers. This concept of consumption processes helps structure the emerging theoretical constructs as displayed in Table 4:

Table 4: Themes in value creation throughout the consumption process

Initial consumption	On-site consumption	Post-consumption
Pop-ups as a unique opportunity	Pop-ups as a cultural experience	I was (not) here!
Value starts with knowing		

Source: Own creation (2016)

The two first themes, *Pop-ups as a unique opportunity* and *Value starts with knowing*, aid in illuminating how the value co-creation begins when the consumer is exposed to information about the commercial pop-up. It is concluded that the most influential contextual factors in creating value are social relations and media. The study also finds that if the first exposure to a pop-up activity is when passing by in the street, the cultural capital is still a relevant construct, as respondents do not enter if they do not know what the pop-up is about. In this, an implicit fear of not holding the right cultural capital is detected. Moreover, the themes regarding initial processes of value co-creation emphasize that both the corporation and consumer are resource integrators in the process (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Further, it is found that symbolic meanings of the brand or media endorsement are important in creating value through anticipatory consumption (Campbell, 1995). Thereby it is found that value starts with knowing or being in the know.

One of the sub-questions raised in the introduction of the study concerns whether the temporality of the pop-up carries value implicitly. The findings show that there is an inherent perception of pop-ups as facilitators of a unique and exclusive experience. It is found that possessing an experience of a pop-up can be perceived as an extension of self, although it is suggested that due to the modern consumers' focus on consuming novelty, it is not a durable extension of self (Belk, 1988). Thus, the answer to the sub-question is that the temporality is interpreted as creating value for the consumer through exclusivity in the initial consumption. However, this value may be temporal as well. For example, the study finds that the attractiveness of a pop-up decreases if the pop-up is interpreted as being too hyped.

The consumer perception of pop-ups is found to resemble that of cultural events. The study finds that attendance is increased when making plans of attending with friends. Hereby, the value co-created through on-site consumption is centered in having a good time with friends. This insight leads to the conclusion that marketers can benefit from perceiving cultural events such as concerts or exhibitions as competitors of a new commercial pop-up activity. The study indicates that value in on-site consumption is not related to engagement between brand and consumer. Instead, the consumer focuses on the consumer-to-consumer engagement, and the pop-up space is merely perceived as facilitating a space for this.

The final theme, *I was (not) here*, describes the struggle of utilizing pop-up consumption in identity construction. A resistance is found in the relation between describing the pop-up as a unique and exclusive experience and using this description about oneself as well. The findings show that this is a recurring struggle among the respondents, and this is interesting when considering Belk's (1988) theory of identity construction through possessions. The present study does not provide an exhaustive answer to the origin of the struggle. However, it is suggested that after attending a pop-up, the consumption process is dependent on the ongoing evaluation of the cultural significance that the pop-up is perceived to hold. Moreover, it is concluded that the respondents use the post-consumption phase to emphasize their individual preferences. This is found that they only communicate about a pop-up activity that they truly found interesting and valuable. Thereby, the consumption of the pop-up becomes part of the online management of the individual's identity. The resistance towards communicating about pop-ups on social media channels is suggested to be a symptom of trying to prevent others from co-constructing one's identity through commenting on e.g. the picture that is shared (Belk, 2014).

The study provides a novel insight with regards to value production in consumption of pop-ups as it is found that a large part of the value creation lies before attending the pop-up. The anticipatory consumption is found to be the first step in value co-creation from a consumer perspective. Moreover, being able to join conversations with community members about a pop-up creates value through a sense of collective identity construction. Another important conclusion from the present study is that on-site value creation is closely related to the social occasion, and less contingent on the substantive staging of the pop-up space. Moreover, the findings are affirmative of the advantage to considering the consumer to be a co-creator of value as it is concluded that the value is created throughout the entire consumption

process. In this process, the corporation does not play an active role besides from having offered a value proposition in the shape of commercial pop-up activity.

The theoretical framework suggested a move towards understanding all marketing activities as services through the S-D Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The study supports this by finding that the respondents' descriptions of value-creating factors are all contingent on the consumer's application of own resources. The resources are primarily found as contextual knowledge and interpretive skills. In the present study, none of the respondents describe value as embedded in the experience or the product bought in the pop-up. Instead, they highlight the social occasion with friends, and highbrow endorsements as giving value to a pop-up activity. This is an important contribution to the existing literature on commercial pop-ups, as it contests the commonly accepted notion of companies being able to produce valuable experiences in branded pop-up scapes. Instead, the findings empathize with the premise put forward by Vargo and Lusch (2004) as it concluded that "the customer is always a co-producer [of value]" and "the enterprise can only make value propositions" (p. 10-11).

8. Future research

The present research illuminates additional aspects that would be interesting to develop a deeper understanding of in future research projects. Moreover, it is acknowledged that the findings are a result of the present research design, why alternative methodologies would be interesting with regards to a similar research topic as the present.

The research aims at understanding how consumers define and relate to the value that consuming a pop-up activity can create. However, it was found during the interviews that the participants continuously reflected upon whether various restaurants, exhibitions, or stores were in fact a pop-up or not. In the majority of the instances the activities complied with the pop-up definition, but the discovery raised a curiosity of whether the findings of the present study can be investigated further through a commercial pop-up case study. It is interesting to explore if there is a difference between the more intangible, mental reflective construction of value created in this study and the value-creating factors found when the consumer can relate to a particular case. It should be emphasized that a future case study of the phenomenon would benefit from also departing from a CCT approach. This allows an investigation of the entire consumption process in order to diminish the chance of only exploring on-site con-

sumption of the pop-up. Thereby, comparability with the findings of the present study is also ensured.

By applying an anthropological methodology and employing on-site observation in the pop-up activity, a future study can further deepen the understanding of on-site consumption practice. This on-site study might contribute with additional knowledge to the suggested managerial implication of creating pop-ups that empathize with the understanding of consumers perceiving pop-ups as cultural events.

Finally, the somewhat inexplicable resistance towards using the pop-up experience in identity construction provides a highly interesting paradox to serve as starting point for future research. Here, it should be noted that the two data collection methods in the present research suggests that the focus group context provides a better space for exploring pop-up activities' influence on identity construction. Therefore, future research on this topic might benefit from collection data through several focus group interviews.

9. References

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