

CO-CREATING THE SOCIAL CHOREOGRAPHY OF AN EVENT

Ethnographic account on voluntary workers' knowledge

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ABSTRACT

Voluntary workers are an important group in producing the service experience of many events. The production of events and the role of different actors in them, can be explained by the concept of co-creation, originating from the marketing literature (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Peñaloza & Mish 2011). In this paper, I view events as co-created arenas where volunteers practice their knowledge. I discuss the use of ethnographic enquiry as a way of studying this knowledge. Specifically the time and space related knowledge of volunteers are under investigation. These are used when building the event's social choreography, which refers to the physical environment as well as the social and political systems that encourage people to perform in certain ways (Parviainen, 2011).

To illuminate the volunteer knowledge, autoethnographic data gathered in a Finnish rock festival is used. It is collected by volunteering in the festival for two years in a row. The observational data highlights the intuitive and experimental ways of knowing by concentrating on the researcher's experience as a member of a social group, in this case a voluntary worker in the event. The preliminary results describe the different ways of organizing the movement in the event co-creation. The main focus is on how the knowledge of volunteers modifies the movement and how it influences the event's social choreography. To conclude the paper, the nature of knowledge gained through the ethnographic method and how it could be used in the field event management in the future are discussed.

Keywords: *ethnography, co-creation, social choreography, voluntary work, knowledge, events*