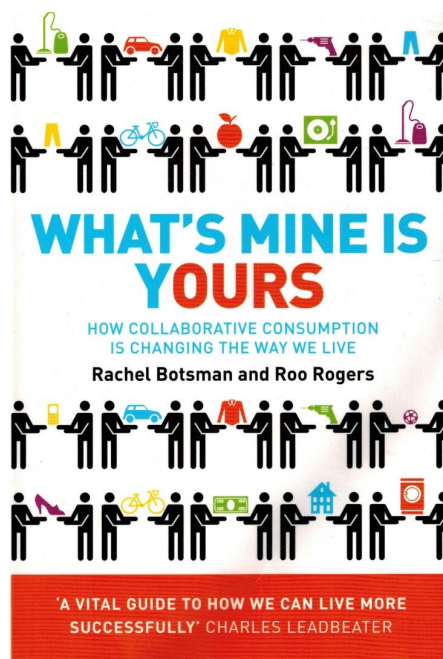


Share Economy and its role in metropolitan tourism

Andreas Kagermeier
Trier University, Germany

AAG 2015 Annual Meeting:
Tourism & Gentrification in the Metropolis
Chicago, Illinois 20-24th April 2015

Share Economy



- Hype on Share Economy
- Tourism: mainly accommodation
- couchsurfing.org; airbnb.com
- Apart from budget orientation:
=> unique & authentic experience



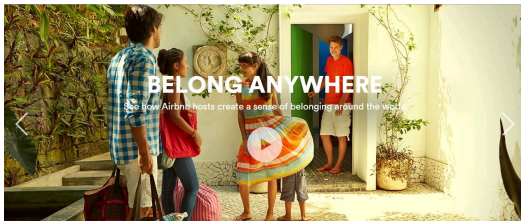
couchsurfing

Wimdu
travel like a local

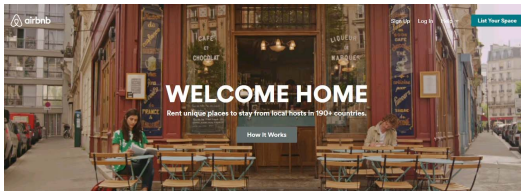
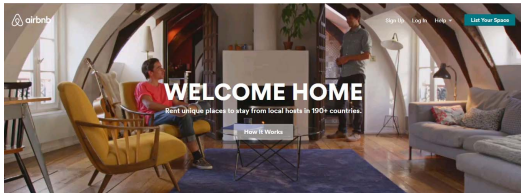
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Share Economy: The promise of authentic experiences



- Life with/like the locals
- Sleep in unique accommodations
- Insider Tips
- Explore „Off-the-beaten-track“
- Outside the „Tourist Bubble“
- Stay in residential neighbourhoods
- Get into contact



couchsurfing



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What's new about sharing?

- Share Economy: Socio-economy development build around the collaborative usage of **idle** human and physical **capacities/resources**
- Sharing is not a new phenomenon
- Social Web as enabler and facilitator
- Drivers:
 - post-materialistic lifestyles
 - LOHAS (orientation towards sustainability)
 - Urbanization, critical mass
 - financial crisis 2008/09



couchsurfing



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Aims of the presentation

Share Economy participants

- Characteristics
- Motives and expectations
- Experiences

Case study: Berlin



Excursus Berlin 1/2

SE-accommodations are regarded as a threat to the traditional **hospitality industry** and a driving force to gentrification

BUT

- Some 22 Mio. overnight stays in commercial accommodations

Plus

- Some 26 Mio. overnight stays in the traditional VFR segment (2011)

VERSUS

- Only 245,000 Airbnb-guests



BODNAR 2014



SPIEGEL ONLINE 2014

Excursus Berlin 2/2

SE-accommodations are regarded as a threat to the traditional hospitality industry and a driving force to **gentrification**

- In the most touched boroughs *Mitte*, *Prenzlauer Berg/Pankow* & *Friedrichshain/Kreuzberg* are 545,000 flats



BODNAR 2014



Photo Stors 2012

VERSUS

- Only 6,470 Airbnb-accommodations ($\approx 1.2\%$)

Methodology

- Online survey on general perceptions and on experiences with Share Economy (271 cases)
Sample with a supposed affinity towards Sharing (academics and students)

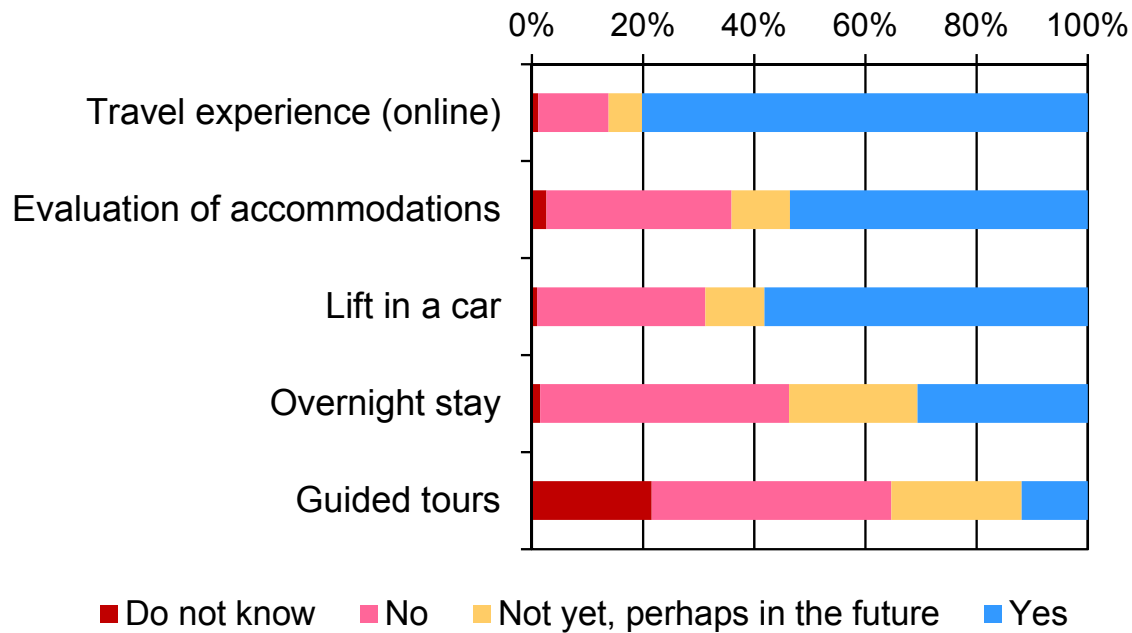


- In-depth interviews with occupants of Airbnb-flats in Berlin

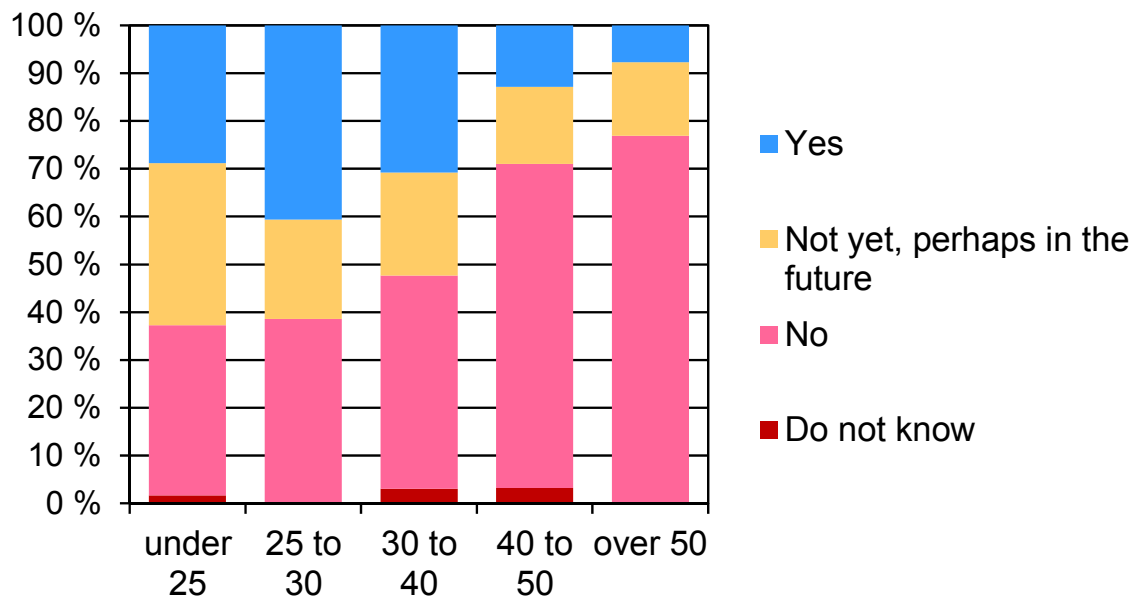
- Interviews with Airbnb-visitors in Berlin



Experience with tourism related SE-options



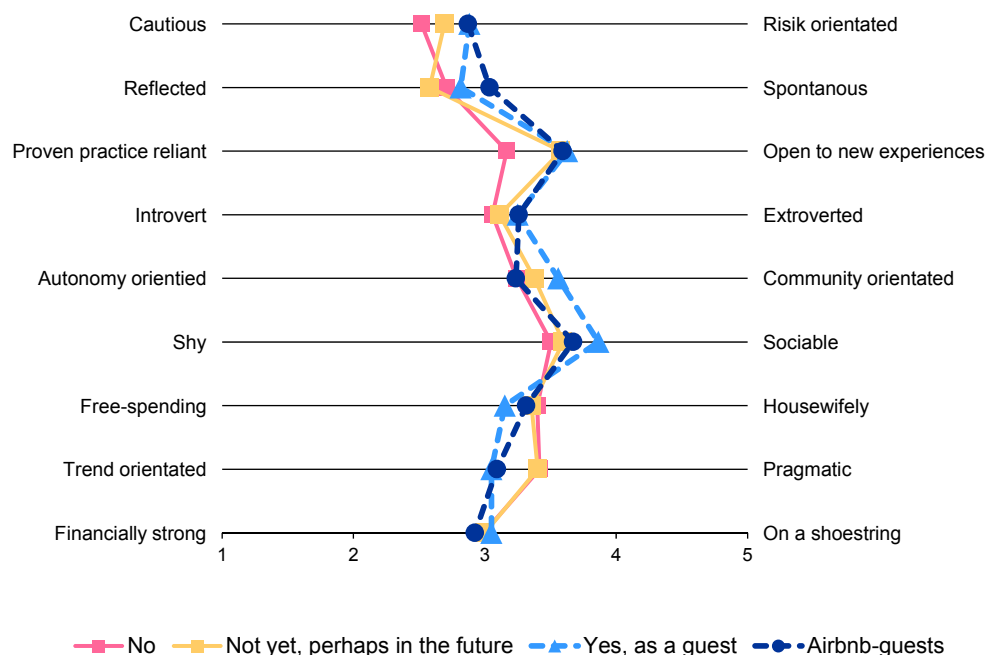
Experience with SE-accommodations (by age group)



Mostly young, well educated guests

- *"I would say it is **an above average educated clientele**. And it is generally a clientele that is more open-minded, to learn new things, than guests in the hotels (...). There are many young people who come. They are **mostly 23 up to 30 years**, something like that. But I already lodged a woman over 70" (GG_Berlin-21).*
- *"Mostly, there are very very open-minded people (...). They want to go out, but they are no party-people. Never had guests that stayed here in Berlin to party. There were always kind, open-minded people that **want to experience Berlin's art, culture etc**" (GG-Berlin_8).*
- *"**25+** but sometimes also older couples. (...) Rather technology-oriented, also many professors and many companies. It is now very popular to **accommodate employees in a real apartment**, instead of a hotel" (GG-Berlin_14).*

Profile of personality



Motives of the guests

— Yes, as a guest

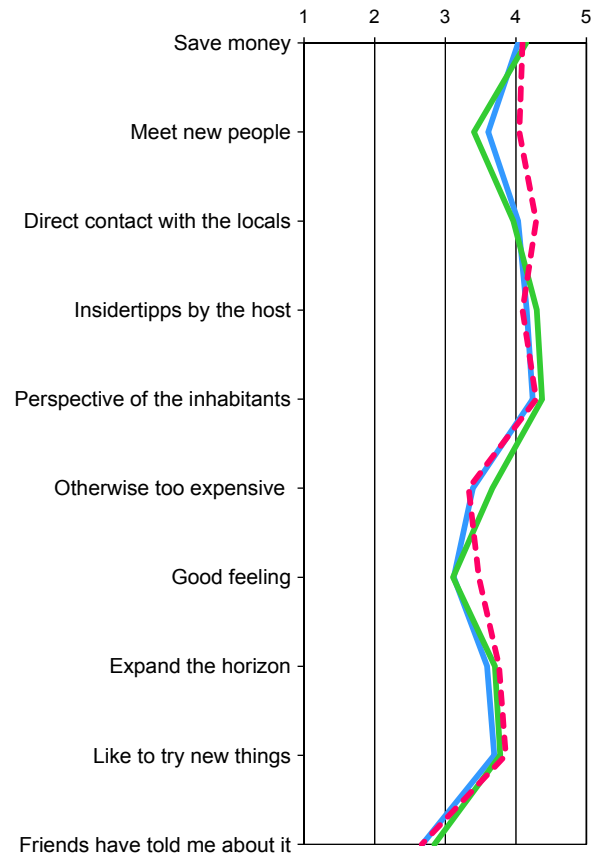
— AirBnB

- - Couchsurfing

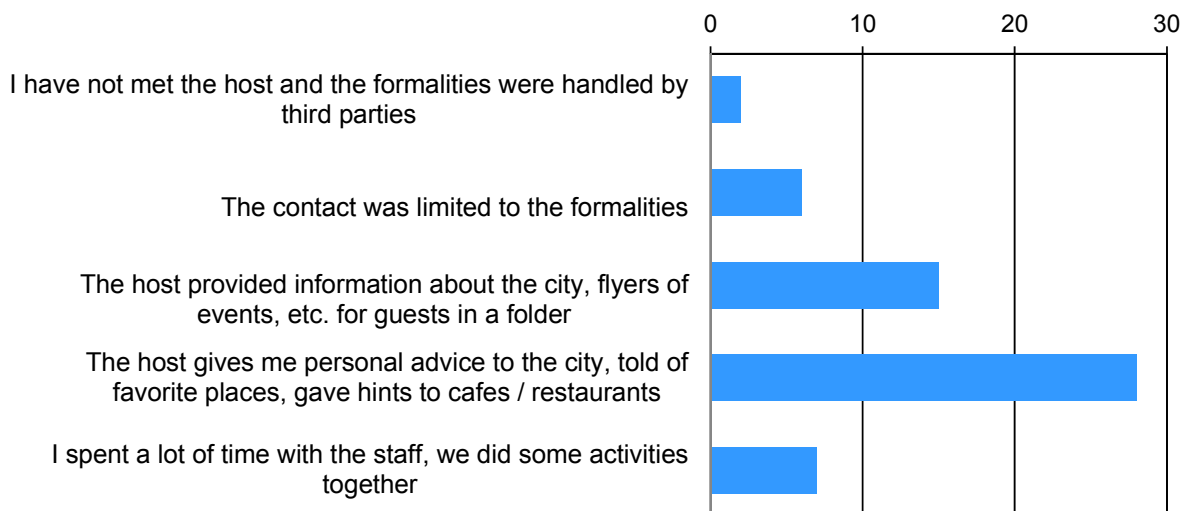
Scale:

1 = absolutely unimportant

5 = totally important



Interaction between host and guest as part of the visiting experience



Individuality and design of the accommodation

- *"And whoever participates in something like that [Airbnb], and says, I don't want to go to a hotel, doesn'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" (GG_Berlin-15).*
- *"You might even be able to live in a place, an apartment **slightly nicer, cooler than you can afford**. You can be like ohhh, if I were living in NYC I totally would have a flat like this. Even though that would cost 5.000 \$ a month but 100 \$ per night, that's fine" (GA_Berlin-3).*

Interviews: Natalie Stors

Authenticity and the feeling to experience the real city

- *"I do believe that the reason for choosing Airbnb is to **experience the city** or a place visited from the **local's perspective**" (GG_Berlin_13).*
- *"This is one of the topics where I have the feeling they see a little bit of something else. (...) [T]hey **see other neighborhoods**" (GG_Berlin_21).*
- *"You can pick you neighborhood (...) maybe a cool neighborhood doesn't even have a hotel in it. (...) And there is also the appeal, instead of just staying somewhere **you feel as if you are living somewhere** for a couple of days" (GA_Berlin-3).*
- *"My host in Schöneberg, he is an expatriate and lives here for already 15 years, he said, ohhh on Saturday, there is this market where you have to go. And I didn't have any plan for the day and he gave me something to do. **I wouldn't have known these places without the local host**" (GA_Berlin 1).*

Interviews: Natalie Stors

Social interaction and personal contact

- “Typically, your host wants you to **come out of your room** and read your book in the kitchen and have a coffee here since you are staying at their home”.
- “Actually, I was in Kreuzberg at the beginning of the weekend and I was really not sure what to do tomorrow. And my host said, well if you get stuck, you can sleep here Saturday. Not through Airbnb, because we are renting out this room, but we also have a living room. And I just thought this is really interesting, because I didn't want to take that offer but I **have made enough of a connection** by having dinner with them and staying there for 2 days that they were like, **give us a call if you need anything**.”
- “We talked less about the surrounding communities but **more about life and our own stories**. That is also interesting and nice” (GA_Berlin-3).
- “I hardly **experienced so my love, so much kindness towards my person/my apartment** as via Airbnb. (...) The contact to people and the feedback that they are happy, that's really impressing” (GG_Berlin-23).

Interviews: Natalie Stors

Advantages of Airbnb vs. traditional accommodations

Authenticity

Social interaction/people

- Kind, personal contact
- More humanity
- More love and security (Nestwärme)
- One gets insider tips, get to know people
- Meeting new people, getting to know the area
- Nice area with locals
- Immediate proximity to life in the city
- I like to interact with the locals and to know the culture and what they feel about the city

Locality within the city

Price

- Cheaper accommodations for youths
- Costs
- Inexpensive
- The price is low
- **Private apartment/space, price, area**

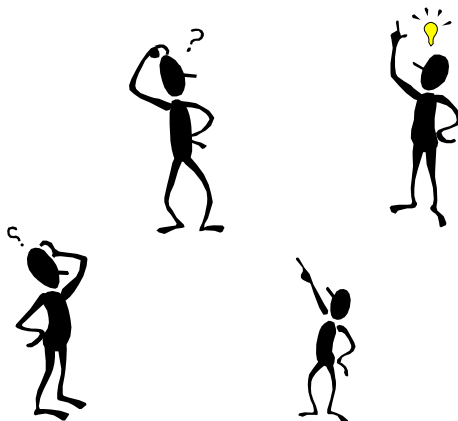
Practicality

- Hosts are less bureaucratic
- Cooking space
- Practical overview, instant mailing with host
- More flexible

Conclusions

- Collaborative Consumption in general has the potential to become more than a niche market (1/4 of the German population can be characterised as showing an affinity towards sharing options)
- The monetary dimension is one major aspect, but in tourism other driving forces are of high importance: location, social interaction, inside knowledge about the city etc.
- Particularly the social interaction between host and guest can be presumed as the „authentic“ experience for which certain travellers are longing for.
- Open, however, remains the question, how visitors respond to a recipient commercialization (professional suppliers).
- (Suggested answer: similar to many other tourism products, professionalization will open this market to a much larger group of SE-participants, but the explorer needs to move on, the a new, real authentic experience.)

Thank you for your
attention ...



... and I am looking
forward to a lively
discussion