István Tózsa – Anita Zátori (eds.)

Metropolitan Tourism Experience Development

Selected studies from the Tourism Network Workshop of the RSA, held in Budapest 2015

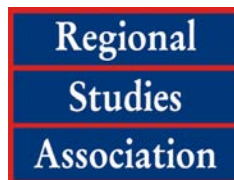Source of original photo: Zoltán Máthé / MTI

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Tourism Network Workshop
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Regional Studies Association,
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Published by
the Department of Economic Geography and Futures Study

2015

Introduction

On January 28-30, 2015 Corvinus University of Budapest hosted the latest workshop of the Regional Studies Association's Tourism Research Network. The event had been held previously in Izmir, Aalborg, Warsaw, Östersund, Antalya, Leeds and Vila-seca Catalonia.

The aim of the RSA research network is to examine tourism diversity from the perspective of regional development in order to identify current challenges and opportunities in a systematic manner, and hence provide the basis for a more well-informed integration of tourism in regional development strategies and move beyond political short-termism and buzzword fascination. In the frame of the network a series of workshops have been organised from various topics of destination management till rural tourism.

In the age of budget airlines and increased mobility, the importance for metropolitan areas of positioning themselves in an increasingly competitive environment where the boundaries between international tourism and local leisure are becoming blurred, has increased. Metropolitan areas are highly preferred targets for tourists owing to their diversified and concentrated attractions particularly cultural heritages and up-to-date events as well as to their business environment. They are the focal points of tourism in a lot of regions and countries. Beside the questions of local management and sustainability, the regional implications (not only for the neighbouring regions) are of crucial importance from the aspect of development opportunities and strategies. Another aspect of metropolitan tourism is connected to the local population, and the great variety of institutions and businesses linked to tourism system. The Budapest workshop aimed to discuss and exchange ideas, experiences, and research results about metropolitan tourism development and management. The core areas and their regions, as well as the relations and connections with regions outside of metropolitan areas as objects for destination development and management, were relevant for the workshop.

Ádám Ruszinkó, the deputy state secretary responsible for Hungarian tourism honoured the workshop to give an opening welcome speech. The keynote speeches explored various topics of metropolitan tourism, including network-based planning of sustainable metropolitan tourism by Bálint Kádár, regional development and policy issues of metropolitan tourism by Attila Korompai, and ethnic tourism and product development in metropolitan frames by Melanie Kay Smith. Thirty paper presentations covering different aspects of tourism and regional development enriched the two and a half day long programme. The paper presentations' subjects covered a wide range of topics, from the philosophy of metropolitan culture through mega sport events to the newest trends of metropolitan tourism, such as sharing economy. The workshop was

structured in nine chaired sessions. Session *'Emerging consumer trends of urban tourism'* discussed topics such as responsible tourism product development in Italy by Melissa Moralli and Chiara Rabbiosi, shared, co-created and customized services' effect on tourist experience by Anita Zátori, and staged authenticity of a touristic space by Andrea Hubner.

Another session entitled *'Tourism development in metropolitan areas'* included presentations about tourism product development and marketing of Sofia from business perception by Vasil Marinov, Elka Dogramadjieva, Mariana Assenova, Elena Petkova and Baiko Baikov, designing a transregional destination in Hungary - the Danube Limes in Hungary: a concept to integrate metropolitan, urban and rural areas by Tamás Balogh and Árpád Karsai, and metropolitan wellbeing and technology – opportunities in the Balkan region by Attila Horváth.

'The impact of tourism in urban spaces' session discussed topics such as urban culture by Matti Itkonen, urban resilience and tourism development in East Germany by Younkyoung Sung, touristification and the tourist trap: case study of Prague by Veronika Dumbrovská.

'Festivals and gastronomy' are important elements of urban and metropolitan tourism. In the session food markets: cases of Barcelona and Madrid by Montserrat Crespi Vallbona and Marta Domínguez Pérez, the case of Arguvan Türkü Festival by Gülşah Akkuş and Ülkü Akkuş, and urban gastronomic festivals as success factors by Darko Dimitrovski were analysed.

The second day workshop started with NGO and business case studies by Hungarian Tourism Ltd., while László Puczkó spoke about re-launching of the Liget project (the current museum mega project of Budapest).

The session *'Destination image, branding and shared economy'* consisted of paper presentations of social media and of image creation for destinations, the case of Barcelona by Lluís Garay Tamajón and Gemma Cànoves Valiente, the role of the share economy for the future of metropolitan tourism by Natalie Stors and Andreas Kagermeier, and re-branding of the countryside Lenita Nieminen and Arja Lemmetyinen.

Another session put only Budapest into focus. Potentials of landscape based metropolitan tourism were analysed by Ágnes Sallay, Zs. Mikházi, S. Jombach, K. Filepné Kovács and I. Valánszki, the image of Budapest as the best river cruise port city by Melinda Jászberényi and Katalin Ásványi, and spa and hotel on the periphery of a metropolis: a case study of Aquaworld Resort Budapest by Attila Csaba Kondor, Tünde Szabó and Szabolcs Juhász.

The session *'Sport and leisure tourism development in metropolitan areas'* looked at sport mega events in metropolitan areas by Marek W. Kozak, new

aboriginal partners in resort development: whistler and Winter Olympic Games legacies by Alison M. Gill, and tourism leisure shopping the case of the Rimini area by Chiara Rabbiosi.

The *'Regional economy, development and wellbeing'* session focused on the differences in wellbeing attitudes between the residents of urban and rural regions in Balkan countries by Kornélia Kiss, Ivett Sziva, Melanie K. Smith, László Puczkó and Gábor Michalkó., development of regional economy by Ari Karppinen, Mervi Luonila and Arja Lemmetyinen, and the role of regional policy in the development of spas in Észak-Alföld region by Ferenc Mező and Zoltán Dorogi.

The topic of *'Safety and technological development in tourism'* included safety audit process of tourism in European local authorities – EFUS project by Janez Mekinc, Rob Mawby and Mark Burton-Page, the impacts of the technological environment on the travel habits of Hungarian travellers by Judit Grotte, and regional distribution of Hungarian tourism by István Tózsa.

Lastly, the *'Role of perception and interpretation in tourism'* session contained the place of modern interpretation in heritage attractions, through the case study of virtual museum of Herculaneum by Dorottya Bodnár, tourists' perception of the metropolitan Cluj-Napoca, Romania by Lujza T. Cozma, and creative side of Budapest tourism offers by Csilla Petykó and Adrienn Nagy

The two and a half days long event ended at Friday noon with a brainstorming session, in frames of what three emerging workshop topics were discusses, led by Melanie K. Smith, Daniela Carl and Bálint Kádár. The aim of the evening programs e.g. river cruise sightseeing tour, gala dinner, besides recreation, was to form and strengthen the professional and social relations among the research network's old and new members. Altogether almost fifty tourism experts, academics and practitioners attended the workshop. The Budapest event hosted attendants coming from 13 countries from Turkey to Canada. The following workshop of the RSA Tourism Network is due on 10-12th February, 2016 in Rimini, Italy, with a focus on heritage sites 'Beyond the Great Beauty: Rescaling Heritage and Tourism.'

the Editors

Contents

Urban culture and wellbeing

The role of ICT in tourism

Share Economy in Metropolitan Tourism.
The role of authenticity-seeking

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'What's Mine is Yours' – the popular book by Rachel Botsmann and Roo Rogers has become the slogan of the 'share economy', which has exploded in recent years. In tourism, the share economy movement mainly affects the accommodation sector. In addition to offering free or affordable overnight stays, share websites such as couchsurfing.org and airbnb.com also claim that visitors to urban areas will enjoy a new, authentic experience. The leading research questions like: 'Who participates in the tourism share economy?' 'What motivations and expectations lie behind the offer and use of share accommodation?' 'What experiences have been gained?' will be explored on the basis of various quantitative and qualitative empirical surveys in two urban settings: Berlin, as an example of an international metropolitan tourism destination, and Trier, as a case study for a smaller city with a greater focus on the domestic market and a target group oriented mainly towards traditional cultural tourism. The aim of this article is not only to help discover what collaborative consumption in tourism means to 'explorer tourists' in search of authentic experiences off the beaten track and outside the tourist bubble, but also to analyse, more globally, the role that sharing in tourism is likely to play in the future and the question raised by Trivett et al. (2013) as to its impact on the traditional tourism industry and the future of travel.

Share economy and the role it plays in urban tourism

Since the book by Rachel Botsman and Roo Rogers '*What's Mine is Yours – How Collaborative Consumption is Changing the Way we Live*' became a best seller, the 'share economy' has become a buzzword in current debates in society. Originally regarded as a result of economic decline following the financial crisis in 2008/09 (cf. Heinrichs & Grunenberg 2012, p. 2), today's connotation has shifted so that the term is used in many contexts and even as a vehicle for revisiting existing lines of discourse. These range from discussions about collaborative consumption supporting environmentally friendly practices – in line with

the sustainability paradigm – to criticism of capitalist consumption patterns and self-expression as a post-materialistic lifestyle.

Different factors drive this development. Above all, the Internet and its function as an enabler and facilitator of the matchmaking process between the demand and supply side of goods and services represents the heart of the share economy (cf. Linne 2014, p. 9). For a long time, high transaction costs and a lack of critical mass inhibited the resale and reuse of second-hand products or products that are used only temporarily. Constant access to the mobile Internet, together with the emergence of large trading platforms such as eBay, provided the basic conditions required to make the share economy and its sub-branches accessible and manageable for large parts of society (cf. Behrendt, Blättel-Mink & Clausen 2011). This boom was also supported by technological transformations, also in participants' value system – particularly in trend-sensitive and trend-responsive environments. Changing values towards post-materialistic positions play a similar role here as people's increasing awareness of sustainability issues.

The blurring of a previously clear differentiation between the producer and the consumer and the resulting hybrid form of the 'prosumer' (Surhone, Timpledon & Marseken 2010) was not a new phenomenon of the share economy. This has been discussed in depth, particularly in tourism, mainly with regard to the role played by consumers in co-creating the tourist experience (cf. Günther 2006, p. 57, Kagermeier 2011, p. 57f.; Pappalepore, Maitland & Smith 2013, p. 234f.). Along this line, Nora Stampfl asserts: "Sharing is nothing new, it has always been part of human co-existence' (2014, p. 13; author's translation).

The results of our online survey (n = 271), which will be presented in the course of this article, reveal a similar position. Different variations of traditional offline sharing exist that are widely distributed and common, as the following examples illustrate: more than 80 per cent of the respondents stated that they had bought or sold something at a flea market. Three-quarters have hired a car or a bicycle; 75 per cent have also benefited from social or charitable offers or have provided second-hand goods to others. Finally, two-thirds have more than once used other people's knowledge and skills or offered their own knowledge and skills, for example for private tuition, to help someone move, or in repair cafés.

The same applies for tourism, where these analogue forms of practices interpreted recently as sharing are well known (cf. Hartmann & Pasel, 2014, p. 90f.). It is common for people to visit friends and relatives (VFR), usually in urban tourism. The VFR segment accounted for some 26.2 million overnight stays in Berlin in 2011, exceeding the number of overnight stays in commercial accommodation (22.4 million nights) (cf. Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH 2012, p. 6). In other words, every Berlin resident put up friends, acquaintances and relatives for approximately 7.5 nights that year. Against this background, the heated debate about the anticipated negative impacts of Airbnb, Wimdu and

9flats on Berlin's housing market or the accommodation business needs to be qualified. The number of Airbnb listings in Berlin ranges from 6,000 to 20,000 rooms or apartments (cf. Bleuel 2014, Halser 2014, Vasagar 2014, Ziegert & Czycholl 2014). Starting from a more detailed analysis conducted by the magazine Capital (cf. Laube et al. 2014, p. 85), which identified some 6,000 apartments in the heart of Berlin, it is realistic to assume that Airbnb has around 10,000 listings in the whole of Berlin (cf. Kutschbach 2014). This also corresponds to the latest figures published on the Airbnb website, which state that 245,000 guests stayed with 9,400 Airbnb hosts in 2013 (cf. Stüber 2014). Given the 50 million or so overnight stays in Berlin, the roughly 10,000 rooms and apartments offered by Airbnb appear to constitute a bearable number, particularly compared to the almost 140,000 commercial rooms (Statistisches Bundesamt 2014 b) and all of the guest rooms, couches and airbeds offered by Berlin's almost 2 million households (Statistisches Bundesamt 2014 b) to occasionally visiting friends, acquaintances or relatives.

The prevalence of traditionally existing and well-established examples of offline collaborative consumption illustrates that this phenomenon is an evolution of existing trends in society, rather than a cultural turnaround (cf. Heinrichs & Grunenberg 2012, p. 4). In this paper, the share economy is therefore not considered to be a fundamental paradigm shift. Instead, it is understood as an evolutionary development of existing societal and behavioural transformations, which is certainly being accelerated by the aforementioned multi-dimensional shift in values. Due to the leading role played by the Internet and the wide range of social media options available, these transformations have gained a previously unknown dynamism with unforeseeable ultimate consequences.

Considering the central driving forces behind share offers in tourism, it can be assumed that the search for authentic visitor experiences (cf. Gilmore & Pine 2007) may play a major role. For a long time, visitors have been yearning for off-the-beaten-track experiences outside the confined lines of the tourist bubble, particularly in city tourism (cf. Judd 1999, Freytag 2008, Maitland & Newman 2009, Stors & Kagermeier 2013, Stors 2014). Although traditional backpackers' motivations and interests may differ to those of modern-day couchsurfers (cf. Schulz 2013, p. 30ff), the general roots of this quest for authentic experiences must surely lie in the milieu of the explorer and drifter, identified by Cohen in 1972.

The present article aims to provide an empirically based contribution to the current debate on the role of the share economy in tourism. The article focuses on questions regarding the socio-demographic and motivational structure of participants in online share platforms as well as the experiences of both the demand and supply side of collaborative consumption.

Methodology

In order to explore the aforementioned research questions, a number of qualitative and quantitative research methods have been combined, which will be presented below.

Online survey gives an impression of share economy participants

A digital questionnaire was created to gain an initial impression of the socio-demographic and motivational structure of share economy participants. The main objective of this online survey was to identify people's reasons for participating in the share economy. In addition, the barriers and constraints preventing potential *prosumers* from participating in the share economy were addressed (cf. Kagermeier, Köller & Stors 2015). It was decided to use an online questionnaire as a data generation tool for several reasons. One reason why this tool was considered to be ideal for share economy users is their high Internet affinity. It also enabled the large group of non-users and those who have already left share platforms to be addressed in addition to share users.

In order to collect this data, convenience sampling was conducted involving students, employees and mainly young Tourism graduates from a medium-sized German university. Sampling resulted in 271 completed questionnaires. Due to this specific selection, it cannot be claimed that the results are statistically representative of the German population as a whole. As Heinrichs & Grunenberg (2012, p. 13) illustrated, there is a high positive correlation between the age, level of education and income of share economy participants. By selectively addressing mainly young academics, our sample contains a disproportionately large number of "social-innovative collaborative consumers' ("Sozialinnovative KoKonsumenten') (cf. Heinrichs & Grunenberg, 2012, p. 14; similar to Nielsen 2014, p. 9) in our sample. Compared to the German population, one quarter can be assigned to this group (cf. ibid.). Regarding the awareness of Internet platforms that offer overnight stays, the bias becomes even more striking. According to a representative GfK survey, two-thirds of the population are unaware of offers such as Airbnb (cf. Marquart & Braun, 2014), whereas in our sample, only 1.5 per cent did not know of such possibilities. However, focusing on such a target group enabled more precise statements to be made on their motivations for taking part in share activities, which was the main reason for conducting the study. Two additional methods were applied to explore the initial results generated by the online survey in greater depth.

Qualitative interviews with Airbnb hosts in Berlin and Trier

A specific segment of the large number of collaborative consumption offers was identified and analysed in order to gain a clear picture of share economy participants. The authors decided to focus on the tourist way relevant segment of pri-

vate accommodation within the share economy that gained considerable media interest in recent years. Since there are even different suppliers in this small section of the share economy, our analysis focused solely on the market leader Airbnb.

Since there were relatively few Airbnb listings in Trier during the research period in July 2014, it was possible to conduct a full survey. All Airbnb hosts in Trier were contacted via the online platform. The 28 hosts were asked if they would participate in a personal interview; 9 agreed. Since there were considerably more Airbnb hosts in Berlin – namely more than 10,000 – it was not possible to contact all of them. Instead, the number of requests was based on the number of listings in Berlin's districts. The most important districts were those with more than 1,000 listings, which in July 2014 were Prenzlauer Berg, Friedrichshain, Kreuzberg, Neukölln and Berlin Mitte. A total of 46 requests for interview were sent in these areas, resulting in 13 interviews. In the districts with between 250 and 1,000 listings (Schöneberg, Wilmersdorf, Charlottenburg, Moabit and Wedding), at least one interview was conducted per district. Fewer Airbnb hosts were contacted and interviewed in other districts. After a one-week interview pretest in March 2014, interviews were conducted over the space of four weeks in August and September 2014. Despite the relatively short data collection period, approximately 100 requests were sent to Airbnb hosts, resulting in 25 personal interviews. This extensive data provides a solid basis for conducting an in-depth analysis of motivational structures and interaction between Airbnb hosts and guests.

Quantitative questionnaire to gain a better understanding of the demand side

In order to enhance the results of share economy participants in general, a third method was applied. A quantitative questionnaire in German and English was distributed to a number of Airbnb hosts in order to collect detailed information about the socio-demographic and motivational structure of Airbnb guests in Berlin. The aim was to gain a deeper understanding of their specific motivations and experiences in a certain destination. It would also have been desirable to conduct extensive qualitative interviews with this group of users, but they are difficult to approach and it would have been very time-consuming. For the present article, 61 questionnaires completed by respondents from Berlin and Trier were analysed.

Characteristics of share economy participants

The aim of this section is to characterise users of share economy offers – particularly those related to tourism in general and touristic accommodation in particular.

In our sample, the distribution of travel experiences on the Internet (reading and writing) is the most common touristic practice with regard to collaborative consumption (cf. Fig. 1). Other practices dedicated to the share economy are less well known. In particular, free guided tours with local inhabitants of a city, such as those belonging to the Global Greeter Network (cf. Stors & Klein 2014), are the least well-known practice; only one in nine have been on such a tour. However, almost one in four respondents can imagine participating in such a tour in the future. With regard to touristic overnight stays, nearly one third of all respondents have booked a room or an apartment via platforms such as Airbnb at least once, and 8 per cent offer accommodation.
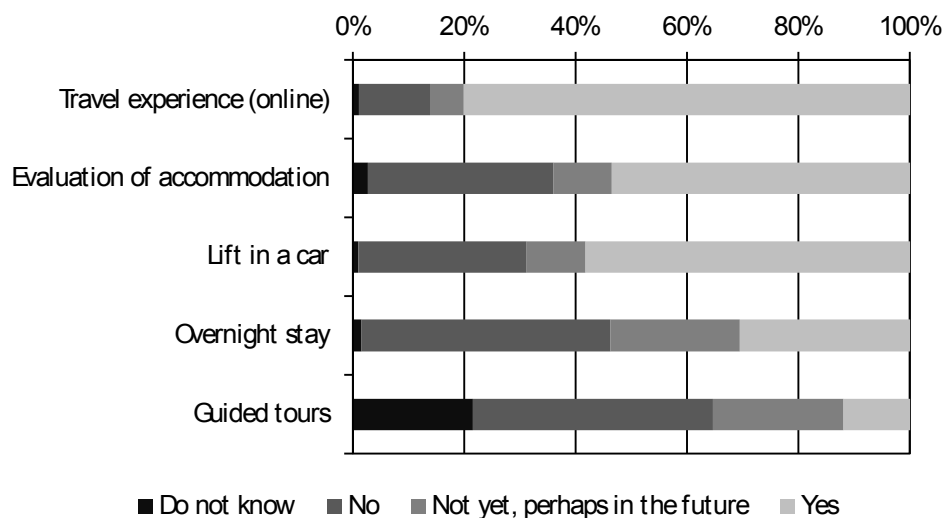

Figure 1: Experiences with touristic share economy offers (N = 271)

Figure 2 also shows that willingness to participate in the share economy is related to the respondents' age. The 25 to 30 age group, which has already experienced collaborative consumption, has the highest proportion of people willing to participate in the share economy (40 per cent). Those least interested are the 50+ age group. Nonetheless, in general the sample demonstrates a high affinity towards sharing practices compared to the German population. The GfK representative survey yielded 12.5 per cent as the highest value within different age groups using sharing overnight stays and 4.7 per cent as the lowest (cf. Marquart & Braun 2014).

These findings regarding the respondents' age structure are similar to those generated by the quantitative questionnaires distributed to Airbnb hosts and statements hosts made about their guests:

> 'I would say it is a clientele that is well educated. And in general, it is a clientele that is open to learn new things, unlike those you get to know in hotels. (...) There are often young people who come. Mostly, there are people between 23 up to 30 years, something like that. But I also had a woman older than 70' (Host_Berlin_21).

A comparatively young age structure was also identified. However, the main group of hosts is the 30 to 50 age group. This group also has experience in other segments of the share economy, such as online and offline swapping, selling and hiring goods and services; they belong to a medium income group.
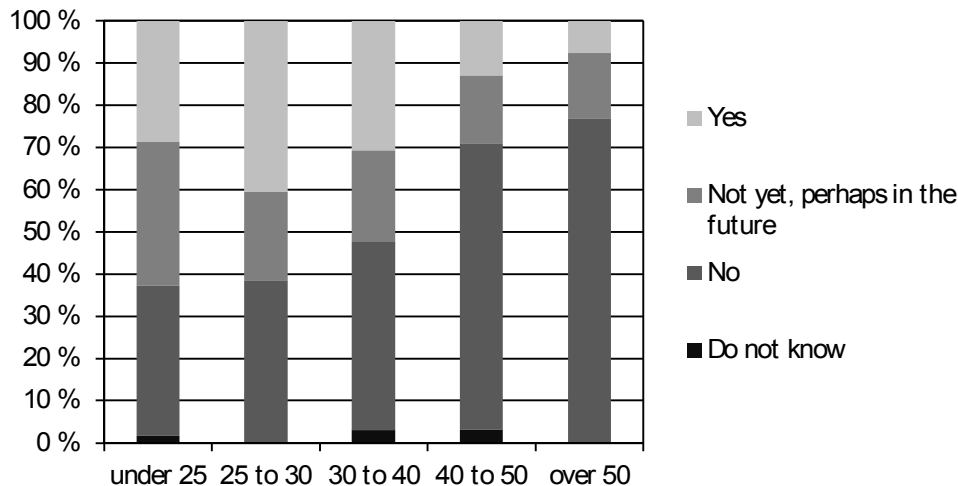

Figure 2: Experiences with accommodation sharing
(Airbnb and the like) (N = 271)

In order to conduct a more detailed characterisation of the respondents beyond mere socio-demographic figures, we created a profile of their personalities using a five-point Likert-scale (cf. Fig. 3).

Besides age, which is illustrated above, there are no significant differences within the sample, for example between students and professionals. Also with regard to the use of share offers, there are only marginal differentiations in personality between users and non-users. One reason for this is likely to be that the sample was drawn from a share affine population, which also means that these results cannot be translated easily to the German population. However, it should be noted that share economy participants are slightly more risk tolerant and open to new things than their non-user counterparts.

The personality profile above includes the results of the online survey as well as the questionnaires distributed to Airbnb hosts. However, no striking distinctions can be made between the two groups. We were also unable to identify any major differences between people who used couchsurfing (for more details, see: Hartmann & Pasel 2014, p. 93et seq.) and Airbnb clients.

One comparatively strong feature that most share economy users have in common is their openness to new things and their sociable personality. This is also mirrored in the descriptions Airbnb hosts gave of their guests. The hosts describe their guests as open, sociable and communicative.
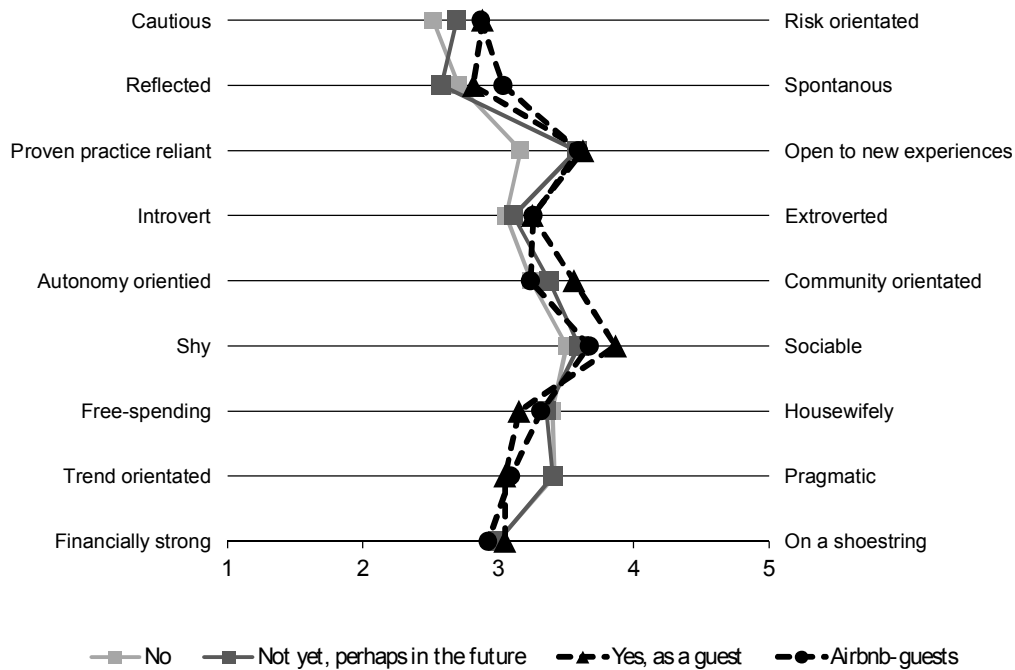
Figure 3: Personality profile of respondents by level of participation
(N = 271 in online survey and N = 61 in questionnaire distributed to Airbnb hosts)

In contrast, financial motivations are less relevant than expected. Actual and potential users of share accommodation are no more economical or thrifty than non-users. At least, their reason for participating in touristic share offers is not that they are unable to afford anything else. Their internal driving force must be another kind of motivation.

Driving forces behind participation in the share economy – a guest perspective

All of the methodological approaches taken are designed to enable socio-demographic data to be collected about the respondents and their personality and to gain a deeper insight into the motivational dimensions for participating in the share economy.

Figure 4 illustrates various potential motives for using private share accommodation and how the respondents evaluated them. As expected, the economic dimension within the motivational structure is of relevance ("saving money', "visiting destinations that would otherwise be too expensive'), but it is not the only driving force. Similar results can also be found in Liedtke's study, which focuses solely on couchsurfing: in this study, too, financial aspects were less important than other motives, such as meeting new people, cultural exchange and establishing new friendships (cf. Liedtke 2011, p. 34f). Visitors' expectations related to specific experiences at the destination – such as having direct contact to the local population, gaining insider information from the host about bars,

restaurants or the neighbourhood in general, and experiencing the destination from the locals' perspective – are at least as relevant as the monetary factor. These are the most important motives in the leisure segment in particular. More general aspects, such as 'expanding the horizon' or 'trying new things' together with recommendations from friends are also relevant, but they are much less important than those dedicated to the on-site visitor experience.
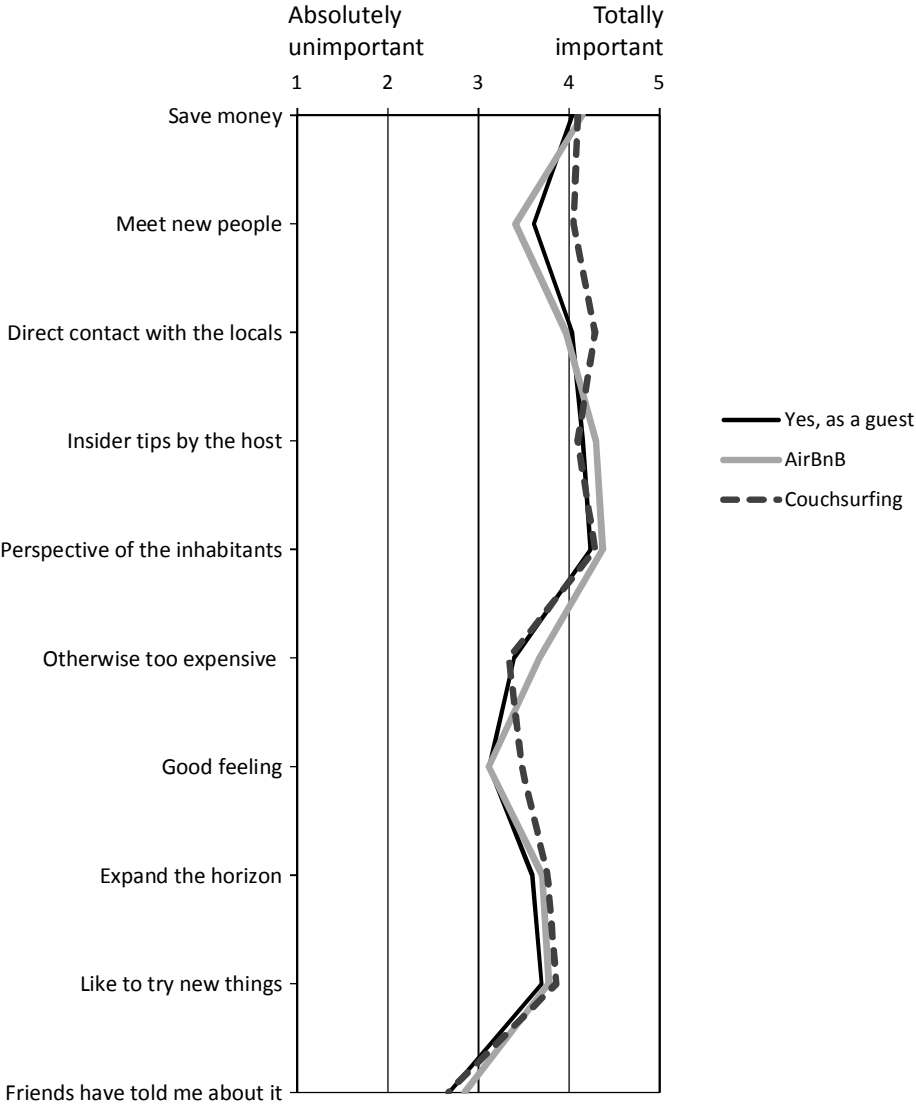
Figure 4: Motivations of share accommodation users
– differentiated by Airbnb and Couchsurfing users (N = 112 in online survey)

In a nutshell, the online survey revealed two leading motivational dimensions that were supported by the quantitative questionnaires distributed and the qualitative interviews conducted with Airbnb hosts.

Comparing the three lines in Figure 4, it becomes obvious that no significant differences exist between Airbnb users and couch surfers. The only noticeable deviation can be found in the social contact items "meeting new people' and 'direct contact with the local population.' Couch surfers seem to attach greater im-

portance to these very specific social objectives, while differences decrease in the next item – gaining insider tips from the host.

A final finding that is worthy of note is the disproportionately high relevance the financial motive has in the business traveller segment compared to leisure travellers; for the latter, it is just one motive of many.

Monetary dimension

The role of financial motivation became a key aspect in the analysis of the quantitative offline questionnaires. This survey revealed that one-third of leisure guests and half of business tourists booked private accommodation via platforms such as Airbnb to save money. Leisure visitors also stated that these share platforms enable them to visit destinations that they would otherwise be unable to afford.

Interaction between hosts and guests as an important element of the visitor experience

Besides the financial aspect, personal interaction between hosts and guests plays a major role for the majority of the tourists interviewed. In particular, visitors from the leisure segment consider it very important to get to know new people (significant deviation to business travellers) and to receive personal information and recommendations from the host (also a significant deviation). This element is also reproduced in the contact intensity between hosts and guests. Based on 58 questionnaires completed, one in seven stated that contact was limited to formalities, e.g. receiving keys or brief information about the room/apartment. In some cases, a third party dealt with these formalities (cf. Fig. 5). In one in four cases, the host had also prepared written information for the guest. Almost half of the visitors said that the host provided personal information about the city; another 12 per cent undertook activities with the host. In all of the latter cases, personal information and joint activities were supplemented by written information about the city.
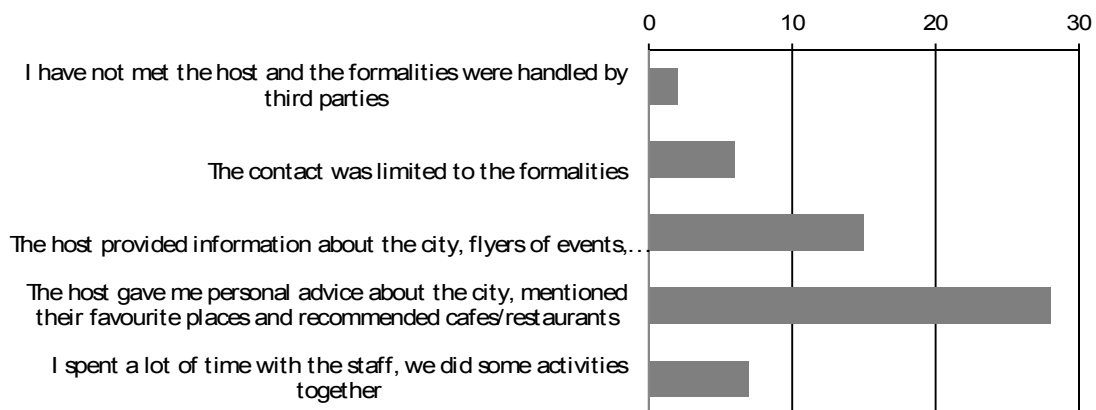

Figure 5: Interaction between hosts and guests
(N = 58 in an offline questionnaire distributed to Airbnb hosts)

Qualitative interviews with the hosts confirmed that most had personal contact with their guests: "Up to now, all new guests have been welcomed by me or my family' (Host_Trier-1, author's translation). These personal contacts often include brief conversations about the city, the host's favourite sights or insider tips.

'I show them the room, have a chat and hand over the keys. I give them tips about the city, things that you can do in the neighbourhood' (author's translation) (Host_Trier_9).

'I told him about the sights that I think are interesting. I told him about the wall memorial. (...) That's something that I like to show people (Host_Berlin_21).'

In addition to these two general motivational dimensions, a final specific aspect was identified in the course of the on-site personal interviews.

Individuality of the facilities and design of the accommodation

The qualitative interviews conducted with the hosts revealed an element that was underestimated in the previous quantitative surveys. Due to their relatively intense guest contact, Airbnb hosts were able to observe that visitors greatly appreciate the ambience of private accommodation: "They always say (…) the pictures [on the Internet] are very attractive and outstanding. And they like to have something more individual, not a hotel' (author's translation) (Host_Trier-4). As a result, not only direct contact with the host and the creation of an inside perspective contribute to the specific visitor experience of Airbnb and the like, but also the design and amenities of the accommodation.

'And those who participate in something like that [Airbnb], and say, I don't want to go to a hotel, don't head for a standardised 70s-style flat, but prefers the charm of an old Berlin building. (...) But I think – for a relatively low price – they want this feeling: that's Berlin. A hostel, in contrast, is of course completely interchangeable; it always looks the same everywhere. I think that's the first thing they want' (author's translation) (GG_Berlin-15).

Finally, further aspects are also relevant when it comes to choosing private accommodation in the share economy. Some visitors stated that these online platforms are easy to use, offering a comparison of different accommodation and prices, and fast access to relevant information. For others, the straightforward and instant contact and communication with the host is the greatest advantage. In addition, both the quantitative surveys and the qualitative interviews revealed that the specific location of the rooms and apartments within a city or even a neighbourhood may be highly relevant to visitors, and may be the decisive factor for choosing private accommodation over a hotel.

Summary

Since no major constraints or negative experiences could be identified (cf. Kagermeier, Köller & Stors 2015) and about 25 per cent of the German population can be characterised as having an affinity towards share options, it can be concluded that collaborative consumption in general has the potential to become more than a niche market in tourism.

As expected, the monetary dimension naturally plays an important role when it comes to choosing share economy accommodation. However, the survey revealed that other dimensions are at least as important. In addition to practical reasons (hosts are less bureaucratic, cooking space, practical overview in Airbnb, instant mailing with host, more flexible), aspects relating to authenticity also play a major role. This concerns not only social interaction between guests and hosts, but also the location of the flats/rooms within the city (in residential quarters). Personal contact is a key motivation for both hosts and guests – even if it is not usually very intense, generally concerning sharing inside knowledge about the city, and so on. In particular, social interaction between hosts and guests can be presumed to be the ''authentic' experience that certain travellers long for.

However, it is impossible to predict how visitors will respond to a recipient commercialisation of professional suppliers, which is expected to occur when the share economy reaches maturity stage. Similar to the traditional life-cycle of other tourism products, this expected professionalization will open this market to a larger group of share economy participants which, on the down side, could induce 'explorer tourists' to move on and search for other new, supposedly "real authentic' experiences. Overall, the share economy appears to be nothing other than a further step in the traditional product innovation cycle, where new offers are invented by pioneers and innovators to become commodified and demanded by a broader public.

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