Value Propositions and a Human Service Logic

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ABSTRACT

Purpose This conceptual paper presents an integrative, cross-disciplinary conceptual framework on employees' motivation to live up to value propositions in value practices.

In practice firms make all kinds of value promises and often these psychological contracts are broken. Employees, in particular emotion workers, who interact with customers, do still, despite the increase of technology-based services with less personal interaction, have a substantial impact on customer experiences in particular in face-to-face interaction. In the customers' eyes emotion workers still represent a firm as its "brand ambassadors". Therefore their motivation to participate in the emergent value process is still pivotal.

Research Design An abductive approach was used to develop the framework. It draws upon findings from a longitudinal, qualitative action based case study. It combines the empirical findings (factors employees experienced motivating and de-motivating) and a set of theoretical frameworks; co-workership, humanistic management, motivation science and third and forth force of psychology, as its informants.

Findings The suggested conceptual framework, the Human Service Logic (HSL) emphases the human factor in value creation and sees emotion workers as actors in the process. Therefore their capabilities and motivation for performing in accordance with their firm's value promises, as uttered in its official discourse, is argued to be of significant importance. The HSL is summarized as six core principles, e.g. co-active power sharing and agency to participate, integrating experiences, a practical circular ontology and authentic promises. Further the HSL suggests firm-internal social- and service competence as central to employee motivation.

The HSL represents an employee discourse on motivation and thereby deviates from the common assumption in service research; that managers are able to order subjectivity towards employees and see to it that employees are motivated. In regard to value propositions it departs in particular from the Nordic School and its longstanding traditions off placing value propositions in a central position "as promises of potential future value creation" and the pivotal role of employees as facilitators in value co-creation, and the effective use of supplier-customer interaction as a means of directly influencing customer value fulfilment and value co-creation.

Originality and Value The framework brings together several theories that have not been previously jointly connected within service research. By its humanistic and systemic approach it advances the understanding of *integration and management of resources and capabilities* as well as the human factor involved in living up to *value propositions*

1. INTRODUCTION

Value propositions and promises are topical concepts. However, surprisingly little research has been published on the conceptual meaning of value propositions, despite their widespread use (Ballantyne, Frow, Varey, & Payne, 2011). *Employee motivation* is another topical issue. Add to this the considerable amount of research that provides evidence of the employees' substantial role in keeping promises, as: 1) the firms' "brand ambassadors" (Mahnert & Torres, 2007) in service encounters (de Chearnatony, 2003; Grönroos, 2008; King & Grace, 2007; Schultz, 2004; Sirianni, Bitner, Brown, & Mandel, 2013); and 2) value facilitators in supporting customers' value creation in supplier-customer interactions (Grönroos, 2011). However, the research and literature on *employees' experiences*, from a first-order position, is scant in regard to motivation and their role as value promise and proposition facilitators and brand ambassadors.

Making promises about the firm and its offerings by communicating to and with customers in different ways is, by tradition, a primary function of marketing (Calonius, 1988). By authentically brand-aligning service employees' behaviour with advertising and other promotional messaging, firms can influence customers' brand evaluations and customer-based brand-equity (Sirianni et al., 2013; Vincent, 2012).

The type of promises and propositions a firm makes influences the customers' value-expectations of the firm's services/products. Promises refer to all statements about a firm's offerings (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000), and are made in a variety of ways, differing in precision and clarity. They can be implicit, broad, and general, such as brand promises expressed as general statements about what a firm is and does (de Chearnatony 2003; Schultz, 2004). They can be explicit and specific, for example, detailed service promises that communicate certain concepts and activities (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2006). The interaction and emotion work that occurs in service encounters is a promise in itself (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). This places the human factor in a crucial position. At times, employees state their own "wild promises" in service encounters, which are not necessarily congruent with the firm's official line of promising (Liewendahl, 2014).

Thus, firms engage in promising from a variety of sources. In practice, contradictory messages may occur, and oftentimes, what occurs in practice in service encounters may deviate from what has been officially promised. Considering the many sources of promising, aligning and integrating all firm messaging and communication is pivotal in order to avoid customer confusion, whether it's written, oral or physical, unidirectional or dialogic. In practice, this enables a firm to "walk its talk(s)". Current research indicates that authentic promises, i.e., promises that correspond to actual service encounter activities, positively impact employees' motivation (Liewendahl, 2014).

The aim of this paper is to introduce a framework, the Human Service Logic (henceforth, the HSL) that links the management of value promises to employee motivation from the employee's perspective. The paper provides a conceptual overview of the framework, which draws upon a qualitative, abductive longitudinal case study of employees' experiences on living up to value promises in value practices, and their motivation for this (henceforth, the HSL-study). The HSL is argued to be a valuable, viable "bottom-up" complement to other currently prevailing service logics.

1.1. Managing Promises – The Three Promises Framework

How to best manage promises has been discussed within promises management (Grönroos, 2009). Its central framework, "The Three Promises Framework" (henceforth, TPF), offers, from a managerial perspective, an overview of how to manage the triadic promise: i) giving, ii) enabling, and iii) keeping interplay. The TPF draws upon the idea of aligning its three aspects to ensure that the intended (by the firm) and expected (by the customer) delivery of promises meet, and thus that accurate service performance takes place (Grönroos, 2000; Zeithaml, Gremler, & Bitner, 2010).

By placing customer value at the centre of the model, the concept of value has been incorporated into the framework (Brodie, Glynn & Little, 2006). In doing so, the model depicts that by realising promises the firm ultimately supports customers in their value process. Therefore, the model reveals that the customer's value process is dependent on how promises are fulfilled, and thus, all three sides of the triangle

contribute to the customer's value process, including service employees' authentic brand-aligned performance in service encounters. Aligning promises to performance occurs by enabling, as expressed by Zeithmal, Bitner, & Gremler, 2006: (354)

> "All three sides of the triangle are essential to complete the whole, and the sides of the triangle should be aligned. That is, what is promised through external marketing should be delivered; and the enabling activities inside the organization should be aligned with what is expected of service providers".

This is essential because according to Grönroos & Voima (2011) it is in the joint sphere, e.g. in face-to-face service encounters in the customer-supplier interaction, that firms ultimately can influence customers' value processes, and even co-create value.

Hence, employees' motivation and willingness to serve as promised is established as a prerequisite for brand-aligned performance in face-to-face service encounters, and is instrumental for value fulfilment and, ultimately, satisfied customers (Bitner, Booms & Mohr, 1994; de Cherantony 2003; Grönroos, 2000, 2011; Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler 2010). Research has shown that employees perceive promises that they find impossible to live up to as de-motivating, and may even deviate from service scripts if they experience promises as unauthentic (Liewendahl, 2014). On the other hand, there are indications that employees are motivated by the possibility of participating in all three aspects of the TPF (Liewendahl, 2014), and indeed are willing to participate in development work in general, and find it frustrating when not having the chance to do so (Lehtonen & Väänänen, 2015).

1.2 Defining the HSL

The HSL departs from the TPF, but places employees' experiences of factors that impact their motivation at the centre. The HSL adopts an *employee inclusive stance and co-mode*, and suggests *six principles* and one core concept as the underpinnings of co-active managing of value practices. It considers employees and their motivation as essential in value creation and formation and adopts a humanistic stance. It places human interaction at the centre, emphasising the role of active human interaction in service encounters and the employees as the pivotal value facilitators. In particular, it pays attention to the employees' experiences in customer interactions, and the employees' role in regard to all three aspects of the TPF.

The HSL extends the TPF by suggesting a co-active stance and mode to all the TPF aspects, and in particular, emphasises that enabling is dialogic. It sees employees also as important *enablers* towards management, in subject positions as active and knowledgeable customer interaction experts, coinciding with their role as value facilitators towards customers. This logic is suggested as parallel to other currently prevailing logics. Drawing in particular upon the service logic (SL) view, the HSL suggests an alteration towards a more de-managerialized, practice-based logic that fully appreciates the input of employees considering their view on motivation. It draws upon the idea of integrating experiences and co-active power sharing.

The paper develops as follows. First, the need for an HSL that represents an employee discourse on motivation within marketing research and practice is argued. Second, after an introduction of the HSL-study that the logic draws upon, the paper introduces the HSL and its underpinnings; the factors employees experience to influence their motivation to live up to value propositions, its stance and mode, and its six central principles. Third, the paper elaborates in more depth on motivation, and in particular, pro-social motivation. Fourth, the paper concludes by exemplifying the leverage effect of the HSL in regard to employee motivation to live up to value propositions, by depicting and discussing the HSL principles as a constellation. Throughout the discussion some empirical citations are used to illuminate the point of discussion.

1.3 Value Promises, Internal Marketing and a Humanistic Approach on Employees' Experiences

This section discusses: a) the meaning of value promises and the definition applied to the HSL; b) the enabling aspect of the TPF, i.e. internal marketing (IM); and c) the humanistic approach the HSL adopts to the employees' experiences in regard to living up to value promises. The need for an employee discourse on motivation in relation to living up to value promises is explicated in this discussion.

1.3.1 On the Meaning of Value Promises and Propositions

In practice, firms communicate all kind of promises, i.e. psychological contracts, planned and non-planned, unidirectional and dialogic, via a multitude of channels. Grönroos (2011) articulates the conceptual meaning of value propositions and promises in relation to value creation by stating:

> Value propositions are suggestions and projections of what impact on their practices customers can expect. When such a projection is proposed actively to customers, it is a promise about potential future value creation. (p. 14)

There appears, however, to be some confusion and differences of opinion on the meaning of the value promise and proposition concept, and various ways of categorizing the dimensionality of value promises/propositions co-exist in the current literature. The somewhat differing views on value creation and co-creation that the prevailing service logics represent, i.e. the SLD and the SL, may have specific implications on the use of the terms. In both logics, *promises* and *propositions* are intertwined with somewhat similar and differing meanings.

Frow et al. (2013) state that value propositions are used to position a firm, highlight favourable points of distinction, and determine promises of delivered value. As explicated within the SDL, a promise is unidirectional and explicit and is, therefore, distinguished from a proposition (Frow et al., 2013). For example, Ballantyne et al. (2011) discuss a variety of definitions of value propositions, from unidirectional communication of value to reciprocal propositions of value. According to these authors, reciprocal value propositions represent a more recent development of the concept and refer to exchange participants reciprocally determining their understanding of what is of value and communicating it with their counterpart; thus, value propositions are recognized as having a communicative interaction function. Drawing on this, it seems that *value promises* are more general and are concerned with the unidirectional messaging the firm is engaged in via different channels, whereas *value propositions* are more specific and concerned with more detailed "dialogic" offerings.

The promise concept is embedded in defining relationship marketing, "as the process of establishing, maintaining and enhancing, and when necessary terminating relationships with customers, for the benefit of all involved parties, through a process of making and keeping promises" (Grönroos, 2007, p. 275). In this regard, *making promises* requires "that the supplier engages itself with its customers' processes in the first place" (Grönroos, 2011, p. 245). *Keeping promises* relates to "how the supplier continuously supports the various processes relevant to its customers" in accordance what its promises, and enabling refers to "the supplier's capability to support value creation through value facilitation (providing appropriate goods and service activities

and other resources) during interactions with customers in a variety of customer practices" (Grönroos, 2011, p. 245). This view, which represents the SL view, also suggests a dialogic meaning to value *promises*.

Clearly, an intricate dimensionality is inherent in the use of the promise and proposition concepts. In practice, the line between the two may be hard to draw. As Grönroos (2009) argues, ultimately it is not the promises that firms should strive to keep, but rather, that firms need to live up to customers' expectations of these (Grönroos, 2008). In practice, this implies that employees should strive to live up to customers' expectations (of the kind of value they anticipate).

Within branding literature, promises are noted as effective in establishing a context and to differentiate a market position for the brand (Vincent, 2012). Thus, a brand promise represents the experience the brand promises to deliver (ibid).

The HSL notes the promise concept as an empirically grounded, practical construct, informed by the current literature. The concept of *value promises* is used in the HSL as the main concept to comprehend all types of promises that theory notes. Its practical meaning reflects employees' experiences on the issue. For practical purposes, within the HSL-study, *customer promises* were used as the main concept covering all types of promises and propositions made to customers. The notion of promises as central to motivation is empirically grounded: employees who participated in the HSL-study experienced challenges and entanglements in regard to living up to customer promises. This was experienced as challenging in particular when others in the firm made promises that were not anchored in practice, and yet employees were supposed to live up to these.

In summary, the HSL adopts both *value promises* and *propositions* as viable interrelated concepts. Put into practice and linked to employees' performance, it takes the promise concept as a generic term for both unidirectional and dialogic statements of value in offerings, at brand and more specific concept levels and, thus, has an impact on customers' (possible) expectations of employee performance in service encounters.

1.3.2 On Enabling Employees to Live up to Value Promises

Enabling covers the link between value promises and performance. According to Frow et al. (2013), the link between superior value propositions and organisational performance has not yet been subject to empirical research. Conceptually, the TPF illuminates this link in discussing the alignment of its three aspects. The HSL extends the TPF empirically with research on the promise-performance link in regard to employee motivation in service encounters, by describing an employee discourse on motivation in this particular context. Reciprocal enabling is central to this.

In living up to value promises, and thus supporting customers' value processes, supplier-customer interactions are emphasised in the current literature because their existence and the effective use of them as a means of directly influencing customers' value fulfilment, enables not just value creation but also *co*-creation of value (Grönroos, 2011). This places certain requirements on management in aligning the "promise work" and ensuring that the firm's brand messaging is congruent with customer interaction performance, thus enabling "branded service encounters" (Sirianni et al., 2013). For the customer, the service employees represent the firm (Ind, 2003), and thus the service employees are, in the view of customers, equal to the service and are the firms' 'brand ambassadors' (Schultz, 2004; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2008). Therefore, firms' internal brand alignment programs are argued to be necessary in order to build an understanding among employees about the brand promise and its translation to performance (Vincent, 2012).

According to Grönroos (2011), the effective use of supplier-customer interactions requires that employees who interact with customers in various other functions, but are not part of a conventional marketing function, "are prepared and willing to take up this challenge and perform as part-time marketers" (Grönroos, 2011, p. 14). Therefore, from a managerial point of view, the importance of IM is emphasised (Grönroos, 2011). IM represents the enabling function of the TPF. However, enabling as a concept is claimed to be theoretically underdeveloped (Ahmed & Rafig, 2003) and unpractised in the field (Wiseke, Ahearne, Lam, & van Dick, 2009). Internal branding, as a component of IM, is gaining growing research attention since its potential to support corporate brand-building initiatives by enabling employees to deliver the brand promises has been recognized (Foster, Punjaisri, & Cheng, 2010).

Within IM, motivation is a crucial concept, and employee motivation is traditionally considered instrumental for customer satisfaction and service quality (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2000; Bansal, Mendelson, & Sharma, 2001; Berry & Parasuraman, 1991), which is premised by employees' ability to live up to the customers' expectations (King & Grace, 2007; Matchinger, 2004) in relation to what firms promise (Schultz, 2004). Thus, motivating employees is one of IM's goals.

Currently, IM adopts a somewhat ignorant mode and elitist, objectifying stance towards employees (Liewendahl, 2014). Mostly, employees, are placed in a passive position, as a manageable resource, and their perceptions and experiences of, for example, marketing ideas and promises are not considered, thus depriving employees of their first-order positions in regard to their work in customer interactions (Liewendahl, 2014).

The IM discourse attributes obedience to employees and command to managers, i.e. managers are attributed instilling capacities, while compliance is enforced by authority (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2002), and employees have a responding, passive role in this regard. Thus, managers (should) strive to, and are ascribed power to, govern the organization in the forming of practices. Thus, the IM discourse assumes that management, by adopting IM as a tool, program, etc., is able to order the subjectivity of employees towards qualities that underpin customer work. This occurs, for example, when "charismatic leaders instil into followers", such as organizational identity, "a sense of oneness with the organization" (Wiseke et al., 2009, p. 123). This implies that management is able to order employees' subjectivity towards ideas that are central to IM, such as service orientation and motivation. This kind of subjectification towards something occurs through objectification, i.e. employees are targeted by a variety of programs and activities.

The passive role ascribed to employees within IM is interesting. For example, the fact that employees acquire customer knowledge in customer interactions is not commonly considered within IM. In practice, however, employees often have both experience and expertise in regard to customer interactions, and seem to be pro-socially motivated, i.e. motivated by helping customers (Liewendahl, 2014). Depriving employees from an active role and the possibility to influence is de-motivating, and impinges on their performance in service encounters (Liewendahl,

2014). For customers, this may result in un-branded service encounters that may impinge on their brand evaluations, and ultimately lead to value destruction in service encounters. In general, it seems that employees are still a silent "resource" (Leinonen & Väänänen, 2015), which implies that the employees' full potential is not utilized.

Indeed, a lack of "bottom-up" empirical research, i.e. how marketing is actually done in practice, has been noted in marketing (Skålen & Hackle, 2011). It has been argued that marketing lacks critical empirical research (Bradshaw, Fuat, Brownlie, & Hewer, 2007; Skålen, 2009,) that questions the prevailing managerial hegemony in service research (Ek, 2001; Ek et al., 2005; Grey, 2003; Learnmoth, 2003; Saren et al., 2007, p. xviii; Skålen, 2004; Skålen et al., 2009).

The HSL draws upon a "bottom-up" research approach and introduces a new perspective to the TPF by reordering, reorienting and reframing it from promise management, governed mainly by managerial control, norms and procedures to a dynamic perspective, directed by human principles. Describing an employee discourse on motivation is argued to contribute to research and practice by widening the understanding of what, in practice, needs to occur in order to motivate employees to live up to value promises, and thereby, advance the applicability of IM in practice.

1.3.3 On a Humanistic Approach to Employees' Experiences and Motivation

Within the value discourse, in general, the stream that emphasises the importance of employees as value facilitators and motivation as instrumental to value fulfilment is the SL stream (Grönroos 2011, Grönroos & Voima 2011). Within the Nordic School, which underpins the SL, the substantial importance of the employees was early conveyed by Grönroos (1989: 10) who claimed that:

> "Management should create, and continuously encourage and enhance an understanding of and an appreciation for the roles of the employees in the organization".

The HSL draws upon this notion and is positioned within the SL, as a point of departure. In service research, in general, people are considered a prominent key to success in service delivery (Grönroos, 2000; Schneider & Bowne, 1995); thus, "an understanding for co-creation of value by and for people" is required (Schneider & Bowne, 2010, p. 31). Because "services are frequently delivered by people to people and the people who deliver them work with and for other people; people are a big part

of consumer service delivery" (Schneider & Bowne, 2010, p. 32). Therefore, "there is a need to understand the social psychology of consumer service delivery contexts" (Schneider & Bowne, 2010, p. 32). Understanding the social psychology of service delivery, and thus the customer's value process, is central to the HSL, and adopting a humanistic stance to the study and to the developed framework, advanced this. A humanistic stance places human experience at the centre. However, service research is somewhat thin on this in regard to considering, in depth, experiences from an employee perspective.

Taking a humanistic stance means applying humanistic principles as the starting point for a research. This implies doing research "as if people were human" (Rowan, 2001, p. 121, as cited in Reason & Brandbury [eds.]), and places human experience at the centre (Rowan, 2001; Hirschman, 1986). Consequently, if the aim is to understand human motivation in more depth, the "owners" of the motivation and their experiences are to be explored. Second, certain principles underpin humanism and stress the potential value and goodness of the human being. In addition, humanism sees humans as adult, active subjects possessing a free will (Assagioli, 1974; Follett, 1924) and seeking meaning (Frankl, 1969; Maslow, 1971), also in work contexts (Burger, 2007), which puts employee motivation in a specific light.

Drawing upon the works of Maslow, humanism places human needs in a central position in regard to motivation (Bugental, 1964; Maslow, 1970). However, contrary to common perceptions of need fulfilment, which see need fulfilment mainly as individualistic undertakings based on selfish drives, humanism sees the fulfilment of higher-level needs, such as self-fulfilment, in relation to a higher outcome and the self. Today this approach to motivation is gaining more recognition in business practices, and in some streams of organisational research, such as positive organisational behaviour (POB). Drawing upon contemporary psychology, such as positive psychology, POB, and public service motivation current research claims that motives such as altruism may be present in work-life (see e.g., Seligman, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi 2003; Kofman, 2006; Park & Word, 2009). Thus, being human implies, according to humanism, a relation to higher-order motives, such as meaning, in both work contexts (Burger, 2007) and in relation to oneself. For employees such a meaning is e.g. serving customers authentically and in the best possible way.

Indeed, employees who participated in the HSL-study experienced such motives in customer interaction, in particular, in emotion work in face-to-face service encounters. For employees authenticity in regard to the link promise-performance was experienced as high priority, which supported the humanistic stance.

1.3.4 Emotion Work

The work that service employees undertake in customer interaction has, by tradition within the service literature, been labelled emotion work (Zapf, 2002) or emotional labour (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1983). Emotion work concerns the affective delivery (of service) and people work, (i.e., service jobs) (Brotherridge & Grandey, 2002), and it refers to the affective tone of service (Mattila, Grandey & Fisk, 2003). It refers to the way service employees serve, treat, and interact with customers, and it determines, to a varying degree, customers' experiences (Grandey & Groth, 2012) of service encounters as well as service relationships (Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul & Gremler, 2006) and the brand of the firm (de Cherantony, 2003).

This implies, among other things that service employees in service encounters use emotions as tools when living up to value promises. Thus, employees encounter customers on an emotional level, i.e. emotion-to-emotion. This places emotional demands on employees in service encounters because their performance influences the affective tone of service provision (Mattila, Grandey & Fisk, 2003). Such emotional demands are e.g., expressing positive emotions in interactions in employee–customer interface (Grandey, 2003) and 'the display of expected emotions by service agents during service encounters' (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993:88).

Hence, employees are also expected to live up to affective dimensions of value promise such as "a wonderful atmosphere" (promise by case I of HSL-study). Current research notes that employee autonomy is important in regard to motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008). This is in line with the findings of the HSL-study; employees valued highly the possibility to participate also in the formulation (giving) of promises, because in their view this would align the promises-performance relation, and enhance the firm's overall authenticity.

Recently, also Yagil and Medler-Liraz, (2013) found that employee autonomy and authenticity increases their honesty, personal endeavour, and/or closeness to a custome. On the other hand, if employees' authentic behaviour is incongruent with the firm's- or customers' expectations, this may cause costs to the organization (ibid). Hence, if/when employees are driven by authenticity, and express this in performance in service encounters, which is a promise in itself, and promises have been made by the firm that are not in line with employees' performance, customers may experience not only incongruence in promises-performance, but contradicting promises. Employees in turn may experience psychological discrepancy, which they find de-motivating.

To conclude, considering that employee motivation is established as instrumental to brand aligned service performance there seems to be room, and a need for a framework such as the HSL. The HSL turns the limelight towards employees' experiences and illuminates an employee inclusive stance and mode of managing practices that advances employee motivation. Considering the importance of the congruence between brand- and other firm messaging, expressed as promises, and employees' performance and the impact motivation has on their performance, the need for a employee discourse on motivation, such as the one expressed in the HSL, seems relevant.

2. The Underpinnings of the Human Service Logic

To "identify" and describe a "new" previously unexpressed discourse, such as the HSL, is a tedious task.   The empirical and theoretical anchoring of the HSL is formed by its research design and approach, which draws a longitudinal, abductive case study. Therefore the study's central methodological aspects are discussed here.

In the HSL-study the empirical world was initially approach in an inductive manner as the study set out to explore why implementation of relationship strategies fail within firms, among their employees. In the initial phase of the study the empirical material indicated that employees in practice where a "silent resource", without a voice in regard to many issue that concerned their work, and this impinged their motivation.

Employees; a Silent Resource in Need for a Discourse

The initial findings indicated that reasons for implementation failures had not been explored in regard to employees' experiences from their first order position. Employees were more or less "objectives" for implementation, a resource "in which" new marketing ideas were implemented and instilled in. When/if implementation failed, i.e. did not surface in employees' performance in customer interaction according to plans, one commonly assumed reason was "change resistance".

> "Some of the employees on operations level resist change". (Management, Case I)

Listening to employees' in regard their view on *change* showed only weak signs of *change resistance*, but rather a need to valuate the ideas, as exemplified in the following citations:

> "Changes… Well when they (management) make these changes sometimes you wonder why they don't ask us anything, because we do the work, and we know, but always someone else decides … and sometimes we get the information very late … some new thing should be working like yesterday and we get the information today..." (Employee)
> "Changes are always welcome, positive changes, when you can tell that there is a real advantage of the change". (Employee)
> "I am open to change; it is our field of business we just have to change all the time". (Employee)

As it turned out during the course of the HSL-research process it was rather about employees feeling that they were not included in making decisions about their own work. It was commonly felt that at times ideas that were "poured on" form above complicated customer work:

> "At best, when you get people to develop things themselves they will then gladly do those things. But when it comes decided upon already and stated that beginning from some specific date we'll do in this or that way it's really hard to make it work. That is … you cannot start doing new things just like that … but it requires a longer process to make it work and to see whether it is doable at all. If we were allowed to think and participate in development then things would work smoothly (Employee).

In practice employees seemed to have plenty, and seemingly relevant ideas, in particular in regard to customer work, which is their field of expertise. However, resistance towards "not doable ideas", and "impossible to keep promises" was more common, but many employees did experience they did not have a forum to express their ideas, and if they still did so, many were afraid of being labelled bothersome (in particular if employees did argument against some in their view "not doable idea"):

> "But I have to admit that during the past three years there has been this … it's like forced and you have had to force yourself to go by what has been decided, like 'ok let's just do it this way even if it is not working' (sigh) … there is not anymore the … it feels like whatever you suggest to whomever nothing happens that would enable us to work better. Sometimes it feels like it would be nice if someone from X,

or any other department came to our department and asked 'how can we help you in this and this?' No one ever came! We are their customers! If the ladies and gents would bother coming down …". (Employee)

Thus, in practice it seemed that this "resource" was neither silent nor resisting change. When given a chance and a forum, employees expressed opinions, wills, desires and intentions, i.e. motivation, in particular towards how to serve customers in the best possible way. In regard to this an important attitude surfaced among employees; a genuine concern for customers, as exemplified in the following citations:

"It is that you get to work with people that is rewarding". (Employee)
"Let us do our work, what we are good at, serving the customers". (Employee).
"Let them (management) keep doing their strategies and such, we take care of the customers, eventually they'll calm down". (Employee)
"No matter what system, eventually you can always walk over it …"(in favor of serving customers well)". (Employee)

When employees had a chance to come forth with arguments pro or against new ideas, they did. Considering their experience in customer work this seemed relevant, and was welcomed by management:

"It is obvious that if you keep the operational level aside in decision making they are excluded, and that is always negative. That's human … people always complain about things that come from outside, when one is not included, whether it is something good or bad. If it is bad, it becomes some steps in the worse direction if they (employees) are excluded. Even if you take just one member of a group to participate in decision making so this person is the spokesperson for the group…. It is really strange that this has not been understood (among management)". (Marketing Manager, Case II).

Thus, there seemed to be some level of mutual understanding, among employees as well as management, about the need to be included/ to include employees in planning and decision-making.

Hence, employees who participated in the HSL-study felt they were not listened to enough and needed an *idea exchange forum* where they could come forward with, and evaluate ideas. Management in the HSL-cases were accommodating in this respect. As part of the action research such forums were arranged, and participating employees experienced these as highly motivating: "This is really good that we get together and can discuss and exchange ideas like this, we would need more of these gatherings". (Group work conclusion during empirical session, Case I).

The initial findings indicated a need not only for an employee idea-exchange forum, but an employee discourse on motivation as well, i.e. what in their view really impacts their motivation. A discourse analyses on IM, which accounts for the enabling aspect of the TPF revealed similar notions of a "silent", manageable employee resource. Consequently, it is fair to claim that an *employee discourse* that expresses employees first order experiences in regard to their motivation has been more or less absent within service literature up till now. Other current research supports this argument; employees are still in practice silent (silenced), and yet they wish to be able to participate in development work (Leinonen & Väänänen, 2015). This is in line with the critical voices within marketing research that argue for the need to break the managerial hegemony in this research field (see e.g. Skålen, 2009).

2.1. On The HSL Study

Marketing research in general is little influenced by discourse analyses (Skålen, 2010). Discourse analyses are commonly conducted to reveal underpinning power relations embedded in the discourse (Fairclough, 2012). To become conscious about actors' experiences embedded in practices in a specific context, and thus gaining understanding of the underpinning mechanism and the worldview inherent in these, may have emancipatory effects. Thereby, "emancipating people from the determination by habit, custom, illusion and coercion which sometimes frame social practice" (Kemmis, in Reason & Bradbury 2001:92) is possible by discourse analyses. Discourse draws upon a multitude of heterogeneous forms of verbal utterances and semiosis that constitute our social world. The HSL framework strives to describe an employee discourse in a particular context.

The HSL framework emerged by an abductive approach, which implies that the empirical findings and chosen theoretical informants were systematically combined during the duration of the action processes, aiming at initial theory construction. The aim with abduction is to discover new things, and intertwined with the empirical material theory is used to build an understanding of new things, and to deepen the understanding. An abductive process is characterised by non-linear proceeding in the research activities (Dubois & Gadde 2002). Corbin and Strauss (1990) emphasise that the ongoing scrutinizing of various literature fields keeps the theoretical sensitivity stimulated.

The developed HSL framework is empirically grounded through two longitudinal case studies and draws upon three groups of theoretical fields as to its abductive grounding: 1) Service research and the TPF, as the point of the departure for the exploration. 2) Humanistic management, co-workership and work-life research and constellations theory, which draws upon systemic thinking, as theoretical informants in the abduction. 3) Applied modern psychology (third- and fourth-force psychologies) in regard to exploring motivation.

Four generative questions emerged out of the empirical material during the research processes. Such questions stimulate the line of investigation in productive directions, which lead to working hypotheses, useful questions, and the collection of certain kinds of data (Strauss, 1989: 17, 22). The generative questions that emerged during the research process are: 1) Why do they make promises we cannot keep? 2) What is all this fuss about? And, 3) Why are we not included? 4) What motivates employees? The three first questions represent the employees' concerns in regard to value practices and challenges they experienced in relation to living up to value promises. The forth question is the general generative questions which directed the entire process.

The aim of the study was *to create an initial, empirically grounded framework on employee motivation that reflects the employees' experiences in real-life settings, and in so doing, to describe an employee discourse on motivation.*

The employee discourse covers motivating and de-motivating empirically identified factors, as depicted (in appendix 1), and is informed by relevant theoretical informants. Central to the HSL-framework is its humanistic stance, which also influenced the research design, which thus was directed by assumptions of humanistic action research.

2.1.1. On a Humanistic Stance in Action Research

Humanistic action research takes a humanistic stance, and thus a subjective position (Flood 2001:137). Drawing upon the reasoning of Maslow (on scientific principles that reflect a humanistic stance), Rowan (2001:116-117) has summarised 10 core ideas (in comparison to traditional research) that articulate the basic humanistic principles to be taken into account by anyone studying people in the conduct of

humanistic action research. These principles were applied to the HSL-study. The main principles guiding the study was: a) Re-humanising what is explored. In this study, it implied seeing the human aspects of both the employee (as a subject) and the context in which the employee works; humane aspects of service provision. b) Taking a holistic approach (vs. reductionism), which implies approaching a person as a whole rather than some split-on effects of a person, grasping "the wholeness as such and focus on the relations of each constitute with the whole and each other" (Winter, 1998:42) and emphasising first-person experiences and seeing the world as experiences, and thus an interest in first-person knowledge, which requires the researcher's engagement in real-life settings. In this research, it implied being involved in the cases, as an action researcher.

Applying these principles of humanistic action research to the study meant that the research process best could be described as "a process of jointly becoming conscious" about factors that impact employees' motivation. Employees' experiences were captured during the empirical process as uttered by them, and expressed in their semiosis in relation to the themes customer service, value promises, and motivation, taking value practices as the locus. This ensured an empirically grounded framework that reflects the employees' discourse authentically.

Employees' experiences were captured by identifying issues they experienced as critical and as having an influence on their motivation, framed by the above-mentioned themes in relation to: a) The content; marketing ideas (concepts, etc. expressed as value promises). b) The process; management and internal marketing. c) The context; systemic workings of the firm with a focus on firm internal social and psychological factors and customer-interaction factors.

The main research question posed was: what needs to occur, (to come about), in the view of service employees, in order for themselves to be motivated to live up to value promises? The analyses were structured around the following five questions:

1) Why does (internal) implementation of marketing ideas fail, and what barriers for implementing marketing ideas can service employees and managers identify?
2) Which barriers for living up to value promises in value practices do service employees' experience?
3) What de-motivates/motivates service employees to live up to value promises?
4) What is individual, service contextual motivation?

5) What fosters service-contextual motivation?

The study consisted of two case firms briefly introduced here.

Case firm I is in the shipping and hospitality industry, offering transportation and cruises and entertainment and experiences, both in b-to-c and b-to-b. The firm employs around 2000 employees. Currently the firm is 'a leading provider of high-quality mini-cruises and passenger transport services in the Baltic Sea region, as well as a leading provider of ro-ro cargo services on selected routes'. The firm's current prime promise to its customer is: 'the Baltic within your reach'. At the time of the empirical study, the firm promised, amongst other things, 'the best service on the Baltic'; that 'our employees create a congenial atmosphere during the cruises'; and that 'we are more'. At the time of the research, the firm's brand equity rated high in Finland. This study was conducted mainly onboard one of the vessels sailing under the Swedish flag, on the Helsingfors–Stockholm route. A pilot study was conducted on the Åbo–Stockholm route.

Case firm II offers comprehensive material services in nine countries for contractors, industry, public organisations, and technical retailers. It is a family-owned company that has operated in the industry since 1913. It has 2,800 employees in its' Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, and Baltic operations. The net sales for 2012 totalled EUR 1.6 billion. Currently, the firm promises to be the 'First choice in material and information flow solutions for our customers'; to provide the 'Best customer service in our industry'; and 'To support our customers' competitiveness by organising efficient material and information flows'. The firm's core values make up the backbone of 'how they operate'. The firm states that its values 'give direction to the way they behave, and apply to each and every employee as well as to customers, suppliers, and other partners. Their values are: Responsibility, working together, continuous improvement, entrepreneurship.[1]

2.1.2 On the Analyses and its Methods

The analyses of the empirical material draw on constructivist, evolved grounded theory (GT) principles, Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) and systemic constellations analysis. The evolved, constructivist form of GT has contributed with a structure to

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[1] Quoted from the firm's website and other official material.

the analyses for the entire research process, following mainly constructivist GT principles in line with the ideas of Charmaz, (2000, 2008). It draws upon traditional GT features, but admits the researcher to adjust the process according to the need placed by the research, as well as the researcher's choice of the ontological- and epistemological stance-point. The constructivist GT inspired approach was chosen as it provides clear guidelines for analyses, but deviates from traditional GT in its ontological stance-point, i.e. in adopting a constructivist stance as opposed to the traditional somewhat more positivistic stance.

GT is a general analyses methodology for qualitative research intended for developing theory that is grounded in data. Theory evolves during the actual research process through continuous interplay between analyses and data collection. The GT process is structured in phases of "data collection", memoing, coding and categorization as an iterative process. According to Packer-Muti (2009: 141) GT provides frameworks by which data can be broken down into manageable pieces and the researcher can begin to conceptualize in "the direction the data points". According to Glaser (2002), GT considers multiple perspectives among participants (in the research). By conceptualizing, the researcher, who has captured the perspectives, raises these perspectives to a higher abstraction level, which the six HSL principles in this study represent.

Constructivist GT, thus, is committed to the ontological stance-point that "what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective", and that "knowledge is created, not discovered by the mind" (Schwandt, in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:237). It adopts a relativist ontology, which implies that "realit*ies* exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the person who holds them (Guba, 1990: 27).

The empirically identified factors were arranged as <u>units of observation,</u> having three levels and three variables. All issues that were identified during the empirical process were categorised according to these units of observation; the content (value promises), the process (management and e.g. IM) and the context (social and psychological issues). Further, a distinction of the empirical material into the different

levels was made as follows: Level 1; general issues. "Level 2; group level issues. Level 3; individual issues.

The <u>unit of analyses,</u> i.e. the *aspects of experiences* that were analysed followed a humanistic stance, which sees experiences as the proper ontological unit to focus. Initially it was identified that the <u>mode and stance</u> of management impacted motivation. Consequently, how employees experienced the stance and mode of management was analysed throughout the study. Drawing upon the empirically identified and categorised motivating/de-motivating factors and discussions on mode and stance of management conclusions about motivation were made.

Also management's discourse i.e. how management discussed employees and the attitude towards employees management express was analysed. The theoretical informants were also analysed as to their stance towards employees, i.e. attitude towards employees and how employees are discussed, and mode towards management and practices, the manner in which things are assumed to be done/occur, i.e. the manner of managing practices. Thus, also the IM discourse, which represents the enabling aspect of the TPF, was analyzed as to its mode and stance. The mode and stance IM adopts towards employees and how enabling and employee motivation is addressed in IM and internal branding, was analyses by doing a discourse analysis covering 40 articles. This was done by answering 10 questions (see appendix 2).

To conclude, according to the discussion above, the essence of the HSL is its stance that draws upon a humanistic approach in regard to management, motivation and research design. Employees' experiences of factors that impact their motivation (appendix table 1) and current literature on motivation have informed the HSL. The *stance and the mode* of the HSL, as expressed by its six core principles and its core concept, social and service competence, summarize the factors the HSL-study found to impact employees' motivation to live up to value promises.

2.2 On The Stance and Mode of the HSL

The HSL suggests an alteration to the current prevailing logics that underpin service research, by incorporating the human factor also from an employee perspective. Initially and theoretically it draws upon the Nordic School of service research and the

SL and moves towards an egalitarian stance. Thus, the HSL considers human interaction in service encounters as pivotal for the success of customers' value processes in service encounters. It places service employees, and their experiences and capabilities in a central position in regard to the firm's ability to live up to value promises, and thus customers' value fulfillment.

The stance, i.e. *the attitude* that the HSL framework adopts, reflects the motivating factors that were identified empirically among employees, in particular those that express the manner how employees prefer to be encountered (by the organization and its management). The HSL suggests a stance refers to an inclusive, adult attitude in a first order position.

A mode stands for *the manner in which something is done*, occurs or is experienced. The HSL suggests applying a *co-mode* to all three TPF aspects. This suggests including employees not only in the keeping aspect of the model, but also in its giving - and enabling aspects. From an employee perspective, this is argued to be relevant as it enables a holistic approach to customer work and facilitates living up to value promises, which in itself fosters motivation.

The stance and mode the HSL adopts is depicted in table 1. The 6 HSL principles explicate the stance and mode in more detail.

Table 1   Stance and Mode of the HSL

Stance: Integration of experiences. Principles 1-5	The frameworks' underpinning assumptions of its stance towards employees, which reflect and articulate factors that are congruent with those that employees according to the empirical material found motivating in regard to stance.
Mode: co mode to all TPF aspects. Principle 6	The frameworks' underpinning assumptions of its suggested mode of management, which reflect and articulate factors service employees found motivating in regard to working modes.
Systemic approach	Applying a systemic approach to the above (how these factors relate and influence each other according to systemic/constellation principles).

 The main underpinning of the HSL construct is integration. Integration of experiences refers to the stance that the HSL suggests. It refers to the different variables as explored in this study as follows: With co-active power sharing in practice, ideas are allowed to emerge out of practices: Those involved in the practices are allowed to contribute with ideas anchored in practices and ideas are born alive. The ownership of practices is enhanced, which fosters motivation, and the ideas get

stronger, more vital and healthier. Integration can be elaborated upon in more detail by relating it to each variable of the units of observation (table 1: process, social and psychological issues, and content):

a) Process integration; is about putting promises into action, taking what is to be done into the doings/practices in a co-active mode by letting the practices order the decisions.

b) Social and psychological integration; intermixing of segregated employee groups and co-coordinating processes in a mode that results in a well-balanced 'field of being', an dynamic equilibrium (a state where opposing forces are balanced).

c) Content integration; deriving promises out of the doings/practices by the doers: employees defining promises based on practices in service encounters: What is it actually we do here? What can we promise based on what we do?

Integration is introduced as a principle that advances the enabling of congruency between value promises and performance in service encounters, by integrating employees experiences and knowledge in all three TPF aspects. Thus, it first and foremost suggests the attitude, which reflects factors employees found motivating, to be applied to practice.

Integration draws upon contextualization (as described by Skålen, 2004) and adopts an explicit humanistic co-workership stance. This implies that marketing ideas are not only contextualized, but created together by those who have the practice knowledge (power). Thereby, integration implies that those who are to live up to promises, especially in face-to-face service encounters, valuate and also create promises.

Integration with a firm internal focus is concerned with integrating service employees' understandings and practices and the creation of applicable value promises, with value practices as the locus. It suggests:

a) Including service employees as active subjects with agency to participate in all aspects of value practices work. Integration departs from practices and relations in customer interaction as experienced by service employees' in their everyday work-life. It includes, as a concept, the activities service employees undertake in order to live up to value promises. Integration, as a process, departs from adopting features to value promises service employees suggest. This ensures an anchoring of value promises in practices, and thus enhances

the interactive enabling (of living up to value promises). Thereby integration becomes a firm internal 'consciousness process'.

b) Encompassing the idea of integrity (to own the work) to apply also for service employees, and thus co-active, expanded power sharing. This is argued to foster service contextual motivation in a holistic and systemic manner.

This view on integration follows the initial ideas of integration suggested by humanistic management (see e.g. Follet, 1924; Federman, 2010, Godwin & Gittel, 2012; Parker, 1995), which sees integration of diversified experiences, with advanced understanding as the purpose, as a vehicle for progression. In this case, the purpose of integration is to advance systemic consciousness of value promises and creating (making) 'liveable" authentic promises'.

The HSL suggests a co-mode to all the TPF aspects, and suggests and alteration from promise management to *co-active managing*. This implies adopting a practical ontology and creative working mode to co-operation. The co-mode has a basic re-ordering function that reflects factors that were identified in the HSL-study as having a positive influence on employee motivation. A co-mode implies that employees participate in co-creating, co-keeping and co-enabling. A co-mode draws upon the HSL stance, which implies a mind-set that attributes employees' agency to participating in a wider range of practices that are instrumental goals to customer value fulfilment. The co-mode reveals a first-order systemic understanding of employees' motivation in relation to living up to value promises in value practices, i.e. the promise-performance link.

Taken to practice re-directing the mode of the TPF to co-active managing suggests decision-making agency for employees in regard to value practices. Drawing upon the HSL stance, the suggested co-mode questions the traditional superior-subordinate managerial setting as to the mode in which things are managed. It suggests a 'non-managerial mind-set', and questions the traditional managerial objectifying mode of management towards employees.

By adopting a systemic view linked to value promises and motivation implies systemic consciousness and suggests seeing the TPF as a constellation, having the form of a circular image. This stresses the underlying implications of systemic workings in practices, as underpinnings for a co-active stance and a co-mode. This

view suggests re-directing the TPF from a linear, hierarchical focus to a systemic one. Systemic consciousness of value promises is central and embedded in this stance and mode. In the HSL constellations are defined as: sets of nonlinear and highly dynamic networks of people, relationships, resources, practices, events, and information sources that are interconnected and experience-based.

Portrayed as a constellation, the HSL expands the TPF from being a triadic interplay of three aspects, seen solely from the managerial perspective, to a dynamic circular image, including the employees' perspective. It gives no attention to a priori defined hierarchical positions, but emphasizes the systemic perspective, and sees the aspects as circulating in constantly changing patterns and shapes, forming nodes, enhanced by the co-active stance and mode of managing value practices collaboratively. This kind of systemic working is argued to be dependent on, and simultaneously advancing, consciousness of value promises, and thus advancing understanding of what is doable in practice and what is not.

This, i.e. collective consciousness of promises and their applicability to practices, ultimately fosters employees' motivation to live up to value promises, partly because it reinforces liveable value promises, and dilutes less liveable ones. According to this it is suggested that living up to value promises is dependent on *systemic consciousness of promises,* which is advanced by a systemic approach and noting value practices as constellations and understanding how elements, such as the HSL principles, interact in these.

2.2.1 On the Six Principles of the Human Service Logic

The HSL principles are; 1) co-active power sharing, 2) unity and integrating experiences, 3) seeing employees as active subjects, 4) taking a relational and interactional stance, 5) stressing prudence and togetherness, and 6) adopting a practical ontology and creative working mode to co-operation. In particular it notes employees' need of agency to participate and coactive, reciprocal enabling as its essential underpinnings and suggestive requisites for employee motivation.

The HSL departs from a humanistic ontology, and thus stresses the understanding of value processes not only for people, but also by people. These HSL principles suggest an inclusive mind-set to managing. In practice, this implies that employees'

competences, explicitly and consciously, are to be considered and included in co-active managing, suggesting re-ordering of the TPF towards (firm internal) reciprocity, departing from practices.

In line with the SL the HSL in particular stresses human interaction, and takes "one step further" by placing also employees in subject position, with agency in customer-supplier interaction. It adopts a capability and experience-based view on employees, which deviates from other current views in service research that discuss employees as an operant/operand resource. It stresses an equality-oriented approach as to "ownership" of practices. In practice "customer power", i.e., the ultimate decisions of how customers are encountered, is with employees. The HSL study shows that service employees often have the ultimate power to enhance or destroy customer experience and thus value formation, in service encounters. Therefore the HSL advocates an explicit shift of power towards *co-active power sharing* in regard to managing value practices, and decision-making agency in practice.

Thus the HSL suggests, and emphasizes *co-active enabling* of living up to value promises as expressed by its principles and its core concept: The stance that the HSL suggests reframes service leadership towards co-active enabling. It suggests that enabling occurs in reciprocal relationships between employees and managers, is dialogic and ordered by practices. Drawing upon this, agency to participate from a first order, non-subordinate position in the domains of practices where employees by tradition are the experts, is emphasised. This can occur only by co-active power sharing, emphasizing responsibility and co-active managing of value practices. This supports the underpinnings of motivation in practices as it enables that value promises in practice can be kept. Human encountering is essential in co-active enabling.

Human encountering is expressed by the HSL core concept, service and social competences.

2.2.2 On the Core Concept of the HSL; Service- and Social Competence

As discussed so far the HSL suggests re-framing of promise management towards co-active enabling. Embedded in its principles are social and psychological attitudes that foster motivation. It further suggests firm-internal competences, i.e. knowledge and skills that in practice are instrumental to employee motivation.

Based on the empirical findings form the HSL study, the HSL suggests that co-enabling in particular requires 'human knowledge' from the actors involved, in order form them to interact in a manner that facilitates living up to value promises. This competence is expressed as the HSL core concept; *social and service competence,* which covers such human competences. As a concept, social- and service competence implies both direct and indirect impact on motivation. The HSL suggests that social competence enhance systemic workings required for living up to promises. It also suggests that social competence fosters motivation in reinforcing a firm's internal positive energies.

Social competence implies humanistic co-workership competences, divided into an individual and collective level. The individual level, which covers individual self-knowledge and communication skills, is required for functioning in human interaction and constellations. In regard to self-knowledge it draws upon a self-model that depicts the individual motivation construct, according to humanistic psychology. In regard to communication it in particular emphasises the tone of communication. It makes concrete suggestions on how the tone of communication can be improved by awareness of meta-patterns that underpin motivation. On a group level, collective social competence, covers aspects such as becoming conscious of dysfunctional as well as harmonious people-issues of systemic workings, in a given context. This conceptual suggestion reflects in particular the empirically grounded C-variable motivating/de-motivating factors depicted in appendix 1.

Service competence is suggested as one aspect of social competence. As a concept, it draws upon the expectations service literature prescribes (e.g. servqual attributes) for service employees in emotion work, and adopts these to the firm's internal workings. It extends these to apply to all co-workers, including managers. On a practical level it suggest skills in courtesy and manners are required of all co-workers. It is grounded in the empirical material that indicates that a firm's internal positive service attitude not only fosters a good atmosphere, which in itself contributes to motivation, but is required as the underpinning of living up to value promises in service encounters.

3. A Brief Discussion on Motivation as Underpinning the HSL

As the essence of the HSL expresses an employee discourse on motivation, the motivation concept, and its theoretical grounding, is discussed in some more depth here. The fields of contemporary applied psychologies employed as theoretical informants in the HSL-study are: humanistic psychology, positive psychology, neuro-linguistic programming[2], motivation sciences, including social psychology, and positive organizational behaviour. These distinct, but overlapping streams, describe human functioning from a shared ontological viewpoint, which underpinnings are congruent with a humanistic stance.

Motivation is a central concept in service research and in particular noted in IM, but has not been thoroughly discussed or defined in these fields. How employees *become* motivated based on their subjective experiences, and what factors impact their motivation, is scarcely discussed. IM as a conceptual framework offers neither theoretically nor empirically grounded definitions on motivation.

Motivation science defines motives as 'a predisposition to behave in a directed fashion' (Fiske, 2008:4). Motives are essential as they 'act as the motor for action and energizes purposive behavior that serves a function for the individual' (ibid). Further in most views on motivation a common assumption is that 'motives operate via specific goals in specific situations' (ibid). Different schools of thought suggest different motives, such e.g. hedonism initiated by Freud, (1900/1953) instincts and purposive activity (McDougle, 1950), needs as influenced by Gestalt approaches (the main contributor being Maslow, 1943, 1967), and self-enhancement (Murry, 1938) which currently has developed into a rather widely spread view where self-enhancement is seen as a prime motivator (Fiske, 2008).

Maslow was among the establishers of humanistic psychology, the third force of psychology, as an intellectual movement within academic psychology (Taylor, 1999). He saw a need for 'positive psychology', which is of specific interest in regard to motivation as humanistic psychology does emphasizes the positive potential of all humans as the basic functionality of the motivational system (Warmoth, Resnick & Serlin, 2002).

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[2] A distinct applied stream that draws upon humanistic psychology, linguistics, Gestalt therapy, cognitive psychology and other field its founders found applicable to practices.

To make clear distinctions between the different fields of psychology that covers motivational issues is a tedious task, as hybrids from unlikely border-crossing marriages are emerging out of basically 'opposing' views, such as meaning-centred counselling, which draws upon existential psychotherapy (initiated by Frankl within the field of humanistic psychology) and cognitive/behaviour psychology.

Current discussions on motivation distinguish between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (see e.g. Baylis, 2004:210; Park & Word, 2012). The motivating (and de-motivating) factors that were identified and categorized in the HSL-study (depicted in appendix 1) are both of extrinsic and intrinsic kind, and seem to influence, intertwined substantially on both group and individual motivation. Many of the factors relate to employees willingness to contribute, and being heard. This is of interest as other studies within work psychology show similar results (Leinonen and Väänänen, 2015).

To exemplify, a willingness to contribute is expressed by factor 2.c.3 (appendix 1) "*a need to serve customers*". Employees who participated in the HSL-study expressed a genuine concern for serving customers according to their expectations, and the firm's promises, and were deeply concerned when/if they for some reason failed.

> "For me this work used to be a calling, it really gave me much and I really liked it, but now it's more like I am forced to be here. I have been on different boats and now I feel they just throw me around. That's de-motivating.... The most important is to be attentive to the customer, listen to people and be in a good mood. You get far by using humour, and by giving customers time. That is important in service work". (Employee)

In current literature on motivation such expressions of helping behaviour is referred to as pro-social motivation. Thus, empirically grounded and informed by literature on pro-social motivation, the HSL also considers pro-social motivation as a significant factor in regard to employee motivation. Further, this "helping customers" motivating factor is closely linked to factor 1.a.1 *authentic truthful promises*, i.e. employees wish that promises also should express what actually occurs in practice.

> "Why can't they simply promise things we are good at"? (Group work conclusion during empirical session, Case I)

> "Some promises are impossible to execute. Maybe it is that too much is promised to the customers?" (Employee)

Authenticity is a factor that current research on employee motivation has found to relate to pro-social motivation (Yagil & Medler-Liraz, 2013). Linking different factors, e.g. employees need to serve and their request for authentic, practically

grounded promises illuminates the complexity of employee motivation; how different factors are interrelated and feed each other, and thus the need to further explore the factors separately and jointly, as elements in constellations.

3.1 On Pro-social Motivation and Helping Behaviour

In line with the "need to serve factor" identified in the HSL-study, research on public service motivation (PSM) have found that employees often are *pro-socially motivated*. This implies that employees are motivated by a sense of duty and a desire to help others (Park & Word, 2009). Park and Word suggest that public service motivation may transcend the public sector, and thus is applicable to the private sector as well. Research on public service motivation is currently witnessing exponential growth (Andersen, Eriksson, Kristensen & Pedersen, 2012). By tradition IM does not note such a pro-social type of motivation. Therefore, in regard to this factor, the conceptual development of the HSL borrows from public service motivation to illuminate the "need to help" factor.

This need-based, pro-social aspect of motivation corresponds with humanistic need theories on motivation. This identified need to serve customers (appendix 1, 2.c.3) could be seen as one aspect of e.g. the need for self-fulfilment (a higher level need). However, self-fulfilment needs relate primarily to satisfying personal needs, whereas this need to serve customers seems to be "transpersonal" to its character. Self-fulfilment, which relates primarily to one self, is thought to exist in relation to aspects of individual motives, such as values and goals (e.g. developing ones competences for self-fulfilling purposes such as competing or career reasons), and the seeking of individual utility. However, the need to serve, as identified in the HSL-study is different as it refers to how employees related to caring for customers, whom they often seemed to be prepared to "go the extra mile for". In case employees could not live up to customers expectations, e.g. of good service, they seemed to suffer of psychological conflicts.

PSM claims that service employees have a preference for common good, service for citizens and high professionalism (Park and Word, 2009), i.e. employees are driven by doing good for others. PSM is in its field commonly distinguished into different dimensions characterised by different motives: 1) political dimension, with rational

motives, 2) a common good dimension with normative motives, 3) social compassion and altruism and unselfishness, which attributes to affective motives and focuses on the willingness to work selflessly and independent from external standards and expectations from others (Perry, 1996). The third dimension is in line with the underpinnings of humanism and transpersonal psychology, and what was identified among employees in the HSL-study. The motives underpinning compassion and altruism, i.e. doing good for others are empathy and co-dependence (Mihalcioiu, 2011). In this context altruism implies that serving others, giving to others and helping others is more important than personal achievements and financial rewards. In summary, pro-social motivation is concerned with doing good for others, and goes beyond self-interest (Andersen et al, 2012), which is in line with how employees in the HSL-study expressed their stance towards customers.

To conclude, HSL argues that pro-social motivation needs attention as an aspect of motivation, and thus of enabling employees to live up to value promises. A violation of this need may impinge motivation severely. Further, in this context it is of interest to note that resent research findings in PSM claim that mangers should strive to attract employees with high pro-social motivation as they are expected to perform better (Andersen et al. 2012). This further emphasises the link between pro-social motivation and performance.

4. Discussion: The HSL as a constellation

The main contribution of the HSL to other prevailing service logics in current service research and practice is demonstrating the need for an employee discourse on motivation in the value promises context, and depicting the wide range a factors that in practice impact motivation. To note the employee discourse is relevant when considering the role of autonomy and authenticity has on employee motivation in current work-life, and employee motivation as instrumental in regard to a firm's ability to live up to its value promises in customer interaction. A comprehensive understanding of the many factors that impact motivation is best gained by depicted these as elements in constellations. The interrelatedness of the HSL principles, and how these if/when active in a system reinforce each other, is illustrated by portraying them as elements in a constellation.

Portraying the HSL as a constellation elucidates the leverage effects of its principles, and advances a higher order *systemic* understanding and how these, taken to practice, may foster employee motivation. By systemic is here referred to systems thinking, as applied to explore human systems, which implies an emphasis on the human aspect of systems and exploring human activities "as if people were human" (Flood, 2001: 137, in Reason and Bradbury).

A constellation analyses reveals that with any change in the system there is a simultaneous and reciprocal change in all its elements. It is vital to note that constellations should always be done with a positive solution in mind (Birkenkrahe, 2009). The "solution" in this context is to advance the understanding of employee motivation linked to value promises and the promise activities, as depicted by the TPF.

4.1 The HSL constellation

Portraying the HSL-principles as a constellation illustrates how the principles coincide. The six HSL principles are portrayed in the figure and related to each other as elements in a constellation as a non-linear cause-effect-cause etc system, departing from a root-cause and five elements. As all the elements reciprocally interact with each other and with the core-cause, the minimum number of systemic relations possible to examine is 36. A detailed elaboration of all possible relations is not done here. The aim is rather to illustrate the leverage effect the HSL principles, and their relations to each other.
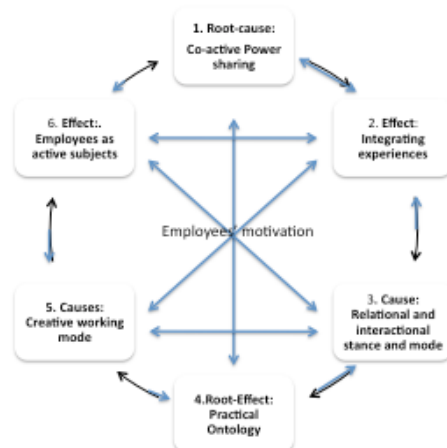
The HSL -principle constellation departs from 1) co-active power sharing as the root causes, which is related to 2) integrating experiences as the effect, which is related to 3) a relational and interactional stance and mode as the causes, which is related to 4) the practical ontology as the root-effect, which is related to 5) the creative working mode as the cause which is related to 6) the inclusion of employees as active subjects in value practices. These principles can be related to each other as portrayed in the figure, and altogether these form 36 relations that can be examined separately.

When examining the HSL principles portrayed as elements in this constellation, the logic is that the more of power sharing there is the more probably it is that ideas and experience will be integrated, which implies that value promises may reach common consciousness among actors inside the firm. Further, the more relational and interactional the mode and stance the more practical the prevailing ontology may be, which can lead to a higher creative working mode, which eventually will/might lead to the inclusion of employees as active subjects in value practices. This constellation can be analysed in regard of any dyad or triad or more, as many as one can comprehend. However, this is to be seen as a circular image in which the events or issues emerge in different places simultaneously and lead to results, also in various places, as emphasized by Horn & Brick (2009:15). This is indicated by the two-headed and crossover arrows.

Concluding remarks

The HSL introduces a framework, which emphasises the "people to people factor" and the human aspects of service, linking value promises to performance from an employee perspective. The framework is ideal to allow for the development of new conceptualizations that embrace an interdisciplinary perspective. It draws upon an employee inclusive stance, and a practical ontology, which discountenances the polarization of workers vs. managers. It adopts an approach that sees employees as equally knowledgeable, in particular in regard to value practices, and notes their ownership to these and how this is linked to motivation. It emphasises allowing decisions to be guided by practices, and notes that enabling imparts sharing power with those who possess knowledge and competencies of specific activities, such as customer interactions and helping behaviours in service encounters.

It is argued that this framework, which assumes a multi-perspective and systemic approach to the intricate value processes, may substantially contribute to advancing the understanding of *integration and management of resources* as one aspect of dialectic social reality construction. By taking a practical, humanistic and systemic view on employees' motivation, and identifying factors that employees experience as motivating/de-motivating, the conceptual development is empirically grounded, which widens its scope, opens up new research avenues, and advances its applicability. Further, the suggested framework not only redirects the TPF but also brings together several theories, which have not been previously jointly connected to service research. This advances a more holistic understanding of service employees' motivation.

This paper, as most papers, has certain limitations. The purpose of this paper is to introduce a framework that represents a novel discourse within service research, the employees. The paper argues for the need and advantages of such a framework, and illustrates the central aspect of it. It has to be noted that the framework's conceptual development is still in its preliminary phase and is, therefore, suggestive. The many factors that underpin the HSL framework as presented in this paper all need further investigation and empirical grounding. It is hoped that this paper will inspire other service researchers to contribute to this emerging HSL.

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APPENDIX 1

De-motivating factors identified and categorized in the HSL-study

De-motivating factors			
Variables > (Nature of issues) Levels (scope and location of issues)	A. Content Marketing ideas: Strategies, concepts and value promises.	B. Process Management.	C. Context Social, psychological and customer interaction related factors.
1. Organization	(d-M)1.a.1 Too abstract marketing ideas. 1.a.2. Employees unconscious of value promises. 1.a.3. Employees not able to serve customers well. *These are about lack of connection between content and practices in the firm and a shared, common sense that promises should be kept.*	(d-M) 1.b.1 Us vs. them: Objectifying mode and stance of management. 1.b.2 Informing in objectifying mode. *These are about neglecting humane aspects in work-life, and not treating employees as subjects in their work.*	(d-M) 1.c.1. Confusion (about code of conduct of business). 1.c.2. Objectifying and Paternalistic stance towards employees. 1.c.3 Management resisting change (in regard to stance and mode of managing). 1.c.4 Disintegrated logical levels. *These are about unconsciousness of systemic workings and social and psychological aspects of work life.*
	1.abc Dysfunctional Communication (2.a.1, 2.b.2, 2.c.2)		
2. Group	2.a.1 Fuzzy, impossible promises d-M. 2.a.2 Not enough information about marketing ideas & value promises. 2.a.3. Information aspect of communication (too much/too little). *These are about not contextualized promises. Ideas imposed. Too little or too much information.*	2.b.1. If/when a lack of agency to participate is present. 2.b.2 Negative/oppressive mode of communication. *When/if communication occurs "from above" and when/if the mode of management is excluding. When/if service employees are bypassed and objectified. ("Message to object" style communication).*	2.c.1.Gaps in Maps of reality. 2.c.2 Negative tone of communication. 2.c.3 Power struggles and negative energies. 2.c.4 Too little internal service mindedness. 2.c.5 The "moomin valley syndrome". *Is about administrative and social structures that separate and foster divergent views on reality, negative tone in communication and lack of social competence and bad manners.*
3. Individual	3.a.1 Meaningless ideas. 3.a.2 Value promises not anchored in individual work context. *Is about personal lack of feeling of connection to content (marketing ideas & value promises).*	3.b.1 No space for individual valuation of value promises. *Is about not being included in own work, as to being able to decide if a promise is doable or not (can I personally keep this value*	3.c.1 Indifference and resignation. *Is about a feeling of "I cannot influence" and "what I do and say does not matter anyway" so I just work here.*

		promise?).	

Motivating factors identified and categorized in the HSL-study

Motivating factors			
Variables > Nature of issues Levels (scope & location)	A. Content: What Marketing ideas: strategies, concepts and value promises.	B. Process: How, mode Management of value practices.	C. Context: How, stance Social and psychological factors: The stance applied towards employees.
1. Organization	(M) 1.a.1 Authentic truthful promises. When ideas emerge from practices: Marketing ideas and value promises grounded in practices as the focal message of promises in general. *If/when sayings are congruent with doings, and communication (towards customers) about promises is truthful (on a general level).*	(M) 1.b.1 Agency to participate. 1.b.2. Having a forum for exchanging ideas. 1.b.3 A functioning "service chain". *When employees have the mandate to be active parts of the different aspects of value practices, also giving and enabling. When they are considered as equals.*	(M) 1.c.1 A unified congruent "We" and reciprocal enabling. 1.c. 2 Good Atmosphere & and adult behavior. 1.c.2 Internal service-mindedness, servility, respect and kindness. *Having a shared view about what needs to occur in customer work that is grounded in service employees´ practices. If/when adopting a positive stance in encountering people. Genuinely respecting and appreciating that people are competent. Treating people as adults.*
2. Group	2.a.1 That value promises reflect local practices (team level) as the focal issue of specific promises and that promises are realistic. *Is about making value promises that genuinely reflect the different department-, group- and team level practices and competences.*	2.b.1 Co-active working mode in teams 2.b.2. Valuation of promises and marketing ideas and reciprocal enabling. *Inclusive working mode within teams. Marketing ideas and value promises reflecting also what specific departments/teams/groups are good at.*	2.c.1. Positive tone of communication. *If/when firm internal communication occurs in a positive respectful manner* 2.c.2 Practice power. 2.c.3 Need to serve customers *Employees mobilize their "practice power" to serve customers well.*
3. Individual	3.a.1 Doable, authentic promises, congruent with individual competences. *Is about promises reflecting also individual competences*	3.b.1 Reciprocal enabling on individual level. *Is about continuously keeping individuals included. A "we support each other, regardless of position" attitude. Reciprocal enabling on micro level.*	3.c.1 Feeling valued and supported. 3.c.2 Consciousness and personal work-related faith and inspiration. *Is about a sense of belonging and finding the personal meaning in work.*

APPENDIX 2

Questions asked the texts in IM articles:

Q1: How does the text discuss IM/IB, as a method, program, perspective, metaphor?

Q2: How does the text discuss the purpose/function of IM?

Q3: Why is IM needed?

Q4: Who is responsible for IM?

Q5: How does the text discuss employees in general?

Q6: What does the text say about employee motivation?

Q7: What position(s) in value practices does the IM discourse ascribe service employees?

Q8: How are employees suggested to be treated/managed, what should be done to/with/ together with them?

Q9: What in relation to employees/about employees is excluded from the text?

Q10: Are employees addressed as subjects or objects?