

# A customer diversity perspective on Customer-to-Customer Interaction (CCI)

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# Customer-to-Customer Interaction (CCI)

- CCI used in a range of ways (Albrecht, 2016; Colm et al., 2017; Heinonen et al., 2018)
  - on-site direct (& indirect); mere presence; e-CCI; WOM; e-WOM
- This presentation's focus:
  - direct interactions occurring between customers in physical service settings

# Selected themes in CCI research

- Evidence of CCI
- Types of CCI
- Customer satisfaction implications of CCI
- Blame attribution
- Management of CCI
- Similarity and dissimilarity of customers 

# CCI and similarity

- A consensus for the desirability of ‘customer similarity’ is an established theme in CCI research (e.g. Brack & Benkenstein, 2012; Brocato et al., 2012; Luther et al., 2016; Martin, 1995; Rosenbaum & Montoya, 2007; Thakor et al., 2008; Wu 2007)
- Limiting customer diversity has been proposed as an approach to managing CCI
  - How realistic/important/desirable is this?
  - How does the ‘customer similarity’ consensus fit alongside the diversity narrative in society (e.g. diverse workforce; boardroom diversity; education)?

# Exploratory study of customer diversity

- Aim: to identify themes relating to customer diversity and CCI
- Narrative Literature Review involves integrating a number of scattered topics to help make sense of their bridging value
- Useful for:
  - developing a broad perspective on a topic
  - structuring a diverse literature in an accessible way
- Beyond literature that identifies itself as being on CCI

# Main themes

1. A range of types of customer dissimilarity which tend to influence CCI
2. Some service contexts lessen the impact of social diversity
3. In some contexts customer dissimilarity is a source of value added

# Selected studies on customer dissimilarity

Theme	Study	Findings
Age	Grove & Fisk (1997)	Noted age-difference related CCI incidents (NCCI & PCCI)
	Thakor et al. (2008)	Younger consumers preferred similar age fellow customers
Gender	Schmidt & Sapsford (1995)	Female discomfort in traditional male pubs
Culture	Nicholls (2011)	Introduces concept of cross-cultural CCI (CC-CCI) and discusses relevant studies. Illustrates NCCI & PCCI
Size / physical ability	Baker et al. (2007)	Identifies unwelcoming C2C behaviour towards disabled
	Small & Harris (2012)	Identifies obesity-related tensions between obese & non-obese air passengers
Purpose of consumption	Ekpo et al. (2015)	Case study of two very different conferences at the same venue
	Vaske et al. (2000)	Identifies conflicts between snowboarders & skiers

# Customer diversity impact

- Some service contexts lessen the 'everyday' social order:
  - adventure activity, pilgrimages, festivals
- Liminal conditions enable this
- Communitas grows through a common bond of experience

# Customer dissimilarity as value

- Mutual help:
  - Learning from others with different experiences (e.g. Brack & Benkenstein, 2012)
- Help-seeking customer:
  - Seeking help from others who:
    - Are more physically able (e.g. Tomazelli et al., 2017)
- Referent ethnic customers:
  - Lend authenticity

# Summary

1. Places CCI within the 'diversity in business' debate
2. Highlights the centrality of similarity and dissimilarity in CCI research
3. Clarifies how customers may differ from each other
4. Explores a range of 'less apparent' CCI literature and uses it to enrich CCI discussion
5. Contests the prevailing view that customer dissimilarity generates negative CCI
6. Questions?