

EXPLORING TRUST IN COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

MASTER'S THESIS BY
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ABSTRACT

Collaborative consumption is a rapidly growing socio-economic phenomenon that involves peer-to-peer exchanges mediated by online platforms. Trust is acknowledged to be a fundamental aspect when individuals engage in collaborative consumption, because the exchanges usually occur among strangers. This thesis has two main purposes. First, to explore why and how trust is established when consumers engage in collaborative consumption. Second, to examine how trust differs depending on consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption. An explorative study was conducted based on 21 semi-structured interviews with respondents using peer-to-peer accommodation sharing platforms.

We find that consumers have different reasons and modes to establish trust. Consumers place their trust in two main objects, companies or individuals, and assess the trustworthiness of such objects through a wide array of sources. This assessment is influenced by several contextual perceptions that make the formation of trust a dynamic process that depends on the personal experiences and the risk perceptions of individuals. The mindset of consumers, which is shaped by their basic trust in people, risk attitude and attitude towards collaborative consumption, furthermore affects why and how trust is built. We also find that consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption frame the reasons and the modes in which people establish trust and perceive risks. In particular, we outline a conceptual framework with three idealised consumer archetypes that present trust-related characteristics in relation to utilitarian, experiential and social motives to engage in collaborative consumption.

The insights of this study provide a holistic and consumer-centric perspective on trust in collaborative consumption. We present a theoretical foundation for academics to reconsider and improve conceptual research models. Companies can employ these insights to foster and manage trustful relationships both among users and between consumers and their brands. We also suggest directions for future research and especially encourage to further investigate the relationship between trust and consumer motives.

Keywords: Collaborative consumption, peer-to-peer, accommodation sharing, trust, consumer motives.

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1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHY TRUST IN COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION?

Collaborative consumption represents a rapidly growing socio-economic trend that is radically changing consumer behaviours. Although several terms are used interchangeably to define collaborative consumption (Codagnone, Biagi & Abadie, 2016, p. 67-68), at their core they all entail the underlying idea that consumers can share goods or services with other peers through the mediation of online platforms (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Hamari, Sjöklint & Ukkonen, 2015). These peer-to-peer online platforms allow people to share their apartments, cars, skills, knowledge and much more among individuals. What makes the act of sharing unique in collaborative consumption, however, is that technological advancements have allowed sharing activities to occur among complete strangers on a large scale (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Belk, 2014; Schor 2014, p. 7).

Although still in its early stages, the phenomenon of collaborative consumption is not a niche trend. It is expected to reach a \$335bn market value in 2025 (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2015), and currently counts millions of users (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Möhlmann, 2015, p. 193). Moreover, this new way of consumption is already disrupting many existing industries. Suffice to say, the peer-to-peer accommodation sharing platform Airbnb has overtaken Hilton as the world's most valuable hospitality company (Ting, 2016). Collaborative consumption is therefore a continuously evolving trend that has created new modes of consumption and business models, making it a relevant phenomenon to be studied. Academic research on collaborative consumption is still in its infancy, but it has been increasing in the recent years (Codagnone et al., 2016, pp. 8-9; Cheng, 2016a). However, due to its novelty, the majority of existing literature is composed of conceptual developments or normative essays, thus calling for more empirical studies (Codagnone et al., 2016, p. 74). Given the substantial socio-economic impact of collaborative consumption, it is imperative that further research contributes to unveil unexplored and crucial aspects that characterise the phenomenon.

Trust is acknowledged to be among one of the the most important and problematic aspects when people engage in collaborative consumption (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Möhlmann, 2015; Hawlitschek, Teubner & Weinhardt, 2016a; Ert, Fleischer & Magen, 2016). Botsman (2012) has even defined trust as the “currency” of collaborative consumption. Trust, however, represents a complex concept that is being studied from a wide range of academic disciplines, generating several definitions and perspectives on trust (Mayer, Davis, Schoorman, 1995; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998). It is generally agreed that trust needs to be established in situations where risk and uncertainty are involved (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 711; Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395; Li, 2007). It can be argued that the risks and uncertainties involved in collaborative consumption context are particularly enhanced for three reasons, which makes trust even more

important and problematic. First, peer-to-peer exchanges occur between strangers (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Keymolen, 2013; Yoon & Occeña, 2015; Ert et al., 2016). When people are strangers, the lack of information about the other person increases the risks and uncertainties involved in the exchange (Khodyakov, 2007; Flanagin, 2007). Second, such exchanges occur in online settings that entail impersonal and automated virtual environments, which enhance the uncertainty and risks of the exchange (Lee & Turban, 2001; Gefen & Straub, 2004; Keymolen, 2013). Third, the intermediary role of companies in peer-to-peer exchanges creates complex triadic relationships among the users of a platform, the company and the peers (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 4). These new relationships are claimed to involve new challenges for which a reconsideration of the notion of trust is required (Möhlmann, 2016). For instance, when intangible assets such as time or space are shared among peers, “the person who provides the service becomes an integral part of the experience” (Ert et al., 2016, p. 63). A higher degree of trust is therefore required, due to the greater need of interaction among humans in peer-to-peer settings (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 73). In the lights of these reasons, we deem it valuable to explore the concept of trust within collaborative consumption in depth.

In order to facilitate the formation of trust between individuals interacting on their online platforms, companies have created various tools such as review systems (Resnick & Zeckhauser, 2002; Slee, 2013; Dambrine, Jerome & Ambrose, 2015). From an academic perspective, existing literature has extensively researched trust within the online settings, especially within business-to-consumer e-commerce (e.g. Gefen, 2000; Lee & Turban, 2001; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Corritore, Kracher & Wiedenbeck, 2003; Gefen & Straub, 2004). Inspired by online trust literature, researchers have developed and tested conceptual frameworks or research models of trust within collaborative consumption (Möhlmann 2015; Möhlmann, 2016; Hawlitschek et al., 2016a; Ert et al., 2016). On the one hand, these frameworks have considered the additional complexity of peer-to-peer settings of collaborative consumption compared to the traditional business-to-consumer settings of e-commerce (e.g. Hawlitschek et al., 2016a; Möhlmann, 2016). On the other hand, however, researchers have not yet explored the phenomenon of trust in depth, but rather adapted and tested existing knowledge on both offline and online trust literature into their frameworks (Hawlitschek et al., 2016a). Although we acknowledge that existing findings on trust can also hold in collaborative consumption contexts, we believe that an explorative approach is needed to understand and uncover latent aspects of trust within collaborative consumption. Aligned with these observations, Hawlitschek et al. (2016a) suggest that further research should “focus on how to build and sustain trust in peer-to-peer market settings as well as the antecedents and influencing factors of trust towards peer, platform and product” (p. 7). In sum, we argue that a study of explorative nature is required to truly understand the complexity of trust within peer-to-peer collaborative consumption settings. A qualitative investigation is also managerially

relevant, as companies operating in collaborative consumption can gain a deeper understanding of their users' perceptions on the establishment of trust. With such an understanding, managers and practitioners might be able to more effectively foster and manage the formation of trust.

Another important aspect of collaborative consumption covered by existing literature relates to the understanding of consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption (Hamari et al., 2016; Hawlitschek, Teubner & Gimpel, 2016b; Bucher, Fieseler & Lutz, 2016; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). An understanding of consumer motives complements the focus of existing literature on a macro-perspective on collaborative consumption with a consumer-centric perspective on the "individuals who are at the heart of this phenomenon" (Bucher et al., 2016, p. 317). To our knowledge, existing research has not yet explored whether any relationship exists between consumer motives and trust-related aspects within collaborative consumption. Such exploration is relevant also from a managerial perspective, as different motives to engage in collaborative consumption might be used as proxies for needs of the consumers. As consumers with homogeneous needs constitute identifiable market segments (Kotler & Keller, 2016, p. 117), it is relevant for managers and marketers to gain insights on trust in relation to different segments in order to target them more efficiently.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The above introduction outlines how trust is vital to be established in order for consumers to engage in collaborative consumption. It is important to address this challenge by investigating the concept of trust in collaborative consumption. We therefore seek to extend existing literature by adopting an explorative approach to understand trust in collaborative consumption contexts. In particular, we emphasise that existing conceptual models on trust in collaborative consumption are mainly based on previous trust research on "traditional" e-commerce settings. As collaborative consumption is argued to add further complexity to the establishment of trust, such an approach is likely to overlook the discovery of new perspectives as well as essential interpretations of trust within the specific context of collaborative consumption. We therefore aim to answer the following research question:

RQ1: Why and how do consumers establish trust when engaging in peer-to-peer exchanges within collaborative consumption?

Additionally, we seek to understand how the findings from research question 1 vary depending on consumers' motives to engage in collaborative consumption:

RQ2: How do consumers' motives to engage in collaborative consumption relate to why and how they establish trust?

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

This thesis aims to contribute both academically and managerially to the knowledge and understanding of trust within collaborative consumption.

From an academic perspective, this study provides an empirical exploration of why and how trust is established by consumers when engaging in peer-to-peer exchanges. Such exploration would help researchers to develop and test conceptual frameworks that are specifically tailored to the context of collaborative consumption. These frameworks would, in turn, extend the knowledge of trust in collaborative consumption, which is limited to conceptual frameworks based on traditional online trust research. Furthermore, to our knowledge, we provide the first attempt to link two important bodies of research within collaborative consumption, namely research on trust and research on consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption. By segmenting individuals based on their motives, we provide a preliminary understanding of how such motives can frame the reasons and modes in which consumers establish trust.

From a managerial perspective, the findings of this research can provide practical and actionable implications for companies. Managers of collaborative consumption platforms will be able to benefit from the insights of this study to gain an in-depth understanding of how trust influences consumers' experience as well as their willingness to use various platforms. Consequently, managers will be able to more efficiently brand, build and design collaborative consumption platforms by considering trust aspects in relation to their target segment(s).

1.2 THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis is divided into five chapters: *Literature review*, *Methodology*, *Findings*, *Discussion* and *Conclusion*. The structure of the five chapters is illustrated in *Table 1*.

The *Literature Review* chapter provides an overview of existing literature on collaborative consumption as well as a systematic review of existing research on motives. The chapter furthermore presents a review of trust literature most relevant to our research, thus focusing on trust within online and collaborative consumption settings.

In the *Methodology* chapter we argue for the adoption of an interpretivist philosophy of research. We then define our study context, which is represented by the peer-to-peer accommodation sharing setting. Finally, we present and elaborate how data have been collected and analysed.

The *Findings* chapter is presented in two sections which correspond to the two research questions. The findings are related to peer-to-peer accommodation sharing. In *Part 1* we

present four layers and 14 themes to explain why and how trust is established. In *Part 2* we develop a conceptual framework to analyse the relation between trust and consumer motives.

The *Discussion* chapter considers the findings within the broader perspective of collaborative consumption, thus answering the two research questions. In this chapter we also consider the results in relation to existing literature, which has been presented in the *Literature review*. We present academic and the managerial implications of our thesis, discuss its limitations and suggest directions for further research.

The *Conclusion* chapter presents a brief sum up of the thesis, highlighting the most important findings and considerations on trust within collaborative consumption.

Table 1: Thesis structure

Chapters	Sections (topics)
Literature Review	Collaborative Consumption Definition and description of collaborative consumption.
	Motives Synthesis of studies on motives to engage in collaborative consumption.
	Trust Definition of trust. Discussion of trust in collaborative consumption settings.
Methodology	Research Philosophy and Approach Interpretivist philosophy. Abductive research. Qualitative method.
	Research Method Semi-structured interviews. Study context (peer-to-peer accommodation sharing). Thematic and conceptual analysis of data.
Findings	Part 1 Exploration of why and how trust is established (RQ1).
	Part 2 Examination of the relation between consumer motives and trust (RQ2).
Discussion	Discussion of Findings Discussion and comparison of findings with respect to existing literature.
	Academic & Managerial Implications Presentation of theoretical and practical insights.
	Limitations & Future Research Evaluation of the quality of the research. Suggestions for future research.
Conclusion	Summary Brief conclusion on main findings of the thesis.

2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The *Literature Review* chapter covers three main topics, which are deemed to provide a solid theoretical foundation for answering the two research questions of this study. In particular, we divide the chapter in three sections. First, we review research on the phenomenon of *collaborative consumption* as to understand its main characteristics and market dynamics. Second, we synthesise existing literature on *consumer motives* to engage in collaborative consumption. Third, we review existing literature on *trust* both in respect to its theoretical foundations and to the specific context of online and collaborative consumption settings.

2.1 COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Collaborative consumption is one of many terms that are interchangeably used to define a wide array of sharing or collaborative behaviours among individuals (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Belk, 2014; Cheng, 2016a; Codagnone et al., 2016). In particular, collaborative consumption involves activities such as “sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting and swapping” of goods or services between peers (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. xv). These activities are usually enabled and facilitated by third-parties, who develop online platforms where users can engage in such collaborative behaviours (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 92; Hamari et al., 2015, p. 2050; Hawlitschek et al., 2016a, p. 2). Famous examples of these platforms are global companies like *Airbnb*, where different types of accommodations are shared among peers, or *Uber*, which allows its users to share short-distance car trips.

This section aims to provide an overview of the main concepts underlying existing literature on collaborative consumption. This is relevant in order to understand the specific dynamics and context in which consumers establish trust. First, the recent rise of collaborative consumption is presented, including an elaboration of its drivers and its socio-economic impact on today’s society. Second, definitions, different systems and core principles of collaborative consumption are outlined.

2.1.1 THE RECENT RISE OF COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

The concept of “sharing”, which is at the core of collaborative consumption, is something that has always existed and is claimed to be an act as old as humankind (Belk, 2010; Belk, 2014). Among the most cited definitions of sharing, Belk (2007) defines it as an “act and process of distributing what is ours to others for their use and/or the act or process of receiving or taking something from others for our use” (p. 127). What makes the act of sharing unique in collaborative consumption, however, is that it occurs among strangers (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Belk, 2014; Schor 2014, p. 7). Collective initiatives promoting collaborative or sharing behaviours between strangers, such as car-sharing, already emerged in the mid-90s (Shaheen,

Sperling & Wagner, 1999). Although still presenting some similarities with the phenomenon of collaborative consumption, those initiatives remained mainly local, community-based and non-profit (Shaheen et al., 1999). Enabled and empowered by the internet, it is only in the early 2000s that the first large scale collaborative consumption platforms started to emerge (John, 2013; Belk, 2014; Botsman, n.d.). Some of the platforms that achieved large scale, such as Couchsurfing¹ and Freecycle², were still non-profit initiatives (Martin, 2016, p. 151). After the financial crisis of 2008, collaborative platforms with for-profit business models have risen as well, such as the well-known apartment and car sharing platforms Airbnb³ and Uber⁴ (Botsman, n.d.; Oh & Moon, 2016). In particular, the phenomenon of collaborative consumption got its 'breakthrough' in the beginning of 2010 (Martin, 2016). In 2010, Botsman and Rogers (2010) wrote the book "What's mine is yours", which is often credited to have been particularly influential for the diffusion of the idea of collaborative consumption (Codagnone et al., 2016, p. 67; Martin, 2016, 151; Cheng, 2016a). Industry reports also confirm that people have quickly and enthusiastically embraced the ideas of collaborative consumption (e.g. Nielsen, 2014; ING, 2015; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2015). For example, a study from the beginning of 2015 indicates that one-third of the European population knew what collaborative consumption was and 5 per cent had already participated in some form of collaborative behaviour (ING, 2015)

GROWTH DRIVERS OF COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Several factors are acknowledged to have contributed to the rapid growth of collaborative consumption (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Botsman, 2013; Owyang, 2013; Oh & Moon, 2016, p. 2; Barnes & Mattsson, 2016). In particular, existing literature seems to agree with Botsman (2013), who outlines four main drivers for the rise of collaborative consumption: "tech innovation, values shift, economic realities, environmental pressures". The four drivers partly relate to consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption, which will be elaborated in section 2.2 *Consumer motives*.

The *tech innovation*, which refers to society's technological advancements, represents an imperative driver, as collaborative consumption platforms are claimed to be enabled by technology (Belk, 2014; Hamari et al., 2015; John, 2013). These technologies usually involve the use of the internet and are for example represented by social networks, smartphones and online payments (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Owyang, 2013, p. 6; Belk, 2014, p. 1596). Differently from the small-scale sharing communities of the 90s, the more recent collaborative platforms are large-scale and have expanded globally, thanks to the more advanced internet technologies

¹ Couchsurfing is a peer-to-peer platform where people can stay at locals' homes for free (Couchsurfing, n.d.)

² Freecycle is a peer-to-peer platform where people recycle things in their towns for free (Freecycle, n.d.)

³ Airbnb is a peer-to-peer platform where people can rent out and book stays at private homes (Airbnb, n.d.)

⁴ Uber is a peer-to-peer platform where people can either be drivers or passengers in private cars (Uber, n.d.)

that allow reach people and coordinate information (Slee, 2013; Möhlmann, 2015, p. 194; Hamari et al., 2015; Codagnone & Martens, 2016, p. 4).

The *values shift* is evident in the consumers' preference to get access to goods rather than to own them (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Belk, 2014). Another shift is exemplified by people's desire for social connection and more authentic experiences when travelling (Molz, 2013; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016; Sigala, 2017; Lalicic & Weismayer, 2017). The values are emphasized at its extremes by Botsman and Rogers (2010), who believe that society has experienced a shift from a 'me' to a 'we' consumption culture in which building interpersonal relationships have gained vital importance (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 199).

The financial crisis of 2008 also had an impact on the *economic realities* of today's society, eventually making consumers more price-conscious and thus interested about the economic benefits that collaborative consumption might offer (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015, p. 414; Cheng, 2016a, p. 61; Oh & Moon, 2016, p. 2).

Finally, the rise of collaborative consumption is also driven by *environmental pressures*, which made many consumers more attentive about sustainable consumption. These pressures have fostered the re-use of goods and thus the exploitation of idle capacity, which is one of the core principles of collaborative consumption (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

The rapid growth of collaborative consumption has seen several companies disrupting existing industries as well as changing the behaviour of many consumers (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015; Cheng, 2016a). To illustrate that, it is particularly relevant to discuss the economic and social impact caused by collaborative consumption.

The *economic impact* of collaborative consumption is evident when considering the estimated market size of collaborative consumption and the valuation of its most successful companies. Collaborative consumption is expected to grow from a \$15 billion market value in 2015 to \$335 billion in 2025 (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2015). Although this number might not be completely accurate due to the multitude of definitions of collaborative consumption (Cheng, 2016a; Codagnone et al., 2016, pp. 25-26), it still indicates the magnitude of the trend, as it predicts a promising 20-fold increase in 10 years. The peer-to-peer car and accommodation sharing markets are, in terms of revenue, the biggest categories within collaborative consumption (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2016). Looking at the valuation of the biggest companies within these categories clearly illustrates the economic impact of collaborative consumption platforms. For example, Uber is valued at \$62.5 billion (Buhr, 2016; Crunchbase,

2017a) and Airbnb is valued at \$31 billion (Crunchbase 2017b; Lunden, 2017). Airbnb is also the highest valued company in the hospitality industry - more than the biggest hotel chain, Hilton (Ting, 2016). These numbers clearly indicate both the present and future potential of collaborative consumption.

The *social impact* of the rise of collaborative consumption is instead manifested in the profound change of consumers' behaviour and consumption patterns (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Gansky, 2010; Cheng, 2016a, p. 60). For instance, recent research has showed that peer-to-peer accommodation sharing led to an increase in people's travel frequency (Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). As mentioned earlier, consumers have started to prefer to get access to goods rather than owning them (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Belk, 2014). This shift in consumer behaviour and preferences has especially impacted the so-called "millennials" generation, which has immediately embraced collaborative consumption practices. The millennial generation, which is composed by individuals aged between 21 and 34 years old, is reported to be the consumer group that most frequently participate in collaborative consumption (e.g. Nielsen, 2014; ING, 2015). This generation is increasingly changing their consumption behaviour and seem to prefer access rather than ownership of goods and services (Gansky, 2010, pp. 70-72; Goldman Sachs, n.d.). The millennial generation is also composed by digital native individuals (Goldman Sachs, n.d.), making them both more prone to understand as well as more willing to use the technologies involved in collaborative consumption.

2.1.2 DEFINITIONS AND SYSTEMS OF COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Collaborative consumption is just one term describing a phenomenon that entails the core idea that consumers can share goods or services with other peers through online platforms which mediate the exchange (e.g. Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Hamari, et al. 2015). Several other terms are being used interchangeably and inconsistently, indicating the lack of a shared definition (Cheng, 2016a, p. 61; Botsman, 2013; Botsman, 2015; Codagnone et al., 2016, p. 67; Oh & Moon, 2016). Popular definitions used by researchers include "access-based consumption" (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012), "peer-to-peer-based activity" (Hamari et al., 2015), "sharing economy" (Lessig, 2008), "the mesh" (Gansky, 2010) and many others. The reason for different terms being applied is probably due to the adoption of multiple perspectives that aim to understand collaborative consumption from different perspectives, which are usually based on "the benefit (e.g. access), behaviour (e.g. sharing), business model (e.g. rental) or even a market structure (e.g. peer-to-peer)" (Botsman, 2015).

Among other researchers, Hamari et al. (2015) suggested a definition based on the analysis of 254 websites involving in collaborative consumption models. We find their definition of the

phenomenon appropriate for our thesis, as it allows to focus on online collaborative behaviours that are enabled by technological platforms and it also specifically points out the importance of peer-to-peer interactions. They propose the following definition:

“peer-to-peer-based activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing access to goods and services, coordinated through community-based online services” (Hamari et al., 2015, p. 2049).

This definition reflects how the activity of sharing can concern both tangible assets (i.e. “goods”) and intangible assets (i.e. “services”). However, although the peer-to-peer interaction is paramount within collaborative consumption, it is also important to specify that the type of transactions can be both peer-to-peer and business-to-consumer. These differences illustrate how there can exist different systems of collaborative consumption platforms (e.g. Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Möhlmann, 2016). Möhlmann (2016), for example, identifies substantial differences between “first generation platforms”, such as *eBay* and “second generation platforms”, such as *Airbnb*. The former is more focused on the resale of goods, while the latter are more related to short-term rental of services (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 5). These differences are captured by Botsman and Rogers’ (2010) categorisation of three types of collaborative consumption systems: *product service systems*, *redistribution markets* and *collaborative lifestyles*. We find that these systems differ mainly in three elements: (1) the type of *asset* involved in the exchange (i.e. goods versus service) (2) the type of *transaction* (business-to-consumer versus peer-to-peer) and (3) the type of *exchange* (transfer of ownership versus access over ownership). An overview of how the three collaborative consumptions systems differ in terms of these aspects is presented in *Table 2*.

Table 2: Collaborative consumption systems

	Asset	Transaction	Exchange
Product Service System	Goods	Business-to-consumer or peer-to-peer	Access over ownership
Redistribution Market	Goods	Peer-to-peer	Transfer of ownership
Collaborative Lifestyles	Services	Peer-to-peer	Access over ownership

Product service systems resemble businesses where consumers can rent goods. Also in this case, consumers only pay to get access to them, not for their ownership (Botsman & Roger, 2010, p. 71). Both companies and private individuals can have ownership of the underlying good that is

being rented by others (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 71-72). Thus, the market structure can resemble classic business-to-consumer setting or be peer-to-peer based.

Redistribution markets entail reusing and reselling personal goods among peers (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 72). This is different from product service systems, as the ownership of a good is transferred between peers (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 72). This is what Möhlmann (2016) considers as the first generation of peer-to-peer platforms.

Collaborative lifestyles involve the sharing of intangible services such as “time, space, skills and money” (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 73). They entail peer-to-peer transactions and are claimed to “generate a myriad of relationships and social connectivity” (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 73). This resembles the second generation of peer-to-peer platforms identified by Möhlmann (2016).

CORE PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Regardless of the type of collaborative consumption systems, Botsman and Rogers (2010, pp. 75-93) indicate that there are four core principles of collaborative consumption: *critical mass*, *idling capacity*, *belief in the commons*, and *trust between strangers*. These principles will briefly be elaborated as they entail characteristics and dynamics that are vital to understanding the foundations of a new phenomenon like collaborative consumption.

Critical mass

A collaborative consumption platform needs enough popularity and “momentum to make it self-sustaining” (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 75). This requires two elements. First, there needs to be a critical amount of choices available to satisfy users’ needs (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 76). Second, there must be a “critical”⁵ number of people using the platforms, thus serving as a ‘social proof’ to convince the masses to participate as well (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 81).

Idling capacity

A requisite for collaborative consumption is the availability of goods or services with idling capacity that can either be used by or redistributed among peers (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 86). An example of idling capacity that the authors propose is the power drill, which is usually used “between six and thirteen minutes in its entire lifetime” (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 83). Such unused potential of assets can be shared with and distributed to other peers. Goods and

⁵ The “critical” number has to be intended as contextual, as it depends on the nature of the collaborative consumption system (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 81).

services with idling capacity can be “owned” by either a company or private individuals, who will share the underlying asset with other peers. (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 83).

Beliefs in the common

Collaborative consumption can be seen as a countertrend to the privatization of assets (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, pp. 88-91). In fact, it allows people to get access to goods and services without the need for owning the underlying asset (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). Collaborative consumption, however, requires someone to own an asset and make it available to a certain network of people (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 91). When people decide to engage in collaborative behaviours, even for self-interests, they create value for other peers as well. For instance, when a new user joins the platform of Airbnb, the platform becomes more valuable in itself, thus providing benefits to everyone (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 91).

Trust between strangers

The last and most crucial principle for our research, is trust between strangers. In peer-to-peer marketplaces, users exchanging goods and services are most likely strangers to each other (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p.91). Existing literature widely agree that establishing trust among users is vital (e.g. Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Ert et al., 2016; Hawlitschek et al., 2016a; Oh & Moon, 2016). For instance, “strangers are unlikely to engage in a monetary transaction without trusting one another” (Ert et al., 2016, p. 64). Trust among strangers is paramount because collaborative consumption platforms have an intermediary role, where they facilitate interactions among peers, who thus have to trust each other (Lu, Zhao & Wang, 2010; Ert et al., 2016, p. 64; Hawlitschek et al., 2016a). In particular, a “high degree of trust is often required with collaborative lifestyles because human-to-human interaction, not a physical product, is often the focus of the exchange” (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 73). As a result, trust seems even most crucial in collaborative lifestyles systems, where services, rather than goods, are shared among strangers.

2.2 CONSUMER MOTIVES

Existing literature often discusses collaborative consumption from a “macro-perspective and critically assesses the role of sharing intermediaries as well as the ethical and economic implications of non-regulated commercial niches in the sharing economy” (Bucher et al., 2016, p. 317). However, an investigation at a more individual and consumer-centric level, which focuses on the people and their motives to engage in this new phenomenon, is argued to be even more crucial (Hamari et al., 2015; Bucher et al., 2016; Hawlitschek et al., 2016b). Consumers are found to have different motives to engage in collaborative consumption, ranging, “from saving money to making money, from convenience to meeting friends, from saving space to saving time, from feeling a part of a community to ‘doing the right thing’” (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, pp. 73-74). Understanding and considering different types of motives is thus vital to fully understand consumers’ own perspectives and behaviours within collaborative consumption contexts. In order to answer our second research question, this section provides an overview of existing literature on motives and systematically synthesize it to obtain a typology representing the underlying consumer motives for engaging in collaborative consumption.

2.2.1 CURRENT STATE OF LITERATURE: SEARCH AND SELECTION

Even though academics identify a need for more empirical research on motives in collaborative consumption (Möhlmann, 2015; Hawlitschek et al., 2016b; Butcher et al., 2016), literature has already determined numerous reasons for consumers’ participation in collaborative consumption. We therefore synthesize empirical findings into a typology representing underlying consumer motives for engaging in collaborative consumption. This approach is useful to provide an aggregate understanding of existing literature on this body of research. The development of a clear typology is considered functional to answer the second research question of this thesis. In fact, a typology of consumer motives can furnish a parsimonious and comprehensive framework when exploring and analysing the potential relation between trust and motives.

The search and selection process of relevant research on consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption was inspired by Cooper’s (1998) approach, which serves to perform a systematic literature review. In our case, the approach consisted of three main steps.

As a starting point, we aimed at gaining a general understanding of existing literature. To do so, we specifically relied on our personal knowledge of collaborative consumption studies, which

was acquired in the initial research stages of this thesis by reading the papers that we deemed to be most influential within the field of research.

In the second step, we explored and identified relevant cited studies and authors within these papers to find new articles of interest. Such exploration led to the most extensive discovery of relevant papers. Among the most helpful papers, Codagnone et al. (2016) and Hawlitschek et al.'s (2016b) provided the most comprehensive understanding on the topic. The former presented a summary of 140 papers related to all aspects of collaborative consumption including motives, while the latter represented a specific study on motives, which were analysed and summarised based on several existing research about motives. As empirical research on motives to engage in collaborative consumption is limited, we quickly reached a saturation point for which we started to repeatedly find the same cited studies.

As a final step, we found a few additional papers, primarily of newer date, by searching on academic databases and indexing services such as *EBSCOhost* and *Google Scholar*. The search and selection process eventually lead to the identification of 24 relevant papers. An overview and short summary of these papers is presented in *Appendix A*.

2.2.2 MOTIVES TO ENGAGE IN COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Existing literature suggests several motives for consumers to engage in collaborative consumption (cf. *Appendix A*). By analysing the selected papers, we identify three overall underlying motivational categories that drives the participation in collaborative consumption: (1) *utilitarian motives*, (2) *experiential motives*, and (3) *social motives*.

Research on consumer motivations has found two main reasons for why people engage in a certain type of consumption: utilitarian motives and hedonic motives (e.g. Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). Utilitarian motives are driven by a rational approach. The consumer objectively evaluates the reasons for his or her behaviour, thus focusing on pragmatic benefits of consumption (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). Hedonic motives, instead, entail consumption driven by sensory gratification, fun and enjoyment, thus focusing on more affective benefits (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). In this case, the consumer is not necessarily rational but is driven by emotions and social influences.

In our typology, presented in *Table 3*, *utilitarian motives* have its own category. On the other hand, *experiential* and *social* motives are both considered hedonic motives. The reason for distinguishing between two categories of hedonic motives relates to the existence of different

units of reference that influence consumers' behaviours. This distinction is inspired by the Østergaard & Jantzen's (2000, p. 9) review on consumer behaviour research, where they acknowledge that the "unit of analysis" for a consumer may be twofold. One unit can be "the single consuming individual", while the other might extend to a more collective and social level of influence, in which consumer behaviour is "determined by socio-cultural frames of reference and institutional structures" (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000, p. 22). Hence, we underline that the motivation of a consumer can have either the individual or a social group as its main unit of analysis. As illustrated in the typology in *Table 3*, experiential motives refer to individuals, who seek fun and authentic experiences and are driven by their emotions. Although socio-cultural contexts might also have an influence on consumers driven by experiential motives, the unit of analysis of this motive category is the individual alone. By contrast, the unit of analysis for social motives are individuals considered within a social group and thus mainly influenced by the social context. In this case, consumers seek to achieve social belonging and care about the symbolic values attached to their behaviour. As it will be described, each motive category is characterised by different specific types of motives, ranging from purely economical gains to more symbolic ones.

Table 3: Typology of consumer motives

	Utilitarian motive	Experiential motive	Social motive
Reference	Individual	Individual	Group
Type	Economic gains Practicality	Fun and excitement Authenticity of the experience	Social belonging Symbolic

UTILITARIAN MOTIVES

Consumers are found to engage in collaborative consumption when they believe it to offer greater utility compared to other traditional services, thus indicating a rational assessment of the benefits of using collaborative consumption services (Lamberton & Rose, 2012, p. 122; Hamari et al., 2015, p. 2052). In particular, utilitarian motives make people act rationally and thus objectively consider the costs and benefits related to a certain consumption activity. We identify two main types of utilitarian motives: (a) *economic gains* and (b) *practicality*.

ECONOMIC GAINS

People engage in collaborative consumption because of its economic convenience (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Baumeister & Wangenheim, 2014; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015, p. 414; Balck & Cracau, 2015, p. 5; Hamari et al., 2016; Bucher et al., 2016). The economic gains can both be in terms of saving and earning money, as it is possible “to save money by sharing fixed costs with others, to make extra money by sharing fees and to maximize the utility of their investment by sharing it with others” (Bucher et al., 2016, p. 318). Aligned with this perspective, a case study conducted on Airbnb concluded that consumers are motivated to use the platform when when they can book accommodations at cheaper prices than hotels (Guttentag, 2016, pp. 165-166).

PRACTICALITY

Collaborative consumption platforms are also used for more practical reasons, which usually relate to the greater convenience of using them. For instance, the flexibility and ease-of-use of such platforms are key drivers of consumption for carsharing services (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). Consumers furthermore value services that work fast and efficiently, thus making them save not only money but also time through services that are always accessible (Schaefers, 2013, pp. 73-74; Balck & Cracau, 2015). Reduced responsibilities resulting from access over ownership are also an important practical motive, for which consumers benefit from being released from the burden of owning (Schaefers, 2013, pp. 73-74; Balck & Cracau, 2015). Finally, practicality benefits might also derive from the size of the network of a collaborative consumption platform, as it provides consumers with more choices (Balck & Cracau, 2015).

EXPERIENTIAL MOTIVES

When people engage in collaborative consumption for experiential motives, consumers want to obtain personal enjoyment from it and thus feel good by doing it (Hamari et al., 2015; McArthur, 2015; Bucher et al., 2016). Behaviour is thus driven by people’s emotions and feelings in contrast to the rational attitude of utilitarian motives. We identify two main types of experiential motives: (a) *fun and excitement* and (b) *authenticity of the experience*.

FUN AND EXCITEMENT

The personal enjoyment of consumers is mainly related to personal pleasure that stems from the fun and excitement of trying new experiences (Schaefers, 2013; Balck & Cracau, 2015; McArthur, 2015; Hamari et al., 2015, p. 2055; Bucher et al., 2016, p. 322). Examples of this type of motives are the fun of driving smaller electric vehicles of carsharing services (Schaefers, 2013, p. 75), the feeling of adventure of being users of Landshare⁶ (McArthur, 2015), the access

⁶ Landshare is a peer-to-peer platform “that connects growers to people with land to share” (McArthur, 2015, p. 241)

to innovative and rare products (Balck & Cracau, 2015), or even technophilia, which is the enthusiasm for technology (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015, p. 414).

AUTHENTICITY OF THE EXPERIENCE

Living local and authentic experiences is another important motive to engage in collaborative consumption (Forno & Garibaldi, 2015; Guttentag, 2016, p. 107; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). For instance, living authentic cultural experiences is found to motivate people to share their accommodations, such as home-swappers (Forno & Garibaldi, 2015), Airbnb users (Guttentag, 2016, p. 107; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016), and Couchsurfers (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 178; Jung et al., 2016).

SOCIAL MOTIVES

When people engage in collaborative consumption because of social motives, they are highly influenced by their peers. People seek to meet and connect with other peers (Albinsson & Perera, 2012; McArthur, 2015; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015, p. 414), and express their values and personality through collaborative consumption (Lawson, 2010; Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Schaefer, 2013, pp. 74-75). In contrast to experiential motives, the unit of analysis is not the individual alone, but how the individual seek social relations. We identify two main types of social motives: (a) *social belonging* and (b) *symbolic*.

SOCIAL BELONGING

Many researchers maintain that creating social connections and eventually being part of a community are strong motivators for many consumers engaging in collaborative consumption (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010, pp. 392-393; Albinsson & Perera, 2012; McArthur, 2015; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015, p. 414; Bucher et al., 2016; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). For instance, McArthur (2015) found that people using Landshare expressed the “need for connection and belonging to a community” (p. 245) as their main motivation. Thus, the social context in which people live create an incentive for consumers to be part of a community of people. Albinsson and Perera (2012) also found that people who engage in sharing events, such as clothes swapping, are driven by the desire of creating a sense of community. Being part of a community also means creating social contacts and exchange interaction and ideas with “like-minded people” (Balck & Cracau, 2015, p. 4).

SYMBOLIC

The participation of consumers in collaborative consumption can also represent a social status, as it this new form of consumption embodies specific values that eventually relate to people's self-expression (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Lawson, 2010; Schaefer, 2013). Referring to the Airbnb case, Botsman and Rogers (2010) claim that when hosting different people in their

homes, consumers want to “declare their collaborative, nonowning, or sharing status” (p. 202). People may therefore be motivated to use collaborative consumption services for ideological reasons, because they feel that is the “right thing to do” (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, pp. 73-74; Bucher et al., 2016, p. 319). Many consumers also associate collaborative consumption with more sustainable and green consumption practices (Lawson, 2010; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015, pp. 414-415; Balck & Cracau, 2015; Hamari et al., 2015, p. 2051; Bucher et al., 2016, p. 319). Nonetheless, sustainability is often an unintended consequence of collaborative consumption rather than a motive per se (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 74; Schaefer, 2013, p. 75). Collaborative consumption is also seen as a political act used by supporters of anti-consumption and anti-capitalist movements (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010; Albinsson & Perera, 2012; Dubois et al., 2014, p. 53; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015).

THE IMPACT OF CONTEXT ON THE TYPOLOGY OF MOTIVES

Consumer motives can differ significantly between the several contexts that exist within collaborative consumption (McArthur, 2015, p. 242; Bellotti et al., 2015; Balck & Cracau, 2015; Möhlmann, 2015; Böcker & Meelen, 2016). For instance, motives depend on the sector or nature of the collaborative consumption activity, such as space rental, car sharing or tools sharing and many others (Balck & Cracau, 2015; Böcker & Meelen, 2016). Consumer motives are furthermore found to differ substantially depending on whether the collaborative behaviour happens in a for-profit (e.g. Airbnb) or not for-profit (e.g. CouchSurfing) context (Bucher et al., 2016). For example, motives such as social belonging (Albinsson & Perera, 2012; McArthur, 2015; Jung et al., 2016) as well as personal ideology linked to a belief in anti-consumption (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010; Dubois et al., 2014) are mostly related to non-profits. Even though non-profits are associated more with experiential and social motives, consumers' main motive may still be utilitarian (Balck & Cracau, 2015). In for-profit contexts, existing literature generally agrees that utilitarian motives are the primary consumer motive (e.g. Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Lamberton & Rose, 2012; Balck & Cracau, 2015; Guttentag, 2016), although experiential motives seem to be important as well (e.g. Baumeister & Wangenheim, 2014; Balck & Cracau, 2015; Guttentag, 2016). Finally, it should be emphasized that being driven by one motive does not exclude being driven by others. Consumers can therefore have different motives simultaneously. In fact, Bucher et al (2016) point out the possibility of “co-existence of utilitarian/monetary motives, on one hand, and altruistic/moral and social-hedonic sharing motivations, on the other hand” (p. 322).

2.3 TRUST

This section first presents a review of trust research and its most important components and characteristics. Secondly, the constructs of trust that are deemed most relevant for the thesis are outlined. Finally, this section discusses trust within collaborative consumption with a focus on the online setting.

2.3.1 THE CONCEPT OF TRUST

Trust is a complex concept that has been conceptualised in various ways and lacks a common accepted definition (Li, 2012; PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). The roots for the complex nature of trust also stem from the different perspectives or disciplines that are considered when examining the notion of trust (Rousseau et al., 1998; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Möllering, 2006; Li, 2007, p. 422; PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). The several perspectives on trust increase the amount of relevant studies, making it more difficult to provide a compact and at the same time comprehensive review of existing literature. To overcome such difficulty, our literature review on trust will primarily be based on journal articles that are frequently cited or provide reviews of interdisciplinary studies and perspectives on trust (e.g. Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Möllering, 2006; Li, 2007; Li, 2012; PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016).

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ON THE CONCEPT OF TRUST

Trust is a concept that is being studied from many different perspectives (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 393; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 37; Möllering 2006 pp. 130-32). The multiplicity of perspectives on trust naturally gives rise to various definitions and conceptualisations of it. While the lack of a shared understanding of trust represents a challenge in terms of comparative analysis (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 36-37), the multiple perspectives on this concept provide various and important contributions to the trust literature. For instance, economists tend to view trust as an “*economic-choice mechanism*”, psychologists tend to view trust as a “*personal trait*”, and sociologists tend to view trust as a “*social structure*” (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 393; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 37).

Economists usually view trust from a rational or calculative perspective (e.g. Williamson, 1993) or through an economic framework based on disciplines like game theory (Möllering, 2006; Evans & Krueger, 2014). As economists often look at trust from a business perspective, trust is thus understood as an asset that impacts the likelihood of transactions among two parties (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 399).

When studying the notion of trust, *psychologists* are focused on the cognitive attributes and perceptions that are peculiar to individuals (Deutsch, 1962; Rotter, 1967). In this perspective, trust is seen as a psychological state founded on individuals' personal traits and attitudes. While psychologists understand trust at the individual level, *social psychologists* emphasize that trust must be examined on a more social level, for which the individual is studied in relation to other individuals (Lewis & Weigert, 1985, p. 968). Hence, social psychologists focus on understanding the influence of interpersonal relations on trust (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995, pp. 137-138).

Finally, *sociologists* emphasize the importance of considering institutional aspects (Zucker, 1986), which puts focus on how trust is impacted by social structures, contexts and the general functioning of a system (Luhmann, 1979). Trust is thus analysed based on different institutional theories, which suggest that trust is dependent on formalised and tacit rules (Zucker, 1986).

While each of these discipline-bounded perspectives considers different important aspects of trust, it is the combination of these that is likely to provide the most comprehensive understanding of trust. In fact, as Rousseau et al. (1998) point out, "*trust is a 'meso' concept, integrating microlevel psychological processes and group dynamics with macrolevel institutional arrangements*" (p. 393).

DEFINITION OF TRUST

The majority of trust research conceptualises trust as the willingness of a person to accept his or her vulnerability to another party (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42; Gefen, Benbasat & Pavlou, 2008, p. 277; Li, 2012, p. 101; PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016;). As pointed out in a review on trust research by Li (2007, p. 424), existing literature tends to agree on the existence of four dimensions that characterise the concept of trust: (1) the *uncertainty* of a certain situation, (2) the *vulnerability* of one party to another (3) the *expectation* that a certain action will be performed and (4) the *willingness* to rely on someone or something to perform that action. In their interdisciplinary review of trust, Rousseau et al. (1998, p. 394) refer to Mayer, Davis and Schoorman's definition of trust as the most frequently cited, which we also believe to be able to capture the four dimensions identified by Li (2007). Mayer and his colleagues define trust as:

"the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party" (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712).

We will apply this definition in our thesis. Such definition conceptualises trust as an underlying "*psychological state*" where trust represents a willingness rather than an action or behaviour.

Hardin (2002) explains such a conceptualisation: “I may act from my trust, and my actions may give evidence of my trust, but my action is not itself the trust, although it may be compelling evidence of my trust” (p. 10). We acknowledge that even though it is a psychological state, trust is also influenced by the social and institutional context that surrounds each individual (Rousseau et al., 1998 p. 39; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42). This allows trust to be studied from different perspectives and understood as a *mesoconcept*.

COMPONENTS OF TRUST

Despite the complexity and variation in definitions of trust, existing literature tends to agree on some fundamental components of trust. Among the most important components of trust, researchers typically include (1) *the interdependence between trustor and trustee*, (2) *the trustworthiness of the trustee*, (3) *the personality of the trustor* and (4) *the concept of risk and uncertainty* (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016).

THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF TRUSTOR AND TRUSTEE

Trust is established between two parties. One party is the trustor, who places his or her trust towards another party, who is the trustee (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 711). In grammatical terms, this definition can be seen as “*action sentence with a subject, verb, and direct object*” (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 43) in which the trustor (subject) trusts (verb) the trustee (object). It naturally follows that trust requires two parties to be involved, where “the interests of one party cannot be achieved without reliance upon another” (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395). Some degree of interdependence among two or more parties is therefore strictly necessary for trust to be established (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 710; Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 36). The degree of interdependence might vary depending on the context where it needs to be established, as the relevance of trust also differs across situations (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395). Trust is always a relational concept, as it involves two parties, a trustor and trustee (Schoorman et al., 2015). Trust is therefore “not ‘given’ but co-created by the trustor and trustee” (Lyon et al., 2015, p. 6). However, trust is not necessarily reciprocal (Schoorman et al., 2015), even though reciprocity involved in trust is important to the trust building process (Möllering, 2006; Li, 2007). This means that trust can be established also one-way, as one party might trust the other without the need to be “trusted back”.

TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE TRUSTEE

The concept of trustworthiness is essential in understanding the the trust relationship between the trustor and the trustee, as it represents the motivation for why a certain party should be trusted (Mayer et al., 1995; p. 716; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Hardin, 2002, p. 31). More

specifically, the concept of trustworthiness relates to the *“characteristic of someone or something that is the object of trust”* (Corritore et al., 2003, p. 741).

The concept of trust and trustworthiness are interrelated. As pointed out by Hardin (2002), “the declarations ‘I believe you are trustworthy’ and ‘I trust you’ are equivalent” (Hardin, 2002, p.10). However, an important distinction exists between the two notions. Trust is a psychological state that relates to the willingness by a trustor, while trustworthiness represents a characteristic of the trustee.

PERSONALITY OF THE TRUSTOR

The trustworthiness of the trustee is not the only element influencing the the establishment of trust between the two parties. The personality of the trustor is also essential, as it is believed to impact the willingness to trust (Mayer et al., 1995; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Li, 2012). Personality is most often conceptualised as a trustor’s “generalised expectation about the trustworthiness of other” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 715). As we will explain later, this generalised expectation is crucial to the understanding of the concept of dispositional trust.

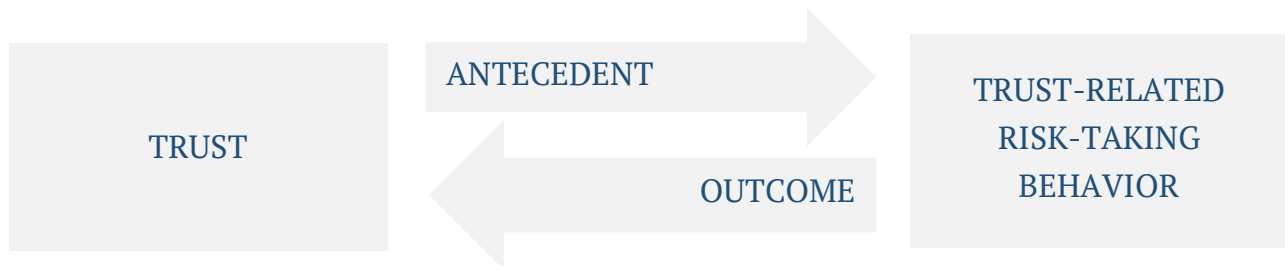
RISK

Risk is an essential component in most conceptualisations of trust (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395; Hardin, 2002; Li, 2007; PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). Risk entails the presence of uncertainty, which is important because trust would not be required if there was a situation of complete certainty (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395; Schoorman et al., 2015). However, in a trust context, risk is only related to the trustor’s uncertainty with respect to the trustee’s action(s) (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395; Li, 2007). Furthermore, the risk has to be about “something of importance to be lost” to the trustor (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712), which reflects the ‘willingness to be vulnerable’ part of the trust definition of Mayer and his colleagues. In this respect, it is the perceived risks that matter (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395; Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712).

Even though risk is a central element in trust research, it is debated whether risk is an antecedent or outcome of trust (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 711). Existing literature generally agrees that trust “is not taking risk per se, but rather is a willingness to take risk (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712). Thus, a person’s actual risk-taking behaviour can be a manifestation of trust (McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712), but trust is not the behaviour itself. This is illustrated in figure 1. Moreover, when the behaviour is trust-related it inherently involves risk. Consequently, trust is then an antecedent of trust-related risk-taking behaviour. But trust can also “result from such actions” (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395), as the outcome of the risk-taking

behaviour can build trust. Thus, trust can be seen as both an antecedent and an outcome of trust-related risk taking behaviour.

Figure 1: Trust as an antecedent and outcome



THE NATURE OF TRUST

The *components of trust* addressed aspects directly related to the definition of trust. However, trust is a complex concept that also requires to understand other aspects that characterise it. Such aspects mainly relate to the nature of trust. First of all, trust is argued to be highly context-dependent. Secondly, trust is a dynamic concept. Thirdly, there is a debate whether trust is in fact an attitude or should be seen as a choice.

THE CONTEXTUAL NATURE OF TRUST

The establishment of trust strongly depends on the context or situation specific to a certain trust relationship (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998; Lyon et al., 2015). For example, a trustor may deem a trustee trustworthy in one situation but not in another (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 727). Even if the evaluation of the trustee's trustworthiness was consistent across situations, other factors could influence the formation of trust. For instance, “stakes involved” or the “alternatives available” to the trustor represent another important contextual influence on trust (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 727). Moreover, the macrolevel context, such as social norms or institutions behaviour, is also claimed to shape people's trust attitude (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 397).

As noted by Lyon et al. (2015), situational and contextual factors are “decisive when we want to understand why people trust” (p. 6). It is thus paramount for our study to consider the highly context-dependent nature of trust, which cannot be assumed to be established for the same reasons across different contexts.

THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF TRUST

Existing literature seems to agree on the idea that trust has a dynamic nature, for which past experiences strongly influence the establishment of trust over time (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau, 1998; Hardin, 2002, p. 134). Hence, trust is not static, but evolves through

continuous interaction. This occurs because both favourable and unfavourable outcomes of trust-related behaviour impact trust (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 728; Rousseau, 1998, p. 395). Moreover, the trustor's familiarity as well as past experience with trust-related behaviour become a source for the re-assessment of a trustee's trustworthiness (McKnight et al., 2002; Gefen, 2000, p. 727). By contrast, initial trust also has to be formed when a trustor has to engage with an unfamiliar or unknown trustee for the first time (McKnight et al., 1998, p. 473; McKnight et al., 2002, p. 335). The initial trust formation cannot be based on previous experience and thus depends on a trustor's specific personality trait as well as more general institutional or situational cues (McKnight, Cummings & Chervany, 1998, p. 474; McKnight et al., 2002, p. 336). The difference between initial trust formation and continuous trust building is important in collaborative consumption, because peer-to-peer interactions occur among strangers, making the initial trust formation process necessary for each exchange with a stranger.

ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON TRUST: ATTITUDE OR CHOICE?

While literature generally agrees that trust is not an actual behaviour, there is a debate whether trust is a "psychological state" or a "choice behaviour" (Kramer, 1999, pp. 571-572; Li, 2007). Both Li (2007) and Rousseau et al. (1998, p. 395) state that literature mainly adopts an attitudinal perspective of trust. However, Li (2007) argues for a growing interest in trust as a choice, while Rousseau et al. (1998, p. 395) argue that trust should not be viewed as choice. Trust as an attitude is defined as a "pre-decisional, non-committal evaluation and acceptance of trustee's trustworthiness" (Li, 2007, p. 435). The major limitation of such a perspective is that attitude is only concerned with the willingness or predisposition of accepting to take a certain risk, but it does not necessarily imply that such risk will be taken. Trust as a choice, instead, is more linked with the actual trust-related behaviour (Li, 2007). As our study aims at exploring why and how consumers establish trust in collaborative consumption, we thus view trust as an attitude. In fact, seeing trust as a choice or behavior might fail to consider the underlying attitudinal reason of consumers, thus hindering a deeper understanding of why and how they establish trust when engaging in collaborative consumption.

2.3.2 CONSTRUCTS OF TRUST

Many constructs of trust have been identified within the realms of trust research (Rotter, 1967; Zucker, 1986; Rousseau et al., 1998; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Noteboom, 2002; Möllering, 2006). These constructs usually vary based on which objects of trust are considered by the trustor. People, things, institutions or organizations are usually identified to be the main objects of trust (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Noteboom, 2002, p. 9; Schoorman et al., 2015, p. 13). By reviewing existing literature, we have identified three main constructs: (1) *dispositional trust*, (2) *institutional trust* and (3) *interpersonal trust*. We present the three construct and illustrate how they are relevant in relation to the collaborative consumption context.

DISPOSITIONAL TRUST

The concept of dispositional trust has its foundations in the the field of psychology and it represents a general disposition or tendency that individuals have to trust ‘general’ others (Mayer et al., 1995, pp. 714-716; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42; Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009). Such general predisposition or attitude of people to trust others lies within their individual psychological state and it is not impacted by social contexts or specific situations (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 41).

Mayer et al. (1995) conceptualise this dispositional trust as “a general willingness to trust others” (p. 715). Such attitude is a very basic form of trust that does not rely on any previous information on the trustee and can lead to the extreme case of “blind trust” (ibid, 1995, p. 715) or “faith in humanity” (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 47). In other words, individuals with high levels of dispositional trust are willing to be vulnerable to other people for whatsoever reason, regardless of who the trustee is (ibid, p. 42). Dispositional trust varies from person to person, as it depends on the personality of the individual (Mayer et al, 1995, p. 715). Hence, as personality differs between individuals, dispositional trust also differs.

INSTITUTIONAL TRUST

In contrast to dispositional trust, institutional trust is not “determined by factors within the person but by the environment and situation” (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 41). Institutional trust derives from sociology and considers non-human entities as the main object of trust (ibid; Möllering, 2006, p. 7). Such entities are generally defined as institutions, which represent and form social norms and formal structures (Zucker, 1986; Rousseau et al., 1998, pp. 396-397; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Noteboom, 2002, p. 31; Möllering, 2006). Institutional trust is argued to have an impersonal in nature, as there is no encounter with individuals that have to

be trusted (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 123). This “makes creation of institutional trust so difficult, because it is more problematic to trust some abstract principles or anonymous others” (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 123).

McKnight and Chervany (2001) characterise institutional trust as involving “structural assurance” and “situational normality” (p. 48). This implies that individuals establish trust towards a particular type of social structure or situation that is perceived as legitimate or normal by the trustor. It can thus be claimed that institutional trust entails trust in the “general functioning of the system” (Luhmann, 1979, p. 56). This describes institutional trust as an abstract principle, which could, for example, be represented by trust in the internet in general (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 43). In this form, institutional trust can provide an assurance that people can rely on specific others, which also influences the formation of interpersonal trust (Rousseau et al., 1998, pp. 400-401; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 46; Noteboom, 2002, p. 8; Möllering, 2006, p. 74; Khodyakov, 2007, p. 122).

In McKnight & Chervany's (2001) framework, which holds for an e-commerce setting, trust in a specific e-vendor is defined as interpersonal trust. However, as argued above, we conceptualise institutional trust as considering non-humans while, as explained later, interpersonal trust as considering humans as the main objects of trust. Therefore, we argue that trust towards a specific non-human entity, such as an e-vendor, is conceptualised as an alternative and more concrete form of institutional trust, rather than interpersonal trust. The reason for this differentiation stems from the fact that McKnight & Chervany's (2001) framework is tailored for an online business-to-consumer transaction. Collaborative consumption instead also involves peer-to-peer transactions. These two types of transactions create different contexts, which require a distinct examination of the notion of trust (Jones & Leonard, 2006; 2008; Möhlmann, 2016). We therefore conceptualise institutional trust to comprise of two forms: (1) *abstract* trust in situations and formal structures and (2) *specific* trust in a particular non-human object or entity.

INTERPERSONAL TRUST

Interpersonal trust addresses “specific others” as the object of trust (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42), and is defined as the “expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon” (Rotter, 1967, p. 651). Thus, the trustee is represented by a specific person or group of individuals. Interpersonal trust is founded on social psychology (McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42), as it focuses on the trustor's psychological state within a social interaction. It differs from dispositional trust because it is directed towards someone specific rather than general, and it differs from institutional trust because it focuses on humans in contrast to non-human entities. Although the trustee is a specific other, the trustor may or may not know the trustee

beforehand. As trust in collaborative consumption often implies interaction with strangers, this implies that the trustee is likely to be an individual that the trustor is unfamiliar with.

Trust literature specifically differentiates between two types of interpersonal trust (e.g. Khodyakov, 2007; Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009, p. 784): *thick* interpersonal trust occurs when the trustor knows the trustee, such as family members or friends. This usually implies familiarity and strong ties among the parties (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 121). By contrast, *thin* interpersonal trust occurs when the trustor does not know the trustee. This implies a relationship bounded by weak ties (Khodyakov, 2007, 122-123). The risk associated with thin interpersonal trust is also higher, because it involves “relationships with people whose real intentions may not be clear” (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 122).

SUMMARY OF TRUST CONSTRUCTS

To sum up, *Table 4* outlines the key characteristics differentiating the three constructs of trust described above. *Dispositional trust* is based on the personality of the trustor, which influences his or her general predisposition to trust humans. *Institutional trust* focuses primarily on non-human entities as the main object of trust, thus shifting the attention to more situational or contextual aspects of trust. Finally, *interpersonal trust* focuses on trustors’ evaluation of the trustworthiness of specific other humans, which thus become the object of trust for this construct.

An additional characteristic should be considered for both institutional and interpersonal trust. Institutional trust can be either abstract, referring to an idea or a general system, or specific, referring to trust into a specific entity, such as a company. Interpersonal trust can be either thick or thin, whereby the latter is most likely to occur in collaborative consumption given that users are likely to be strangers to each other.

Table 4: Characteristics of the three trust constructs

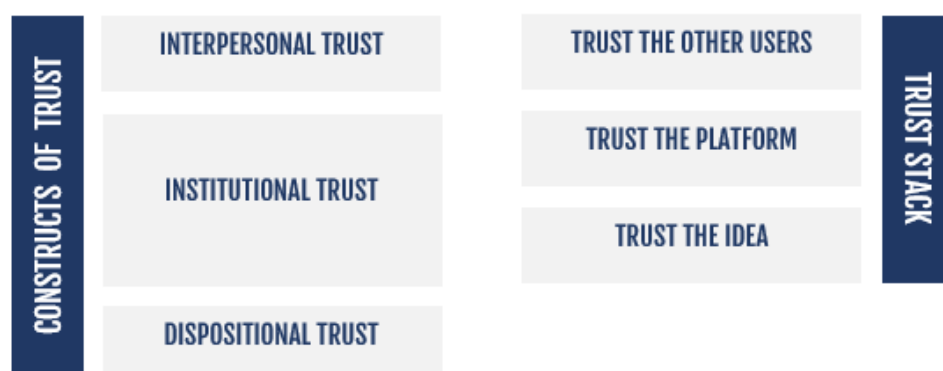
	Dispositional	Institutional	Interpersonal
Forms	General	(a) Abstract, (b) Specific	(a) Thick, (b) Thin
Objects	Humans	Non-humans	Humans
Discipline	Psychology	Sociology	Social Psychology

THE THREE TRUST CONSTRUCT IN COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION CONTEXT

The three constructs of trust identified within existing trust literature become relevant also in the collaborative consumption context. Trust among strangers is a key aspect of collaborative consumption. It is hence vital to consider the construct of interpersonal trust, especially in its thin form, in our study. However, interpersonal trust is not the only relevant construct, as multiple objects of trust are found to exist in collaborative consumption (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 4; Hawlitschek et al., 2016a). For instance, Möhlmann (2016, p.4) emphasises the presence of such triadic trust relationship between a user, the company and the peers involved in a collaborative consumption setting. Similarly, Dambrine et al. (2015) observe that “not only platforms need to have good and reliable reputational systems in place in order to create trust between users, they also will have to ensure their users trust them” (p. 15). Institutional trust, both in its abstract and specific form, therefore becomes relevant to be considered in collaborative consumption.

Botsman (2017) proposes a model of trust dynamics within collaborative consumption. She conceptualises a “trust stack”⁷ with three sequential layers of trust that must be considered by consumers when engaging in collaborative consumption. First, people need to trust a certain *idea* of collaborative consumption. This layer reflects the construct of institutional trust in its abstract form. Second, people need to trust the specific collaborative consumption *platform*, which resembles institutional trust in its more concrete form (e.g. trust towards an e-vendor). Third, people need to trust the specific other *user*, typically a stranger, with whom the exchange will happen. This layer corresponds to the construct of thin interpersonal trust.

Figure 2: Comparison between the trust stack and constructs of trust



⁷ When describing the “trust stack”, Botsman (2017) provides the example of the long-distance carpooling company BlaBlaCar: “(...) to try BlaBlaCar, you have to first be convinced ‘ridesharing’ and getting in a car with a ‘stranger’ is a safe idea. Then you trust the platform will not only weed out the bad apples but will help you fix a problem if something goes wrong. Finally, you trust the driver and passengers that you will share a ride with will be good and honest people. That is someone going through the trust stack.”

2.3.3 TRUST IN COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Existing literature on trust is often based on offline context. However, collaborative consumption is enabled by technology and mainly entails online interactions (cf. section 2.1.1 *The recent rise of collaborative consumption*). As trust also has a strongly contextual nature (cf. section 2.3.1 *The concept of trust*), it is imperative to review existing trust literature specific to the online context. This section also reviews and presents the various tools used by companies to build trust.

ONLINE TRUST

Trust within online settings has been extensively researched (Corritore et al., 2003; Wang & Emurian, 2005; Salo & Karjaluoto, 2007; Gefen et al., 2008). However, it is possible to identify two different perspectives on online trust. Some researchers posit that existing findings, conceptualisations and constructs related to traditional offline trust literature hold or can be adapted also in the online context (McKnight & Chervany, 2001; McKnight et al., 2002; Shek, Sia & Lim, 2003; Corritore et al., 2003; Wang & Emurian, 2005; Botsman & Rogers, 2010). By contrast, other researchers posit that online trust requires specific analysis and considerations, as it creates virtual environments that differ from traditional offline settings (Gefen, 2000; Keymolen, 2013; Gefen & Straub, 2004; Gefen et al., 2008; Lee & Turban, 2001).

Corritore et al. (2003) assert that general research on offline trust holds also in online settings, which are found to have many similarities and share the same characteristics of trust. Online trust is claimed to entail the same core components previously identified within traditional trust research, such as trustor and trustee, risk, vulnerability and expectation (Corritore et al., 2003; Shek et al., 2003; Wang & Emurian, 2005; Gefen et al., 2008). Aligned with this perspective, Botsman and Rogers (2010) argue that “technology is reinventing old forms of trust”, which represent offline trust, and that “online exchanges mimic the close ties once formed through face-to-face exchanges in villages, but on a much larger and unconfined scale” (xiv).

However, the online context involves the creation of more impersonal and automated virtual environments, as opposed to face-to-face human interactions, which lead to the consideration of new trust issues (Lee & Turban, 2001; Gefen & Straub, 2004; Keymolen, 2013). Such new trust issues suggest that abstract institutional trust is important because consumers need to trust situations and structures that are different from offline settings. Researchers also highlight the importance of trust towards specific non-human entities, such as companies (McKnight et al., 2002; Pavlou & Gefen, 2004; Salo & Karjaluoto, 2007; Yoon & Occeña, 2015; Hawlitschek et al., 2016a; Möhlmann, 2016). However, the role of the non-human entity differs

between business-to-consumer and peer-to-peer⁸ markets, thus creating differences in how trust is established (Jones & Leonard, 2006; 2008; Yoon & Occeña, 2015). Both business-to-consumer and peer-to-peer markets entail the relevance of trusting a non-human entity. However, in the first case the entity is an e-vendor (Gefen, 2000; McKnight et al., 2002), while in the latter the entity is just a third-party platform (Yoon & Occeña, 2015; Möhlmann, 2016; Hawlitschek et al., 2016a). This difference stems from the diverse roles of these two entities. The e-vendor has a one-to-one direct interaction with the consumer, whereas third-party platform additionally needs “to create the right tools and environment for familiarity and trust to be built, a middle ground where commerce and community meet” (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 92).

Another important aspect of peer-to-peer markets is that they require users to establish trust among each other. Trust, however, is established among people who are strangers (Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Lu et al., 2010; Yoon & Occeña, 2015). Thin interpersonal trust therefore becomes vital to be established. The following sections will elaborate the concept of online trust in both business-to-consumer and peer-to-peer platforms.

TRUST IN ONLINE BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER MARKETS

In e-commerce, consumers’ trust towards the selling company, the e-vendor, is found to be fundamental (Gefen, 2000; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; McKnight et al., 2002; Chen & Dhillon, 2003). For instance, McKnight et al. (2002) assert that “trust in an e-commerce vendor helps consumers overcome perceptions of risk in web-based interaction” (p. 299). An e-vendor could, for example, foster trust through returns policies, customer services, escrow services, credit card guarantees and other services (Pavlou & Gefen, 2004; Yoon & Occeña, 2015, p. 353). This underlines the centrality of institutional trust towards a specific entity - whether that is a company or a website - in business-to-consumer markets. Institutional trust towards the specific business, brand or website is central when collaborative consumption platforms operate in business-to-consumer like markets. In this case, existing literature might be especially relevant for product service systems (cf. *Table 2: Collaborative consumption systems*), where business-to-consumer transactions are involved.

The trustworthiness of e-vendors is assessed based on a wide range of elements. In fact, online environments entail different cues, such as ease of website navigation, visual design and professional look of the website, which can influence trustworthiness’ perceptions of the trustee (Corritore et al., 2003, pp. 746-747). In particular, website quality is commonly found to be one of the most relevant elements to assess trustworthiness of a company in online

⁸ Several researchers (e.g. Jones & Leonard, 2006; 2008; Yoon & Occeña, 2015) use the term consumer-to-consumer (C2C). We adapt a similar meaning of this term and use peer-to-peer (P2P).

environments (McKnight et al., 2002; Jones & Leonard, 2008). A sense of social presence, which is the “perception that there is personal, sociable, and sensitive human contact in the medium” (Gefen & Straub, 2004, p. 410), is also found to facilitate the establishment of trust in online environments. Finally, the perceived familiarity the e-vendor strongly influences the assessment of its trustworthiness (Gefen, 2000; Lu et al, 2010), thus indicating a dynamic trust-building process based on personal past experiences and interactions with the trustee (Gefen, 2000; Shek et al., 2003; Salo & Karjaluoto, 2007; Gefen et al., 2008; Yoon & Occeña, 2015, p. 353).

TRUST IN ONLINE PEER-TO-PEER MARKETS

In peer-to-peer market transactions, “the vendor’s and customer’s role is taken by private individuals” (Hawlitschek et al., 2016a, p. 2). Collaborative consumption platforms do not have control over the actual collaborative behaviours occurring among peers, but rather act as “economical-technological coordination providers” (Hamari et al., 2015, p. 2050). Hence, companies act as a virtual intermediary that enables interpersonal interaction in peer-to-peer markets, rather than offering a good or service directly to the buyer as in business-to-consumer markets (e.g. Flanagin, 2007, p. 403; Lu et al., 2010; Hamari et al., 2015, p. 2050; Hawlitschek et al., 2016a, p. 2). Even though this difference is vital, institutional trust towards a specific entity is also important in peer-to-peer markets. In fact, consumers consider vital to deem peer-to-peer platforms trustworthy when engaging in collaborative consumption (Lu et al., 2010; Möhlmann, 2016; Hawlitschek et al., 2016a; Hartl, Hofmann & Krichler, 2016).

A fundamental difference between business-to-consumer and peer-to-peer markets is that the latter require exchanges to occur among individuals, who are most likely to be strangers to each other (Flanagin, 2007; Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Keymolen, 2013). Such exchanges entail greater risks due to the higher uncertainty and lack of information about the trustee (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 122; Flanagin, 2007, p. 403). Consumers may for example risk to arrive “in a foreign city late at night, discovering that the booked and paid apartment simply does not exist or that the driver does not show up” (Hawlitschek et al., 2016a, p. 3). Peer-to-peer transactions between strangers therefore involve substantial risk for the trustor, who must often establish thin interpersonal trust towards the trustee.

Keymolen (2013) emphasises the need to discern between interpersonal trust formed in online platforms from the one formed through face-to-face interactions. In fact, the author claims that “technology can partly and temporarily bridge interpersonal distance but can never overcome it” (p. 136). As a critique to Botsman and Rogers (2010), Keymolen (2013) states that “the online context is not a neutral environment bringing back ‘old’ forms of trust” (p. 136). Rather, the system created by the online environment becomes a vital part of the peer-to-peer

interaction and it can influence consumers' willingness to place trust in other individuals (Keymolen, 2013, p. 144). Keymolen (2013) defines such a conceptualization of trust as "interpersonal system trust". According to the author, trust should not only be understood as being established among peers, but among peers within the system in which such peers interact.

To sum up both institutional and interpersonal trust are fundamental within collaborative consumption. Institutional trust towards the collaborative platform resembles the trust established in business-to-consumer markets, as it considers the trustworthiness of a business, a brand or a website. However in peer-to-peer markets the company has a different role, as it is not directly involved in the exchange with an individual but only facilitates exchanges among peers. In addition, peer-to-peer markets requires interpersonal trust to be established between private individuals, who are strangers to each other.

REPUTATION IN COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Companies have designed and implemented a range of different tools that help consumers to build trust when engaging using collaborative consumption platforms. Reputational systems are reported to be one the most frequently used tools to build trust among peers (Resnick & Zeckhauser, 2002; Jøsang, Ismail & Boyd, 2007; Thierer, Koopman, Hobson & Kuiper, 2015; Dambrine et al., 2015). Moreover, companies also use other trust-building tools, such users' pictures, identity verification systems, mutual friends and insurances (Teubner, Adam, Camacho & Hassanein, 2014; Dambrine et al., 2015; Weber, 2014) as well as the belongingness to a brand community (Slee, 2013; Celata, Hendrickson & Sanna, 2017).

REPUTATIONAL SYSTEMS IN COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Reputation is claimed to be a key factor to facilitate and enable trust, as it represents a sign of trustworthiness of the trustee - whether that is a human or non-human entity (McKnight et al., 2002; Resnick & Zeckhauser, 2002; Corritore et al., 2003; Wang & Vassileva, 2007; Jøsang et al., 2007; Slee, 2013; Ert et al., 2016). Both platforms and users have to build reputation within collaborative consumption contexts (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, pp. 217-218; Slee, 2013; Zervas, Proserpio & Byers, 2015). Thus, while the concepts of reputation in business-to-consumer markets only concerns the company, both the companies and users' reputation are relevant in peer-to-peer markets.

Companies can build reputation in different ways, for example through marketing activities (Zervas et al., 2015). By contrast, individuals engaging in peer-to-peer markets do not have an "outside source of reputation, nor the means to build it, by investing in advertising or related activities" (Zervas et al., 2015, p. 2). Thus, users' reputation is built and manifested on the peer-

to-peer platforms and it has a “community-driven and non-commercial” nature (Slee, 2013, p. 4). Hence, peer-to-peer platforms usually design reputational systems that provide information about the reputation of the users (e.g. Resnick & Zeckhauser, 2002; Dambrine et al., 2015; Ba & Pavlou, 2002). Such information constitutes users’ “reputational capital” (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 218; Bostman, 2012), where reputation is a “measurement of how much a community trusts you” (Botsman, 2012).

A reputational system can be defined as a mechanism that “collects, distributes, and aggregates feedback about participants’ past behaviors” (Resnick & Zeckhauser, 2002, p. 129). Most common reputational systems consist of review or rating mechanisms through which, “after an individual has purchased an item, used a service, or rented a good, he or she will report on the overall experience” (Dambrine et al., 2015, p. 4). Through reviews or ratings, a sort of dynamic trust process is thus recreated, as trustworthiness of strangers can be judged even if no previous interactions have occurred with them. It is claimed that reputational systems can deter moral hazard as well as reduce information asymmetry and economic risks (e.g. Resnick & Zeckhauser, 2002; Jøsang et al., 2007; Slee, 2013;).

However, there is a debate about whether such reputational systems are a sufficient condition to ensure trust among strangers as well as whether biases can weaken the efficacy and reliability of such systems. It is also acknowledged that reputation is not even a necessary condition for trust, as people sometimes may trust each other also without information on their reputation (Slee, 2013, p. 4; Ert et al., 2016, p. 64). Some researchers claim that reputational systems are not always enough to facilitate and ensure trust (Slee, 2013; Keymolen, 2013; Ert et al., 2016; Celata et al., 2017, p. 4). It has been showed that there is a strong bias towards positive reviews (Resnick & Zeckhauser, 2002; Slee, 2013; Zervas et al., 2015). For example, Slee (2013) found that 98 per cent of BlaBlaCar⁹ reviews were rated with the maximum score and Zervas et al. (2015) found that 95 per cent of Airbnb users had a rating of either 4.5 or 5 stars, where 5 stars is the highest. Researchers have proposed different reasons for such positively inflated reviews. The fear of retaliation on negative reviews is one of the most commonly identified, as peer-to-peer platforms usually involves both parties reviewing each other (Resnick & Zeckhauser, 2002; Bolton et al., 2013; Fradkin et al., 2015; Zervas et al., 2015). By reviewing existing literature, Zervas et al. (2015) also noted that positively inflated reviews are also linked to herding behaviour of users, who are often influenced by previous reviews. Another explanation can be self-selection behaviours, for which “consumers who are a priori

⁹ BlaBlaCar is a peer-to-peer platform where people can share a long-distance ride with other consumers (BlaBlaCar, n.d.)

more likely to be satisfied with a product are also more likely to purchase and review it“ (Zervas et al., 2015; p. 2).

Due to these reasons, researchers claim that reputational systems are not enough to build trust as they fail to discriminate positive from negative experiences (Slee, 2013, p. 7; Fradkin et al., 2015). However, some authors claim that even if there are positively biased reviews, reputational system still facilitate and foster trust among strangers. For instance, Resnick and Zeckhauser (2002) state that “it is the perception of how the system operates, not the facts, that matters” (p. 152). In other words, if reputational systems make consumers trust each other, despite the presence of positive biases, then the final aim of building trust is still achieved. This seems to be confirmed by facts, as one study found that “75% of people trust peer reviews” (Dambrine et al., 2015, p. 3-4).

OTHER SOURCES TO ESTABLISH TRUST IN COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Collaborative consumption platforms also benefit from different sources or mechanisms than reputational system to both enable and foster the establishment of trust among users. Among the most common sources of trustworthiness, researchers and practitioners point out the usage of users’ photo, identity verification systems, mutual friends and insurances (Weber, 2014; Teubner et al., 2014; Dambrine et al., 2015) as well as the belongingness to a brand community (Celata et al., 2017; Slee, 2013).

The usage of *personal photos* as profile pictures seems a valid instrument for building trust among peers. Empirical research proposes that users’ infer their peers trustworthiness from personal profile photos, which thus contributes to establish trust (Bente, Baptist & Leuschner, 2012; Ert et al., 2016). In fact, visual-based impressions may have a strong potential in creating trust, as they are found to be “more influential than the effect of reputation, at least in the case of Airbnb” (Ert et al., 2016, p. 70). According to Teubner et al. (2014), the more a profile picture is representative of real human beings, the greater the sense of perceived social presence, which also has a positive influence on online trust.

Some collaborative consumption platforms have also introduced *identity verification systems* (Slee, 2013; Dervojeda et al., 2013). For instance, companies like Airbnb strongly rely on such new trust-building mechanisms, as it requires to provide official identity documents that serves as a proof that users are real and authentic (Slee, 2013; Zervas et al., 2015).

The role of social media is also considered by many platforms, which allow to connect the profile on a collaborative platform with other social media accounts such as Facebook or LinkedIn (Teubner et al., 2014; Zervas et al., 2015; Dambrine et al., 2015, pp. 7-8). By connecting

other social profiles to peer-to-peer platforms, it is possible to identify mutual friends of the trustor and trustee. Having mutual friends might result in higher interpersonal trust due to the concept of trust transitivity¹⁰.

Another widely used trust mechanism consists of *insurances*. In fact, collaborative consumption platforms can increase trust among peers by implementing a “trusted insurance service to mitigate moral hazard” (Weber, 2014, p. 40). Thus, trust in the system creates institutional trust, which furthermore facilitate interpersonal trust.

Finally, belonging to a strong and committed brand community is found to be another source of trust for consumers. The mere membership to a brand community can in fact be seen as a sign of trustworthiness of the members of that community (Celata et al., 2017; Slee, 2013). Moreover, by facilitating and developing strong brand communities, companies can “enforce implicit sanctions and informal control mechanisms to motivate users’ active participation in the self-regulation of peer-to-peer exchanges and to enhance their sense of belonging and affinities” (Celata et al., 2016, p. 13).

¹⁰ Jøsang et al. (2007) provides a good explanation of trust transitivity as: “when Alice trusts Bob, and Bob trusts Claire, and Bob refers Claire to Alice, then Alice can derive a measure of trust in Claire based on Bob’s referral combined with her trust in Bob” (p. 622).

3

METHODOLOGY

Trust is a complex phenomenon, as outlined in the previous chapter. To cope with such complexity, researchers have applied a range of different methods within trust research. The 'Handbook of Trust Research Methods' by Lyon, Möllering and Saunders (2015) merges several perspectives of influential trust and method researchers by reviewing and collecting thoughts on methodological considerations specific on trust. Nonetheless, it is also acknowledged that "no single method can provide the perfect understanding of such a multifaceted phenomenon" (Lyon et al., 2015, p. 2). We therefore present the argumentation for the research methodology most appropriate for our study.

Defining the appropriate methodology and method is an essential part of academic research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016, p. 5). This chapter first explains the research philosophy we take in regards to the study. Then, the selected research approach, chosen in accordance to this scientific position, is presented. Finally, method considerations related to the collection and analysis of data are explained.

3.1 INTERPRETIVIST RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

As pointed out in *Chapter 2*, the contextual and dynamic nature of trust is influential to understand why people trust (e.g. Mayer et al., 1995, p. 727; Rousseau, 1998, p. 395; McKnight, Choudhury & Kacmar, 2002; Lyon et al., 2015, p. 6; Schoorman, Wood & Breuer, 2015). This is relevant as this study will investigate trust in the specific context of a peer-to-peer market and from the point of view of the consumer, who interacts with both individuals and institutions. The situation, experience, characteristic and motive of each consumer may therefore lead to different meanings of trust.

The research methodology of this study is determined by how we understand the concept of trust within collaborative consumption settings. Such an understanding is reflected by ontological and epistemological assumptions, which define our research philosophy. Ontology refers to how we view the world and epistemology refers to how we develop knowledge within that view (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 15-23; Saunders et al., 2016, p. 127).

From an ontological perspective, we view trust as a phenomenon that is socially constructed by individuals in the context of online peer-to-peer markets. From an epistemological perspective, we develop knowledge on such phenomenon by focusing on how individuals create meanings relating to trust and interpret their experiences and social interactions. Based on these assumptions, we embrace an interpretivist research philosophy, which places human interpretations and perceptions at the core of the research (Saunders et al. 2016, p. 140). In particular, such philosophy helps to provide an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon with

a focus on “richness, multiple interpretations and meaning-making” (Saunders et al. 2016, p. 141).

The interpretivist approach moreover suits the explorative nature of our research question, which seeks to explore a phenomenon of which the researcher is “unsure of its precise nature” (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 174). First, the field of collaborative consumption is a new and fast-growing market that is changing the mindset of many consumers (cf. section 2.1.1 *The recent rise of collaborative consumption*) and interpretive studies are claimed to be well-suited to explore dynamic and rapidly growing markets (Moisander & Valtonen, 2012, p. 6). Second, researchers argue that trust is a core aspect of collaborative consumption (e.g. Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Ert et al., 2016; Hawlitschek et al., 2016a; Oh & Moon, 2016), but it is less often examined in-depth to understand the nature of it, as pointed out in the introduction. Third, it is known that consumers participate in collaborative consumption for a range of different motives (cf. section 2.2.2 *Motives to engage in collaborative consumption*), but it remains unclear whether and how such motives relate to trust. Fourth, online trust is often examined in a business-to-consumer context, whereas the context of peer-to-peer markets is argued to entail further complexity, for example due to the presence of a third party (cf. section 2.3.3 *Trust in collaborative consumption*).

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

An appropriate research approach, based on the interpretivist research philosophy and research question, should be chosen by considering the approach to *theory development* and *methodological choice*. (Saunders et al., 2016, pp. 144-145; 163-166).

Theory development considers three approaches regarding the nature of the relationship between theory and the research (Bryman & Bell, 2010, p. 11-14; Saunders et al. 2016, p. 144-148). A deductive approach is theory-driven, as it uses theory to derive hypotheses that are tested through data, while an inductive approach is data-driven, as it starts from data and then builds new theory (Bryman & Bell, 2010, p. 11-14; Saunders et al. 2016, p. 145). An abductive approach adopts a midway stance that combines deduction and induction by exploring phenomena based on data based as well as analysing findings within conceptual frameworks, thus moving back and forth between data and theory (Mayan, 2009, p. 87; Saunders et al. 2016, p. 148). An abductive approach suits with the interpretivist research philosophy, where “the theoretical concepts that are employed in the study are not fixed at the outset but rather drawn from the social life that is being studied - from the empirical context in which the action takes place - and gradually worked out from the data with the help of existing theory” (Moisander & Valtonen, 2012, p. 4). As argued in the previous paragraph, our research has an explorative focus and it is thus not suitable for a deductive approach aimed at deducing hypotheses. On the other hand, an inductive approach allows to be explorative. However, a purely inductive approach would also overlook the important contributions and theoretical foundations within the realms of trust research. We therefore argue that an abductive approach is appropriate for examining our research question.

In relation to the *methodological choice*, qualitative methods are often aligned with the assumptions underlying the interpretivist research philosophy (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 27; Saunders et al., 2016, p. 136). In fact, qualitative methods place more emphasis on words than quantification, focus on the perspective of participants rather than of researchers’, and enhances the importance of context when collecting of data (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 410-411). Moreover, the use of qualitative methods is useful in the abductive approach to “avoid imposing definitions and frameworks on the research subjects” (Lyon et al., 2015, p. 11)

3.3 RESEARCH METHOD

In this part we elaborate and discuss our considerations on method. In particular, we present our choices related to the use of semi-structured interviews, research context, sample selection, data collection and data analysis.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Qualitative interviews are appropriate to answer the two research questions. In particular, semi-structured interviews are suited for exploratory studies (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 392), as they allow to address the main topics of interest related to the research question and at the same time provide flexibility by letting the interviewees talk about aspects that are important to them (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 466-467). Thus, semi-structured interviews are able to provide rich and deep information to explore the phenomenon from the individual's point of view.

In order to conduct the semi-structured interviews, we created an interview guide with a list of topics, key questions and prompts (see the interview guide in *Appendix B*). When designing the interview guide, we considered theoretical aspects related to collaborative consumption, motives and trust in *Chapter 2*. However, using these theoretical frameworks as 'fixed' ideas would be inappropriate from an interpretivist standpoint. Rather, theoretical concepts provided a frame of reference that served to stimulate consumers' own thoughts and perspectives and freely express their ideas on how they perceive trust in online peer-to-peer markets. We thus followed the abductive approach selected for this study. For each topic of the interview guide we designed a very general, broad question. The aim was to uncover what first came to people's mind as well as to let them partially take control of the interview. Sub-questions were then designed to follow up or probe respondents to clarify or elaborate on a specific topic, if they did not do that themselves.

Based on our own experience as well as influential handbooks on methods by Bryman and Bell (2011, pp. 464-500), Saunders et al. (2016, pp. 388-435) and King and Horrocks (2010, pp. 42-60), we considered all questions we developed as to assess their (1) relevance, (2) wording and (3) order. First, we dismissed questions that were not specifically relevant for the research question. Second, we carefully rephrased questions to avoid long, complex and leading questions, as well as made them open-ended and in a simple language. Third, we split the interview guide into two overall parts. The first part focused on descriptive elements of usage, experience and motives when engaging in collaborative consumption. The second part focused on the different aspects of trust. In the latter, the structure also aimed at being flexible to secure a natural flow in the interview. This implied that respondents influenced the order of

topics that were discussed as well as the time devoted to each topic, making it difficult to predict a specific direction of the interview. To overcome such difficulty, we prepared questions that allowed us to both follow up on topics introduced by the respondents themselves as well as introduce new overall topics. For example, if respondents explicitly talked about their need to trust people as an answer to another question, we could follow up by asking *“How important is it for you to have trust in the stranger that is hosting?”* (cf. the interview guide in *Appendix B*). However, if respondents did not touch upon aspects related to the idea of trusting other people, we could introduce the topic more generally by asking *“How has your experience with strangers been through Airbnb?”*

STUDY CONTEXT: PEER-TO-PEER ACCOMMODATION SHARING

The peer-to-peer accommodation sharing sector is selected as the study context of this research. Considering one specific collaborative consumption is chosen to reach a more in-depth understanding of consumers’ perception of trust as well as avoid the complexity that might arise when conducting a research across different sectors. The accommodation sharing sector is among the most relevant and successful within collaborative consumption and has had a substantial socio-economic impact on the overall hospitality industry (cf. section 2.1.1 *The recent rise of collaborative consumption*). As previously described, accommodation sharing platforms like Airbnb and Couchsurfing have rapidly achieved critical mass, counting millions of users around the world.

Besides belonging to the same sector, we choose these two platforms as our empirical context for three additional reasons. First, one platform (i.e. Airbnb) is a for-profit organization, while the other (i.e. Couchsurfing) is a non-profit organisation. This mainly served to obtain variance in the motives to engage in collaborative consumption, as literature has shown that such motives usually differ in the two different cases (c.f. section 2.2.2 *Motives to engage in collaborative consumption*). Second, the success and popularity of both platforms increase the feasibility to find enough respondents for the interviews. Third, Airbnb and Couchsurfing involve exchange of services between peers (resembling collaborative lifestyles system cf. *table 2: collaborative consumption*), which is argued to require a higher degree of trust due to their human-to-human interaction (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 73). We argue that the higher degree of trust required might unveil more trust-related aspects and concepts, thus aligning with the explorative nature of our study.

In the following, Airbnb and Couchsurfing will be briefly explained based on the available information retrieved on 8th April, 2017 by browsing their websites¹¹.

¹¹ Airbnb: www.airbnb.com; Couchsurfing: www.couchsurfing.com.

AIRBNB

Founded in 2008, Airbnb is an online peer-to-peer marketplace that allow people to rent (i.e. guests) or rent out (i.e. hosts) different types of short-term accommodations, ranging from small apartments to big villas. The platform has currently facilitated the stay of more than 150 million guests in more than 65 thousand cities across 191 countries in the world.

The service works as a marketplace in which any user can freely create a personal account, which can be personalised with descriptions and photos of the user and accommodation. Users can verify their identity by providing official documentation or connect with online profiles (e.g. Facebook). In practice, a guest can request to book any accommodation and hosts then have to accept such request. Hosts and guests can also privately communicate through Airbnb to agree on details related to the stay. Airbnb handles the transactions by receiving the payment from the guest and transferring the payment to the host 24 hours after the guest has arrived. Hosts can also decide on a pre-set of different cancellations policies and they are covered by an insurance through Airbnb. At the end of the stay, hosts and guests are invited to write a review to each other, which will then appear in the personal profiles of the users. Airbnb is a for-profit accommodation sharing company, as it earns a percentage cut on each host-guest transaction.

COUCHSURFING

Founded in 2004, Couchsurfing is an online peer-to-peer marketplace that allow people to host other travellers by sharing their home or find a place to stay at other members' place for free. The community currently includes 14 million of people in more than 200 thousand cities.

The service works very similarly to Airbnb. Users create their profiles, where they are asked to describe personal information and upload photos of themselves. They then can contact other users and either ask to be hosted, accept a hosting request or propose to host someone who asked for a place to stay in a specific location. Users are not required to verify their profile, but can do so for a small amount of money. As in Airbnb, users of Couchsurfing can write reviews about each other. Differently from Airbnb, the platform is much more centred on community aspects. This is reflected in the fact that Couchsurfing is a non-profit accommodation sharing company, where social interaction and the community of "couchsurfers" are core values of the brand, as no money are involved in the peer-to-peer exchanges.

SAMPLE SELECTION

As the purpose of this research is explorative, we do not aim to make generalizable statistical inferences. We thus apply a non-probability sampling method and consider

purposive sampling as particularly appropriate to be used. Purposive sampling requires a subjective judgment to select those respondents who best suit to answer the research questions (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 302). In particular, we adopted two techniques of purposive sampling: *homogeneous* and *heterogeneous* sampling. Homogeneous purposive sampling focuses on the selection of subgroups of participants who share similar characteristics, thus allowing for more in-depth exploration (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 302). Heterogeneous purposive sampling instead focuses on selecting participants with diverse characteristics, thus providing enough variation that allows “to describe and explain the key themes that can be observed” (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 301).

In terms of *homogeneity*, the participants were all Millennials¹², living in Copenhagen, with a similar educational level¹³ and having used one of the platforms at least once. Millennials were chosen because this generation of consumers is most likely to participate in collaborative consumption (cf. section 2.1.1 *The recent rise of collaborative consumption*). In particular, we sampled participants that were acquaintances or second-level connections within our personal network as well as a few strangers by contacting Couchsurfing users, who were found directly on the platform and personally reached through social media.

In terms of *heterogeneity*, it was important to sample people with different reasons for using accommodation sharing in order to understand how motives relate to why and how people establish trust when engaging in collaborative consumption. Additionally, we sampled respondents based on different characteristics such as frequency of platform usage, gender, nationality and whether the person was a guest or host.

To sum up, we adopted a combination of homogeneous and heterogeneous techniques to obtain both depth and variance in the data. *Appendix C* presents a detailed overview of respondents’ characteristics. A total of 21 people were interviewed. The guiding principle for how many participants to interview was based on the attainment of data saturation, which is the point where “additionally collected data provides little, if any, new information or suggest new themes” (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 297). For experiential and social motives this saturation point emerged quicker than people with utilitarian motives. Furthermore, users had an overall positive experience with both Airbnb and Couchsurfing. Neither non-users nor users with extremely negative experiences were sampled.

¹² Millennials is a term for the generation aged 21-34. The age of the sample ranged from 22 to 32 years.

¹³ All respondents either had a university degree or were currently attending university.

DATA COLLECTION

All interviews were done over a period of 14 days in March, 2017 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Interviews took place in different locations - mainly in private study rooms, meeting rooms and at respondents' homes. This was deemed important, as quiet and relaxed settings help to avoid interruptions and strongly influence the dynamics of the interviews (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 43; Bryman & Bell, 2011 p. 474; Saunders et al., 2016, p. 403). The length of the interviews ranged from 21 to 43 minutes with an average of 30 minutes, excluding the informal greeting and goodbye.

The first three interviews were done right after creating the interview guide. This also served as an initial testing of different questions along with their potential challenges. After each of those interviews we made minor changes in both the wording and the order of questions. However, the outcome of the interviews was still valuable and insightful and thus included in the final data set.

Due to the importance of building rapport with participants, which means making them "feel comfortable" in expressing their ideas (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 48), those with the closest relation to the authors were interviewed first. This served to let the authors gain experience with the interview setting. However, it was important that the author who was interviewing did not know the participant to avoid any tacit understandings.

The introduction of the interview was important. As a first step, we asked respondents to browse the website of Airbnb and/or Couchsurfing - depending on which platforms they have used - for approximately five minutes to refresh their memory about the platform. We asked the respondents to either imagine to use the platform for their next travel or recall a past experience they had in using the platform when booking for a specific occasion. The reason for this approach was twofold. First, the websites of Airbnb and Couchsurfing present many different features, making the whole 'consumption' experience quite complex and difficult to remember. Second, some respondents used the platform long time ago, so it was important to refresh their memory of previous usage situations. Furthermore, such an introduction led several respondents to voluntarily explain what they were doing as well as ask us questions, even if the interview was not 'officially' started. We use such preliminary information to probe respondents to elaborate on more specific answers later in the interview.

At the end of each interview, we purposely continued to record while having a debriefing chat with the respondents. This was deemed relevant to do based on the experience gained in the first interviews as well as on the suggestion by King and Horrocks (2010, p. 45), who advise that more informal situations, such as a small talk, can provide additional insightful information.

The authors of the thesis participated jointly in the first half of the interviews conducted. This was done to provide each other feedbacks as well as to obtain a common understanding of the content and dynamics of the interviews. However, only one author was the main interviewer, in order to ensure consistency in the interviewing style and not to confuse the interviewee. The 'non-interviewing' author had the important role of assessing the overall flow of the interview, controlling that main topics were covered and eventually following up with relevant questions towards the end of the interview. The subsequent interviews were done independently, as the semi-structured interview guide allowed to be more time efficient in collecting data.

All interviews were recorded with the permission of respondents and fully transcribed. For the 'non-official' parts of the interviews (i.e. the recorded small talk), however, only the parts considered relevant to the research were transcribed. All interviews were transcribed in parallel with conducting the interviews. To further ensure a common understanding of the content, the authors also discussed each interview and transcribed the ones that they were not attending in person. This also allowed to understand when the data saturation point was reached

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis process is divided in two main phases, which respectively relates to the two research questions of this thesis. In *Phase 1*, we aimed to answer the first research question to explore why and how consumers establish trust. To do so, we apply the method of 'Thematic Analysis' to systematically analyse the large and rich amount of data from the 21 transcripts. In *Phase 2*, we aimed to answer the second research question to identify how trust relate to motives. To do so, we adopted an even more analytical and conceptual process of data analysis.

PHASE 1: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis is recognised to be a common and generic method to analyse qualitative data (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 149; Saunders et al., 2016, p. 579). Specifically, this type of analysis aims at "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 79). Developing themes provides a comprehensive and clear way to present different patterns of meaning that emerged from data. However, when developing themes, it is important to achieve balance between how many themes are created and how inclusive each theme should be (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 151). In fact, too many themes or too much depth may lead to over-complexity, while the opposite may lead to oversimplification. Balance should also be pursued between within-interview and cross-interview analysis (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 150). In particular, analysing within-interviews is a way to secure the inclusion of contextualisation specific to each participant's account, which is

important to the interpretivist approach. However, analysing cross-interviews is crucial to generate collective findings relevant to the research question, as we seek to understand trust in collaborative consumption across distinct groups of people (i.e. with different motives). This study therefore aims to emphasise the cross-interview analysis, but also places attention to within-interviews analysis to include the importance of contextual influences specific to trust and collaborative consumption. While the stages of thematic analysis are often described as a linear process of stages, it should be noted that the process is rather about continuously moving back and forth between such stages (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 86-87; King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 152; Saunders et al., 2016, p. 580;). We base our approach to the thematic analysis on the suggestions by Braun and Clark (2006), King and Horrocks (2010, pp 149-158) and Saunders et al. (2016, pp. 579-587). While the number of stages varies, the essence of the process is essentially the same. We divide our process into four stages, which reflect and illustrate the process of our data analysis.

Stage 1 – Familiarizing

Familiarising and getting a general overview of the data is important to be able to make rigorous analysis and recognizing the context of the data (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 87; King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 152; Saunders et al. 2016, p. 580;). The first immersion into the data occurred by interviewing participants and transcribing the interviews. The transcription of interviews was split, but each author read the transcripts that he did not transcribe with the aim of familiarising with all the transcripts. While transcribing or reading a transcript for the first time, we also highlighted text passages that we deemed interesting as well as took preliminary notes. These notes were continuously developed and revised throughout all stages. Taking notes allowed to create reminders related to the meanings of the codes, analytical ideas and potential patterns.

Stage 2 – Initial coding

After the preliminary immersion into the data, a more systematic stage of *Initial Coding* was pursued. We created descriptive codes, which are labels made of single words or short sentences for each relevant unit of data. The size of a unit of data is defined by its meaning and could hence be a shorter or longer text passage (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 580). The main aim of the *Initial Coding* stage was to summarise all units of data into descriptive and comprehensive codes (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 88; Saunders et al. 2016, p. 580). Such codes should not aim at interpreting or speculating on respondent's' words but rather “stay relatively close to the data” (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 153)

We divided all the transcripts into two sets and each author coded one set individually. After one set was coded, we exchanged sets and read the other set as well. This allowed us to generate codes independently without initially imposing ideas on each other and

then cross-compare them to obtain what King and Horrocks (2010, p. 164) refer to as “investigator triangulation”. The follow-up process of reviewing the codes of the other researcher provided inspiration to generate new or revised codes as well as allowed to evaluate the accuracy of codes already developed. Finally, we reviewed all transcripts together. *Table 5* shows a snippet of data and associated descriptive codes. The actual process was conducted with the use of NVivo, which is a software program that facilitates the coding process of qualitative data. *Appendix D* reports an example of the use of NVivo during the Initial Coding stage.

Table 5: Example of descriptive coding

Transcription	Descriptive code
Francis: “Yeah I definitely do. I think that might also have to do with what you’re used to from each generation like, cause in... At least in my generation I think there’s a lot of trust when it comes to digital platforms when it comes to sharing economy. Where that’s just something that you’re used to if you’ve grown up with it somehow and... you trust that people like... want to do the best for you. Obviously you know that there’s a certain risk that that someone might want to screw you up right? But that might also be the case with companies. So, for me at least, I don’t think there’s a bigger risk of... of actually using a sharing economy-based type of business compared to an organized.”	Generation used to sharing economy
	Trust in digital platforms
	Grown up with sharing economy
	Trust people
	Risk of being screwed up
	Risk with companies
	Same risk

The codes were data-driven, as they represented words either used by the participants themselves or similar words defined by the researcher (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 88-89; Saunders et al. 2016, p. 582-583). For example, the code “trust in digital platforms” in *Table 5* is based on the words used by Francis. It was thus ensured that codes were descriptive and stayed close to the meaning of the data, thus avoiding to be theory-driven and apply terms from theory - unless, of course, such terms were used by participants themselves. Avoiding to impose concepts from theory and staying close to the meaning of the data was deemed fundamental to align with our abductive approach to theory development.

Stage 3 – Interpretive Coding

The *Interpretive Coding* stage aims to collate all descriptive codes that present commonalities or shared meanings (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 154; Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 89). In this stage, a higher level of abstraction is pursued, as descriptive codes

are interpreted in order to find several patterns in the data set. In practice, we outlined a graphical overview of the identified patterns by suggesting themes and the relationships between them. This stage is data-driven as well, in order to continue the process of discovery and exploration of the data without imposing theoretical frameworks on them. However, closeness to data is less enhanced and personal interpretation of researchers acquires more relevance.

Stage 4 – Defining Themes

The stage of *Defining Themes* required even further abstraction than the previous stage, as it was necessary to create key overall themes and capture the most relevant latent meanings from data (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 84; King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 156). Thus, the level of abstraction gradually increases by moving to later stages in the thematic analysis. Differently from previous stages, this abstraction process is both data-driven and theory-driven. Hence, only in this stage, we related data to the theoretical concepts reviewed in *Chapter 2*.

The relevance of each theme was assessed based on whether it was deemed to capture “something important about the data in relation to the research question” (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 82). Furthermore, the validity of such themes depends on whether data within a theme was coherent and at the same distinct from other themes (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 91). As previously mentioned, the usage of NVivo allowed to quickly locate the units of data, group them into themes and evaluate the appropriateness of each theme. In this stage, key themes were created and continuously refined to secure their internal coherence, their distinctiveness and their relevance to the research question.

PHASE 2: CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

To answer the second research question, we aim to analyse the relations between consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption and the trust-related aspects explored through the thematic analysis of the 21 interviews. The analysis in *Phase 2* requires a greater level of abstraction than the one in *Phase 1*, as it aims at conceptualising relationships between motives and the trust-related themes identified in *Phase 1*. This conceptual analysis seeks to explain idealised characteristics of people driven by the three motives (utilitarian, experiential and social) conceptualised in section 2.2.2 *Motives to engage in collaborative consumption*. Specifically, the analysis is structured in four steps.

In the first step, we categorised each respondent in terms of the motive he or she expressed for engaging in collaborative consumption. An overview of such categorisation can be found in *Appendix C*, where both the primary and secondary motives of respondents are reported.

In the second step, we searched for patterns of relationships between a certain motive and trust-related aspects based on respondents with just one strong primary motive. In this way, we ensured that influences from secondary motives were not biasing our conceptualisation. By grouping the patterns for each different motive, clear distinctions between the three motives already emerged.

In the third step, we looked at the different trust-related aspects of respondents with both primary and secondary motives. In this step, we aimed to understand whether the distinctions outlined in the second step were possible to identify and attribute to either the primary or the secondary motive of such consumer. For example, we compared a person who was driven by both an experiential motive (primary) and utilitarian motive (secondary) with a person that only had a utilitarian motive. In such a comparison, we have interpreted trust-related aspects that were similar between the two respondents as relating to a utilitarian motive. Conversely, the trust-related aspects that differed were attributed to the experiential motive.

In the fourth step, we obtained a more holistic view of the relationship between motives and trust. Hence, we looked at all the respondents simultaneously to understand whether it was possible to suggest some aggregated patterns.

3.4 SUMMARY

To sum up, in our thesis we adopt an interpretivist research philosophy, for which knowledge is developed through the socially constructed perceptions of people. In particular, interpretivism is deemed relevant as we seek to explore and understand individuals' interpretations of trust within collaborative consumption contexts. We employ a qualitative method that allow as to be data-driven, but at the same time are inspired by theory, thus adopting an abductive approach. In particular, we conduct semi-structured interviews to allow for the collection of rich data that focuses on the point of view of individuals.

The peer-to-peer accommodation sharing sector is selected as the study context of this research. We used purposive sampling to select 21 participants who were users of either Airbnb or Couchsurfing. Data were analysed by following two main phases. In *Phase 1*, data were coded and analysed through a systematic approach founded on thematic analysis, which aimed at finding patterns to develop key themes and relationships. This phase allowed to derive findings to answer the first research question of the study. In *Phase 2*, data were analysed with a conceptual and more analytical approach. This phase allowed to derive findings to answer the second research question. The findings from the analysis are presented in the following chapter.

4

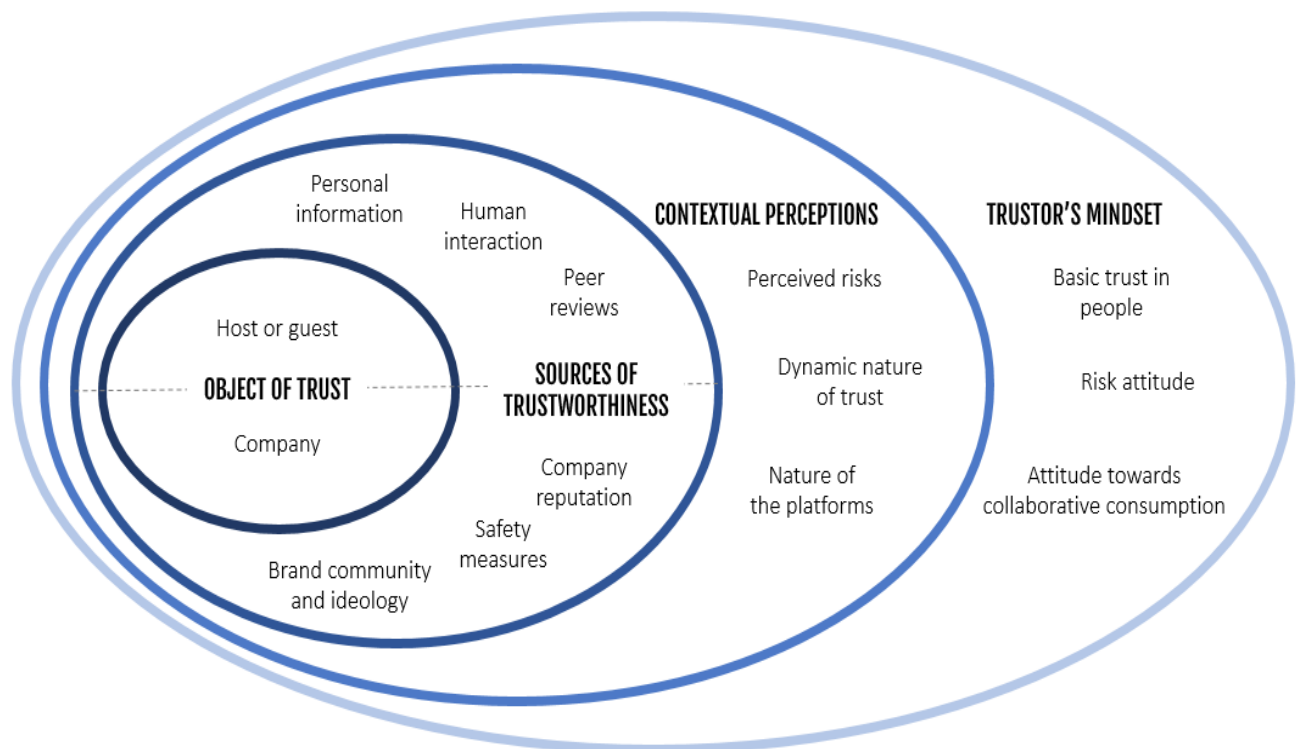
FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings that were derived from the analysis of the 21 interviews conducted for this study. We present findings in two parts in order to answer the two research questions. *Part 1* provides an understanding of why and how consumers establish trust when they engage in peer-to-peer accommodation sharing (hereinafter just “accommodation sharing”). *Part 2* identifies and conceptualises how consumer motives to engage in accommodation sharing relate to why and how trust is established.

PART 1 EXPLORING TRUST IN ACCOMMODATION SHARING

We first present a graphical overview of *Part 1* in *Figure 3* to provide a more holistic understanding of the findings. Overall, we identified 14 themes, which have been grouped into four layers to illustrate how the themes relate to each other. The graphical representation resembles an onion-like figure, in which each layer influences the layers it contains. The four layers will be presented in an inside-out order. This order allows the reader to gain an understand of the core aspects, which are needed to fully understand the concepts presented in the themes within each outer layers.

Figure 3: Overview of the four layers and the 14 themes



In the “objects of trust” layer, two themes are identified: *trust towards a company* and trust towards a *host or guest*. This layer is fundamental, as trust must be directed towards an identifiable object, which eventually influences why and how trust is established.

In the “sources of trustworthiness” layer, six themes are identified. These themes revolve around the concept of sources of trustworthiness. The trustworthiness of a company depends on *company reputation*, the *safety measures* provided by that company and finally its *brand community and ideology*. The trustworthiness of hosts or guests instead depends on their *personal information*, the *human interaction* occurring with them and the *peer reviews* on their profiles.

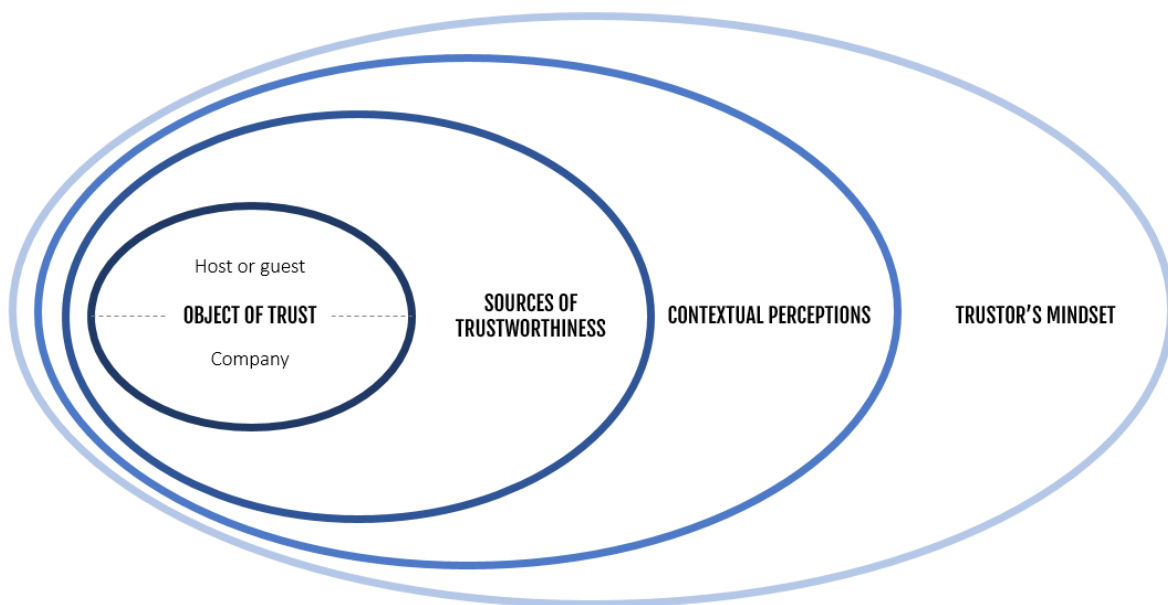
In the “contextual perceptions” layer, three themes are identified. This layer reflects situational trust-related aspects related to the context of accommodation sharing influencing why and how trust is established. First, *perceived risks* are found to be central to the trust concept. Second the *dynamic nature of trust* presents how personal experiences of consumers shapes the perceptions of how the establishment of trust vary over time. Third, the *nature of the platforms* relate to how the perception of a platform can shape the establishment of trust.

In the “trustor’s mindset” layer, three themes are identified. These themes are constituted by clusters of meanings that relate to people’s general predispositions and attitudes to think and interpret situations in life. In particular, consumers’ *basic trust in people* is essential to understand why and how trust towards a host or guest is established. Furthermore, the *risk attitude* influences both the perceived risks and why respondents establish trust. Lastly, the *attitude towards collaborative consumption* is influential to explain why and how respondent’s address trust-related aspects differently within the context of accommodation sharing

4.1 LAYER ONE: OBJECTS OF TRUST

The first layer, which is the core of *Figure 4*, relates to the specific objects of trust that respondents consider when engaging in accommodation sharing. We find that the two most important objects that respondents trust when engaging in accommodation sharing are companies and host or guests. At the extremes, people trust just one of them. However, the two objects are not mutually exclusive as most respondents indicate that they rely on trusting both objects with varying degree of importance. Two themes are therefore identified within the first layer, as trust *towards a company* and *trust towards a host or a guest*.

Figure 4: The “objects of trust” layer



TRUST TOWARDS COMPANY

Respondents emphasise the importance of relying on a company to build trust when they engage in accommodation sharing. For instance, Carl and Gabriel need to trust the company to make a reservation on the platform, as they feel that they cannot completely rely on a stranger:

Carl: “Yeah, exactly this is. But you don’t know them [the hosts] right? But you know Airbnb. So they are officially [inaudible] with the Airbnb. So the connection between you and the host is Airbnb. So you cannot trust those people, like the host himself. But you can trust Airbnb, so you that there is a brand in between, there is an intermediary, so and they, so many commenced on the page. So this help you to enhance your trust on the

people. But still not the people, but the brand itself. So you know, like, even if something goes bad, I still have this option of contacting Airbnb and telling this is what happen."

Gabriel: "(...) If it's a complete stranger, I would need like the Airbnb brand covering that part that I don't know about the person."

Carl and Gabriel describe how they prioritise to place their trust in the platform, which in this case is Airbnb. Trusting a particular brand is also likely to enhance trust in a host or guest. Respondents in fact acknowledge that they will interact with strangers, but such interaction occurs through the company, which they believe to be the main object of trust. In particular, Carl states that a company could help him if he encounters any problem, while a host cannot necessarily be trusted.

TRUST TOWARDS HOST OR GUEST

Respondents also underline the importance of establishing trust towards a specific host or guest, who are perceived as a core and sometimes primary object of trust. As hosts and guests are usually strangers to each other, many respondents believe it is paramount to be able trust the other party. Among others, Maddie explains that Airbnb is just an intermediary through which users interact, while trust is most importantly and ultimately established among people:

Maddie: "I mean, the thing is I think people have to remember that like... even though I think a lot of people would believe something you would feel trust because it's on Airbnb, it's still like... anybody can register on there. So you just have to be like, you know, a little bit have your wits, so you know...not being completely naive about things. So, like, I go... you know. I understand that it's like, you know... I don't necessarily have trust just because of Airbnb. I would rather go by "ok, how does this person sound?" like, and... "what are the ratings?". You know..."

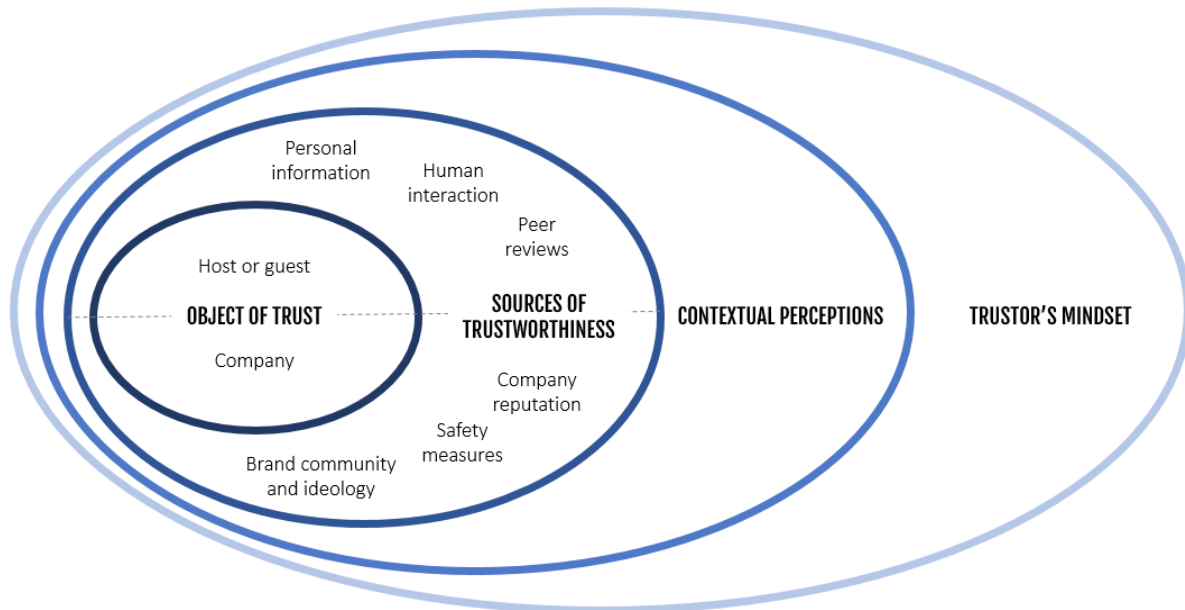
Respondents believe it is important to place trust into a specific host or guest also because accommodation sharing platforms require consumers to depend on private people's actions rather than on trained employees of a traditional hospitality provider. For instance, Ben believes it is important to trust hosts on Airbnb due to the greater unpredictability in terms of whether the other person can act professionally enough to deliver the service as promised:

Ben: "I mean, I try to understand as much as possible from the host if he has some uncertainty in the booking availability because like... this is not a professional world. I mean, those are people who have their own life, their own job, their own whatever... Is not like in a hotel that you go there and if you reserve a room, the room is for you... I mean, only the building crashing down can prevent you not to enter the room or whatever."

4.2 LAYER TWO: SOURCES OF TRUSTWORTHINES

This layer relates to the different sources respondents maintain to use to assess the trustworthiness of the two objects identified in the first layer. These sources implicitly or explicitly provide information about the objects to be trusted, thus facilitating the establishment of trust towards them. In this layer, six themes, which are interrelated with the two themes of the first layer, are identified. The themes *company reputation*, *safety measures* and *brand community and ideology* relate to the theme *trust towards company*. By contrast, the themes *personal information*, *human interaction* and *peer reviews* relate to the theme *trust towards host or guest*. The six themes of layer two as well as their cross-theme relationships with the two themes of layer one are illustrated *Figure 5*.

Figure 5: The “sources of trustworthiness” layer



As a general premise, we found that respondents use the sources of trustworthiness in different ways. Some respondents assess trustworthiness of an object based on a rational and meticulous evaluation, while others base it on a more superficial or emotionally driven assessment.

COMPANY REPUTATION

The reputation of a company emerged to be one of the main sources of trustworthiness of companies. Respondents refer to the concept of reputation as the perception that they have about a brand. Such perception usually stems from the number of users of the platform, brand-

related news and stories or word-of-mouth recommendations. The concept of company reputation clearly emerges from Kevin's words:

Kevin: *"Yeah, I think it really... I think if there would be a new platform, I would be sceptical in the beginning. And I think I trust Airbnb for example, because it has such a broad user base and I mean they also know they are dependent on the reputation, so if there are like horror stories, that what happened on Airbnb, then people would not do it. Or then I would also question myself "is this really a good option for me?" If this could happen. So I guess it is really important that they have a good reputation and they keep their customers satisfied, happy. But I think they generally do, because I have the feeling when there is, when people mention their concerns or something, the Airbnb community and also the company itself kind provides a lot of feedback and kind of... There is a dialogue between the brand and the consumers, which is important. But yeah, smaller companies that would just come up, I would be sceptical."*

Like other respondents, Kevin also maintains that he would be more sceptical to use relatively new platforms, as these are too small or unknown and thus lacks of a solid and positive reputation. In order to be convinced to use a new platform, many respondents claim the need of a friend's recommendation. In fact, word-of-mouth is especially influential when the platform is still unknown. People also evaluate the reputation of a brand based on its size, which is strongly linked to the number of users on the platform. Like Kevin, also Nina believes that a broad user base make companies more trustworthy:

Nina: *"I think the fact that it is Airbnb and people are using it, I think - yeah - the quantity of people actually using this platform called Airbnb and people are talking about, "oh, it's great" you know. That in a sense validates it. Whereas if I would go online and find a completely random platform with the same host, then you know, unless I knew the host, unless I have stayed with the host before, I wouldn't book it."*

As Nina points out, a high number of users 'validates' the reliability of a company. The reasons why a higher number of users improve the reputation of a company are explained in three main ways by respondents. First, a platform is perceived as more safe when many people use it. Second, if many people encountered problems while using the platform, there would not be many users. Third, when the user base of companies grows, they are able to hire more employees to control the platform and thus ensure the desired behavior of its users.

SAFETY MEASURES

The trustworthiness of a company is also evaluated based on different safety measures that a company offers to ensure a reliable and safe service. For instance, when respondents refer to

how they build trust towards Airbnb, they emphasise the relevance of different safety measures of the platform. Among them, respondents report the insurance covering theft or damage of objects, review systems, a telephone hotline service to solve unexpected issues and a safe payment system. Gabriel, for instance, points out that the existence of an insurance increases the trustworthiness of platforms like Airbnb:

Gabriel: *"The insurances is a big thing. Like for sharing platforms the insurance is crucial, because, mainly because it's... I know that most of the people are not willing, like me, like we are not willing to use a sharing platform, because they don't have much experience or don't trust it. So, knowing that behind it there is an insurance that covers you in case anything happens it's good."*

Despite mentioning different measures, the majority of respondents have only used a few of those. Thus, respondent perceive the relevance and helpfulness of such measures in different ways. For instance, Patricia believes that, even if Airbnb provides an insurance service, that would not help in case the apartment of a host is destroyed:

Patricia: *"Because I don't think Airbnb, even if they have insurance, will take care if someone destroy your apartment."*

This exemplifies how Patricia's perception of insurance's usefulness to establish trust differs from Gabriel's perception, who instead needs to rely on the existence of an insurance. Thus, safety measures are not always perceived helpful to establish trust towards a company.

Another important measure is the review systems, which respondents tend to view as a reliable safety measure provided by both Airbnb and Couchsurfing. For instance, Quinn views Couchsurfing as a trustworthy platform because of its review system and Ben perceives Airbnb's review system to be even more reliable than other common review systems of other online platforms:

Quinn: *"(...) I think the platform is trustworthy because of the reviews. You cannot fake reviews, right? That's it. And you cannot delete it, cannot control it. Nothing. So I think that's like... It's trustworthy."*

Ben: *"I'm always making reviews, in every platform, also on Tripadvisor. I'm a lover of reviews so I'm reviewing everything... Ehm, so, I think that Tripadvisor had some problems with reviews, ehm... I know that there were some scammers or whatever people that pay... like you had fake customers reviewing yourself but... that's different from Airbnb because here you can only give a review after you have paid and after you have stayed at a place. So you can do it afterwards and it's also... you can also give like 'blind' reviews in a certain*

way that you don't see the reviews of the other party... So the host gives a review, the guest gives a review, you don't know the other ones so you're probably the most honest possible here, while on Tripadvisor for example everybody even without staying at that... ehm... without eating at that restaurant or that hotel, they can give you a review... I also did it once for my friend [laughing]. No ok, but this is... I mean... I have more trust in Airbnb than other platforms."

Both Quinn and Ben underline that a review system is trustworthy when reviews cannot be deleted or faked. Thus, companies are seen as more trustworthy when they offer sound and trustworthy review systems.

BRAND COMMUNITY AND IDEOLOGY

The community of people as well as the shared ideology that is built around the brand can be a key determinant of a company's trustworthiness. For instance, respondents using Couchsurfing emphasise their sense of belonging to the community of the Couchsurfing brand. As Quinn explains, the existence of a brand community and ideology behind the company is what makes her perceive Couchsurfing as a safe and trustworthy platform:

Quinn: "Mmm. I think the whole idea behind it, the ideology of the platform. Like, meet locals and... because it's much different when you see a place with locals, you share some stories, you have common experience... than when you just go like a tourist according to a tourist map, you know? It's much different, it's more human. So I think that's why it's trustworthy to me. And it's... attracting people who are like-minded, you know?"

Quinn: "I trust in people, and I trust in the spirit of the community, I mean, the website. And... That's why I feel it's safe."

The brand ideology is so important that it can even impact how other sources of the company's trustworthiness are perceived. For instance, respondents indicate that the reputation of Couchsurfing benefits from its strong brand community. Also the perception of safety measures can be influenced by a strong brand community and ideology. For instance, Raphael believes that Couchsurfing users would perceive the implementation of more safety measures in the platform as having a negative effect on the trustworthiness of the company:

Raphael: "I think it is, for Couchsurfing it is a little bit different cause money is not really involved. It is about trust only. And I know that Airbnb has some initiatives where they put up money if, in case your apartment is gonna be trashed and all these security initiatives. But CouchSurfing doesn't have that. But I think that is good. Because I think if they start doing that it will just be less trustworthy. So I think they should stay how they..."

Interviewer: *"Like the platform would be less trustworthy?"*

Raphael: *"Yeah, because it would just change, like the reason for using Couchsurfing. People would be, I mean sceptical or sad about the direction it would take. Because it would be focusing on putting security inside the platform where there is no need for security in the platform. It would just give mistrust between people. People would think, 'oh why is this here, is that because you can't trust the other people?' Do you see what I mean?"*

Raphael's words reveal how the introduction of many safety measures on Couchsurfing would be in contrast with the brand ideology of the platform. In fact, the brand community and ideology supports the belief that the users of its community can trust each other, making it unnecessary or even detrimental to introduce sophisticated safety measures.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

When assessing the trustworthiness of a guest or host, respondents claim to rely on *personal information* provided by a host or guest him- or herself through the platform. This process mainly depends on which platform tools are available to the users. Respondents generally agree that the most important tools are written profile descriptions and pictures. In particular, the amount of information and the quality of the host or guest's profile description and pictures are relevant indicators to assess the trustworthiness of a person:

Ursula: *"(...) If it's just a profile with no information or only like very badly written, then I don't have the same gut feeling about this is a nice visitor I am going to have."*

Liz: *"(...) How they write about themselves. Like, you know, I think you can tell quite a bit about people from, you know, how they present, like... market themselves, you know. So yeah, about that and the reviews. And then I think that can build up a basis of the trust or like 'Oh I think this one's ok'."*

The profile description also allows to understand which type of person is involved in the exchange. This is important, as respondents believe that the type of person affect a host or guest's trustworthiness. Old couples and families are often the preferred type of guests when hosts want to rent their accommodation to calm and reliable people. However, young people are preferred when the respondents seeks to connect with like-minded people. These differences can partly be explained by respondents' motives to engage in accommodation sharing, as it will be covered in *Part 2 of the Findings*.

As mentioned, pictures are also an important source of trustworthiness. Personal pictures of the host or guest contribute to assess if the person actually exists and thus the realness of a user. Moreover, respondents emphasise that pictures allow them to get a feeling about the person. For couchsurfers, pictures of people are extremely important to establish trust:

Susan: "I think it builds trust when there is more pictures. I want to know when I meet the person who it is. So that is actually a pretty important thing for me. That there is more profile pictures."

On Airbnb, hosts can also upload pictures of their accommodation. Respondents believe that high quality pictures are usually increasing the trustworthiness of a host, as they are a sign that the host cares about making a good impression:

Liz: "(...) The pictures, always like look through the pictures and if they have good quality pictures because I think that also reflects, ehm, [inaudible]. Yeah quality pictures cause it means people take care..."

HUMAN INTERACTION

Having some kind of human interaction with hosts or guests is also believed to have an impact on their trustworthiness. Specifically, respondents refer to the interaction in both *online* and *offline* settings. *Online* interaction between the host and the guest allows to obtain a more precise impression of the person. In particular, respondents believe that personal messages facilitate to establish a more direct contact with the person. This contributes to build trust, as personal messages create a more intimate connection between the parties involved in the transaction. For instance, Eva interacts online with hosts in order to learn more about their personal life, which contribute to make them more trustworthy:

Eva: "Yeah I think it's maybe because, like the trust aspect maybe... Because you actually get to know the person or like if you contact someone you write with the person and not with someone working in a hotel for example. So you usually learn something maybe about their family and what are they doing for you for a living or whatever. So it makes everything much more personal and I think that it's also connected to trust."

Offline interaction is sometimes necessary as the last step to establish trust towards the host or guest. In fact, some respondent find that sometimes online messages are too standardised and thus insufficient to indicate that a person is trustworthy. Meeting people in real-life settings is thus sometimes required to fully establish trust a host or guest. The real-life connection can occur by meeting people to give or receive keys or just by welcoming someone in the

accommodation. As explained by Ben, such an encounter increases the feeling of safety and helps to increase the trustworthiness of a host:

Ben: *"I mean, I need to meet a person in front of the house or maybe inside the house and then he opens the door, welcome me into the house. That's what I usually expect from Airbnb. So I don't feel safe if there is something more intermediated, more without the presence of a person than... I mean... It's already automated using Airbnb if also I have to receive the keys from Airbnb that's too much for me. I need to have an interaction with a person. I mean, it's complex what I say, but it's like... it's fine to have a platform (....). But then I need a human interaction to have more safety. I need to know that there is one person accountable at least for my stay."*

PEER REVIEWS

The peer reviews are reported to be an essential source of hosts and guests' trustworthiness. Peers, who are the users of a certain platform, use the review system to provide recommendations about a specific host or guest who they have had an exchange with. Hence, peer reviews provide information about the host or guest, but are generated by other users of the platform. Peer reviews contrast with *personal information*, which is instead generated by the host or guest him- or herself. As Raphael observes, users' trustworthiness is built and developed online as they accumulate more reviews.

Raphael: *"Yeah, definitely, and that is why I don't book a place at people who doesn't have a lot of references. And that's why I also try to collect some references on my way, like with my CouchSurfing experiences, like just once in awhile. So there is like trust within the platform. So I would say that the platform provides the trust, you don't have to establish it so much. After you have like the first 10, five or ten references it gets a lot easier than in the beginning. Because people can see that you are trustworthy. And people would have been writing about you, like how you are a nice guy and bla bla bla. Whatever. And I also only choose places at hosts who have a lot of references. So if I can't find a place at like the top five people, I would just book a hostel. Because of the trust. I would never be so desperate that I would book at place somebody who had zero references and rarely logged in, although he said, yeah you can come to my place. I would maybe not do that."*

Raphael's words also point out the fundamental role that reviews play in the establishment of trust towards a host or guest. Like all other respondents, Raphael always uses peer reviews to assess people's trustworthiness. The more positive reviews, the more trustworthy a host or guest becomes. Moreover, he would never trust someone with no reviews. This is also shared by the majority of respondents, who explain that they deliberately avoid hosts or guests with

zero reviews. Some respondents even look primarily for negative reviews to filter out untrustworthy hosts or guest as well as to know what to expect from those people at the very least. For instance, Gabriel asserts:

Gabriel: "So, like, I mainly look at bad reviews. I filter the bad reviews and look at them. And so that I have, that I know what to expect at the very least. If they say we waited, if I see a review that says we had to wait for an hour and a half outside waiting for him to come getting us the key, or something. Then I would probably choose someone else."

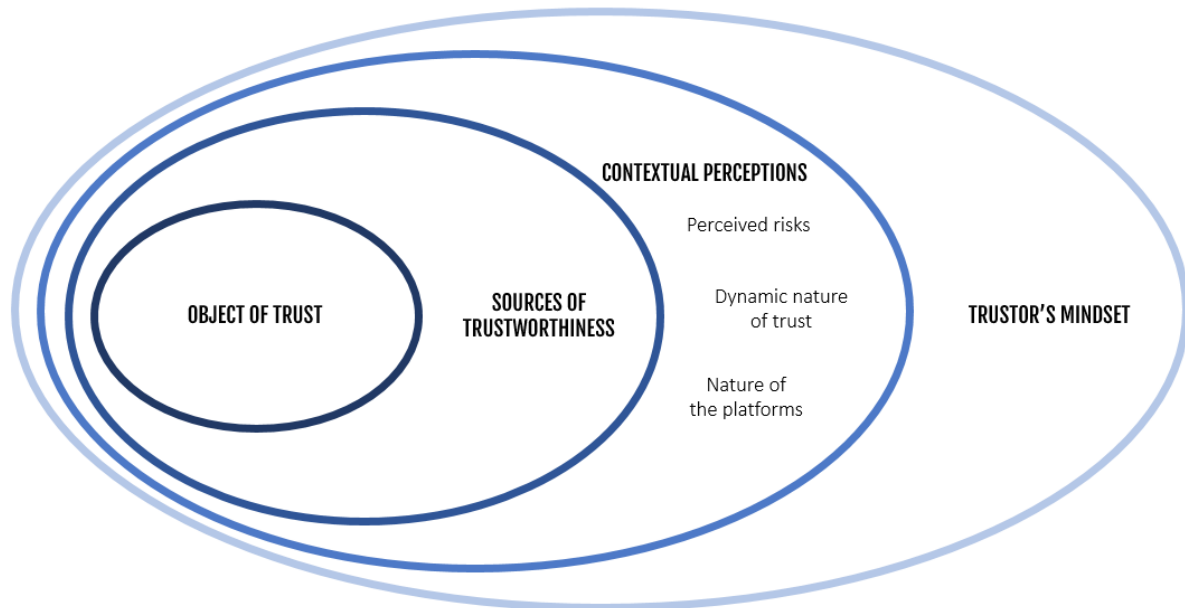
Some respondents, however, are slightly sceptical about the reliability of reviews on accommodation sharing platforms. They usually notice that the majority of reviews are positive, which convey a perception that reviews are biased and do not always reflect people's real experiences. Nonetheless, even the most sceptical respondents still use reviews to assess the trustworthiness of a person. Reviews are in fact believed to offer a depiction of the experiences that other users had with a certain host or guest. As stated by Francis, reviews provide a more objective information than what the host or guest writes him- or herself:

Francis: "Yeah I really think so but I think it's a different type of trust like because in my case it was not necessary the trust to the host, it was more trust to people who rated the host somehow. Because my impression was if they had a good experience and they would probably have a more objective view of what their staying than the host who offer the place obviously. So it was more trust for me based on the recommendation than what the host wrote himself on Airbnb."

4.3 LAYER THREE: CONTEXTUAL PERCEPTIONS

This layer reflects situational trust-related aspects related to the context of accommodation sharing. As illustrated in *Figure 6*, three themes are identified: *perceived risks*, *dynamic nature of trust* and *nature of the platforms*. *Perceived risks* are a necessary component of trust as they represent a major reason for why respondents need to establish trust. The *dynamic nature of trust* deals with how respondent's personal experiences in using accommodation sharing platforms shape the perception how trust is established over time. The *nature of the platforms* relate to how the perception of a platform can influence the establishment of trust when they engage in the exchange.

Figure 6: The “contextual perceptions” layer



PERCEIVED RISKS

The *perceived risks* are found to be a central concept when respondents establish trust. Such risks mainly derive from the uncertainty of situations and contexts that are peculiar to accommodation sharing settings. As trust represents the willingness to take risk (cf. section 2.3.1 *The concept of trust*), risks clearly represent a fundamental component when people establish trust. The theme *perceived risks* relate to the different *types of risks* involved in accommodation sharing. Respondents perceive risks involved in accommodation sharing in different ways, thus suggesting that risks represent a perception that is person-specific and context dependent.

The risks perceived by respondents entail some degree of uncertainty, for which some unexpected events might or might not happen. Respondents are concerned about six main types of risks when they engage in accommodation sharing platforms: 1) *Scammers*, 2) *Reality-expectations mismatch*, 3) *Damage or theft*, 4) *Unpredictability of host's behaviour*, 5) *Personal safety*, 6) *Lack of interpersonal chemistry* and 7) *Time consuming*. These risks range from a more concrete nature (e.g. damage and theft) to a more abstract nature (e.g. lack of interpersonal chemistry).

Using an online platform involves the risk to face *scammers*, who are people that use fake identities on the internet to deceive other users. Thus, respondents are concerned about the possibility that the person they interact is not real.

When guests look for a place to stay, they are concerned about the chance that the apartment will not look like it is advertised by the host. Thus, guests face a risk of a *reality-expectations mismatch*. In particular, the pictures of the apartment might not reflect how the apartment look in reality. The reality-expectations mismatch is also linked to the overall experience of accommodation sharing. For instance, respondents report the risk that an experience might not be as authentic or adventurous as they expected or as it was advertised by the host.

The *risk of damage or theft* of some valuable objects is also frequently mentioned. For instance, hosts have to deal with the uncertainty deriving from potential carelessness or misbehaviour of guests, who might break or steal something valuable in the apartment.

The *unpredictability of host's behaviour* represents an important risk when choosing an accommodation sharing platform over more traditional accommodation options such as hotels and hostels. This unpredictability is for instance linked to the possibility of hosts cancelling the reservation of accommodation or do not even show up deliver the keys of the apartment. Even though there might be an option to get refunded through Airbnb, the consumer risk that the vacation might still be compromised due to the unpredictable behaviours of the host.

Risks related to *personal safety* are often acknowledged as well, but they are considered more likely to happen mainly by women travelling alone. In fact, female respondents expressed some concerns about the likelihood of meeting “creepy” men. This was also due to rumours of bad stories about women using accommodation sharing platforms.

Another type of perceived risk is the *lack of interpersonal chemistry* between a host and a guest. Respondents are concerned about the likelihood of meeting hosts or guests they can create personal connection and bond with. For instance, many couchsurfers express their concerns

about the possibility of encountering free-riders, which in this particular context are people who take advantage of the platform just to get free accommodation.

Finally, respondents report how *time consuming* it can be to use Airbnb and Couchsurfing compared to using hotels and hostels. The risk of wasting time is especially perceived by hosts, who have to deal with the uncertainty of receiving guests that are difficult to manage and have many pretentious requests. Thus, the unpredictability of interacting with strangers may lead respondents to waste time with unnecessary or annoying formalities, making time consuming issues, due to unpredictability in interacting with strangers, an important risk.

DYNAMIC NATURE OF TRUST

The personal experiences of respondents in using accommodation sharing platforms shape the perception of how trust is established over time. In particular, trust towards a certain object develops over time based on such experiences. Respondents point out how the lack of experience with a certain platform create greater uncertainties, thus making trust more difficult to establish for first-time users. However, after gaining experience with the platform, trust becomes more easy to establish and usually develops over time. Respondents emphasise that they were more nervous as well as more concerned about certain risks when they refer to the first time they used Airbnb or Couchsurfing. This, for instance, emerge in the words of Olivia and Susan:

Olivia: *"I feel pretty confident now I think. Even though I have both bad and positive experiences. Yeah."*

Interviewer: *"When you say now, what has changed?"*

Olivia: *"I think the first time I was a little like 'ehw', you know, you used to be in a hotel where everything is in order, and now you are just renting another person's apartment. Like, it is a very personal thing, for me at least... To go into somebody else's home. But after the first time, I understood the concept and it was fine."*

Susan: *"Yeah, in the beginning I was more careful about, I would never give out my address, for example. And I don't, actually I never do that. But in the beginning I made sure that we met at a public place and I walked with them to my house, around 15 minutes walk [laughing] so I could have the possibility to just know them a bit. And if they just seemed too weird, or I felt something was wrong, I could always, you know, come up with something like "my grandmother is very sick [laughing] and I can't host you. So yeah, yeah."*

Interviewer: *"But today you are not meeting people, or?"*

Susan: *"Yeah, I still do. But I'm more like, they can maybe... because I only host people I have a good feeling about. So I can, in the beginning I wouldn't give them my phone number and that is something that I'm, yeah, don't worry that much about anymore. And maybe I will tell them that I live on this street, and we can meet outside the shop if I'm in a hurry when I'm going to meet them. So I think I became a bit more loose about all these things."*

Both Susan and Olivia express how they became less concerned about using accommodation sharing platforms over time. Susan was more careful in assessing the trustworthiness of her guest in the beginning. Her experience with being a host on Couchsurfing increased her familiarity with the concept, which also increased her trust in guests generally. Nonetheless, when respondents seek to trust the host or guest, an initial formation of trust is always required, as each new exchange involves dealing with a new stranger. While this makes trust towards a guest or host more difficult to establish, respondents also believe that previous bad experiences with one host or guest do not influence the next one. This means that if a host or guest is revealed to be untrustworthy in one occasion, it is not necessarily inferred that also the next host or guest cannot be trusted. Maddie explains how she considers each encounter with a new person as an isolated evaluation of that person:

Interviewer: *"Or... would a bad experience like that impact your kind of willingness to use Airbnb again, or... it just doesn't matter?"*

Maddie: *"No, I mean... it made me think a little bit more sceptically about things like ratings. But I mean it doesn't impact like... I would use it again, like, for sure. Maybe, you can be a little bit more picky depending on, you know. But, no I mean, I look at everything as kind of individual situation so... you know just because she was like that it doesn't mean that everybody would be. But I see how people might be like, you know... slightly put off or whatever. But, I mean, I'm not. I'm already looking at Airbnb in Miami also."*

The dynamic process of trust formation, however, differs based on the object of trust. When the trusted object is a company, after an initial formation, trust develops over time and it is more likely to increase as the object of trust remains the same. For instance, the more consumers accumulate experiences with a particular company, the more they perceive it trustworthy:

Ben: *"(...) I mean I'm starting thinking less about who's on the opposite side and more about Airbnb but still trust a lot in Airbnb than what I was doing at the beginning so more thinking about being worried about the person. Now I'm... knowing reviews, all the controls, the checks that they do, maybe they require you driver licence, or whatever, for*

both the host and the guest so now I'm less concerned about the C2C interaction and more my interaction with Airbnb... but, basically... right now I have a lot of trust on Airbnb."

NATURE OF THE PLATFORMS

Respondents point out how different perceptions regarding the nature of the platform to be used further influence why and how trust is established. The nature of a platform strongly depends on whether or not money is involved in the exchanges within such platform. The platforms that were explored in this study are characterised by either a for-profit (Airbnb) or non-profit (Couchsurfing) nature. In the former, money is involved in the exchange among users, while in the latter no monetary exchanges are involved. The involvement of money in the exchange seems to set greater commitment for both parties, thus decreasing the perceived risks and facilitating the establishment of trust. In fact, respondents believe that the involvement of money conveys a perception of security and transparency in the exchange. Kevin and Hannah's words express this idea:

Kevin: "I think it is very big factor that it is paid. So that money is involved. Because I feel if it's a service that is paid, then you can also trust it more, because I feel like okay, it's an economic transaction, so there has to be certain criteria or certain measures keep the whole thing safe. And for example with CouchSurfing I would be more, I would questioning myself, "okay is that person actually opening the door, is he or she there? Are they really like bound to their promise of taking me in?", because I didn't pay anything. It is more like they do me a favour. So in that term, I think money is very important to secure that... It's actually more like a contract between the two parties that is kept."

Hannah: "I don't know how many similar platforms there is. So I would guess for me it would be between Airbnb, hotels, hostels bla bla bla and CouchSurfing. I think, maybe I picture Airbnb safer than CouchSurfing, just because you kind of pay for it. So you should expect something more, and I think you have more rights when you pay for it."

As explained by Kevin, money creates an economic transaction that represents a sort of contract between the host and the guest. Conversely, when no money is involved, the perception is that the other person might feel less incentivised to provide a service or even show up. For this reason, some respondents associate greater risks to the Couchsurfing platform. Airbnb, instead, is usually perceived as more safe due to the need of monetary transactions. The presence or absence of money thus make the nature of the platform different. The two platforms are perceived fundamentally different by all respondents. Airbnb is a *business-focused* platform where people want to find a good accommodation. As a result, Airbnb is often compared to hotels which are accommodation-oriented as well. Couchsurfing, instead, has a greater focus focused on meeting people and it is thus *human-focused* platform. It

therefore naturally follows that Couchsurfing is usually compared to hostels, where the possibility of meeting people is emphasised as well. Maddie and Quinn's words are particularly representative of how respondents generally talked about the differences between Airbnb and Couchsurfing:

Maddie: *"I mean, if you use Couchsurfing then it's completely different criteria for me. Then it's all very much like, I would say person. Whereas when I use the Airbnb is more about the place."*

Quinn: *"Well, Airbnb is totally different than couchsurfing because it's monetized so there's not the human spirit in it. Couchsurfing is the human spirit in them. So like something which brings you value and Airbnb is more like business. So the two is totally different."*

From a broader perspective, however, most respondents perceive collaborative consumption platforms as less trustworthy than traditional hospitality services such as hotels or hostels. The lower trustworthiness is attributed to the fact that respondents feel more certain about what they will obtain from hotels or hostels. Differently, with accommodation sharing they deal with private individuals, which increases the unpredictability and thus the risks compared to dealing a business employee:

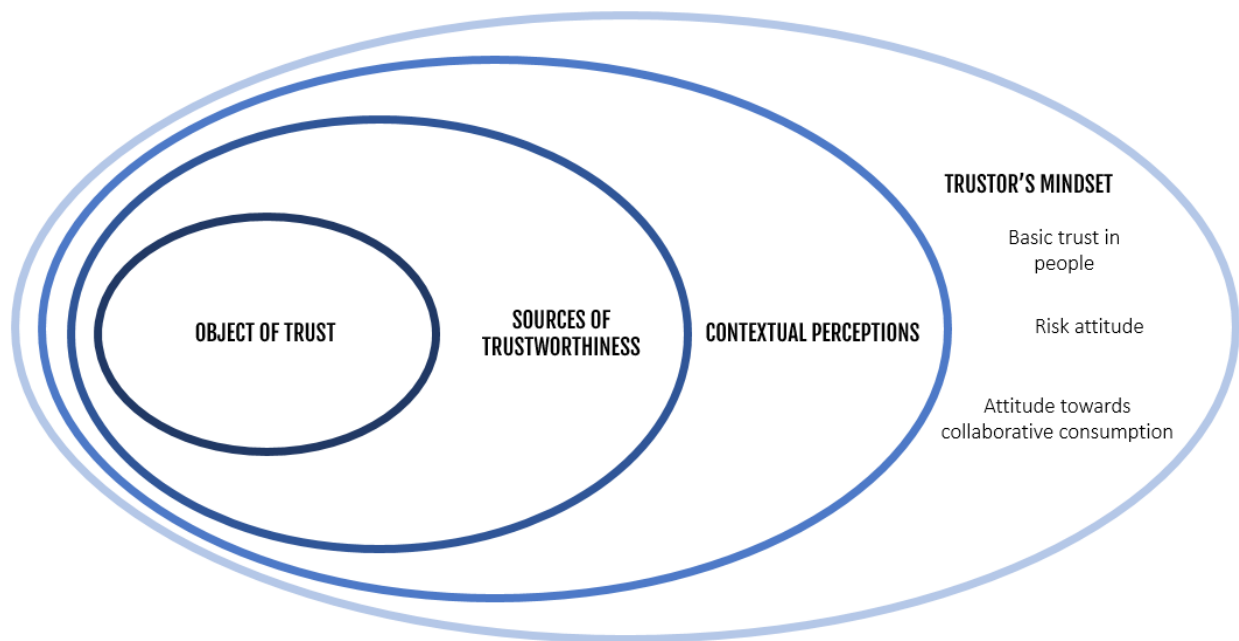
Olivia: *"What I don't like it is a bit more risky. You don't know, like, in a hotel everything is in order. But in Airbnb apartments you never know, because you don't know the host. And, you don't know how the clean it is, for example, the first apartment I was a guest in in Milan, it didn't look like the pictures on the internet."*

This implies that the peer-to-peer nature of collaborative consumption platforms is generally perceived as riskier, as respondents naturally compare them with hotels and hostels.

4.4 LAYER FOUR: TRUSTOR'S MINDSET

This layer relates to people's general predispositions to think and interpret situations in life. Such predispositions constitute the mindset of a trustor, which influences why and how respondents establish trust. Three themes identified, as illustrated in *Figure 7* are: *basic trust in people*, *risk attitude* and *attitude towards collaborative consumption*.

Figure 7: The “trustor's mindset” layer



BASIC TRUST IN PEOPLE

Respondents refer to the importance to have a sort of basic trust in people when using accommodation sharing platforms. Having basic trust in people means that respondents have a general belief that they can trust the strangers who they interact with through the platform. The level of basic trust seems to differ significantly across respondents. At one extreme, respondents express almost no basic trust in people, while at the other respondents affirmed to have very high basic trust in people. For instance, Olivia does not trust people on a general level:

Olivia: *“Because again, I don’t trust people that much, when I don’t know them. (...) No. You can’t trust anyone, can’t you, these days [laughing]. No, again, I really try to screen the people that I host, and again, it’s more mature people who ask me a lot of different things. Like where to go and which museums and like, nice and calm stuff. Yeah.*

Everybody, like most people have been so sweet and nice, so no. But you never know. You never know."

The absence of a basic trust in people makes Olivia an extremely selective host, who carefully screens her potential guests to assess their trustworthiness. Quinn, instead, maintains to have lot of trust in people on a basic level:

Quinn: "I'm open-minded and I like to travel and I like to meet people. I think that's it. A lot of people are afraid to surf or host because they don't trust. But I really trust people on a basic level. So, I don't have problem with that and I just want to experience how it is."

The above examples represent extreme cases. Respondents, however, also present more various levels of basic trust in people, thus placing themselves in several midway positions. Basic trust in people is interrelated with the establishment of trust towards a host or guest. In particular, respondents with a greater basic trust in people seems to establish trust towards a host or a guest more easily. Respondents who generally trust people also tend to prioritise trusting strangers over trusting companies.

While basic trust in people can depend on many factors, respondents often link their level of basic trust in people to their cultural and educational background. For instance, Quinn explains how the cultural context, represented by the country where people have been raised, could be a decisive factor when it comes to establish trust on a general level:

Quinn: "I can trust in something which varies people to people. I think trust is something you cannot really define. It really depends on the person itself. If you've travelled a lot maybe, you have like... I generally have a trust in people which is not good all the time because you can get a lot of... rejections or, you know? But, I think it's something that comes from maybe your culture, maybe your upbringing, your connection with your mum, dad... I think it's quite complex how you trust. I think it's really important to see the culture. For example in China, if you know that, people are really relying on friendship because the government is not trustworthy. So... to make business in China your first have to be friends with them. After that, you can do business because they trust you."

Patricia from Argentina also talks about a cultural shock when a Danish host on Couchsurfing gave her the key of the apartment. Such immediate trust in a stranger would be unlikely in her native country:

Patricia: *"Ehm...So I couldn't believe when they gave me like the keys of the house. I was like... because I come from Argentina, you know? In Argentina you don't trust very much in people in general. So yeah, I mean. For me it was very weird and I was thinking "how is Denmark?" like... Is it like that? All the people trust so much in each other and it was like... but yeah, everything went really well, (...)"*

RISK ATTITUDE

The risk attitude is found to be an important element of the mindset of each respondent to understand whether and to which extent trust is developed when people engage in accommodation sharing. The risk attitude relates to the general willingness of an individual to take risks. Overall, it emerges that such willingness to take risks shapes how respondents establish trust when engaging in accommodation sharing. Respondents are found to be either more *risk-takers* or more *risk-averse*. Risk-takers are eager to take risks that requires trusts, while risk-averse individuals want to minimise risks. These two contrasting risk attitudes entails different characteristics and have a different impact on the ease with which trust is established, as illustrated in *Table X*. The words of Maddie and Jessica help to exemplify such differences. Maddie defines herself a risk-taker and she can more easily establish it due to her propensity to take risks. By contrast, Jessica is not willing to take risks and thus believes it is more difficult to establish trust, which thus represents a bigger concern:

Maddie: *"Well, the thing is that I'm quite much of a risk-taker anyway so I'm not really put off by things like that" (...) Ok well I mean I've used it [Airbnb] five times, roughly five times...And each time I was like "Ehm... I'll just go for... I'll just go for it"*

Jessica: *"No, I'm more the kind of person that don't take risk, as long as the, like... how do you say... I don't have time pressure or the pressure on me. I'm usually very cautious when I make decision. I think trust is really important. If I would have like more time for CouchSurfing, I think, like trust would have been the biggest issue, like with the comments and everything. You trust someone more, if you see that other people are also have good experiences with them. Yeah, if there is no time issues, or money, even money you can, like, I think I wouldn't take risk if it was cheaper, I think I would go for something safer and more expensive..."*

Table 6: Risk attitude characteristics

	Risk-taker	Risk-averse
Propensity to take risk	Willing to take risk	Want to minimise risks
Basic trust in people	High	Low
Ease of establishing trust	Easy	Difficult

The risk attitude of respondents is also strongly linked to someone's basic trust in people. Risk-takers generally present greater basic trust in people, which again makes it easier for them to establish trust. Conversely, respondents who have lower basic trust in people are more concerned about risks in general. This also makes these respondents less willing to trust, as greater perceived risk leads to a lower willingness to take those risks. A common way for risk-averse hosts to minimise risks is by removing valuables from their apartment. In fact, respondents perceive risks to be lower with fewer valuables left in the apartment. Olivia would not even be renting out on Airbnb if she had expensive furniture. In fact, she perceives that as a too high risk, which she is not willing to take due to her low basic trust in people:

Olivia: "I trust them with the things I leave behind. I mean, I think that is fine. But again, if I had nicer stuff... like designer furnitures or designer TV bla bla bla, I may not use Airbnb... Or even rent out my apartment."

ATTITUDE TOWARDS COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Respondent's attitude towards collaborative consumption is an important element that shapes the mindset of individuals and the way trust is established in peer-to-peer exchanges. Respondents have a very positive attitude towards collaborative consumption, which eventually influences how they assess the trustworthiness of companies and host or guests. Jessica explains how she feels more safe engaging in accommodation sharing as she has become more used to collaborative consumption:

Jessica: "Yeah, I think I feel confident with sharing economy, sharing your house and everything, because now it's been there for a while, so I think like, it's well in place. But if it would have been like in the beginning, maybe I would have been more hesitant to use it. Like five years ago, something. But now, after having used it, after using it for a few years, I think it works well."

As sharing economy (i.e. collaborative consumption) becomes more normal, the willingness to accept the need to establish trust seems to increase as well. This is particularly relevant to the generation of Millennials, who constitute the sample of this study. In fact, respondents view themselves as a generation that is particularly comfortable with the concept of collaborative consumption. They have grown up with sharing economy and feel it is a natural way to make exchanges. The overall familiarity of the Internet is also relevant in this context as collaborative consumption occurs through online platforms:

Francis: "At least in my generation I think there's a lot of trust when it comes to digital platforms, when it comes to sharing economy. Where that's just something that you're

used to if you've grown up with it somehow and... you trust that people like... want to do the best for you."

Francis's words show how the components of people's mindset are intertwined and influence each other. Here, the attitude towards collaborative consumption is related to the theme of basic trust in people. In fact, respondents generally agree that a minimum degree of basic trust towards people is needed when using collaborative consumption platforms, as reported by Albert and Susan:

Albert: "But yeah I mean, once you decide to use a platform such as Airbnb of course, I think you have to have the mindset to say "I trust people", because there are no points otherwise in using such a platform"

Susan: "I think you have to trust people in general. Because otherwise you would not sign up on this page. There is a lot of people who don't understand this. And for me, it is kind of the opposite, because I have had so many good experiences. And I think I, just, I have no reason not to trust people. In general. But because it is the internet, like every other, on Facebook, on Tinder, whatever, you always take care of yourself. You try not to be too naive."

PART 2 THE RELATION BETWEEN CONSUMER MOTIVES AND TRUST

In *Part 2* we find that consumer motives to engage in accommodation sharing shape how respondents perceive or relate to certain trust-related themes in the four layers in *Part 1* of the *Findings*. This section therefore serves to answer the second research question of the thesis.

We divide *Part 2* in two sections. First, we briefly present the three type of motives that we find based on the typology of consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption developed in section 2.2.2 *Motives to engage in collaborative consumption*. Second, we illustrate how such motives influence why and how the respondents establish trust within sharing accommodation contexts. To do so, we conceptualise a framework presenting three idealised trustor archetypes: the *utilitarian trustor*, the *experiential trustor* and the *social trustor*.

4.5 MOTIVES TO ENGAGE IN ACCOMMODATION SHARING

Three main motives to engage in peer-to-peer accommodation sharing platforms were found. The systematic literature review on consumers' motives to engage in collaborative consumption performed in section 2.2.2 *Motives to engage in collaborative consumption* provided a typology that served to categorise respondents based on their specific motive. Our findings confirm the existence of *utilitarian*, *experiential* and *social* motives in the specific context of accommodation sharing platforms. Examples of quotes that illustrate respondents' belongingness to the three categories of motives are provided in *Appendix E*.

Utilitarian motives are found to be primarily linked to the monetary benefits of engaging in accommodation sharing. Hosts want to *earn money* by renting their accommodation, while guests want *save money*, as they deem such services cheaper than more traditional alternatives like hotels. Moreover, respondents highly value the *practicality* and *freedom* of having having access an entire apartment, and especially a kitchen, while travelling and their own apartment.

Experiential motives mainly stem from respondents' desire to have a cultural, local and authentic experience when travelling. By living in apartments of some locals, respondents can truly experience the way of living that is typical of a certain culture or country. Respondents are also driven by the thrill of *adventure* deriving from the uncertainty of sharing apartments with strangers, which can make something unexpected and exciting happen.

Social motives derive from the desire to *meet new people*, who are deemed to be like-minded and interesting. The main driver in such motive category is thus the seek of connection and

creation of personal bonds with strangers. In the case of Couchsurfing, respondents often perceive such motive as a personal lifestyle or even an ideology to follow.

Some respondents also mentioned topics related to sustainability, optimisation of resource sharing and macro-economic benefits. These were all considered as added benefits, but not a driver of the respondents to engage in peer-to-peer accommodation sharing. We also found that people using non-profit platforms like Couchsurfing are mainly driven by social or experiential motives, while people using commercial platforms like Airbnb are driven by utilitarian and experiential motives.

Another important finding to be highlighted is the presence of respondents with multiple motives. These “hybrid” consumers are usually driven by one primary motive. However, they also have a secondary motive (for an overview of respondents’ primary and secondary motives see *Appendix C*). These hybrid respondents presented trust-related characteristics that varied from people with only one clear motive. A unique and extreme example of a hybrid consumer is Raphael, who uses Couchsurfing for three motives. He is primarily driven by experiential motives, but also partially driven by both utilitarian and social motives:

Raphael: *“One reason is to definitely save money. And another reason is for the adventure of it. Just because, you are not sure what is going to happen. As opposed to booking a hostel, you kind of know what you can expect. When you are using CouchSurfing you can meet somebody who is really cool and will take you weird places, and you’ll meet awesome people. Or they can be like just a host, who says “here is your couch” see you tomorrow. So I like the adventure of that. And the uncertainty. And the last and third thing is to just get closer to local experiences, like understanding the culture better and I think that is easier when I live at somebody who is from that place, and live in the area. Than staying at a hotel.”*

4.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF TRUSTOR ARCHETYPES

The three motives described in the previous paragraph are used in this section to illustrate how different trust-related aspects presented in *Part 1* differ based on such motives. We create and describe three main archetypes of trustors, each with different characteristics: a *utilitarian trustor*, an *experiential trustor* and a *social trustor*. In particular, we have developed a framework to emphasise the differences between the three trustor archetypes, as shown in *Table 7* below. The following paragraphs will elaborate on the characteristics of each of the trustor archetypes.

Table 7: Conceptual framework of trustor archetypes

	Utilitarian trustor	Experiential trustor	Social trustor
Decision-making approach	Rational	Rational-emotional	Emotional
Main object of trust	Company	Host or guest	Host or guest
Characteristic of trustee			
<i>Company</i>	Well-known, safe	Well-known	Community-focused
<i>Host or guest</i>	Real, reliable	Helpful, friendly	Like-minded
Main sources of trustworthiness			
<i>Company</i>	Company reputation, Safety measures	Company reputation	Brand ideology
<i>Host or guest</i>	Peer reviews	Peer reviews	Peer reviews, Personal information, Human interaction
Main perceived risks	Scammer, damage or theft, time consuming	Reality- expectations mismatch	Lack of interpersonal chemistry
Risk attitude	Risk-averse	Risk-neutral	Risk-taking
Basic trust in people	Low	High	Very high

We emphasise that the framework is a conceptualisation of most extreme cases in which a certain motive influences the establishment of trust as well as the perceptions of risks. To conceptualise the framework, we listed the most important trust-related aspects that emerged in the findings in *Part 1*. We then considered all respondents with the same primary motive. Only the most dominant characteristics that were shared among those respondents are

considered to characterise the archetypes. It is therefore important to acknowledge that the three archetypes of trustors are not descriptions of segments with similar trust characteristics. Instead, the trustor archetypes are an idealised conceptualisation, describing characteristics that are more likely to be evident in consumers with one strong primary motive.

Before presenting each trustor archetype in detail, we present the main elements that compose our framework. The first column lists the *seven* main criteria based on which each trustor archetype differentiates from the others. The first criterion refers to the overall *decision-making approach* of consumers. Respondents are characterised by different overall decision-making approaches, which are also reflected in their motive (cf. section 2.2.2 *Motives to engage in collaborative consumption*). Such approaches influence why and how respondents establish trust when engaging in accommodation sharing. The rational approach entails a careful assessment of the risks and benefits of establishing a trust relationship. The emotional approach, instead, has a more affective nature for which decisions to engage in a trust relationship are rather driven by feelings. The other six criteria are based on some of the themes presented in *Part 1 of Findings*. The *main object of trust* refers to which trustee consumers prioritize to trust. The *characteristic of the trustee* points out which criteria are most important to evaluate the trustworthiness of a certain trustee. The *main sources of trustworthiness* refer to which source of trustworthiness is most important to evaluate the *characteristics of for the trustee*. The *main perceived risk(s)* lists the risks the trustor is most concerned about. The *risk attitude* represents the willingness of the trustor to take risks. Finally, *basic trust in people* represents the general predisposition of an individual to trust people and its level can range from low to very high. Such level is to be intended in relative terms, as it serves to point out differences between trustors rather than provide an “absolute” value of it.

THE UTILITARIAN TRUSTOR

The utilitarian trustor is driven by utilitarian motives and adopts a rational decision-making approach with the aim to maximize their utility in terms of obtaining the greatest monetary or practical value from the service they receive. This view influences why and how they establish trust when engaging in peer-to-peer accommodation sharing.

Table 8: Trust-related characteristics of the utilitarian trustor

	Utilitarian trustor
Decision-making approach	Rational
Main object of trust	Company
Characteristic of trustee	
<i>Company</i>	Well-known, safe
<i>Host or guest</i>	Real, reliable
Main sources of trustworthiness	
<i>Company</i>	Company reputation, Safety measures
<i>Host or guest</i>	Peer reviews
Main perceived risks	Scammer, damage or theft, time consuming
Risk attitude	Risk-averse
Basic trust in people	Low

The utilitarian trustor mainly relies on trust towards a *company*, which is thus his or her main object of trust:

Ben: *“Exactly, I standardise trust I mean... I don’t have to look at you in your own details of the person but I can standardise trust and I have it on the Airbnb platform that I know will perform all the checks about you on my behalf so...”*

The utilitarian trustor perceives a company as more reliable than private individuals. Hence, it is believed important that the company becomes the main trustee responsible and accountable

for the peer-to-peer exchange. At the extreme case, the utilitarian trustor is not even concerned about knowing who the host or guest is, as it is a duty of the company to ensure that users in the platforms are trustworthy. In order to be trusted, a company should be *well-known* as well as perceived *safe*. To assess the trustworthiness of a company, the utilitarian trustor relies on the *company reputation* as well as some *safety measures* offered by that company. For instance, a high amount of users makes a platform both well-known and more safe, thus making such company more trustworthy:

Ben: *"I know there is Airbnb, like they have a good reputation, good brand, good everything, so... I mean, they have a strong image, I trust them. As far as I'm... in my current experience I trust them and I'm not gonna use anything else to find rooms or apartments. So, I've never used other platforms so... I mean, the reason this one is still... I like the fact that everybody is using it, everybody... so the more people are using it, the more probably is safer, the more is controlled so that's why I'm not using maybe smaller platforms (...)"*

As for the safety measures, the importance of the type of measures is perceived differently among utilitarian trustors. However, there is a shared agreement on the relevance of the review system. Companies are deemed more safe and thus trustworthy when providing a reliable review system within which users cannot cheat by, for instance, making fake reviews or deleting negative ones.

While the utilitarian trustors mainly rely on trusting the company, in some occasions they also deem important to trust the host or guest. In order to be trusted, people should first of all seem *real* and then also appear to be *reliable*. In fact, the utilitarian trustor wants to deal with calm, respectful and easy-to-manage hosts and guests. Thus, although at a quite superficial level, it becomes important to assess hosts or guests' trustworthiness. To do so, hosts mainly rely on *peers reputation*, aligned with the fact that they consider the review system trustworthy. However, when the utilitarian trustor is a host, he or she also needs to assess the personal information and to contact the guests requesting a stay. In this way, hosts are able to discriminate against certain types of people who are deemed less reliable and thus not trustworthy. Groups of young people are mostly discriminated, while couples or families are preferred. The high selectivity in choosing guests clearly aligns with the rational decision-making approach of the utilitarian trustors. Hosts furthermore discriminate to minimize the risk of potential damages to their accommodation as well as save time by dealing with easy-to-manage guests.

One main risk perceived by the utilitarian trustors is the existence of *scammers*, which explains the importance of assessing a person's realness. The risk of *damage or theft* is also perceived high, which instead explains why the utilitarian trustors seek exchanges with reliable people. Finally, they are concerned about how *time consuming* it can be to engage in accommodation sharing (e.g. wasting time in managing difficult guests). These risks have a strong impact on how and why the utilitarian trustor's establish trust. For instance, as these risks mainly stem from the uncertainty of other users' behaviour, the utilitarian trustor is less inclined to trust them and rather prioritize trust towards companies). This also stems from the fact that utilitarian trustors are generally *risk-averse*, as they often try to minimise rather than take risks:

Jessica: *"(...) I'm more the kind of person that don't take risk, as long as the, like... how do you say... I don't have time pressure or the pressure on me. I'm usually very cautious when I make decision. I think trust is really important. If I would have like more time for Couchsurfing, I think, like trust would have been the biggest issue, like with the comments and everything. You trust someone more, if you see that other people are also have good experiences with them. Yeah, if there is no time issues, or money, even money you can, like, I think I wouldn't take risk if it was cheaper, I think I would go for something safer and more expensive..."*

As explained by Jessica, even a substantial monetary benefit would not make the utilitarian trustor rely on a certain trustee when risks are perceived to be too high. To minimise risks, guests make very careful decisions and seek the most reliable hosts based on the review system. For instance, they do not trust a host or guest with zero or negative reviews. Hosts also bring their valuables with them when they rent out their apartment to avoid taking big risks.

The utilitarian trustor also presents a relatively *low basic trust in people* compared to experiential and social trustors. Utilitarian trustors do have some basic trust in people, because they deem it necessary when interacting with strangers on accommodation sharing platforms. However, the relatively low basic trust in people enhances their risk-averse attitude, making trust even more difficult to establish for this particular type of archetype

THE EXPERIENTIAL TRUSTOR

The experiential trustor is driven by experiential motives. The experiential trustor adopts a *rational-emotional* decision-making approach. Hence, when engaging in accommodation sharing, the experiential trustors also base their decisions on feelings and not merely rely on rational assessments as utilitarian trustors do. The partly irrational nature of experiential trustors stems from their motive, which is driven by the desire to get an authentic and adventurous experience. This decision-making approach thus influences why and how they establish trust when engaging in accommodation sharing.

Table 9: Trust-related characteristics of the experiential trustor

	Utilitarian trustor	Experiential trustor
Decision-making approach	Rational	Rational-emotional
Main object of trust	Company	Host or guest
Characteristic of trustee		
<i>Company</i>	Well-known, safe	Well-known
<i>Host or guest</i>	Real, reliable	Helpful, friendly
Main sources of trustworthiness		
<i>Company</i>	Company reputation, Safety measures	Company reputation
<i>Host or guest</i>	Peer reviews	Peer reviews
Main perceived risks	Scammer, damage or theft, time consuming	Reality-expectations mismatch
Risk attitude	Risk-averse	Risk-neutral
Basic trust in people	Low	High

The experiential trustor prioritises placing trust in a *host or guest* rather than in a company. As the host or guest becomes part of the service and thus a fundamental element of the authentic and adventurous experience that this trustor archetype seeks, a need to trust the person rather than the company seems to prevail:

Daniel: *"But... yeah, I mean... You put your trust into other people. I think that is what you do. And then Airbnb is the medium you trust them through."*

As Daniel points out, trusting people has central importance, while the company is rather the intermediary through which the host or guest can be trusted. In order to be trusted, the host or guest should be *helpful* and *friendly*, as these characteristics make the trustee more likely to provide the unique experience sought by the trustor. To assess the trustworthiness of a host or guest, the experiential trustor mainly relies on *peer reviews*. In particular, *reviews* are considered the most important source to evaluate the desired characteristics of a host:

Hannah: *"But I think it was most important for us when we looked at the rating how the guy that owned the apartment was, compared to like the facility or the apartment itself. So that was really important to us."*

Interviewer: *"What do you mean?"*

Hannah: *"Like that the person, they wrote positive things about the person, that he was really nice, he helped them out, he did everything he promised, like that kind of stuff. Instead of, yeah, the apartment has a coffee machine or whatever."*

The experiential trustor uses reviews to evaluate the past behaviour of the other person, thus obtaining an "impression" about the person. The faithfulness of reviews derives from the fact that they are based on people's previous experiences, which make them helpful to objectively understand how the host or guest is. Thus, reviews are trustworthy because of the peers who are writing them. This contrasts with how the utilitarian trustor perceives reviews, which are instead seen as a system that is reliable because the company behind it is deemed trustworthy. This further exemplifies that people at the center of the trust building process of experiential trustors.

Nonetheless, also trust towards the *company* is relevant. The experiential trustor finds it important that a company is well-known to be trusted, although this is not vital as for the utilitarian trustor. Also in this case, however, the trustworthiness of a company is mainly assessed through its reputation. However, the experiential trustor more strongly relies on word-of-mouth from close friends rather than looking at the number of users. Moreover, experiential trustors are prone to try smaller, less-known platforms, if they knew about their existence. Getting an authentic and adventurous experience is paramount, and such an experience depends on people. Thus, it is not as vital as for the utilitarian that a platform is big and thus safe, as long as the persons using such platforms can be trusted. For Daniel, even "bad" experiences might become a positive memory, after all:

Daniel: “(...) *And you can have good experiences and you can have bad experiences - but I mean even if it's a bad experience it's a good memory.*”

The main risk for an experiential trustor is to end up with a person that is not providing the *experience* that they seek and expect from engaging in accommodation sharing. Such risk can reflect the uncertainty due to the possible a *reality-expectations mismatch*, for which the experience might be not as authentic or adventurous as expected or advertised by the host. However, even if they acknowledge such risk, the experiential trustors are often willing to take it. In fact, they are *risk neutral*, because they take precautions, but some risk is also necessary as it makes the experience more exciting. This risk attitude is aligned with their generally *high* level of basic trust in people. A high basic trust in people also helps to decrease the risk aversity of experiential trustors, making trust easier to be established towards a host or guest.

THE SOCIAL TRUSTOR

The social trustor is driven by a social motive. The social trustor adopts an *emotional* decision-making approach, for which consumers base each choice mainly on their feelings:

Eva: "But, yeah... I try to get a feeling for the people, just yeah. I don't know... it's... it's difficult to explain... I just get a feeling about the whole thing and, yeah... then if I feel like "ok it's good" then I trust the people (...)"

Social trustors are driven by a desire to meet new and interesting people, which makes their emotional judgement more important than any rational assessment of the situation. This decision-making approach influences why and how they establish trust when engaging in accommodation sharing.

Table 10: Trust-related characteristics of the social trustor

	Utilitarian trustor	Experiential trustor	Social trustor
Decision-making approach	Rational	Rational-emotional	Emotional
Main object of trust	Company	Host or guest	Host or guest
Characteristic of trustee			
<i>Company</i>	Well-known, safe	Well-known	Community-focused
<i>Host or guest</i>	Real, reliable	Helpful, friendly	Like-minded
Main sources of trustworthiness			
<i>Company</i>	Company reputation, Safety measures	Company reputation	Brand ideology
<i>Host or guest</i>	Peer reviews	Peer reviews	Peer reviews, Personal information, Human interaction
Main perceived risks	Scammer, damage or theft, time consuming	Reality- expectations mismatch	Lack of interpersonal chemistry
Risk attitude	Risk-averse	Risk-neutral	Risk-taking
Basic trust in people	Low	High	Very high

Social trustors mainly rely on trust towards *hosts or guests* compared to the company. This mainly follows from the fact that they engage in accommodation sharing to meet new people. Hence, people are the most important object of trust.

In order to be trusted, the host or guest should be a *like-minded* person. In the context of accommodation sharing, like-minded means that the trustees must to be perceived as generally open-minded and have a passion to meet and bond with locals in the place they visit. This specific characteristic of the trustee also stems from the fact that social trustors do not trust people who seem to be free-riders, who use platforms like Couchsurfing just to get free accommodation. Susan, for instance, expresses her concerns about free-riders and indicates a need to identify the existence of some common values, good vibes with the the other person:

Susan: “(...) So I read if it's a personal message or if it's just a standard 'hey, I want to stay, I'm from Copenhagen.' Then it is just, okay good for you, but what.. There is a lot of new members on CouchSurfing who just believe that, 'oh, this is smart, I can stay for free.' But of course it is not like that. That would be too easy. Because people actually do it to get something out of it. Not money but experiences. So you want to have the, get an idea about, yeah, the people actually, yeah that you have something in common and values. That people want to spend time together, that... So I read if it's a personal message, if the person, yeah, if it's seems like they send out some good vibes somehow. Good energy. Yeah, and then I look at the profile, I look at their references if they have any. I think, if they don't have any references, they have to do something extra [laughing] to show that 'I'm new, but I'm actually...', yeah, what do you say, yeah that they are kind of serious about this. So I look at the profile, I read the profile, their interest, and if they seem positive, open-minded people that I could have something in common with. Read the references. Yeah, it is kind of, when you get so many requests, it gets important what the references say (...)”

Susan's words also illustrate that to assess the trustworthiness of a host or guest, social trustors rely on a wide range of sources. *Peer reviews* are, as for the other trustor archetypes, essential. However, the host or guest's *personal information* as well as *human interaction* acquire relevance as well. Online human interaction is believed to be a way to get a more personal feeling about the host or guest. Custom-made, personalised and longer messages often increase the trustworthiness of the person. Moreover, the style and accuracy of personal description as well as the presence of profile pictures help to establish trust.

Although social trustors deem it less vital to trust a company, they do not disregard to establish trust towards it. In particular, a company should be strongly *community-focused* in order to be

trusted. To assess the trustworthiness of a company, social trustors evaluate the *ideology* behind the brand community. The company is considered to be more trustworthy when a fit between the ideology and the personal values or mindset of the trustor exists.

The main risk perceived by social trustors is the *lack of interpersonal chemistry* with the host or guest. Aligned with their social motive, social trustors are mainly concerned about the likelihood of meeting people they cannot bond with on a personal and more intimate level. For instance, they are strongly concerned about whether the other person is a free rider, as explained in Susan's quote above, and how the host or guest is at a personal level. Social trustors acknowledge other risks involved in the peer-to-peer exchange, such as personal safety. Nonetheless, they affirm to be excited rather than worried of meeting strangers:

Liz: *"No, I'm excited. I'm excited about meeting someone new. And like, exactly like I said before, so when you meet them if you don't feel comfortable go to the local hostel, (...)"*

Thus, social trustors can be characterised as a *risk-takers*. They think it is exciting to take risks by trusting strangers. They view the act of trusting other people as a way to meet interesting people and they therefore actively seek to take risks. This high propensity to take risks is also driven by their *very high* basic trust in people, which social trustors see as a sort of requirement to engage in accommodation sharing. This is aligned with their social motive, for which it seems natural that if they strive to connect people they are also having a high general trust in people.

5

DISCUSSION

The discussion chapter is divided into three main sections. First, we discuss the findings of this study and compare the most relevant topics to existing literature on both trust and collaborative consumption. Second, we discuss both academic and managerial implications. Third, we discuss the limitations of the study and propose directions for future research.

5.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Overall, this thesis explores the concept of trust within collaborative consumption by providing insights on why and how consumers establish trust in peer-to-peer accommodation sharing settings. We show that consumers present several reasons and modes to establish trust, which primarily depend on which object they trust. The trustworthiness of such an object is evaluated through different sources. This evaluation is also shaped by various context-dependent perceptions and the mindset of each individual. Furthermore, consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption are found to frame and influence several aspects of consumers' trust-building process.

In this section we discuss the findings of this study. First, we briefly summarise and discuss the main conclusions with respect to *Part 1* of the *Findings* chapter, thus providing an answer to research question 1. Second, we briefly summarise and discuss the results of the conceptual framework developed in *Part 2* of the *Findings* chapter, thus providing an answer to research question 2. Third, we provide a brief reflection on how the academic perspectives influence how trust is being analysed.

EXPLORING TRUST IN COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Our study provides an exploration on why and how consumers establish trust when they engage in collaborative consumption. We find that consumers deem it most relevant to place trust into two main objects, but with varying degree. On the one hand, consumers prioritise trust towards the company providing the collaborative consumption platform. On the other hand, consumers prioritise trust towards the individuals they interact with, who in accommodation sharing settings are either a host or a guest. The establishment of trust towards either of the two objects depends on how consumers assess the trustworthiness of such objects. Trustworthiness of companies is assessed based on their reputation, the perceived effect of a platform's safety measures as well as the values embedded in the brand community and ideology of the company. Trustworthiness of people is instead assessed based on the personal information they themselves provide on the platforms (e.g. profile descriptions and pictures), the online or offline human interaction that is established during the exchange as well as the peer reviews reporting the experiences and evaluations on that person. Hence, our findings

indicate that trust within collaborative consumption is formed for different reasons and in different modes depending on what object a consumer seeks to trust.

We also find that the perception of the risks involved in collaborative consumption has an important role in the establishment of trust relationships. In particular, we identify different types of risks that are relevant in this context, ranging from a concrete nature (e.g. theft or damage of some objects) to a more abstract nature (e.g. lack of interpersonal chemistry among people). Moreover, we find that the perceptions of these risks vary over time. Our findings are therefore aligned with trust researchers' conceptualization of risk, which represents a perception (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395). Furthermore, trust has a dynamic nature, as it varies over time. This means that trust is more difficult to establish the first time a platform is used, but becomes easier as consumers accumulate positive experiences in using a certain platform or interacting with a certain type of people. Additionally, the nature of platforms, and in particular the perception that consumers have of them, influences why consumers prioritize to a company or an individual. The formation of trust is for instance shaped by whether a platform is perceived as having a business or human orientation. Finally, we find that the mindset of each consumer also shapes why and how he or she forms trust. In particular, consumers' risk attitudes and level of basic trust in people were shown to influence many of the trust-related aspects described above.

TWO MAIN OBJECTS OF TRUST: COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS

Collaborative consumption mainly differs from traditional business-to-consumer e-commerce because of peer-to-peer interaction among strangers. Existing literature therefore tend to emphasise the importance of trust among people (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Schor, 2014). However, we emphasize that a holistic understanding of trust in collaborative consumption needs a more inclusive and comprehensive view of who or what consumers seek to trust, which ultimately influence why and how trust is formed. This study reveals that, although consumers need to establish a certain level of trust towards strangers, trust towards the company may be equally and even more important to establish. This has also been found by Möhlmann (2016), who highlights the importance of trusting a company. Thus, both interpersonal trust (Rotter, 1967, McKnight & Chervany, 2001) and institutional trust (McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Möllering, 2006, p. 7) must be considered to fully understand the formation of trust in collaborative consumption.

In line with literature (Möhlmann, 2016; Botsman, 2017), we also find that higher trust in a company might increase the willingness to trust a stranger. However, trust towards these two objects is not necessarily established through a hierarchical and sequential process. Rather, our findings indicate that trust towards companies and people is established through a tangled and

chaotic process, where no existing order can be taken for granted. At the most extreme case, some consumers may directly seek to trust an individual without considering the company, while others may only trust a company without having a need to trust an individual. Our findings are thus aligned with Hawlitschek et al.'s (2016a) claim that multiple objects of trust should simultaneously be considered in collaborative consumption.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOURCES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

The reputation of a company is reported by consumers as the most important source of trustworthiness. In particular, a high number of users and the word-of-mouth generated about a company are found to positively frame the perception of its reputation or brand image. This supports the study of Möhlmann (2016), who found that the size of a company, which is reflected in the company reputation in our study, is significantly more influential in establishing trust than other sources, such as review systems and insurances. We furthermore find that the reputation of a company can be enough for people to establish trust, because consumers infer that a platform is safe if it has many users.

Safety measures are another important source of trustworthiness usually implemented to help users in case anything unexpected or negative happens. However, when consumers generally have good experiences, these specific measures are rarely used. For example, having to use the insurance from Airbnb would require a consumer to have had a negative experience. Thus, the lack of experience on how safety measures work leads consumers to develop only a perception of the usefulness of such measures, which might however not reflect reality. Our study thus underlines that consumers' perception of the reliability of safety measures is more valuable than the true or objective effectiveness of those measures.

The community and ideology of a company is also an important source of trustworthiness. For example, consumers trust a company due to the values and meanings that a company symbolises. Consumers may for example believe in the spirit of a brand community and perceive the community to be composed of like-minded individuals, which can eventually increase the trustworthiness of a company. Our findings are thus aligned with Slee (2013), who states that "community membership itself has provided an adequate signal of trustworthiness" (p. 10). A company's trustworthiness based on a brand community or ideology can, however, be jeopardized. In fact, we found that the presence of "free riders", who are opportunists using the platform just to get free accommodation, represents a threat to the company's trustworthiness. This is explained by the fact that some consumers perceive the lack of interpersonal chemistry between peers as a major risk when engaging in a trust relationship with a stranger. Literature also points out that when communities achieve greater scale, they tend to attract more opportunists, who negatively affect the credibility and trustworthiness of

the community (Slee, 2013, p. 10; Celata et al., 2017). Free-riders could thus jeopardize the trustworthiness of both the brand and the individuals belonging to the brand community. The establishment of trust is thus more difficult because the brand community is somehow threatened by free-riders who do not share the ideology.

A person's trustworthiness usually depends on a combination of sources. Overall, we find that consumers mainly rely on peer reviews. This confirms findings of existing literature, which underline the crucial role of reputational systems to build trust among strangers (Slee, 2013, Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Zervas et al., 2015). However, while some consumers rely solely on reviews, others use reviews in combination with alternative sources such as the personal descriptions, profile pictures as well as human interaction with strangers. Interestingly, while the former group was usually composed by users of Airbnb, a for-profit platform, the latter group was users of Couchsurfing, a non-profit platform. Airbnb is usually perceived as more business-oriented, while Couchsurfing is perceived as human-oriented. When the emphasis of the exchange is placed on individuals rather than on businesses, consumers therefore usually employ a combination of sources to assess a person's trustworthiness. This also indicates how the nature of a peer-to-peer platform can shape the way trust is formed among strangers.

THE INTERRELATION OF TRUSTWORTHINESS SOURCES

Consumers establish trust towards a company or an individual based on various sources that indicate trustworthiness of these objects. The sources of trustworthiness should not be considered in isolation. Rather, we identify a strong interrelation among different sources of trustworthiness that make it vital to also consider them jointly.

The interrelationship between the *company reputation* and *safety measures* illustrates how the sources may influence each other. When the perception of safety measures' helpfulness matters more than the real effectiveness of such measures, we found such perception to be framed by the reputation of the company. Particularly, consumers perceive that well-known and large platforms also provide efficient and trustworthy safety measures.

The interrelation of trustworthiness sources may also be of negative nature. For instance, we found that the *brand community and ideology* of a company might create negative perceptions of other sources of trustworthiness, such as the *safety measures* offered by that company. Consumers in fact believe that the introduction of more safety measures might have a counter effect on the establishment of trust, as consumers might infer that more safety measures are needed because people do not trust each other. This aligns with the work of Parigi and State (2014), who have found that when Couchsurfing users were allowed to provide more reputational information about themselves, the number of strong interpersonal bonds among

them decreased. Our study suggests that this could be explained by the fact that more safety measures create mistrust among users, rather than enhancing trust towards the company.

Finally, an interrelation might exist among more sources concurrently, which could jointly enhance the trustworthiness of an object. For example, some consumers would need a combination of positive reviews, nice-looking profile pictures and well-written profiles in order to fully establish trust towards a stranger. Although each source increases the trustworthiness of a person independently, when such sources are used in combination, consumers may reach an even higher level of trust. Hence, our study points out the importance of understanding how different sources of trustworthiness complement and relate to each other, rather than considering them in isolation as an unrelated sum of tools.

THE INTERTWINED NATURE OF REVIEWS: DO THEY WORK?

We found that reviews represent an essential tool to facilitate trust in peer-to-peer exchanges. Reviews allow users to create a reputation within the platform (Zervas et al., 2015; Slee 2013). We found that consumers perceive peer reviews as a highly objective way of evaluating a certain host or guest. However, the objectivity of these reviews strongly depends on the review system provided by the company. A company's trustworthiness is therefore also influential because, if its review system is perceived to be somehow unreliable, then reviews cannot be used to establish trust among individuals. Conversely, if the system is perceived reliable, reviews can be used to assess the trustworthiness of the other person. The reviews and the overall review system hence represent an intertwined element that helps consumers establish trust towards both the company and the people involved in the exchange. This furthermore provides a clear example of how interpersonal and institutional trust are intertwined and should simultaneously be considered when understanding why and how trust is formed in collaborative consumption contexts. Our findings hence align with Dambrine et al. (2015), who assert that "while platforms need to have good and reliable reputational systems in place in order to create trust between users, they also will have to ensure their users trust them" (p. 15).

As pointed out in our literature review, a debate exists on whether reputational systems are enough to ensure the establishment of trust. The strong bias towards positive reviews led many researchers to argue for the inability of reputational systems to solve trust issues (Slee, 2013; Keymolen, 2013; Ert et al., 2016). This perspective is based on the importance of an objective and effective functioning of the review system. However, our study agrees with Resnick and Zeckhauser's (2002) observation that "it is the perception of how the system operates, not the facts, that matters" (p. 152). For instance, some respondents have noticed the skewed presence

of a majority of positive reviews. This, however, has not deterred them from relying on the review system as a main source of trustworthiness.

DYNAMIC NATURE OF TRUST

Our findings also point out that trust is dynamic, as the way consumers form trust varies over time depending on people's personal experiences and past interactions. These findings align with existing trust literature. However, we emphasise that how trust is developed over time also differs depending on the object of trust. Consumers experience an initial trust formation when they are not familiar with a certain object of trust. As consumers become familiar with the collaborative consumption platform, they develop trust towards that company over time. However, even though individuals might increase trust towards the platform over time, they still need to establish initial trust with a person for each exchange, as they are dealing with a stranger each time. Hence, while institutional trust (i.e. trust towards a specific company) gradually develops over time, interpersonal trust (i.e. trust towards a stranger) must be re-established at each new interaction in collaborative consumption. The continuous trust formation towards a company also entails a sort of "trust paradox". As consumers become more familiar with a company, they perceive its platform as less risky to use. In fact, respondents had greater concerns the first time they used the platform compared to later usage. This is relevant, because trust is only needed when risk is involved (Mayers et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395; Li, 2007). Therefore, as consumers become familiar with a platform, they may gradually perceive less risks involved with using the platform, which can make trust easier to establish and thus create more solid trust relationships between a consumer and a company.

THE TRUSTOR'S MINDSET

Our study also shows that the mindset of consumers frame why and how they establish trust in collaborative consumption. What we define as mindset corresponds to some personality traits or attitudes, which trust researchers also acknowledge to impact individuals' willingness to trust (Mayer et al., 1995, McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Li, 2012). This study find three important elements that shape the mindset of consumers.

First, we find that consumers with greater levels of basic trust in people perceive it as more easy to establish trust towards a stranger. The concept of basic trust resembles the construct of dispositional trust described in trust literature (Mayer et al., 1995, pp. 714-716; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 42).

Second, consumers' risk attitudes frame their willingness to take risks, which in turn influences the ease with which trust is established. Consumers with a risk-taking attitude are more willing

to establish trust towards people, whereas consumers with a risk-averse attitude want to minimize their risks by relying on the object they are familiar with. When they are risk-averse, consumers feel more familiar with companies. In this case, people form institutional trust in both its abstract form (cf. section 2.3.2 *Constructs of trust*). We find that consumers have developed a general familiarity with making transactions with businesses compared to strangers. Business environments are therefore generally more trustworthy in economic transactions than private individuals. In fact, the monetary transaction that is involved in Airbnb and not in Couchsurfing is one element that creates more business-like transactions. Furthermore, the involvement of money often indicates a more professional approach requiring more control from the company's side, compared to a free service. Collaborative consumption platforms that imitate business-like features can thus increase the trusts levels of risk averse consumers.

Third, our study suggests that when consumers have a positive attitude towards of the idea of collaborative consumption, they seem more willing to establish trust towards both a company and individuals. Respondents expressed confidence in using digital platforms and believed that the idea of sharing goods and services with strangers is becoming a more trustworthy and acknowledged mode of consumption in today's society. This belief makes them form trust more easily, as they perceive a sort of "situational normality" (McKnight & Chervany, 2001), in using collaborative consumption platforms. Relating to existing literature, this resembles the abstract form of institutional trust (cf. section 2.3.2 *Constructs of trust*). In particular, it seems that millennials have built a sort of basic trust in the "general functioning of the system" (Luhmann, 1979, p. 56). Moreover, these trust construct resembles what Botsman (2017) defines as "trust in the idea" of collaborative consumption, which she views as the first step when consumers have to establish trust in this context.

CONSUMER MOTIVES AND TRUST ASPECTS

This study also provides a preliminary understanding of how consumer motives relate to the establishment of trust in collaborative consumption. We show that motives frame the reasons and the ways consumers establish trust. In particular, we develop a typology with three types of consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption based on existing literature (c.f. *Table 3 Typology of consumer motives*). Such motives, which we categorized as utilitarian, experiential and social, were also confirmed in the findings. We also find that utilitarian motives are more important in for-profit platforms like Airbnb, while social motives are more important in non-profit platforms like Couchsurfing. Hence, our findings are aligned with existing studies that differentiate motives based on commercial versus non-commercial settings (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Lamberton & Rose, 2012; Balck & Cracau, 2015; Guttentag, 2016; Celata et al.,

2017). Furthermore, we are in line with Bucher et al. (2016), as our study suggests that consumers may have more motives at the same time.

To understand possible interrelations between consumer motives and trust, we developed a conceptual framework of trustor archetypes based on each of the three motives. These archetypes represent idealised types of consumers based on why and how they establish trust according to each specific motive. In particular, we emphasise that the trust-related characteristics associated with the corresponding archetype are more likely be present when a consumer is mainly driven by one specific motive.

The trust-related characteristics associated with a motive are influenced by the underlying decision-making approach of the motive. Utilitarian motives entail a rational approach, which explains why consumers driven by utilitarian motives prioritize trust towards a company. In fact, they find it less risky to interact with well-known and reputational companies. Contrary, consumers with social and experiential motives are driven more by feelings, which explain why these consumers prefer to place their trust in people. In particular, consumers driven by social motives believe that trusting strangers is a necessary condition and even an exciting part of engaging in online peer-to-peer exchanges. Aligned with this finding, researchers have addressed that some platforms may appeal to consumers due to the higher risks involved and the resulting need for trusting strangers while using them (Slee, 2013, p. 10; Parigi & State, 2014). Our findings also provide alternative perspectives to existing literature, which does not consider how motives can shape the trustworthiness of both companies and individuals. For instance, Möhlmann (2016) found that peer-to-peer platforms are less trustworthy than non peer-to-peer platforms. We do not reject such conclusion, but suggest to also consider the potential effects that motives might have with respect to such claims. Möhlmann's (2016) findings are based on the case of Airbnb. Therefore, her study is likely to entail a sample of consumers mainly driven by utilitarian motives, as suggested by both our study and existing literature. We therefore emphasise that a more comprehensive understanding of why and how consumers establish trust require the consideration of consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption.

The trustworthiness of a company provides an interesting example of how motives frame the reasons and modes consumers establish trust in collaborative consumption. We find that a company can be trusted for both its reputation and the brand community or ideology. Although a positive assessment of different sources of trustworthiness can jointly contribute to the overall assessment of the trustworthiness of a company, consumer motives provide an explanation of why one source can be more relevant than the other. Consumers driven by utilitarian and experiential motives trust a company mainly for its reputation. Consumers

driven by social motives instead mainly rely on the brand community or ideology of the company. Our study thus reveals that in order to increase a consumer's trust, a company should consider the source of trustworthiness that relates to a consumer's motive to engage in collaborative consumption.

INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON TRUST

As covered in the literature chapter, the concept of trust is understood through several academic disciplines such as economical, psychological and sociological perspectives (e.g. Rousseau, 1998, p. 393; McKnight & Chervany, 2001, p. 37). The multidisciplinary lenses offer a more holistic understanding of the complexity of trust. The different layers and themes emerging in the findings illustrate this. For instance, the *trustor's mindset* layer presents trust as a psychological state based on an individual's personal traits and attitudes. Our study also showed that some consumers believe it is important to have some human interaction to establish trust with a stranger. This reflects a socio-psychological perspective of trust, which is here understood in the context of interpersonal relations and interactions among consumers. Finally, our study reveals that when consumers deem it normal to use collaborative consumption platforms, the trustworthiness of both companies and people seem to increase. This underlying trust in using collaborative consumption mirrors the sociology perspective, according to which trust has to be understood in terms of more than institutional or societal structures.

5.2 ACADEMIC AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The insights presented in this thesis can be valuable for both academics and companies to understand and manage trust in collaborative consumption. We discuss implications by first presenting what is most relevant for academics and secondly the most insightful and actionable insights for managers.

ACADEMIC IMPLICATIONS

In the above *Discussion of findings*, it emerged how our study aligns, complements and contrasts existing literature on both trust and collaborative consumption. As a result, the insights of our thesis generate several implications for academics, who might have to reconsider or extend some of their findings based on our study. The most relevant implications stem from the explorative approach embraced in the project. The approach allowed us to adopt a *consumer-centric* perspective with respect to the establishment of trust in collaborative consumption settings. We therefore focused on consumer perceptions about different trust-related aspects. The embracement of a consumer-perspective is valuable as it both contrasts and complement the *platform-centric* perspective often adopted by existing literature. Platform-centric studies

focus on the viewpoint of the company by, for instance, describing, debating and statistically testing the effectiveness of different tools in facilitating the formation of trust (Slee; 2013; Teubner et al., 2014; Zervas et al., 2015; Dambrine et al., 2015; Möhlmann, 2016; Ert et al., 2016). These tools, such as reputational systems, are claimed not to be sufficient for establishing trust when they do not work efficiently (Slee, 2013; Ert et al., 2016). The consumer-centric perspective, however, considers how consumers perceive such measures, regardless of their actual efficacy. Hence, we extend existing literature by contributing to the understanding of consumers' own perspectives with respect to the establishment of trust when people engage in collaborative consumption.

Our explorative approach also embraced an interpretivist philosophy with a qualitative method of research. Interpretive studies are crucial to explore dynamic and rapidly growing markets (Moisander & Valtonen, 2012) such as collaborative consumption. We thus contrast to the conceptual and quantitative research that tends to dominate the sparse literature on trust in collaborative consumption (Teubner et al., 2014; Hamari et al., 2015; Möhlmann, 2016; Hawlitschek et al., 2016a; Hawlitschek et al., 2016b, Ert et al., 2016). Although these researchers acknowledge the added complexity of peer-to-peer exchanges, they nonetheless develop conceptual frameworks based on existing trust literature. Due to the highly context-dependent nature of trust (Mayer et al., 1995; Lyon et al., 2015), explorative studies are essential to uncover more latent meanings that can help to develop conceptual research models specifically tailored to collaborative consumption settings.

A noteworthy contribution of this thesis is the conceptual framework of trustor archetypes (cf. section 4.6 *Conceptual framework of trustor archetypes*). This conceptual framework links several trust-related characteristics with consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption. To our knowledge, this research provides the first attempt to link those concepts. Existing studies have shown how consumer motives vary across platforms and how platforms manage trust differently. However, research has not investigated the interrelation between trust and motives. Even with the limitations that comes with linking motives and trust in a generalised framework of idealised archetypes, we argue that it provides valuable contributions, because it is clear that consumer motives impact both why they seek to trust and, consequently, how they establish trust. Academics can benefit from our framework of idealised archetypes to further explore the interrelationship between trust and consumer motives within collaborative consumption. For example, the framework can be used in trust research that seeks to use motives as a variable in statistical studies.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Having a holistic understanding of how consumers establish and perceive trust relationships when engaging in collaborative consumption is paramount for managers. In fact, if consumers are not able to create trustful relationships with either the company or individuals, they might not engage in collaborative consumption. That is important, because “management of trust in the context of P2P collaborative consumption platforms is a real challenge” (Möhlmann, 2016, p. 24). To overcome this challenge, the insights of this research can support companies in developing marketing and branding strategies aimed at establishing trust. In particular, our framework of trustor archetypes provides insights relevant for managers, who can better understand trust-related differences between consumer segments. In this way, companies can facilitate the establishment of trust by targeting specific consumer segments through more efficient and tailored marketing and branding initiatives. To identify such segments, managers can use our typology of motives to engage in collaborative consumption (cf. *Table 3 Typology of consumer motives*) and thus understand their target segments primary motive(s). Based on our conceptual framework of trustor archetypes, we provide suggestions in relation to specific (1) *branding and marketing strategies* and (2) *development of new platform tools*. These suggestions should be intended as possible inspirations of how our findings could be practically implemented.

BRANDING AND MARKETING STRATEGIES

The *branding and marketing strategies* for companies operating in the collaborative consumption market should implement advertising messages tailored to their target consumers. First of all, companies should assess their internal strengths and weaknesses. In particular, they need to understand whether they have a strong reputational brand or they are a small and relatively unknown platform.

In the the first case, companies can leverage their reputational brand and target consumers with utilitarian motives, who easily establish trust towards platforms they deem well-known and safe to use. By establishing trust towards their company, brands can therefore solve the concerns of utilitarian consumers in trusting strangers. Marketing communications towards such consumers should focus on enhancing the trustworthiness of the company. The advertising message can for example emphasise how many users the platform counts or how effective their review system is. Such a marketing strategy could also be valuable for well-known companies that want to enter the collaborative consumption market. Relating to our specific context, traditional business-to-consumer companies like famous hotel chains can benefit from our findings to compete with current peer-to-peer collaborative consumption platforms within the hospitality industry. Consumers with utilitarian motives prefer to place trust in a company because trusting strangers entail greater risks. Reputational companies

might therefore have an advantage in attracting consumers with utilitarian motives. We suggest that brands that appear trustworthy given their strong reputation should exert more control on the peer-to-peer transactions occurring on their platforms. Rather than operating as mere third-party facilitators, collaborative consumption companies should hence enforce a more controlled system, which can eventually increase their trustworthiness for utilitarian consumers. This seems to be acknowledged by strong reputational companies like Airbnb, which are shifting their mentality to more “traditional centralized systems of enforced minimum standards, documentary verification, and so on” (Slee, 2013, p. 11). A more centralized control of companies seems to be against the enthusiastic spirit of sharing goods and services with complete strangers supported by collaborative consumption advocates (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). However, companies should be aware that consumers with utilitarian motives are risk-averse and seek to rely on a trustworthy company rather than a stranger.

Branding and marketing strategies would instead differ for small and new platforms without a large user base, as they cannot leverage on their reputation to establish trust. These companies should, instead, focus on establishing trust among users. This could be extremely difficult to do with consumers driven by utilitarian motives. Our findings suggest that it is instead easier to facilitate interpersonal trust among consumers with experiential and social motives. For these consumers, trustworthiness of companies become less relevant when engaging in peer-to-peer collaborative consumption. These segments establish trust more easily towards strangers, making it important that marketing communications focus on fostering trust among their users. The advertising message could for instance report consumers’ experiences where users talk about how they met helpful or like-minded people when using a certain platform. In particular, communication towards consumers driven by experiential motives should focus on portraying how trusting strangers can lead to great and unique experiences. Communication towards consumers driven by social motives should emphasize the human and interpersonal aspects related to the usage of the platform. Moreover, they can increase trustworthiness in the company by developing a brand community, which in turn increases trust towards people using the platform. Practitioners interested in pursuing that direction could be inspired by existing literature on the management of brand communities (e.g. Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001).

Regardless of their size and reputation companies should consider that people are more skeptical in using a platform for the first time, as they see more uncertainties and thus more trust issues in using a platform they are not familiar with. In other words, managers should be aware of the dynamic nature of trust. After the first time, however, we found that respondents become less concerned with risks they perceived high at the beginning. It is hence important that companies incentivize non-users to try their platform, as gaining experience with it could

solve many initial trust issues. Our findings suggest the existence of a risk-benefit balance for which strong benefits can make consumers more willing to take risks, and consequently establish trust more easily. Companies should therefore provide substantial first-time incentives for people to try their platform. These could for instance be monetary (e.g. discounts for first time usage). As an alternative, brands can leverage on their existing users to stimulate word-of-mouth and referrals. Our study in fact suggests that some people might be willing to try a new and smaller platform just if referred by some friends. In other words, initial trust towards smaller companies can be fostered by recommendations of existing users. Referral programs could provide monetary rewards to existing users based on the number of friends they invite to try the platform. Similar initiatives are already implemented by companies like Airbnb, which has launched a referral programme in which users get a monetary bonus to travel for when a friend, he or she invites to use Airbnb, use it for the first time (Airbnb, 2017).

Finally, when targeting experienced users, different branding strategies are required. When people become familiar with a platform, they become less concerned with the risk, thus making trust easier to establish. Companies should therefore focus less on implementing advertising campaigns aimed at fostering trust and rather prioritize other objectives in branding strategies towards experienced users.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PLATFORM TOOLS

Our findings can become practically relevant for companies also in terms of the *development of platform features*. For example, we found that consumers with social motives consider human interaction important to get a feeling of a stranger and assess his or her trustworthiness. A way to provide more intimate connection between strangers could be to introduce video chats within the platform. This could help consumers with social motives to understand whether the other party seems a like-minded and interesting person, which they believe to be a fundamental characteristic for a trustee to be seen as trustworthy.

Another platform feature could be the personalization of the website design based on a consumer's primary motive to use a certain platform. In the context of peer-to-peer accommodation sharing, this will require an understanding of each user's motive to engage in the exchange. That may be possible by asking users what are they looking for when they start to browse the platform. For example, the choice can be among a cheap accommodation, an authentic experience or the encounter with new people, which respectively reflect the utilitarian, experiential and social motives that we have categorised in this study. In this way, companies can understand the primary motive for consumers in each specific situation. Based on the selected objective, the design of the website could vary by displaying or simply emphasizing different features and information. For consumers with experiential and social

motives, information about people (e.g. personal descriptions, profile photos) should be given attention. Conversely, peer reviews and more practical information (e.g. location of the place, amenities, photos of the apartment) should be emphasised for consumers with utilitarian motives. In this way, companies can provide a custom-made website design that allows consumers to identify more easily the main sources they use when assessing the trustworthiness of another person.

5.3 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study provides valuable and actionable insights on trust in collaborative consumption. However, academics and managers should be aware of the methodological limitations and premises of this thesis. This also leads to the importance of considering the quality of a research, which is usually assessed based on the validity, reliability and generalisability criteria (King & Horrocks, 2010, pp. 160-16; Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 394-3981). However, it is also claimed that such criteria are only relevant for quantitative studies, while they become inappropriate to evaluate the quality of qualitative studies (King & Horrocks, 2010, pp. 160-161; Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 394-398). Four alternative criteria are thus deemed more suitable for qualitative research (King & Horrocks, 2010, pp. 160-161; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 394-398): *confirmability*, *credibility*, *dependability* and *transferability*. These four criteria resemble the criteria to evaluate quantitative research with some modifications. *Confirmability* refers to the ability to confirm that data was collected and analysed in “good faith”, without any strong personal biases influencing the research. *Credibility*, which resembles the validity criterion, refers to the extent to which the interpretation of data reflects respondents’ thoughts and social worlds. *Dependability*, which resembles the reliability criterion, refers to the audibility and trackability of the research process. *Transferability*, which resembles the generalisability criterion, refers to the possibility to transfer conclusions of a research to other settings. While discussing these qualitative quality criteria, we furthermore provide perspectives for future research.

A natural consequence of the interpretivist approach is that data might be subjectively interpreted by researchers. However, to achieve greater *confirmability* of our study, we approached the process of data collection and analysis in a structured and systematic manner in order to be as objective as possible when interpreting data. For example, in first stages of thematic analysis for *Part 1* of the findings, we did not consider theoretical concepts on trust literature in order to stay true to respondents’ social worlds. Furthermore, the coding process was also structured systematically (cf. section 3.3 *Research method*) to overcome the risk of biases due to personal values of the authors. Despite taking such precautions, we still acknowledge that “complete objectivity is impossible” to obtain especially with qualitative

research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). Due to the complex nature of trust, we have provided a holistic review of existing trust research in section 2.3 *Trust*. This serves to align the reader with our understanding of the theoretical foundations that have guided aspects of the research process.

Respondents often referred to the concept of trust in different ways, making the interpretation of their words exposed to potential misunderstandings. In order to limit misinterpretations, we sought to interpret some of the main viewpoints together with the interviewees. This occurred at the end of the interviews or in the informal conversations occurring right after them. In this way, we were able to obtain clarifications or confirmations on the most intricate concepts yet without biasing respondents' answers in the first stages of the interviews. We believe that this sort of validation process of respondents' meanings allowed us to increase the *credibility* of this study. However, we suggest that future research should study why and how consumers establish trust by applying other sources of data as well as different methods to further increase *credibility* of our findings. An ethnographic approach, whereby the researcher observes the consumer in the act of reserving an accommodation, could for instance produce different insights and perspectives on the establishment of trust. Additional sources of data and types of methods could also ensure triangulation of results and increase the credibility of the study (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 164).

The framework with three idealised trustor archetypes (cf. *Part 2 of Findings*) also deserves some observations. In fact, such framework was conceptualized by identifying relations between the trust-related themes found in the first part of the study (cf. *Part 1 of Findings* chapter) and the typology of consumers motives (cf. *Table 3 Typology of consumer motives*). This process required a high level of abstraction that occurred across two different dimensions (i.e. trust and motives). We thus acknowledge that the *dependability* of our research might be weakened by the fact that greater abstraction is more difficult to be tracked and exactly replicated by other researchers. Nonetheless, we claim that the idealized archetypes provide a preliminary picture of how different consumer segments can be understood by considering trust and motives jointly. The conceptual framework of trustor archetypes can therefore become a valuable starting point for further research. The *dependability* of our research is instead greater for the *Part 1* of the *Findings*, as knowledge was generated through a four-stage process of thematic analysis. In this case, the data analysis process is described and illustrated (cf. 3.3 *Research method*), making it audible by other researchers.

A limitation of this study derives from choice of the sample, which was composed by respondents aged between 22 and 32 years old. We acknowledge that trust might be established for different reasons and in different ways for different consumer segments, which

affect the *transferability* of this study. Millennials are a digitally literate generation (Goldman Sachs, n.d.), which in our study seems to have already developed extreme familiarity in online environments. However, older generations might be less familiar with internet technologies, thus making different trust objects more relevant than others. For instance, Slee (2013) claims that, in peer-to-peer online exchanges, the internet environment can become an object of trust in itself. This indicates that trust in the structures and systems within collaborative consumption, and therefore abstract institutional trust, may differ between consumer groups. Further research should investigate whether consumers belonging to different, and especially older generations, have different ways and reasons to establish trust when engaging in collaborative consumption. Nevertheless, we believe our research to be both academically and managerially relevant, given that Millennials are the main user group of collaborative consumption (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2015). Although the sample was composed by individuals living in Copenhagen (Denmark), respondents were heterogeneous in terms of nationality. In relation to geographical differences, some respondents pointed out that they believe culture might have an impact on why and how they establish trust, such as for instance their level of basic trust in people. Aligned with this observation, it has been shown that cultural differences are important to consider when investigating trust (e.g. Uslaner, 2002, pp. 252-255; Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2016). Since we were not able to find any strong patterns explaining how culture could influence trust in collaborative consumption, we also suggest future research to test our findings in different cultural settings. Academics and managers should moreover consider that this thesis empirically explored trust within peer-to-peer accommodation sharing settings. However, different industries (e.g. automotive and consumer goods) as well as different transactions models (e.g. peer-to-peer versus business-to-consumers) can entail different reasons or ways in which consumers establish trust (Jones & Leonard, 2006; 2008; Yoon & Occeña, 2015; Möhlmann, 2016). Hence, we advise to use the insights of this thesis as a point of departure to further explore trust within different collaborative consumption contexts.

6

CONCLUSION

Collaborative consumption is a socio-economic phenomenon that has profoundly changed the behaviour of consumers. The act of sharing goods and services among peers through online collaborative consumption platforms seems to have been enthusiastically embraced by many individuals. However, trust represents a problematic aspect of this new form of access-based consumption, as peer-to-peer transactions occur among strangers. The challenge to establish trust in collaborative consumption is furthermore emphasised by the uncertainties inherent to internet environments, which have an impersonal and automated nature as opposed to offline ones. Trust represents a complex concept that has been studied through the lenses of several academic disciplines and across several contexts. Nonetheless, empirical research on trust in collaborative consumption is limited, especially in terms of more explorative and inductive studies.

Given the novelty and relevance of this new socio-economic phenomenon, this thesis aimed at investigating trust in collaborative consumption. Specifically, this thesis had two major purposes. First, to explore why and how trust is established when consumers engage in collaborative consumption. Second, to examine how trust differs depending on consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption. An explorative study was conducted based on 21 semi-structured interviews with respondents using peer-to-peer accommodation sharing platforms.

With respect to the first purpose, the findings show that consumers place their trust primarily in a company or in an individual. Depending on which objects consumers seek to trust, they adopt a wide array of sources to assess the trustworthiness of these two objects. This assessment primarily depends on several contextual perceptions as well as the mindset of consumers. In particular, the formation of trust is a dynamic process that depends on the personal experiences and perceptions of individuals. The perception of risks and the propensity that consumers have in taking those risks are especially central when trust has to be established. Moreover, the basic level of trust that consumers have in people is found to be an influential ingredient when trust has to be formed towards strangers.

With respect to the second purpose of this thesis, the findings indicate that consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption frame the reasons and the modes in which individuals establish trust and perceive risks. In particular, we outline a conceptual framework with three idealised consumer archetypes that presents trust-related characteristics in relation to utilitarian, experiential and social motives to engage in collaborative consumption. Consumers driven by utilitarian motives prioritise trust towards strong reputational brands. In contrast, consumers with experiential and social motives prioritise trust towards individuals over

companies. The former is found to place trust in helpful and friendly individuals, while the latter easily establish trust towards like-minded individuals.

These three archetypes were derived based on a typology of people's motives to engage in collaborative consumption. We developed the typology based on a systematic literature review. Such a typology can be useful for future research within collaborative consumption that aims to consider the influence of consumer motives. By linking this typology to different trust-related aspects, we provide the first study that, to our knowledge, explores the relationship between trust and consumer motives in collaborative consumption.

In conclusion, our thesis generates valuable contributions to the understanding of trust in collaborative consumption. We provide a holistic theoretical foundation that can help academics to develop and eventually quantitatively test conceptual research models specifically tailored for collaborative consumption contexts. In particular, our findings indicate that the linkage between trust and consumer motives could provide alternative and novel perspectives of analysis for the understanding of trust within collaborative consumption. The insights of this study are, moreover, relevant for companies in gaining knowledge on how to foster and manage trust among consumers. Although advocates of collaborative consumption emphasise that trust is vital to be established among peers, we show that establishing trust towards company can be even more important. Hence, we suggest that collaborative consumption is not just about trust among strangers, but also about trust towards strong brands. Furthermore, we are able to provide an explanation for such a duality of trust objects. Consumer motives to engage in collaborative consumption strongly shapes how trust is established. Brands should thus understand what motivates consumers to use a certain platform in order to build more stable trustful environments and relationships.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF STUDIES ON MOTIVES TO ENGAGE IN COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Author(s) (year)	Findings related to motives in collaborative consumption
Albinsson and Perera (2012)	Examined the motives for participating in sharing events that was centred about causes and ideologies (such as overconsumption). The research area was not-for-profit projects in redistribution markets. A sense of community creation with like-minded strangers was an important driver, but communities were also outcome of these sharing events.
Balck and Cracau (2015)	Cross-sectoral study (including accommodation renting through Airbnb and Couchsurfing) of German customers' motivations. Lower price is the main motive, but there are great differences across industries.
Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012)	Motivations to engage in collaborative consumption are mainly economic, such as self-interest and utilitarianism (case study: Zipcar)
Baumeister and Wangenheim (2014)	They identify perceptions that determines the usage intention to collaborative consumption. Functional and monetary perceptions are most important, followed by experiential perceptions and symbolic perceptions.
Bellotti et al. (2015)	Identified 21 variation of motivations (grouped in 7 theory-based psychological roots). They furthermore identified a misalignment of the motivations expressed in the different roles of actors engaging in sharing economy (providers vs. users)
Bucher et al. (2016)	They identify social-hedonic, moral, and monetary motives for people to engage in collaborative consumption. The investigation employs both quantitative and qualitative methods and considers both commercial (e.g. Airbnb) or non-commercial sharing settings (e.g. Couchsurfing)
Böcker and Melen (2016)	Investigated the importance of three main motives (economic, social, environmental) to engage in peer-to-peer sharing through a survey with

Author(s) (year)	Findings related to motives in collaborative consumption
	1330 respondents from Amsterdam. They find different motivations depending on sectors of the sharing economy, socio-demographic groups, and users and providers.
Dubois et al. (2014)	Based on a non-profit project, they find that an anti-capitalist trend makes people aware of excessive consumerism and its impact on the environment. This leads people to engage in sharing.
Forno and Garibaldi (2015)	Found several motivations for engaging in house-swapping. The main ones were saving money, travelling more often and living an authentic cultural experience (case study: home swapping)
Guttentag (2016)	Motivational themes for consumers' use of Airbnb were surveyed. In general, consumers were more attracted by practical attributes (price and functionality) than experiential attributes.
Hamari et al. (2015)	Found motives to participate in collaborative consumption to be mainly related to sustainability, enjoyment of the activity as well as economic gains.
Hawlitschek et al. (2016b)	Identified 24 drivers of participation of peer-to-peer rental service through a literature analysis and an exploratory survey.
Jung et al. (2016)	Comparing motivation between monetary (Airbnb) and non-monetary (Couchsurfing) platforms based on reviews (i.e. post-behaviour). Couchsurfing users are satisfied more by the human relationships than the house.
Kim et al. (2015)	They identify economic benefits, social benefits and epistemological benefits as antecedents of the relative advantages of engaging in the collaborative consumption (case study: Airbnb).
Lamberton and Rose (2012)	Personal gains (such as cost, utility and availability) were more important for consumers' propensity to engage in sharing than moral appeals (such as environmental and social benefits) (case: car sharing)

Author(s) (year)	Findings related to motives in collaborative consumption
Lawson (2010)	They found that consumers are both status seeking and environmental conscious, which drives participation in access-based consumption.
McArthur (2015)	Found different key reasons for engaging in collaborative consumption. They summarised them in five main themes (in descending order for relevance): community, politics, health, adventure, and financial. (case study: Landshare)
Möhlmann (2015)	Identified 10 factors determining the likelihood of choosing a sharing option. The study used quantitative methods (surveys) and considered two contexts: B2C (car2go) and C2C Airbnb). Utility, trust, cost savings, and familiarity were found to be relevant in both contexts.
Ozanne and Ballantine (2010)	Studying if consumers who share rather than own are motivated by anti-consumption reasons. They identify four clusters representing individuals' motives: Socialites, markets avoiders, quiet anti-consumers and passive members. (case study: toy library)
Schaefers (2013)	He identify four underlying patterns of motives: Value-seeking, convenience, lifestyle and environmental (case study: car sharing)
Schor and Fitzmaurice (2015)	Found five motivations: 1) economic benefit, 2) reduce ecological impact, 3) increase social connections and build social networks, 4) technophilia (a strong enthusiasm for technology), 5) ideology committed to sharing and collaborating
Shaheen et al. (2012)	Interviewed experts in carsharing about general issues. Renters are believed to be cost-conscious and tech savvy. Vehicle owners' primary motives are economic incentives and to be environmental friendly.
Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016)	Users of peer-to-peer accommodation are driven by two factors: 1) social motives (get to know, interact, connect with local communities; experience travel destination as local; contribute to local residents, and 2) quality accommodations at lower cost.

Author(s) (year)	Findings related to motives in collaborative consumption
Tussyadiah (2015)	Identified societal aspects of sustainability and community as well as economic benefits as main motivations to engage in collaborative consumption (case study: travel and tourism industry)

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Note: For each overall category (blue headline) there was a general open question (text in **bold**) and several prompts. Interviews flowed between both overall categories and specific topics. The same interview guide was applied with Couchsurfing users just changing the organisation name.

Scanning the website - scenario

Ask the respondent to imagine they are about to “book” a stay through Airbnb. (Either replicating their last trip, or imagine they are going somewhere). Let respondents have a few minutes themselves to do this task.

WARM-UP

Few questions to start of with:

- Your age?
- How often have you used Airbnb? [User / host?]
 - [As Guest] Is Airbnb your primary choice when you travel?
 - [As Guest] Do you use Airbnb alone or with others? Who?
 - [As host] Are you using other platforms?
- **How has your experience with Airbnb have been?**
 - Any particular good experiences?
 - Any bad experiences?

MOTIVES

- **Why are you using Airbnb?**
 - [What do you mean]: What motivates you to use Airbnb?
 - What is the main benefit (or most important reason) for you to use Airbnb?
 - [Help] Think back to an occasion and describe that for me. Is that usual?
 - [Help] How are these benefits compared to hotels, bed and breakfast, Couchsurfing and so on?

- Do your reason(s) [mention what they said] for using Airbnb, do they differ based on the situation or occasion? [e.g. people you go with alone vs group; leisure vs. work]

Interviewer note:

- If only one main motive is mentioned – go forward
- If 2 or 3 motives are mentioned, wrap up: Come up with scenarios for each motive that will be referred to through the rest of the interview.

RISK

- [Guest] **Can you describe the usual process that you go through in looking for a place to stay?**
 - [If 2 or 3 motives, describe each process, or explain the differences].
- [Host] **Can you describe the usual process that you go through when you get a reservation request?**
 - Can you elaborate a bit more? [e.g. think back to the scanning of the website]
- **What are some major concerns do you usually have in this process? Why?** [elaborate]
 - Do you think there are any risks involved in using Airbnb? Which ones?
 - What do you think are the greatest risks when using accommodation sharing [compared to hotels]?
 - How do you cope with these risks? Do you accept them or are they stopping you from doing certain things? Why/Why not?

TRUST

- [If trust-related aspects are already mentioned]: **So you mentioned [something relating to trust]. Could you elaborate a bit more?** Is it important? How/Why?
- [If trust is NOT mentioned]: **Do you think trust is relevant in any aspect of this process?** Why? [Describe an example]

Interviewer note: Let the interviewee know that trust will be the focus from now on.

INSTITUTIONAL TRUST, ABSTRACT

- **What do you think about the idea of sharing accommodation in general?** [trust in the idea]
 - What do you think of this kind of accommodation service in comparison to other types of accommodation [Hotel, Hostel, BnB]?
 - How confident do you feel in using these platforms?
 - Do you have any reservations towards sharing accommodation? [Situation]
- **What do you think about the security in using accommodation sharing platforms?** [Structures]
 - Do you think that platforms offering these services are generally reliable?
 - Describe a specific example [Reflect on motives]

INSTITUTIONAL TRUST, SPECIFIC

- **Why do you use Airbnb rather than other accommodation sharing platforms?**
 - Would your willingness to use accommodation sharing change if you had to use another platform?
 - Do you think Airbnb is reliable? (In what way?)
- **How does Airbnb help you to trust to book a stay with/host a stranger?** [To facilitate good experiences]
 - What elements influence Airbnb's trustworthiness? [Reputation]
 - Are there certain features (policies) of Airbnb that does that make you more trusting to use the service / book a stay with/host a stranger?
- Refer back to a **bad experience** they mentioned earlier - or 'Have you had any bad experiences using Airbnb?' [that relates to the motive if 2 or 3] (probes: e.g.: host not showing up, host cancelling, room not as expected, etc.) while using the platform.
 - Despite this experience, why are you still willing to use Airbnb?
 - Do you think it can happen again? Can you (and how) do you avoid it to happen again?

- Can Airbnb help in this? How?

INTERPERSONAL TRUST

- [If jumping] **How important is it for you to have trust in the stranger that are hosting?** - Why?
- [If not jumping] Let's talk about the people using Airbnb. **How has your experience with strangers been through Airbnb?** [Refer back to motives]
 - [Let's get back to trust] How are you figuring out if you can trust a stranger?
 - [Think about the process you go through when you use Airbnb] + [Reflect between motives if 2 or 3]
 - What does it mean that you trust a stranger?
 - How do you judge if they are trustworthy? What elements influence?
 - How important is for you to have trust in the stranger? - Why?
- What are you looking at in a host profile before sending a reservation request? [Photo, verified, bio, reviews, amenities, location, common friends]
- Are you typically staying with a certain type of people (same gender, single, family, etc.)?
- What do you think about the review system?
 - How do you use them? (Read, ratings, skim, quantity)
 - Have you written any reviews yourself?
 - Have you or would you stay with a host without any reviews?
- [If only user] **Have you considered renting out your apartment?**
 - [If concerns are raised]: What would make you rent out?
- [If a host] **What are your considerations about have a stranger living in your apartment?**
 - What are you considering before accepting a request from a guest?
 - What do you look at in a profile?
 - How much interaction do you have with guests before accepting their request?
 - Can you give examples of people you did not accept?
 - Are you at home while the guest is visiting?

- How important is it that you feel trust in the specific guest? And how do you come about that?

WRAP-UP QUESTIONS [after interview]

Interview note: Clarify the respondents' opinions/thoughts if something is unclear. E.g.

- Are you mainly using for utilitarian/experiential/social motives?
- Are you generally willing to take risk in interaction with strangers? [Why]
- Are you liking the idea of sharing accommodations? [Why]
- Are you trusting Airbnb? [Why]
- Are you trusting strangers on Airbnb? [Why]
- Has your trust changed over time? [How]

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SAMPLE

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Primary motive	Secondary motive	Platform	Usage (host)	Usage (guest)
Albert	23	Male	Italian	Utilitarian	Social	Airbnb	High	
Ben	23	Male	Italian	Utilitarian		Airbnb		High
Carl	27	Male	Pakistani	Utilitarian		Airbnb		Low
Daniel	22	Male	Norwegian	Experiential	Utilitarian	Airbnb		Medium
Eva	23	Female	German	Social, utilitarian	Experiential	Couchsurfing / Airbnb		Medium / Medium
Francis	23	Male	Danish	Experiential	Utilitarian	Airbnb		Medium
Gabriel	26	Male	Italian	Utilitarian		Couchsurfing / Airbnb	- / Low	Low/High
Hannah	23	Female	Norwegian	Experiential		Airbnb		Low
Isabelle	26	Female	Lithuanian	Social (C), utilitarian (A)		Couchsurfing / Airbnb		Meetings* / Low
Jessica	24	Female	French	Utilitarian		Couchsurfing / Airbnb	- / High	Low / Medium
Kevin	25	Male	German	Utilitarian	Experiential	Airbnb		Medium
Liz	28	Female	English	Social	Experiential	Couchsurfing / Airbnb	Low / -	- / High
Maddie	31	Female	Swedish/ English	Social	Utilitarian	Airbnb		Medium
Nina	27	Female	Swedish	Utilitarian		Airbnb	Low	High
Olivia	26	Female	Danish	Utilitarian		Airbnb	High	Low

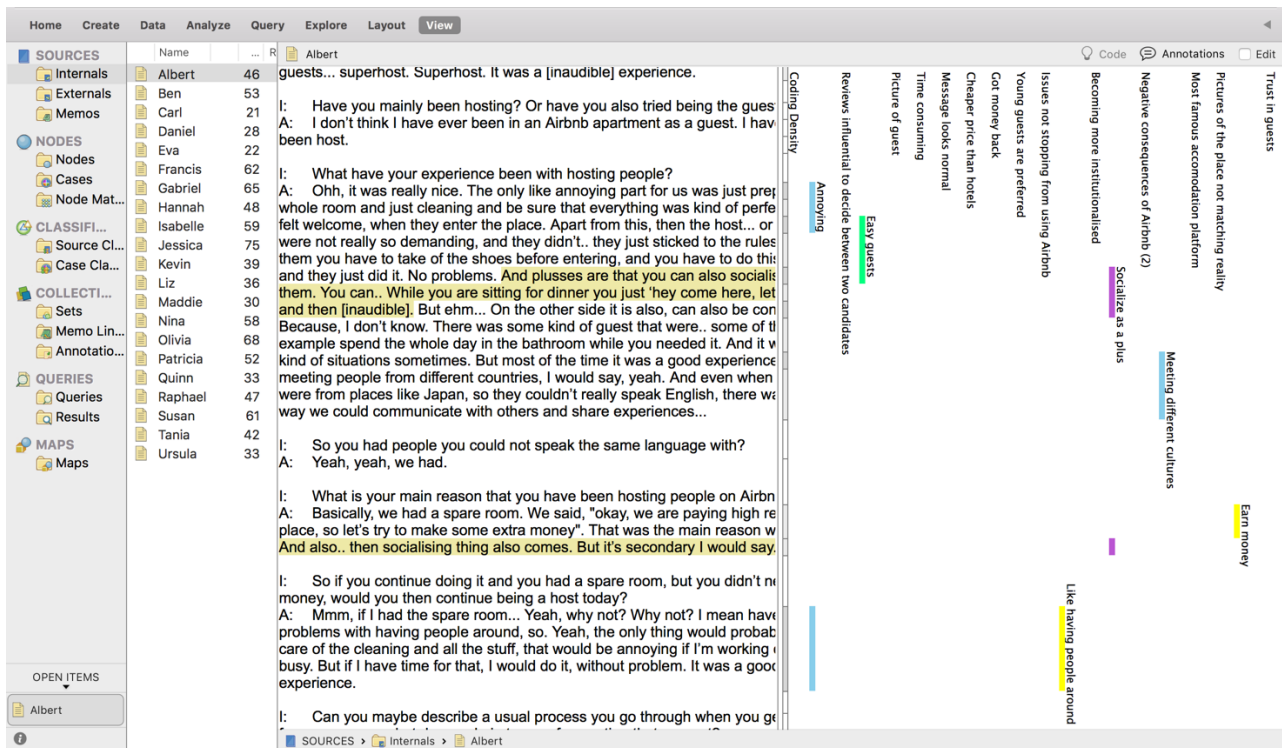
Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Primary motive	Secondary motive	Platform	Usage (host)	Usage (guest)
Patricia	32	Female	Argentinian	Utilitarian	Social (C)	Couchsurfing / Airbnb		Low / Low
Quinn	24	Female	Hungarian	Social		Couchsurfing	Low	High
Raphael	25	Male	Danish	Experiential	Utilitarian, social	Couchsurfing		High
Susan	27	Female	Danish	Social		Couchsurfing	High	Low
Teresa	22	Female	Danish	Utilitarian	Experiential	Airbnb	Medium	Medium
Ursula	29	Female	Danish	Utilitarian	Experiential	Airbnb	High	Medium

Note: The name is a pseudonym to guarantee anonymity to each respondent. The listed motive is based on analysis by using the Typology of consumer motives (cf. *Table 3 Typology of consumer motives*). The primary motive is the most important reason for the respondent to use the platform, while secondary motive(s) are listed if respondents also indicated that there were other important benefits. Isabelle and Patricia had motives that were specifically directed to one platform. (C) indicates Couchsurfing and (A) indicates Airbnb. The usage column is divided in either the respondent being a host or guest. Cells with two labels relates to the frequency between Couchsurfing and Airbnb, respectively, according to the split in the platform column. A hyphen (-) indicates that respondent did not use the platform(s) for the particular type of usage. Where there is no slash (/) the respondent only used one platform as indicated. Frequency of the usage is labelled low, medium and high, which is a relative assessment based on the sample. Low is <5, medium is 5-10 and high is >10. *Isabelle used Couchsurfing for their 'meet-ups' and not as a guest or host.

Appendix D

Coding with NVivo

The screenshot below shows a snippet of the coding in NVivo of the transcript with Albert.



Each relevant unit of data, which usually ranged between a short part of a sentence to just a few sentences, was coded.

The first text passage highlighted in yellow says “*And plusses are that you can also socialise with them. You can... While you are sitting for dinner you just 'hey come here, let's talk a bit and then [inaudible].*” This text passage was coded as “*social as a plus.*”

The second highlighted yellow text in the screenshot says “*And also.. then socialising thing also comes. But it's secondary I would say.*” The meaning of this quote is similar to the first unit of data and is therefore labelled with the same code “*social as a plus.*”

APPENDIX E

EXAMPLES OF RESPONDENTS MOTIVES TO ENGAGE IN ACCOMMODATION SHARING

Respondents with utilitarian motives

Motive	Quote from transcript
Save or earn money	Jessica: <i>"So I used Couchsurfing as a guest and I had to stay in Dusseldorf for one night, and my boss didn't want to pay for my stay, so I had to find a way to stay for cheap"</i>
	Carl: <i>"Yeah, overall the experience was good, because the thing I was looking for was for price, because at that time, you can imagine, it was New Year's Eve, everything is booked. Nothing was available on the last time. And this was the only thing, which was cheap and available."</i>
	Olivia: <i>"I go often to my parents place, to be honest. It is a way to earn money. I would like to have it as a thing where you could go on a trip, so it, you know... So you go on a trip and get it paid, because you can like rent out your apartment. But I never done it actually I always stayed at my parents place or friends place."</i>
Practicality and Freedom	Gabriel: <i>"Mmh. The reason is because I spend the same amount of money staying in a hotel but I have, but I can host people... like I can stay with I have a kitchen, I have a full apartment that I can use."</i>
	Ben: <i>"I mean if you have an Airbnb you just use the house as if it was yours so the main reason is price, more freedom and for Booking [i.e. Booking.com] the ease of use... But I would say I use Airbnb just for price and relax."</i>
Quick and easy solution	Gabriel: <i>"I went on the website and then like based on... well, both of the times I was in a rush, so I had to find a quick solution. Because I was already travelling and it was from tomorrow, like I need a place from tomorrow. And I was with my girlfriend, she is not the type of girl, she likes adventure and stuff, but it was already too much. So we were "okay, we don't have money and we don't have any place to stay tomorrow, so we need to find something"</i>

Respondents with experiential motives

Motive	Quote from transcript
	<p>Hannah: <i>"Well, I think it is.. When I'm travelling, I think it is really nice to also get, more kind of a look into the culture, or you actually stay in someone's apartment, that live in the city I feel like more personal, than just staying in a hotel room. So I think mainly that is why we choose it. We wanted to try something different."</i></p>
Save or earn money	<p>Francis: <i>"(...) And we rented I think it was...in all... I went it three apartments with my friends and two with my family when they went over to visit me. Ehm, so I thought at least from my perspective that was a good way of sort of experiencing the American way of living compared to living in a hotel room for instance. Especially because of the differences you see in regards to whether or not you're staying in the northern part of US or in the southern part. Like... if you went to...I can't remember the hotel names but let's just Crown Plaza or something that. It would probably have been more or less the same experience. If you were in the north from the south, but like going to see how the houses and the apartments look like when you went to some families or at least their apartments you get some kind of impression of how people actually live in this in this state...yeah."</i></p>
Adventure	<p>Raphael: <i>"Just because, you are not sure what is going to happen. As opposed to booking a hostel, you kind of know what you can expect. When you are using Couchsurfing you can meet somebody who is really cool and will take you weird places, and you'll meet awesome people. Or they can be like just a host, who says "here is your couch" see you tomorrow. So I like the adventure of that. And the uncertainty."</i></p>

Respondents with social motives

Motive	Quote from transcript
	<i>Susan: "(...) But it is about getting to know the people who live there. And I think it is, it just make so much sense. And, I think for me, I really meet a lot of amazing people, maybe because people actually sign up on Couchsurfing we already have some, a lot of things in common. Some values and interests."</i>
Meet new people	<i>Quinn: "I think the main reason is the whole experience of couchsurfing, like... meeting people when you travel. Meeting locals... So the main reason is that I'm really... I'm a curious person and I really like to meet new people. And the best thing is that they are local so they can show me things that maybe a travel map cannot show... Yeah."</i>
	<i>Eva: "Because you just get to meet a lot of people and you get to go to places maybe you didn't think of before (....) Like if I wanted to visit a city and see all the sights then I could just do something else but I was travelling with Interrail for example and I was all on my own and... yeah, then it was just super nice to meet different people."</i>

APPENDIX F

DOCUMENTATION - TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEWS

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Interview with Albert

I: How often have you actually used Airbnb?

A: Let's see, I have been using mostly last year in Copenhagen. We had a spare room at our place, so we are like hosting people and trying to get some extra money of course. And yeah, we have been hosting the whole year probably. We were super guests... superhost. Superhost. It was a [inaudible] experience.

I: Have you mainly been hosting? Or have you also tried being the guest?

A: I don't think I have ever been in an Airbnb apartment as a guest. I have mainly been host.

I: What have your experience been with hosting people?

A: Ohh, it was really nice. The only like annoying part for us was just preparing the whole room and just cleaning and be sure that everything was kind of perfect, and they felt welcome, when they enter the place. Apart from this, then the host... or the guest were not really so demanding, and they didn't.. they just stuck to the rules. We told them you have to take off the shoes before entering, and you have to do this and this and they just did it. No problems. And plusses are that you can also socialise with them. You can.. While you are sitting for dinner you just 'hey come here, let's talk a bit and then [inaudible]. But ehm... On the other side it is also, can also be conflictual. Because, I don't know. There was some kind of guest that were.. some of them for example spend the whole day in the bathroom while you needed it. And it was these kind of situations sometimes. But most of the time it was a good experience, like... meeting people from different countries, I would say, yeah. And even when people were from places like Japan, so they couldn't really speak English, there was always a way we could communicate with others and share experiences...

I: So you had people you could not speak the same language with?

A: Yeah, yeah, we had.

I: What is your main reason that you have been hosting people on Airbnb?

A: Basically, we had a spare room. We said, "okay, we are paying high rent for this place, so let's try to make some extra money". That was the main reason why. Yeah. And also.. then socialising thing also comes. But it's secondary I would say.

I: So if you continue doing it and you had a spare room, but you didn't need the money, would you then continue being a host today?

A: Mmm, if I had the spare room... Yeah, why not? Why not? I mean have no problems with having people around, so. Yeah, the only thing would probably be taking care of the cleaning and all the stuff, that would be annoying if I'm working or very busy. But if I have time for that, I would do it, without problem. It was a good experience.

I: Can you maybe describe a usual process you go through when you get a request from a person - what do you do in terms of accepting that request?

A: Alright, alright, alright... I have to tell you before, that I was not the person dealing with the bookings. We were five, four in this... five in this apartment, and it was a girl taking care of all the booking process.

I: But were you involved?

A: Yeah, as far as I know, yeah. When she got the request, she had the dates [inaudible] of the request. And a description of the person "hey I'm this person, I need a place to go for this period bla bla bla". And she told us the dates and the guests, their nationality, if they were a couple, if they were alone. And then basing of this and basing on our commitments, for example if it were exam period and it were like a couple like deciding to stay for a long time, then we would say no, because it would be too time consuming. And maybe a bit, having [inaudible] around when you studying is not good. Otherwise, other criteria were, like the... it can be superficial, but just how a person look like. If they look nice, we said okay let's accept him. If it looked kind of, i don't know, like, maybe too old, maybe a bit creepy, maybe... Then okay, let's not do it. [laughing]

I: You also say something about that if it's too time consuming, so you try to look at people, to see if you would actually like to hang around them? That's the criteria or?

A: Yeah, yeah. For example, yeah, we were mostly comfortable with people travelling alone, because we know they were kind of independent. And they did knew where to go. And also people that was there for business purpose or work. They were way easier to manage, because...

I: Than what people? Couples...?

A: Than couples, of course. Couples were usually, like very confused, and very "okay, what can we do know? Can you show us the main places of interest?" Even though that was not our duty to show them around and to just say "okay, go here and here". We did that pleasure, but of course sometimes it can be a bit time consuming to tell people "go here and don't go here" and "try this and not try this".

I: So I guess, mainly in the becoming you had different kind of people, but what in the end and nowadays? Are you not hosting any couples anymore?

A: Mmm... I think the last people we had was a couple actually, it was a couple yeah. But, now we are not doing it anymore, because we changed place and we can not rent out a room anymore.

I: Do you think there are any major concerns in hosting the apartment out?

A: Concerns of what type?

I: Any risks?

A: Any risks... From our point of view?

I: Yes.

A: Well, Mmm [thinking]

I: Did you consider any risks?

A: We did consider, of course. But yeah I mean, once you decide to use a platform such as Airbnb of course, I think you have to have the mindset to say "I trust people", because there are no points otherwise in using such a platform. Of course there is a risk involved, and we also had some issues... If I remember well, people renting the apartment for new year's eve. And I don't know how, but they broke the glass of the window. [laughing]

I: And you were not home?

A: Ah, we were not home. We were not home. So we came to know that afterwards. And the guys just told us the thing, and I don't know what happen. But we got the money and everything was settled down.

I: Money from them or?

A: I do not remember. I think from Airbnb, probably. It was probably covered, yeah. I don't remember though. I should ask that.

I: But did the guys that broke the glass, did they tell you?

A: Yeah, yeah. Sure, they did. No, from this point of view we really trust people we let come in, of course. And there was never a situation where we did not really trust the people we let in our place.

I: How did you figure out if you trust these people?

A: Of course, you can't really judge a person on first glance on like ten minutes. So, we were kind of superficial. It was just a gut feeling. But you know, gut feeling sometimes is good. When you have to assess a person, you just say 'can I trust this guy?' If you can't then, yeah... You just take the risk of course.

I: You said something about the mindset. In general, what is your view on this idea of the sharing accommodation?

A: Like Airbnb?

I: Yeah, and what they represent in more broader terms. The idea that you can share your apartments directly with people?

A: I think, yeah. I think my opinion is slightly changing. Cause, before, back in time, I used to think that's genius, that's bright, that's bright. Because of course you can get money, you can have an accommodation for a good price. There is [inaudible] logic and all that stuff. But then as you probably have [inaudible] things are a bit changing. And there are a lot of conflict of interest. With a lot of consequences, especially for the red market and all that shit [laughing]. When it comes to Airbnb, of course it's very... it has a lot of pros. But it can also have negative consequences. For example, if I want to find a place in Copenhagen, but all the places are rented out on Airbnb, then it's gonna be, it's not so good. And also, I haven't checked it so far, but the prices are slightly increasing, maybe I'm wrong, I don't know. So, I don't really know...

I: Why is that an... It sounds like an issue that it's increasing?

A: It does indeed.

I: Why is that? Why do you think it is any issue?

A: Because if the main idea behind that, that Airbnb is sharing a place, for a cheaper price than a hotel. Then if the prices are rising up to the ones of the hotels, then the whole concept loses the meaning, you know.

I: So if you had the same price for hotel and Airbnb, you would probably go for the hotel?

A: Yeah. Because, I think that the price factor is primary. It is of primary importance. Of course, there is a socialising aspect of the concept, but... if I have to pay price and I can also have a hotel with a lot of services included. Then I would probably go for a hotel at the same price. But of course that depends on the kind of, maybe, kind of hotel, of the kind [inaudible] many aspects.

I: Do you know of any other platforms than Airbnb that kind of does the same?

A: I know about CouchSurfing. But that's not the same, of course. But the yeah, the concept is probably similar. And apart from this, no... Airbnb, CouchSurfing yeah.

I: So, when you put up your apartment at that time for hosting out, were you... Then I guess you were not really considering anything else than Airbnb?

A: No, no. There was... We heard about a platform here in Denmark, I don't remember the name. Where you could actually rent your room. But we didn't do that. We just went for Airbnb, because it's the most famous one that everyone knows, and where you probably have the most people looking at.

I: What do you think about the reliability of Airbnb?

A: [inaudible]

I: In terms of their reputation of Airbnb. Do you think they are a reputational brand?

A: It's a tricky question. Me, I'm a bit biased of course, because of thing I read and because of my background, probably I'm biased.

I: We are interested in your perception, so don't worry about that.

A: I mean, if I... as an average person who is looking for a place, I would think, yeah that is brilliant. As a student, as a person that know something, maybe about the issue, I would just say it's a good idea, but it entails pros and cons. And, I read somewhere, that Airbnb is actually becoming more and more... institutionalised as a company. And also that the role of this intermediary, that used to have before, now it's a bit losing the meaning because people just give their houses to agencies that clean their houses and they get money for that. So at the end price is actually high anyways.

I: So, I guess you are a little against that - it should be more direct between people? So you could keep cost low?

A: Yeah. yeah, if I have to do, if I have to engage in Airbnb, yeah then... going to an Airbnb place, I would just want the price to be low.

I: But what about the quality? Do you think the quality can be better if you got all these things?

A: The thing is, I think if you go for Airbnb then you are ready to expect like some degree of... you know, you don't expect the same comfort as hotel, in my opinion. You just go to a place, but you know that nothing will be as perfectly as you expected before. So you go to this place and you see pictures, but of course pictures are not representative of the quality of the

place itself. So you may experience some issues. But I think that is something you have to keep into account when you decide to book a place on Airbnb.

I: Let's change the direction a little here. You mentioned - not necessarily bad experiences - but some concerns you have had. While you have had these concerns, both with the broken glass, people using the shower for too long and so on. Why has that not been an important factor to stop using Airbnb?

A: First, because these issues were very, very occasional. So they did not occur often. Second, because every person is different. Basically, if there were a guest that was really annoying, we knew that the next one might be better. So we just kept on doing that. And third, we needed money [laughing]. So we just kept doing that.

I: When your friend got these request, where you also looking at the profile - or was it just her?

A: Yeah.

I: Okay. What kind of things were you specifically looking at? We can maybe even look at the computer so you can show me?

A: [Taking time to look at the computer]

I: If you had to decide if a person had to stay with you, what did you look at?

A: First, the picture. Of course.

I: The picture of the person?

A: Yeah. Then, if I say "okay, this guy seems to be cool". Then the type of message he sends. So I think he got to send a message, where he presents himself, introduce himself.

I: And what is a good introduction - what is convincing?

A: It's convincing that...It's something that looks normal to us, that doesn't lead you to suspect, to be suspicious, you know. We got a message, for example, from a guy, he was Indian, I don't know... He wanted to actually rent and then subrent other people. Because he was a businessman doing, I don't know what, and wanted to make profits. But like what? [laughing]. And other messages very like, I don't know. Like, this 50 years old guy's, a bit you know... Because our profile picture was of Arriana. She was the girl living with us, and she was a good looking girl, and stuff. And it was these guys sometimes being a little, you know too flirty and bit creepy. [laughing]. And other aspects. I think the pictures makes a lot. Cause you see a person and you say okay, this is a young guy, this is [inaudible]. He is travelling, he is probably our same age, we can talk about a lot stuff with him. We shouldn't have problem. If it's a... like

an old, very old woman, who says I'm coming here, I have an injured leg, can you please do sometimes on the stairs to get in. That we would be like, okay you don't get it, it would be a bit more difficult, you know.

I: What about if they are verified, the reviews, if you have mutual friends...

A: Mutual friends. We did not really look for that. But yeah, we looked at the reviews as well. Yeah, of course.

I: And how did you look at that. Did you just skim them, did you look at the ratings?

A: Yeah, we look at the ratings, and what other people said about this guy.

I: Was that influential?

A: It was influential in the moment where we had two candidates for the same dates. But otherwise, if we had the... timeframe was free and we didn't have other requests, we looked at the feedback, and if it was okay, then we said okay, let's take it.

Interview with Ben

I: To start off, how often have you actually used Airbnb?

B: As far as I remember like exactly around ten times it's like more or less I would say... Yeah... Nine, eight, maybe ten times... by myself, otherwise when I was probably a little bit younger I don't remember if we once use it but I don't think so

I: And has that be as a guest or as a host?

B: Ehm... Never as a host, always as a guest. I've been sharing an apartment where my landlord was the host so if you're interested in that part like... you know... Niels... So if you're interested in that part I've been like in a shared... someone living with people in Airbnb but not being the host...

I: Let's focus on you... as the guest part.

B: Ok.

I: And the... ten ish time you have tried it over what period has that been?

B: Like... do you.... all the duration or...?

I: Yeah, like the first time you went and the last time.

B: Oh, ok... last time if we include also Copenhagen it was probably last Autumn... while without Copenhagen the summer 2015... I would say the last time I used is summer 2015, otherwise 2016 early.

I: And do you have an idea when you first tried Airbnb?

B: That's what I'm gonna do in a couple of weeks for June, so that's my... next time

I: But... the very first time you ever tried to be a guest on airbnb...?

B: That's probably... I don't remember... It's probably two thousand... ehm... the last year of high school when was it?... 2012... so... probably the year after, 2013? I think summer time 2013 probably... Don't remember exactly.

I: It's ok. Then I can guess it's like 2-3 times a year

B: Yeah exactly,

I: Ok, then... In general can you then explain what your experience have been across these times?

B: Yeah, yeah, yeah... Ehm, well, usually I've searched for two types of accommodations like in two different holidays types. One it was the city, sightseeing, like... discovering cities... And the other one is the seaside... so I would say... ehm... like the seaside usually has been the one where I felt less concerned about ehm... I would say... the... position of the house... otherwise... cause I could move wherever, and if you go to the seaside you just have many many positions so you don't look for where is the house exactly or maybe, like... in a certain way... but then maybe you look more for the price so you can save money for... whatever... have fun or whatever... you usually when you go to the seaside you don't have too many opportunities to save money. While, if I go to the city, I extremely look for the location and that's probably my quality criteria that I look for when I look for a house... it's the position, location and of course price. In every situation price, but then more concerned about location when I'm looking like for apartments in the city cause I usually have less days in that place while if I go to the seaside I usually stay one week or even more so that's probably my experience what I look for. If you were interested in my personal feeling...

I: Also when you have tried, like... been there, wow has that been?

B: I think I'm very satisfied in general... I never had any situation that I can comply of... complain of. Ehm... I think the worst situation was here with being a co-host or co-guest I don't know how to classify it....

I: What was that?

B: It was because my landlord was here renting an apartment, like a room, in Airbnb... so if you go here you have the...like an option... for example...room type, shared room, maybe I'm the one that shares the apartment...but that would be the worst experience but not really bad, while as a guest, [I] never bad experiences.

I: And when you have been a guest... have you actually... have you had the apartment for yourself or have you... or have the host also been there?

B: Always an apartment for myself... ehm, I think just once a private room but it was a... almost like a... almost an apartment... it was just a room really really isolated, nothing shared besides the kitchen, but it was like... yeah... almost... an apartment.

I: Is that on purpose or...?

B: I usually prefer to do it... like have an entire room or an...not an entire room... like an entire home or...an entire apartment for myself... usually cause if I have to... I don't know... chill... I would like to chill in the living room without any disturbance, while if I have to go to the bathroom I wanna have it for me... for... whatever I'm sharing the apartment with... that is with

me... if I'm there with my girlfriend I would share it with my girlfriend, otherwise with my friends... so I would like to have some control on the place I stay.

I: And have you been with people every time you have used Airbnb?

B: Ehm... Never alone. Mostly with my ex girlfriend... otherwise with friends... usually we were 2-3 friends... but... yeah... twice with friends.

I: You are talking a bit about it... But why are you actually using Airbnb?

B: Ehm, when I travel I'm split between the option of Booking.com for example and Airbnb. The difference is that when I am... The main reason why I'm using Airbnb is just because when I'm with friends or with girlfriend... And I want to be more... relaxed and of course for the price. When I'm with friends I'm more price sensitive so... I would say Airbnb of course is cheaper than Booking and I don't have those requirements that maybe I have when I'm travelling with my parents so my parents maybe want to go to a hotel or whatever because they want to have breakfast they can maybe relax for one week while when they are back home they have to cook every day every morning... So the main difference is that if you go in a hotel usually you have included breakfast so you can relax more, otherwise if you go on Airbnb usually there is sometimes the option to have breakfast from the host but you don't do it so... I mean if you have an Airbnb you just use the house as if it was yours so the main reason is price, more freedom and for Booking [i.e. Booking.com] the ease of use... But I would say I use Airbnb just for price and relax.

I: Ok. And if you look back through the last maybe 2-3 years, have you then been in hotels... like has it split between... This month we went in this vacation and...

B: Yeah yeah yeah... Usually I'm half... like my vacations if I remember well is usually fifty-fifty like between Airbnb and hotels. Usually hotels through Booking.com. Never calling, never emailing, just Booking.com.

I: Ok. And just again to really understand... So if you were to go on a vacation now, what is it that makes you first look at Booking or first look at Airbnb?

B: If I'm... like... I am a young guy, not working right now, so I'm really not using my own money but I'm using my parents' money... So... It seems strange because they are not my money but I'm really concerned about money because they are not mine. If money were mine, I would probably care less about it. I mean, it's strange but for me is like this. So if I'm using money of my parents I'm price sensitive. So if I go with my friends for example on vacation or with my girlfriend probably we have to pay through our parents' money and we are only there without parents I look for price and I look for Airbnb. If my parents are there and they are enjoying the vacation and it's also their money of course I don't really care and I make them pay

whatever if they want the hotel so I'm less price sensitive. Probably they want to relax more so hotel is the option. So I wouldn't say for me is only for price but price is the most important one and then I'm still young and I mean... I don't care about having breakfast prepared by someone else like at the hotel so if I can have much freedom in my apartment I would choose of course Airbnb. And that's pretty much the main reason.

I: So if we... And you're welcome to use the computer now but you don't have to... But, can you describe the usual process that you go through when you look for an apartment?

B: It can happen that I can... I mean... Just... Use it to... Ehm... Not brainstorm but maybe sometimes I put some random places and I start looking for that one but just for... Almost for fun and rarely ending up with a real booking, real reservation or real idea of all this. Just when I'm chilling, I just go there, put the dates, put the place, randomly...

I: So that's more for inspiration...?

B: Yeah, for inspiration. But then if actually I have an idea of where I should go... For example like... Now I'm looking for Lisbon for example, in the future... Like, early June. Ehm, I would just put the place and then maybe if I have already a date clear in mind... if I have like for example... only those dates free I will of course put the dates otherwise I would work on the dates maybe shitting on period and then...

I: And why that?

B: I mean, right now, as I told you, I'm not working so I can more or less play with the days. I mean, I can work out something like from saturday to thursday or whatever and if I find some cheaper prices or better places or whatever I can move the dates and shift the dates cause I'm not working so I don't have time constraints so... I don't have just one week vacation in my life so... and that's it for one entire year. So that's right now what I'm doing, so just moving around, playing around the dates. If I were working of course I would be more strict in the choice of the period. Maybe I already have in my mind which period to leave, which period to come back... But for now I'm more playing around with the dates and then that's the second step and then of course if I'm with a girlfriend or with two guests otherwise I will try to find a place with three or maybe... I have never never used it with more than three people actually, we were never four people, I was always two friends maximum. So... I've no idea if it's easy to find places for more than three people. We were three people once... We had to stay two people in one bedroom and another person alone in the living room so of course, I mean, it's fine if you're young. I don't know... Maybe... In the future, I don't know... But I think it's fine up to 3 people also for me and also 4 people. I don't know more... More than 4 people I have no idea.

I: Ok. So let's say you're in Lisbon now and you have to find this location... How are you deciding whether it should be that one or that one?

B: Ok. Ehm... First, as I told you, if I'm looking for a city... like... Lisbon... I would zoom as much as possible in the city centre and try to figure out what are the prices because I'm not aware of what are the prices in the city. I don't know if, like... there are price differences between my own country and Lisbon or... whatever. So once I have an idea of the prices looking around the map... I will probably set up some...boundaries for my research and then of course then Airbnb lists you all the...once you put some boundaries you get all the... all the main options. I don't know if they are sorted by ratings... Probably they are sorted by ratings I don't know, I've never asked myself. But... then I start looking for pictures of course and reviews. And then...

I: Just reviews here [pointing on the computer screen] or?

B: No reviews here [pointing on the computer screen] and usually... ehm... yeah, reviews here... Of previous guests mostly. I really trust a lot previous guests because I think until now... so far, like... Airbnb for me never disappointed me and I usually I found my self really in agreement with people before me. Like, really sometimes it was crazy how the people said exactly the same thing I would think about the place. So that's probably another step I go through... So looking at reviews. And then...

I: What would look interesting there if you take one of...?

B: Well I mean I still have to understand what is about Lisbon, I mean, it's... So I don't know how many days I will have to stay there.. .So... I mean, at first sight of course I look for the... like the more... the brightest places... Like the ones with more light of course... [inaudible].

I: If you then click into some of them... just random. Like, what are you considering here? Cause you also have to send a request to the person... like... what are you considering before you actually decide to go for this one?

B: I'll probably will evaluate more than 10 even 20 different houses if they are available and...I'm really really meticulous probably ehm... if that's an English word... Like, really looking for the details.

I: What kind of details?

B: I mean, I would probably read all of these descriptions, and... I would find probably in my mind some kind of... comparison between them... And of course, all those like... about the space, so if there is a bathroom of course. So usually I have only looked for private bathrooms because I like to... not too shared apartments. But then... check-in, check-out depending on my flight for example if I'm... landing late in the night and it usually happen because I always want to save money on the flights and flights are cheaper only during nighttime or even the morning

so I look for but usually I look for check-in and check-out... but usually if you then try to press [on the computer] whatever... I don't know there was there... Like contact the host... usually when I'm seriously thinking about a place I'm really concerned about the check-in and check-out so I usually press the "contact the host" button before booking so... This point of check-in and check-out actually I'm not really concerned at the beginning just looking a bit but then I will look at it later. Then... amenities... I mean it depends if I'm here I will... like, Lisbon of course I don't care too much about a lot of amenities because when you're like travelling or visiting a city you usually spend most of the days outside so you don't care too much about the breakfast, pool, whatever. Maybe if I'm at the seaside of course I will... No, at the seaside not [look] for a pool but yeah... I will look for more if I'm on a seaside or on an island whatever I would probably look for more amenities because that's probably a different type of vacation so with more relax.

I: But then when you look through these things and you look for a lot different things, as it sounds, are there... Do you have any concerns in terms of this process like before you have to send a request like... Are there any risk that you consider in this?

B: Ehm, risks like... I mean, there is always the risk of the person cancelling the booking... That's my biggest concern because it happened... My host here in Copenhagen... Ehm, the one that I'm sharing the apartment with the Airbnb guest... that one... This guy always cancels people like even a few days before... That's for me... It's like a huge threat. I mean, if you go on vacation, you have planned everything and then... That's probably the biggest concern I have... So I mean, I usually contact the host and ask those things... I mean "are you sure?" or whatever. But that's nothing...

I: But have you tried that they then canceled?

B: Never happened to me. But after I saw how this guy treats his guests, his customers, then from now onwards I would be even more concerned. I was concerned, but now I'm even more concerned about the...

I: And how do you cope with it?

B: I mean, I try to understand as much as possible from the host if he has some uncertainty in the booking availability because like... this is not a professional world. I mean, those are people who have their own life, their own job, their own whatever... Is not like in a hotel that you go there and if you reserve a room, the room is for you... I mean, only the building crashing down can prevent you not to enter the room or whatever. So... here [on Airbnb] maybe you can have family problems so he [the host] has to go away before you arrive there so... then he has to cancel... so... there is more unpredictability but still I think Airbnb is really really useful for this one [i.e. this unpredictability] because like you can see when you go on the reviews, and I'm really really looking at the reviews... But if you go on the review side, and if you go on my

host's Airbnb profile - like, the one I'm living right now - you can see "the host cancelled", "the host cancelled", "the host cancelled", and you can see how many days [he] canceled before so you get an idea that this person is not really reliable. Of course, if there is one review I have more concerns, but if there are many reviews without any sudden cancellation [then] I will just ask "ok, are you sure? Yeah? No?" and then fine and if there are some problems I mean... who knows...

I: So I mean, you're touching a bit upon trusting another person there and the risks involved... How important do you think it is... Trust in... this concept [Airbnb/accommodation sharing]?

B: I think is really really really important trust through Airbnb. Ehm... There are some, probably some warranties... I don't know, I've never tried myself, but probably there are some refunds, something like this. I don't know, if you have any clue... if you have been cancelled your house from the host you get of course all the money back... right? Is that?

I: I'm not sure I have not tried it.

B: Ok, but I think you will get all the money back. The biggest problem is then... how many days before is your departing that happens. So... I mean, yeah... Trust is a big big issue and I haven't figured out how to cope with it... Probably trusting Airbnb and...

I: So is it because it's Airbnb that you... dare to do it?

B: Yeah, yeah, it's Airbnb and still reviews... Reviews it's probably [inaudible] and I usually trust reviews.

I: Are you making reviews yourself?

B: I'm always making reviews, in every platform, also on Tripadvisor. I'm a lover of reviews so I'm reviewing everything... Ehm, so, I think that Tripadvisor had some problems with reviews, ehm... I know that there were some scammers or whatever people that pay... like you had fake customers reviewing yourself but... that's different from Airbnb because here [on Airbnb] you can only give a review after you have paid and after you have stayed at a place. So you can do it afterwards and it's also... you can also give like 'blind' reviews in a certain way that you don't see the reviews of the other party... So the host gives a review, the guest gives a review, you don't know the other ones so you're probably the most honest [as] possible here, while on Tripadvisor for example everybody even without staying at that... ehm... without eating at that restaurant or that hotel, they can give you a review... I also did it once for my friend [laughing]. No ok, but this is... I mean... I have more trust in Airbnb than other platforms.

I: Let's talk a bit more like overall... Like, what do you actually think about this idea that you can share your accommodation?

B: With me inside or...?

I: No no, like... the general idea.

B: Ok, ah ok. That's... I've also suggested my mother to rent out my room in Italy while I'm studying here [in Copenhagen] but she is too old-fashioned probably. But for me the new generation, our generation, and me... including myself... we are fine with sharing our probably room or apartment for guests. Ehm... I would do it also for...economic, probably, reasons... like, you can earn some more money... Basically, I would be fine... I mean... There are also some people that, for example, my host at the beginning, when he didn't have any money problem, Niels he was doing couchsurfing for free I think he was hosting people without even make them pay. So that's probably also a cultural mindset. Probably here in Denmark they are more open, while my mother wouldn't do it ever in her life while other people also in Italy wouldn't do it ever in their life.

I: Would you do Couchsurfing?

B: Couchsurfing...

I: Have you considered that?

B: I haven't tried and I'm not sure what really is so... it's just... maybe... I don't know... I have no idea of what Couchsurfing actually is but of course I'm using Airbnb and I know that I'm using the apartment or their room, where another person is living there for his life, his own life... so I can see probably... his picture on the wall... I mean... I'm surrounded by his life so...and for me is fine. I'm also fine to share my own room to other people. Of course, I would have to make some adjustments I cannot leave, I don't know...all my money pocket... I mean, I have to... Of course I trust the people, I trust everybody but I will have to make some adjustments to the place to make it also sellable also on Airbnb you have to make some fancy stuff because you are also competing against other hosts so... But I would think about it, I mean, I can think about it. I mean, I cannot do it right now with my room here so if I leave for one week I cannot do it cause I have a contract that doesn't allow it... But yeah, I would do it.

I: And then you also touched a bit upon this but what do you think about the security in using accommodation sharing platforms?

B: Mmm security in the sense like... Ehm... In the transfer of money or...?

I: In general, like... How secure do you feel using these platforms?

B: I feel secure...

I: Maybe compared to hotels?

B: Ok, ok. Compared to hotels it's a different thing, because like hotels as I told you is... professional, is a business, is not something that a person, like this one [pointing on the computer screen] is doing or Hanna is doing or whatever is doing it's... it's a business. So you can always refer to a business, you can always comply... ehm, complain to a business, you can always refer to an establishment, something... an institution. Here [on Airbnb] no. So probably I might be safer when probably more official regulation will be settled so the... I don't know if there are some rules, laws at a national level protecting the customers for Airbnb, I'm not sure if it's everything internal or there are some laws but I think it's... I'm already fine, but with more legal protection I would be even safer using Airbnb.

I: Do you feel unsafe using it at the moment?

B: Now, no. But the first time, maybe the first time I came here and I've used it for looking a place to stay just for short period, before entering in my definitive apartment that I'm still leaving in. So, for that period I found also some scammers of people on Airbnb that they had an apartment they were perfectly registered but then there was - it happened once to me - [one person] asking to give me the keys through Airbnb, I would have received the keys through Airbnb... something like this, and that was really weird because I mean, you don't receive the keys through Airbnb so... I kind of consider myself a person... not a smart person but not a stupid person so of course if there is something strange I would... But I think is not full safe. Because it happened to me something strange and then I checked online and also on the warnings by Airbnb there is a section I think called "warnings" or whatever if you go on "help" probably... So that was exactly the situation where people were trying to cheat on you, saying "you can pay now and then we will give you the keys through Airbnb, you will receive probably, I don't know, a letter with a key something"... No, it doesn't matter... I mean, I need to meet a person in front of the house or maybe inside the house and then he opens the door, welcome me into the house. That's what I usually expect from Airbnb. So I don't feel safe if there is something more intermediated, more without the presence of a person than... I mean... It's already automated using Airbnb if also I have to receive the keys from Airbnb that's too much for me. I need to have an interaction with a person. I mean, it's complex what I say, but it's like... it's fine to have a platform, it's fine to have this kind of intermediary that is easier of course because you don't have to make international calls, like calling the person living there, you don't have to look many different websites... Everything [is] in one platform. But then I need a human interaction to have more safety. I need to know that there is one person accountable at least for my stay.

I: And... now you mentioned if there was a lot of other platforms. Why are you using Airbnb and not other platforms?

B: Ehm... Other platforms... Ehm... I think other platforms... I know, like for example couchsurfing or there are all those websites about couchsurfing that are not the same but similar but I've never used them. Never, like... tried to look for apartments there. I know there is Airbnb, like they have a good reputation, good brand, good everything, so... I mean, they have a strong image, I trust them. As far as I'm... in my current experience I trust them and I'm not gonna use anything else to find rooms or apartments. So, I've never used other platforms so... I mean, the reason this one is still... I like the fact that everybody is using it, everybody... so the more people are using it, the more probably is safer, the more is controlled so that's why I'm not using maybe smaller platforms that if I'm - I don't have an idea about them - but if I start looking for them I will probably find them but I'm not gonna use them because they are yeah... too, too small.

I: So you say you need to trust Airbnb.

B: Yeah, I trust Airbnb.

I: How do you trust Airbnb? What does that mean for you?

B: I mean, it's a big platform, they have probably big, big powers on the host... Like the bigger is the platform, the bigger is the website, the bigger the power, the better the employees, their staff it is, probably I can also rely on a better organization. That's what makes me feel safer. While if I go in a smaller website... I mean it's not managed probably by friends who just do it for fun, of course, but I prefer to rely on a well established companies and businesses. Even if it is something ehm... how to say... ehm... C2C, like... it's almost like not B2B or B2C is... or C2B whatever, customers-to-business... This [Airbnb] is customer to customer almost so... is fragmented but I think the head of the platform is really really strong and really really...

I: So now you're talking a bit about you interact with other people but you also need the brand...

B: Yeah

I: ...So how important is it like these two things compared to each other.

B: Ehm...

I: I mean, how important is it for you to actually trust the host that you're gonna stay with?

B: The first time I used it I was less aware of Airbnb so it was more up to the trust I had in the person so I was really more concerned about the person itself that was renting the apartment so it was more a matter of trust the person and less thinking about Airbnb, I was more thinking about Airbnb as a... I don't know, a kind of infrastructure without any power, because I was also ignorant about those platforms. Now, that I know that maybe Airbnb has a lot of instruments to make the person... how to say... not to force him to comply with some rules but at least there is more... I mean... there are more regulations, more rules on Airbnb and probably it's better structured. Then now I'm more concerned about the first step within me and Airbnb without thinking about me and the... I mean I'm starting thinking less about who's on the opposite side and more about Airbnb but still trust a lot in Airbnb than what I was doing at the beginning so more thinking about being worried about the person. Now I'm... knowing reviews, all the controls, the checks that they do, maybe they require you driver licence, or whatever, for both the host and the guest so now I'm less concerned about the C2C interaction and more my interaction with Airbnb... but, basically... right now I have a lot of trust on Airbnb.

I: I kind of think we went through most of it... ehm...

B: I hope I said not what you were expecting, that's my point...

I: We are interested in your perspective, so... that's everything there's no right or wrong... Yeah maybe we can be a little more specific on the things when you actually look at the profile...you talked about the reviews and you know the general profile... you also just mentioned something about the verified things, like, is that very important or...

B: I think now, as I told you, like there has been also an evolution also for me looking at Airbnb. Probably at the beginning it wasn't mandatory to have the verification. I don't remember you [the host] were probably more interesting for guest if you were verified but it was not mandatory. I think now it's mandatory to have the verification so... for me now it's like... no problem. You must have it I think, is a must so... I'm not really concerned about the verification. I'm more concerned about... probably, yes, I look for the rules for example about the house. Of course if I'm with friends I will look for the house that reflects also the need of my friends. If I'm travelling with smokers... I'm not a smoker so I have probably less problems looking for places but if I'm travelling with smokers I will be concerned about this one...

I: What about the person like... if the host are couple, old women, young men, women...?

B: Mmm, yeah...

I: Are you concerned about that?

B: I mean I probably would prefer like a couple or family because usually they are like quite... like quieter people like more relaxed people, settled down, whatever... so they have less turbulences in their life. While if I'm being hosted by a single person usually who knows... Of course families in the mindset of everybody are good and that's probably better.

I: But that's not like... you're not concerned?

B: No no, usually that's a better question for girls not for men, I mean... I don't care about my personal safety too much. I think everything is registered here so... if I disappear [laughing] everybody will know it so... But probably a girl might be more concerned about who is the host. So... just try not only to interview me and Butta but probably also some girls because I mean... I think that sometimes hosts ask for girls only... on Airbnb I've seen them... or couples or only girls or only males... But I think that is more interesting in knowing the perspective of how the girls look at the... at this page [pointing the screen], specifically this page of Airbnb because probably they have some different concerns about their own safety. Not all girls but I think some girls they have so... just do it because... sharing is not only for us but also for girls. And then I think... yeah... I usually prefer people that state the description of the house in English... It happens that somebody here for example in Copenhagen write it in Danish. If you don't have the time to write a review, ehm like a [correcting himself] description in English... Uhm, ok, you are fine I mean, is not a problem but...

I: When you are looking at ten different profiles it will come a little down...

B: Yeah, come on, you can put a little bit more effort in doing it in English and probably you're less open, you have a less open...yeah, less open mindset, whatever. Airbnb I think is more interesting for international people rather than national people, like the ones from the same country because if I go to Bologna, my own city, to Milan, I will probably have someone to host me. So, I don't use Airbnb. If I have to live in an apartment I will probably call a friend and say "ok, host me and I don't have to pay you" and that's at the national level. While if I go abroad probably I will now fewer people so I would probably use Airbnb more and then that's why I'm asking to you [i.e. to a host] to have a description in English because come on, Airbnb is for international people, to me. So that's probably something interesting probably for your research if you're talking about sharing economy because now... I think societies are becoming more international and... that's what I'm experiencing with my friends... My friends are coming here and if this was a situation I'm not gonna let them go and spend money on Airbnb or for an hotel... I will host them for free. So that something that of course is possible only if society and people start spreading around the globe and then you have a friend in London, a friend in Copenhagen, a friend in Lisbon and then you can visit the city without paying maybe... if you are not ten people going to visit the city. If you are one person and you go there and be hosted so... that's probably the second step of sharing economy. Sharing economy

because you have your own friend, your network of friends spread all around the world. So, you don't need to pay. For me it's already happening at the national level. A lot of friends come to Bologna for example to Copenhagen and stay at my place sleeping one night for example, not all, but some friends do it so...that's something to consider.

I: I think this was super good. I mean, our topic is focusing mainly on trust in the sharing economy and I mean, the way we kind of look at what you're saying is that it has changed for you over time before it was more about people and now it's maybe more about Airbnb and you know about the formal things you can see to minimize the trust you actually need and, and rely on...

B: Exactly, I standardise trust I mean... I don't have to look at you in your own details of the person but I can standardise trust and I have it on the Airbnb platform that I know will perform all the checks about you on my behalf so...

Interview with Carl

I: I would like to know how often have you used Airbnb and if you used it as a guest or a host?

C: Just as a guest. I just used once, so that was all a sort of a kind of an emergency. When I was in US, I had to go to see my friends on New Year's Eve. And things i like, they were coming from a different city, from Boston and I was going from D.C. And we had meet there. And we had plan, like we had a different place we were supposed to go and live together. But accidently, or in the last time we couldn't find a place. So they found another place, they went there. So I was left alone, so I had to find a place to live for one night only. So then I used Airbnb and found a nice place that was not close to Manhatten, yeah Times Square, but far far away, but it was close to the metro station. And it was cheap. So, the only thing I was looking for was something cheap, which... I only had to use for like five hours or six hours. Yeah, only needed to use it for one night.

I: Is this the only time you used Airbnb?

C: Yeah, it is the only time.

I: Can you talk overall about the experience that you had?

C: Yeah, overall the experience was good, because the thing I was looking for was for price, because at that time, you can imagine, it was New Year's Eve, everything is booked. Nothing was available on the last time. And this was the only thing, which was cheap and available. Very far far away. So I contacted that lady. And like, I wrote her an email (inaudible) and she was like very response. And she said yeah you can come, because I was coming very late after the party for the New Year's Eve, at 3 AM or something. So I wrote her like, is it okay with you (inaudible) you can come anytime. So, yeah, I went there like around two thirty or three AM that night, and she was there. It was like very small room but okay. Overall I was satisfied because it fulfilled a purpose, I only had to use it for one night, and I was looking for something that was cheap. And the next day I was with my friends, so we moved for a different place. So I was satisfied.

I: So it seems pretty clear that it was just for...

C: Yeah for like temporary. I was looking for a room temporary for a very short time...

I: So your main motivation...

C: Price.

I: Okay. Since it was the only time you used it, but still... can you go through the process in which you were looking for the place?

C: Yeah. So, initial, before even going to that Airbnb... I had a perception "I don't know if it's a good idea or not." I was looking for the hotels specifically, but nothing was available. Like everything was booked. I looked at last night, the night before [inaudible] New Year's Eve. So everything was booked, totally booked. I couldn't find like anything. Then I went to Airbnb to see if there was anything. There were few places that were close to Times Square and available, but were super expensive at that time. Because I looked at it like a week ago before as well and prices were normal. But on that particular day they were shoot. They increased by at least five times. Four times. Because of the high demand. Then I finally found one. But the process was easy yeah. I searched "Manhattan, Times Square" and then on the map I saw like how far it is from the place, where I had to go. And then I use google maps to figure out "okay, where is the metro station. How long does it take. Which bus to take?". I did all these things before contacting that lady. And then when I wrote her she was very responsive. She responded like within time, so we communicated like five, six times before making the reservation finally. Because I wanted to make sure, first it is okay with her, because I was coming very late. She had mentioned the times during which you can come. But I was going at a different time. So I asked her if it's okay if I book you. And would you be able to at least open the door? So she said, yeah okay you can come anytime. Just let me know one hour before when you have to come. It was a smooth process.

I: Apart from this concern, that it was late in the night and all this, did you have any other major concerns throughout the process?

C: Concerns? Initially I was just looking for... I didn't know, should I trust Airbnb, should I trust that person? But then it worked very well, because... maybe I had no choice. So I had to use it. I don't know, I only had to use if for very short time. So no matter what is going to happen I'm using it. And it was the only option that I had. So I choose it, and then.. yeah, I didn't find any difficulty on the website or anywhere. Because it was very convenient the whole proces. Smooth. Convenient. Flexible. Yeah, I liked it.

I: Did you feel like there was any risk involved?

C: Yeah, this is what I am telling. Initially before using Airbnb that first time, it was something in the back of my mind. Like, should I pay or should I not pay. What is going to happen? Because that was going to be far far away in a different area. I have never been there before. And I didn't know, what is the neighborhood going to be. Is it real, like the lady herself, is she real. What kind of person she will be. So, these were the concerns I had in my mind. But again, I had no other choice. So, if I had a choice and I would have a choice between a hotel and Airbnb, so definitely, like 100% I would have chosen a hotel. Because it is more trustworthy.

And I had experience with living in a hotel before. And I have never used Airbnb. But accidentally I used it. And I liked it. I was satisfied. It went smoothly and according to my expectations.

I: So you would not say that Airbnb is that trustworthy as a hotel?

C: No, before it was my perception. Now I would say it is trustworthy [inaudible]. It's a big brand and people are using it. And I have used it once, so now I have my perception, [inaudible] a good one. So next time...

I: Yeah, would you use it again?

C: Yeah, next time what I would do, I will compare the prices. If I had like both options. So which one is cheaper, I will use it. Now the trustworthy is not relevant anymore. So next time I will just compare the prices. If Airbnb is cheaper, I will go for Airbnb.

I: Okay. Let's try to be a bit more general. What do you usually think about in general terms about the idea of accommodation sharing? What is your perception of that idea?

C: Just sharing apartments?

I: Yeah, like Airbnb.

C: I think it is really cool. [inaudible]. Like really healthy in terms of you as a person. I mean, it's the best or optimal utilisation of resources. If you are living alone and you have three rooms it's the best way, not only for you to earn money, but to like utilise resources in a proper way as a country as a whole gets better of. As a nation, or maybe like the world as a whole gets better because of these initiatives. So you are utilising your resources properly. And on the other end, the consumer end, you are getting good facilities at decent prices, and it is more convenient and trustworthy as well. So I would say, like ultimately just helping people, like real people, not the business or corporates [inaudible] as you use it as a guest or host. It is definitely benefiting the consumer, the real people in the end. And helping the economy as a whole [inaudible], global economy in fact. So these kind of initiatives, sharing economy... sharing anything, even know a days people are sharing clothes as well, that people in the olds days just used once and keep it forever. But now people use clothes to reuse them. And earn money out of them and the same can be weared three, four times by people. It's helping the economy. Utilising the resources in a proper way. And you are making the best use of your time and resources. It is a good thing. Whoever initiated this I think... hat's off. [laughing] I think its American guys? Two guys who started it?

I: Airbnb?

C: Yeah.

I: Yes, I think so.

I: You kind of touched upon this before, but let's be a little more specific. What do you think about the security within this kind of platforms?

C: It is always a risk I would say. Sharing economy thing, like anything where you have to share, there is always a risk. But it depends on the platform you are using. So if it's something new, even when like Uber came in, there were a lot of concerns about how is it going to work, is it safe, is it trustworthy. But now, this is the thing with the brand. When brand establish them self. So they kind of provide you this security thing. So the platform itself is worthy enough, or is trustworthy or reliable, depending on the platform, if they are reliable, if they are able to portray them self as reliable to the end consumer, then definitely. It minimizes... I won't say that it terminates or eliminates the whole security issues, but is minimize it to some extent. People can believe it is something legit. And this is something real. And since I have only used it once, and other people who have used it like so many times. The more you use it the more you become familiar, the more you have 'trust' on that particular brand. And the whole concept. So if they have launched it like 100 years ago, no not 100, but 20-25 years ago, people would not have been able to trust them, because it was a different paradigm. But now most such initiatives are being introduced generally, so people are going towards sharing economy and different kind of things. Even the [inaudible] concerned about trust and security and theft. But still, I have not heard about a single incident where.. there have been like, money had been stolen. I know there would have been practical issues with the landlords and the neighborhood or something. But I have never heard of like any accident where your money have been stolen by the Airbnb. So even if you have any complain, you can contact them. So it depends totally on the brand. Who is running the business. If they are able to portray them self as a trustworthy brand and they are able to help and communicate as a reliable and trustworthy brand, I think it minimizes to some extent the security concerns.

I: So you think it is very important to trust Airbnb?

C: Yeah. If you have to use it, you need to have trust. Or otherwise, like in my case, I wasn't trusting it, but I had no other choice. So either you have to use it forcefully when there is not a choice, or you needs to otherwise have trust on these brands before using them for the first time.

I: What about the trust towards people that you will be living with?

C: Like the landlord or the guest, or host?

I: Yeah. Do you think that trusting these people is important?

C: Yeah, exactly this is. But you don't know the right? But you know Airbnb. So they are officially [inaudible] with the Airbnb. So the connection between you and the host is Airbnb. So you cannot trust those people, like the host himself. But you can trust Airbnb, so you that there is a brand in between, there is an intermediary, so and they, so many commenced on the page. So this help you to enhance your trust on the people. But still not the people, but the brand itself. So you know, like, even if something goes bad, I still have this option of contacting Airbnb and telling this is what happen. Even when I did it. I read all the comments before contacting the lady.

I: You mean the reviews?

C: Yeah yeah. The reviews.

I: And do you think these kind of things are important?

C: Definitely. They are very important. Because they enhance your confidence level. Otherwise. And also the pictures. You see the pictures and you can have an idea, if it is something real or if it's made up things. And then you go to the comments and see how people have been treated before in such places. And generally, I don't know if they are legit comments, but I believe they are okay real comments. And I have also seemed them to be very helpful and very honest. But they are always positive. This is like difficult thing. I have never seen a bad comment... maybe they are able to delete it? [laughing] Otherwise I don't know.

I: Yeah, I don't think they are.

C: So, supposedly they are real, real comments.

I: Apart from that, was there anything else you were looking at when you were browsing the person's profile - like the lady's profile?

C: I think there is no other things available. I had a concern. I wanted to see 'her' self. How does she look like. Is she real. That thing. But from the comments, I kind of have an idea. Like had an idea, what is her age, what does she do. She was an old lady, she was like retired or living at home. And she was very hospitable. So I already kind of had an idea of the image of her in the back of my mind. That what would she look like. It also enhances my trust levels. Okay, this is like a normal person. This is not some kind of criminal guy or something. But yeah, the first thing is the comments and the pictures. So it would be nice, if people could have their own picture as well portray them self as well. Who are they. Well, they have some kind of biography, family and [inaudible]. But probably if they can do something else to enhance the reliability of their profile. It would be even better.

I: You mentioned that, you think it is nice that the idea of Airbnb is that they exploit the extra resources you have. But you also say that you would always compare price between a hotel and an Airbnb apartment. So, how do you think about these two concepts working together?

C: So, when I talk about Airbnb and the concept, I'm talking about it at the macro level. The society as a whole. Economy as a whole. Country economy, national economy, global economy. It is definitely helping out. But when I think about, when I have to chose between... just for myself, so I will compare the things, which are for like my benefits. Probably people are, they put them self first. So I would have to chose between these two. I will look for which is most suitable for me. So that was like before I first selected Airbnb. I would also have chosen hotel over Airbnb. Because I didn't have any trust. I had no experience. But know if I had to chose, first thing is probably there would be price. And there would other be factors aswell, depending on the situation, if I'm going alone or if I'm going with someone and where I'm going and if I just have to stay like last time for five, six hours I would look for price. But if I had to stay for three, four days, then it would be other factors as well probably that come into play. So, yeah, It depends on the context as well. In which context I am looking for a place to live in. But still, the concept itself is amazing. I'm not like degrading the sharing economy. But it doesn't mean that the hotel industry can be degraded or like should be eliminated due to these. Yeah, they have their own people and sharing economy apartments have their own market. So the people who... people I visited in US who travel to Europe a lot, they always use Airbnb because, I don't know, it's most suitable for them I think. And they have like no bindings. Whenever they move to the next country, they find a new place immediately. And probably that is cheaper as well. It depends on the context, this is what I'm trying to say.

Wrapping up. Mostly small talk hereafter - nothing of particular importance.

Interview with Daniel

I: I would like to know how often have you used Airbnb, and if you have used it as a host or a guest?

D: I have used it as both. As a guest I would say that I use it, not every time I go abroad or go on travel, but I always check it out to see sort of what the offer is compared to for example hotels and other options. So I mean, probably one or two times a year maybe, that I actually use to, since it sort of came. And I've also used it as a host, but that's has been through, not sort of as a private vendor, but working for a corporation or bigger, like actor, like a private actor that rents out so several rooms through Airbnb.

I: Have you used any other platform as a host?

D: Not as a host. I mean, I'm renting out my apartment, but that's more of a long term thing. So that would be more like, I don't know what to call it here in Denmark, but we have [mentioned something in Norwegian] in Norway.

I: And what about as a guest? any other platforms?

D: Not as I can think of. No.

I: Okay. Can you talk about, in general, what you experience with Airbnb has been?

D: Yeah, in general I'm very positive towards it. I mean, obviously I understand this sort of, what you say, like concerns about it in terms of regulations and that. But I like the idea very much. Sort of a sharing point of view. And also in my experience, I think especially when you come over private actors, or private people who wants to rent out their apartment and places, the service is always great. I mean, you often get good prices and good locations. And you sort of get, I mean, for example last time when we went to Japan, instead of staying at a hotel you could stay at, in an typical Japanese place. So you sort of get and extra cultural aspect of it as well. Which I think is pretty cool. And yeah, in general, of course, those kind of platforms require that the people who are hosts have a certain amount of, a certain level of service and of rating. So experiences has been really good.

I: Great. So, what will be the reasons why use Airbnb? The main reasons?

D: I would say, probably three things. Location and price and also the cultural or, sort of, I mean, in my experience you can get a nicer place and a cooler place to stay through Airbnb than you perhaps do, for the same price, if you just get a sort of sterile and mundane hotel room in a city hotel. Or at least for a big cooperation.

I: Would you say this is the main reason you are using Airbnb?

D: Yeah, those three or mmh... If I ranked them... Yeah I think actually the cultural, or like the aspect of something different. Like the experience in itself is perhaps number one. And then price and location as number two. Or two and three. In general I just think it is very cool, if you get in touch with, through Airbnb or do Couchsurfing, I mean those kind of situations, at least for, I mean young or like if you like to explore and like to sort of, if you come to a totally new city. I feel like those kind of experiences, if you get in touch with somebody who has lived there or actually has that connection to that place instead of just being a concierge or somebody working, you actually get those like honest and can get some tips and some feedback, you can actually get some experiences from that place that you might not have come over if you just checked into a hotel. Or at least the chances are bigger.

I: And would you say this difference is based on different situations, or general holds?

D: Of course it depends. But I... I think... I mean, you always have to adjust to the situation, but in general if I was supposed to decide today that I want to go to, I don't know.. Mexico City. I would check out hotels and then I would check out Airbnb, and I would sort of assess pro's and con's and see which one I would feel more towards.

I: What do you think is the difference between the two kind? So the cultural thing or also?

D: I mean, also prices... Yeah it kind of... I mean it depends and it's easy to say that it depends on the situation, but it's hard to sort of pinpoint which...

I: Maybe you can think of one experience you have had?

D: Well, like for instance when... the latest example when we were in Japan, they.. First of all, they sort of... the commercial offerings were very expensive, like super expensive compared to the apartment options, like, Airbnb option, like I think four or five times more expensive. We were renting eight people, looking for a house or place to stay for a week where we were going skiing. And we browsed Airbnb and we got in touch with, I think it was a corporation or sort of some some people renting out their house through... I mean, they were from the cooperation, but the whole thing was sort of fronted as a private. You had like one contact person, and they seemed like the people owning the house, but when you came there, they had like people cleaning out, doing cleaning service. And you also had sort of a reception desk in the city where you could come and ask questions and get tips and they can help you with ski cards or whatever. So I mean that was a lot cheaper and in addition you got, I mean we had a car to our own disposition, which was just standing in the garage that we could use for the whole week. No extra cost. Just the gas and drive around. Which was very convenient for

that situation, so perhaps it was a bit more adaptive to sort of, the needs of the people coming there. It seemed like they sort of had a very, they had a... they had sort of portrayed a person or a typo that would come there. Because this was a place where people came to ski, so the whole apartment or the whole home seemed like it was adapted very much to our needs. Which was a bonus. And I mean it was central, it was very private. It felt like a home, you sort of had a home for a week, instead of just staying in a room where you checked in and checked out, and you had breakfast with a lot of other people. I mean you... everything was sort of fitted for you. So you could eat dinner in if you wanted. Or you could go out on restaurants. I mean, you could do that if you stay at a hotel as well, I'm not saying (laughing). But it felt very personal and when we were sort of chilling in our living room, it was.. I mean, yeah, it was a home, it was not a room. So that was... great.

I: So you kind of went through it a bit, but could you describe like do usual process. Like kind of the whole process that you go through when you look for a place to stay?

D: So, like you start browsing kind of?

I: Yes

D: Okay. Well, as I said. You find a place where you want to go, and you start looking. And yeah, it's hard to sort of describe. At least the criterias. But you kind of find, often you find a couple of hotels and a couple of apartments that seem interesting. And especially with Airbnb you have to get in touch with the person at first, to sort of get a picture of how the situation is going to be or how the whole thing.. or if it's possible to get it done. And then...

I: Like, what are you looking for when you do that? What do you decide between when you look at different apartments?

D: Oh, within Airbnb?

I: Yes, within Airbnb.

D: Yeah... location is important as I said earlier. And also, I would like it to look like a decent place. And I think does two are the criterias. That's also what I like very much about it. Once you get in touch with the person that are renting out, you can sort of, at least I often experience they are very service minded and they would like it to be very fitted to you. I mean, if I have any questions, they are helpful. If you do a hotel booking for example, you just book the room. And that's kind of it. It's sort of fitted for everyone. Within Airbnb they can actually, at least it depends on the host, but often when you get in touch with them they are very helpful and they try to fit it to you. And once you get in touch with a person that seems to give you the right vibes, and have sort of a positive outlook, you go for that. If you have a couple of options that is probably what would make me pick at least one of them.

I: In this process, do you have any kind of concerns?

D: Nah. I mean... I think in our generation you always know that there are scams and people not being on there, or not necessarily Airbnb, but being on the internet for sort of other purposes than for helping you out. But in my experience, you kind of... I mean with rating systems and when you can read the feedback of others and you sort of get that feeling that the person is a real person, I feel very... I never had any doubts in regards to those kind of things. Maybe if you came over someone on another network, that didn't seem as legit you got in touch with somebody through other channels... I don't know, maybe I would be a bit more sceptical. But usually I have no troubles, I mean, dealing over... if it's Airbnb or Ebay, I mean, you can usually look at the feedback and look at how people rank, and sort of you get an impression, which I feel is actually really solid and I feel confident when I can see that, I mean, that fifty people before me have given this person or host 5 stars. Then I know that it's an alright thing.

I: So you think these rating systems are kind of important?

D: Yeah. I think so. In the digital world, or the digital life we live in now, I think those kind of things for feedback are, or could be a good thing. I mean, they could also be bad, if the wrong person is targeted against... I mean if you as a host is targeted unfairly.. you could probably if you have 100 guests, you could probably experience one or two that aren't very happy with the service and would try to sort of out you. But in general, I think those kind of systems are, seem secure. And they are probably there for a reason. In my experience they worked out. And usually when you come over someone with five stars, or high rankings, they turn out to be good hosts.

I: Okay. So reviews are what you mainly look at when you look at hosts?

D: That would be a step before deciding at least. It is not like the first thing. I would perhaps rank it after that. But as I do... I mean, if I'm going for a restaurant, I would probably first search for which type of restaurant I would like to go - if it's Italian or Indian. And then look if it's in the nearest distance and then look at rankings. Is this a good place before deciding to order food there or go there. So I would definitely put it as a step up in the process, but I don't know if it would be the first, but it would absolutely be important.

I: Why are you using Airbnb rather than other accommodation platforms? How important is it that it is Airbnb?

D: Well, to be honest I don't know of many others. So that's probably.. I mean, if something else came up I would probably be open to check it out. For instance, like you have drivenow that come now, a new service and people are giving it good reviews. People like it, so I would be open to testing it out. If I just came over a site on my own, for the first time, I would

probably... I wouldn't be sceptical, but I would probably do some research before using it. I mean Airbnb have sort of established a position as market leader, top of mind, for me at least, and I think for most. It's almost like a term. So, yeah that's why I use it, because I'm not aware of many others. But if something else came to market I would not be negative to try it.

I: Do you think Airbnb helps you to trust other people?

D: In terms of renting, or...

I: In terms of trusting, because like when you deal with...

D: Within Airbnb I would I know that this is Airbnb, so I can trust the other person?

I: Yes.

D: Yeah, perhaps... Maybe... I would... I would think that Airbnb has [inaudible] place to prevent fraud or people who shouldn't be there from being there. So yeah, maybe. But I wouldn't. I mean, if an apartment was on Airbnb and I would be the first person renting there and they would have no ratings, I would not necessarily assume that this is an okay apartment, just because it is on Airbnb. Because anybody can probably just upload an apartment there if they want to. I guess. I don't know if they have any security measures in place. At least when I, when we used it for renting out, I mean they have a very good sort of background staff to get in touch with - but the whole process of renting you place through Airbnb is supposed to be easy. So, yeah, I don't know where I'm going with this... [laughing].

I: Going a bit back. In more general terms, what do you think about this whole accommodation sharing idea?

D: I like it. I think it is a good and creative and new way of doing things. I mean this whole idea of sharing economy as you see with uber and share of cars... I like it. I think it is forward minded and innovative. And as I said, just getting in touch with sort of normal, regular people that are like yourself instead of doing, of course you are doing stuff through an organizations like Airbnb, but you kind of... you get this interconnection with other people. You sort of get a closer connection to other cultures. Yeah, I like that idea very much. And that is also of course based on that I have had a lot of good experience with it. I think it is the future in many ways. If it's sort of handled correctly or preserved in the right way.

I: When you go and stay on Airbnb, are you then typically staying with people renting or owning the place or are you renting the apartment alone?

D: Not particularly no. And I would probably prefer to like stay alone... or it depends on the kind of trip you are on. If you are sort of going on a trip with you girlfriend, you would probably, or a couple of friends, you would... I think it would be preferable to stay on your own.

I: Have you tried both?

D: Well... not through Airbnb. But like, when I have been backpacking for example, I have lived on, not hostels, but sort of home [inaudible], where you get a bunk bed and sleep with other people travelling and also the people who lives there. Yeah, I mean.. that's fine with me as well. But it kind of depends on what mindset you are in and what you are doing. If you are there for business, then you probably wouldn't and also in some situations you are probably going on a holiday. If you are there to relax and chill out, I would probably at least prefer to stay alone. But I mean there is always an option to stay with someone as well. And that would definitely depend on rankings. Like how these people rank. If they have lower rankings, then you would probably least like to stay with them.

I: In particular, if you think about trust in Airbnb. What then does come to your mind?

D: I would say, just the rankings.

I: Do you have a trust issues with using Airbnb?

D: No. Not at all.

I: Why not? For example, compared to a hotel.

D: I mean. I like to gamble [laughing]. No. I just... Airbnb has established itself as a platform that I would [inaudible] as safe. I mean, in every other aspect of life there is always an aspect of risk. You can always book a hotel where you get bedbugs. Or you can always get into that one taxi where the driver actually robs you. I mean. You can't always know that it's secure. But 9 out of 10 times or 99 out of 100 it is safe. And you sort of, I mean, people would not use Airbnb if it was a fifty-fifty of a good experience or not. People use it because they generally have good experience with it. And because it brings something else to their travel experience than a hotel does. I wouldn't have any trust issues with it.

I: You are still mentioning that there may be differences between people not having used Airbnb before, like an apartment with no reviews and others. Is that the only criteria? Now I'm just mentioning: if you can see profile picture, if you can see of the person, if you can...

D: Yeah of course. Background check would always be nice. If you are able to see if this person is actually exists and if they have, if you could Linkedin them or facebook them and see this as actually a person, I don't know, with a family, that they exist at least on the internet. But I can't say I haven't looked at apartments that are completely new and that don't have any reviews. But I would probably be more assured that this is a good place or a place I would like to stay if they have a hundred or fifty good reviews than if they have four. But that's not to say

I wouldn't consider the place that have four rankings. I can check afterwards, I don't know the place that we stayed in in Japan. I don't think they had more than five or six ratings. But it just, when we got in contact with the host it seem very, they were very caring, and it's part of the Japanese culture of course, but they were good at following up. I was very reassuring.

I: So is the contact you have with the people, like when you send the request, is that an important element?

D: Yeah, it always helps. Reassuring you at least. I would say that that's important, like in any other context, the interconnectivity. Or the connection with the person that you are in touch with is important. The service that you feel like you are getting. And sort of the first point, or the first impression you get. And first impressions are really important. So yeah, I think that can be of great importance.

I: To wrap up. If we take trust, what do you think is more influential? Is it more about trusting Airbnb or trusting people in it?

D: [Overlapping talk]. Who I'm trusting?

I: Yeah.

D: I'm not... I mean, if I had a bad experience I would kind of, I wouldn't blame Airbnb for it necessarily. I would be more reluctant to use Airbnb again, because you sort of connect Airbnb to the experience. But... So I don't know who you are kind of trusting then. But... yeah, I mean... You put your trust into other people. I think that is what you do. And then Airbnb is the medium you trust them through. Yeah... You put your trust in other people in many ways. And you sort of have these expectations that most people are this way and they wouldn't be on there too to sort of ruin you holiday, or whatever you are using Airbnb for.

I: So you have a general trust in people?

D: Yeah, I would say so.

I: You also said before that you need to trust in things because something can happen even in a taxi or something? And this is kind of your guiding line?

D: Yeah. People always have to be careful. But you can't be... I mean, I'm a... I mean, growing up in culture we have grown up in, at least here in Scandinavia where most things in our life have been safe and good. I think some of us are probably a bit naive. But you have this basic trust in people that they are good until proven otherwise. And that's probably how sharing economy has become a thing as well. Or this Airbnb and Uber. I mean, you trust in people, and of course there are measures, like the rating systems and other measures that are set in by Uber or Airbnb to sort of control this trust as well or make secure that it is even better,

or even more secure. But yeah, in general you have this basic trust. I mean. But like in the old days, before Uber, I would not be too... I mean, I would probably have taken an illegal taxi as well if that was sort of [laughing] offered. From the culture or through my bringin up, I just trust people until proven otherwise. And you can good experiences and you can have bad experiences - but I mean even if it's a bad experience it's a good memory.

I: Do you have had any bad experiences with Airbnb?

D: No.

I: Not any particular?

D: No. I mean you always... I think the only, and that's not personal, but I know through... I mean, through private people I think Airbnb is good. What I know is like sort these second hand vendors, like lotel and other, like butler service. If you go away the whole summer and you let somebody rent out your place and they take a cut of it. I have heard of friends that have lost their keys and sort of... I mean if people give you a bad rating through somebody else because you had a person that were supposed to change the towels every five days or whatever. That's the only sort of things I have heard related to it. But I also know some of the guys that have been trying to start up with these kind of butler services or second hand rentals... I think in the beginning there are a lot of child diseases. You have start up issues. And some minor things that could be handled better. But personally I have never had any bad experiences with it. And also like, if somebody loses your key it might not be the worst. I mean it's not the worst outcome. I would probably, I mean, if I would rent out my own apartment actively, you would probably experience some bad guests. Or some people that would be rude.

I: But that wouldn't hold you from continuing?

D: Nah. I mean..it's a two way platform. And again, if you... my basic thought for it is that if you come to some other guy's apartment, you treat it sort of like it's your own. You treat it nicely. And you expect the same in return if someone come to your apartment. There will always be people brought up a bit differently or come from a different culture or don't have the same thoughts about it or feelings about it. I think in generally, as we talked about earlier, if you trust people, it usually goes well. If both parties weren't benefitting from it, then I don't think it would have been a platform.

Interview with Eva

I: So, first of all, how often have you used Couchsurfing and Airbnb?

E: Uh, mmm. I had my, maybe like... like Couchsurfing five to eight times maybe, something like that. And Airbnb... Yeah, also maybe like 5 times, something like that.

I: Ok. And has that then be as a host or always as a guest?

E: Ehm, always as a guest.

I: Ok. If we first talk about couchsurfing how has your experience generally been with using that?

E: Super good.

I: And why so?

E: Because you just get to meet a lot of people and you get to go to places maybe you didn't think of before. And... Yeah it's much more... If you travel, it's much more of.... I think the cultural experience is much better.

I: Compared to what?

E: Like if I wanted to visit a city and see all the sights then I could just do something else but I was travelling with Interrail for example and I was all on my own and... yeah, then it was just super nice to meet different people and see how they actually, I don't know, how they actually live. And, yeah... You don't really get that if you stay at a hotel for example. So... Yeah.

I: And, how has that experience been on Airbnb?

E: Ehm, for Airbnb it's a little different I think. Ehm, it's not so much about meeting the people I would say, but more just to have a nice place to stay and yeah, usually is cheaper and they, well, since it's so big you can choose from a lot of different places, it's easy to communicate with the people usually, like... in advance. And... you can like use their kitchen and everything so... yeah.

I: If we then look at Couchsurfing what is your main reason for using it?

E: Well, it's... The first time I did it I mainly did it because there was like no other option, it was far up in Sweden, and... Well, they had one hotel over there, but that was super expensive and... Yeah, so I just thought I'm just gonna try it. I had my profile on Couchsurfing for quite a while, I don't know how long but I had never used it, ehm... and yeah, when I wanted to go to Sweden, like... to the north [laughing], that was kind of the only option so...

I: And then you continued...

E: I had a really good experience then, and then when I went on the Interrail, was in 2015, ehm... I always... Like I was super spontaneous with locations and everything and I always went to a café or something where I had some wi-fi and then yeah... looked at hostels or couchsurfing people and... yeah, and actually when I started my trip I also went to Czech Republic because I have like roots there and I wanted to go to a place which no one knows... It's like...

I: What is republic?

E: Czech Republic?

I: Oh, Czech Republic sorry.

E: And I really wanted to go to that place because my grandfather was born there and "bla bla bla", but there was nothing there was no hotel no nothing. But at a place nearby there was someone offering to... for me to stay at his place on couchsurfing. Ehm, so again that was the only option and then I think that kind of... I started using it again and I kept on doing it so...

I: And have you used Couchsurfing after this Interrail?

E: Ehm, no... Since then I haven't.

I: Why not?

E: Just because I haven't been traveling all that much or... Well I have been on vacation but that was then with my parents on... Yeah.

I: And... and how does this differ like... What is the reason for you using Airbnb?

E: Mmm... I don't know if it's difficult to say. Sometimes maybe if I really know... like...if there's a big city that I want to go to for sure and I want to see all the touristy stuff and... Do that kind of things as well, Ehm... Then that might be an option because then it's maybe not so much about meeting the people there but just to see the city and sometimes I just like to be for myself as well.

I: So when you have used Airbnb you have had the apartment for yourself? Or...?

E: Yes but that was more... I didn't know it before...like once I actually want with my brother and we decided... Ok... that was to get to England, to London and... we decided, ok well it's cheaper if we can cook for ourselves and everything and it's it was a super nice occasion and the girl was super nice. And then after we booked it then a couple of days, weeks later, I don't remember, she actually said she actually said ok she's not going to be at her place at the

time but that we can still have like... using her house kind of... in the middle of London, so that was a super nice. But yeah it was more about the central location and I think being able to cook for yourself so you don't have to go to restaurants or anything, all the time. And... Yeah. It think that's...

I: Ok. When you... when you... If we take couchsurfing, then when you have to find a place to stay can you then describe the usual process you kind of went through from figuring out, you know, where to go, who to stay with and do I want to stay with this or this place.

E: Yeah, ehm... Well... for... ok when I went to Sweden I looked at the place and then I saw there's this one person and I contacted him. But then usually for the Interrail I did a... made like, I had like some idea of where I kind of wanted to go and for example when I was down in Italy I said... ok, I'm going to be around Florence at this time... is there anyone who's willing to host me? So like I say I kind of made my trip public but it was not very specific trip. Yeah and then people answered me or contacted me actually and said "Yeah if you are and you can stay at my place". And, yeah then... I for once I said first ok "no I'm sorry I'm not going to come to your place but thanks for your offer" because I then decided to go to Florence instead. And then I went to Florence and also stayed with the CouchSurfing there because... yeah... I think I usually look at, like, the people's profile pictures and like if they have recommendations. And what they have written in their profile.

I: And what is that good for? Like how is that important?

E: I think usually it's just to get some kind of feeling. I don't know so... like if you're writing with that person just to get some kind of feeling... "do I like this person or not?" and "do I feel good about going there or not?" if I don't feel like... if something in me tells me "no, maybe not" then I'm not going there but usually it's like "ok"... they are nice people and they're open... just happy to show me around where they live. Ehm, and...also I think it's super nice because here you can be really flexible. Like, I remember when I went to Florence then... I... first I wanted to stay for two nights but then I just didn't like Florence at all, just the city, because there was too many tourists and everything that I decided ok I'm just gonna stay one night and the guy was totally fine with that. But I went to another place then instead, which was in Mantova. That person I had he had offered me to stay at his place before but I had declined and said "no I'm going to Florence but thank you". But yeah then I just kind of just super spontaneously to changed my mind and said "ok well if it's still ok I would come by and yeah that was then super super nice because it was a lot... the town was so a lot smaller and... That was much more of the Italian feeling that I was kind of hoping for. Yeah and, but for him also I chatted with him and he was just super super kind and said "yeah of course you can..." I have to work at this time but you can still like... see the city yourself and when I'm of at work we can go together and... yeah. But usually I look at it like I would say I post my trip, kind of my ideas and then people come to

me and say “ok if you want you can stay here and that's how I also get to go to very different cities that I didn't even know of before. But yeah that's this cultural thing...

I: Do you have any experience where you didn't... like... had a good feeling about someone contacting you.

E: I don't really remember. I never had the feeling it was like really like “ok, no”. Like not a strong feeling but maybe... but I don't remember...

I: But in general you know you're looking a lot into how the people are because you're going to be with them, actually.

E: Yeah.

I: So that also leads me to Airbnb. Can you think of how process is there, like in terms of how that differs?

E: Ehm, yeah. I think for Airbnb it's much more about the place itself not so much about the people, for me at least. And so if it's like a nice and clean place and... also I like to look at the recommendations but it's usually when people say “ok are they just... gave us the key and then they we're off...”, like the landlords or whoever. That would be fine with me I wouldn't care but if someone said “no it's super dirty” and whatever... “it's not a good” neighborhood” or whatever, then I'd say “ok no then I'm not going there”. But... Yeah I look much more at the pictures and the description about the place itself not so much about who actually is renting it out.

I: Ok. And... In overall terms we are also interested in how you view trust in these aspects... like... Do you do need a lot of trust when you actually go on Couchsurfing? Do you think that's necessary... Do you feel unsafe?

E: No, I don't feel unsafe but I think you do need a lot of trust. But... Well that's... if you for example... if there's a lot of recommendations or if there's... even if there's only a few recommendations I usually tend to trust people then. And well, I think...I mean, I usually feel like... ok I am in here in Europe if... if I go there it's super bad or I have a bad feeling or whatever or I cannot go there because... I don't know... it's not existent or whatever... I could always find a different place, I can always find some cafe where I have internet and then just go to a hotel or get on the train or bus or plane or whatever and go home. So I think even if it turned... if the place turned out to be really bad I would always... like make my way out of it kind of.

I: So like... that is of course one concern in terms of using this platform if... if it's not ok. Do you see any other like... concerns or security risks... with using these platforms? Is that something you've considered that there are risks involved?

E: Mmm, no, not so much.

I: And... neither in comparison to hotels?

E: No, actually because a lot of times if you think of hotels they might as well have super nice pictures on their web pages and then in reality it looks totally different. Ehm... So... No I don't think it's...

I: Ok. Then let's go a little bit more broad again. In general this idea of sharing your accommodations... What do you think about this trend?

E: Ehm... I like it, I mean, I've been using it quite a bit... And, yeah, and... I think it's for me now that I'm a young person and I just like to... ehm... explore the world kind of. It's super nice and I could well imagine like offering my room as well if I had the space. But then it also depends like I would never go to like an Airbnb with my parents I think. Or maybe... maybe Airbnb... But then it needs to be like still not a shared room kind of. And... I think at some point just like my travel preferences might change so that you want to have some more like luxury. Ehm... But you know for now it's amazing to get involved with so many different people and like... learn how they live and how they... how they kind of do things. Yeah.

I: And do you see any... like... Airbnb of course costs money and Couchsurfing is free. Does that have any influence in like how you view the sharing accommodation?

E: Ehm... No the cost not so much because I mean if you find a super nice place on Airbnb with like I don't know sauna or whatever then it's... I mean I'm willing to pay for it.. and it's the same with for example car sharing. I mean just because you share it doesn't mean it has to be for free. I mean I don't like those people that for Airbnb... like rent out their room or apartment like as if it was actually like their living kind of that renting it out. Because that's bad for hotels and also bad for people who are looking for like... proper apartments where to live.

I: So there is a limitation in how excessive it should be?

E: Yeah.

I: Okay. Do you you have had any particular bad experiences either on couchsurfing or Airbnb? Something you think this was not that cool.

E: Mmm... No not really. People they were always really nice and helpful. Showed me around.

I: And then you mentioned you look at the pictures and and the profile of pictures... like that is the main two things that you used to understand if, I don't know, trust or if I'm trust or if you're willing to go to these places.

E: Ehm... Yeah and recommendations from others or like comments from others.

I: Ok. And that differs between the two platforms, you said like Couchsurfing would probably be more about the person or...?

E: Yeah. Couchsurfing is more about the people and then Airbnb would be more about the location itself.

I: So like I think we're kind of gone through the things... you covered a lot of parts, but maybe if we can try to interpret a few of the things you said and then of course say if we're wrong but in overall if you are using to use kind of platforms to get a more real experience than a hotel for example. Like, you want to view how people live their everyday life and you actually want to also at least with Couchsurfing you went a lot to meet the people and Airbnb is more when you go with other people and you kind of want an experience that is in the city.

E: Yeah and I mean it's usually, or a lot of times, it's cheaper than hotels. Yeah.

I: So would you say that is the main motivation of using Airbnb compared to couch surfing or like, hotels...

E: I don't know actually...

I: Like if you would say like... "that's my main reason for using that". I know it's kind of difficult but...

E: No it's not the main reason. I thought if it was more expensive then I wouldn't use it but it's not. I mean if it was same price, I think I might still use the Airbnb. 'Cause usually it's actually super easy and... Yeah.

I: Have you had any bad experiences with hotels since you're not preferring that?

E: Mmm, no. Maybe only that sometimes it looks different... like their pictures they try to make it super nice on the Internet. And then in the end it's not that nice. But, yeah... I mean that could happen in an Airbnb as well. But I think... maybe if it happened there then I'd be like... "Ok, well that's what you get for using your Airbnb and like not using a hotel".

I: But still use Airbnb for like practical... Practicalities. Cause you said is more easy and all that stuff... So...

E: Yeah and I think maybe the feeling like you... you visit a place and you can really feel like home kind of. Because it looks like a home kind of. I mean, it is... usually, so.

I: Have you have tried any other platforms than Airbnb and Couchsurfing if that's the same?

E: Mmm, No I don't think so,

I: And why in particular these two?

E: I think... well I don't know if any other like substitute for couchsurfing. And for Airbnb I think it's because most people offer's are there, so... They have the biggest choice, so to say.

I: Does it have anything to do that these are well-known platforms that... I mean... So if there was hypothetically a new platform that just started up you will also be willing to try that or...?

E: Yeah, I think so.

I: Do you think these platform help you in like... trusting other people? Like, do they have any part in this process because I mean when you go to people you don't know, then you said ok I'm looking at their profiles, I'm looking at their pictures, but like what about the brand that it's like...the platform. What do you think these two things combined together... like...

E: Yeah I think it's maybe because, like the trust aspect maybe... Because you actually get to know the person or like if you contact someone you write with the person and not with someone working in a hotel for example. So you usually learn something maybe about their family and what are they doing for you for a living or whatever. So it makes everything much more personal and I think that it's also connected to trust.

I: And how important... like, how much should you know about this person like when... What is needed before you actually feel "ok this is either safe or this I want... I want do here I want to go.

E: Mmm...

I: Like you say you have to figure out something about the person. I mean, do you have a lot of conversations back and forth or...? Are you just straightforward or...?

E: No, I think it's a lot of times what they share for example on their profile like they say "ok we are small family, we have a little child, we have pets or whatever. I think it's this aspect. And usually I tend to, when I write people, I think and I always say I'm 23 year old from Germany traveling around and I would like to stay at your place kind of. Whereas, I mean, if you book a hotel for example, you just put in kind of your data, your name, birthdate maybe and... Ehm, yeah, that's it so...

I: So so when you look at Airbnb compared to couchsurfing here, how much are you looking at these profiles things also?

E: Mmm, yeah I think I think for couchsurfing it's even more. But, yeah... I try to get a feeling for the people, just yeah. I don't know... it's... it's difficult to explain... I just get a feeling about the whole thing and, yeah... then if I feel like "ok it's good" then I trust the people but I always know "ok I might be misled and might be totally wrong", but then ok well whatever. I can still find another place or if... if like there's no one else offering a place then I can always go to a hotel or take some bus or whatever.

I: I think that's it. Perfect, It was good to hear a new perspective so unless you have something... I think we covered what we would like to hear. Thank you very much.

E: You're welcome [laughing].

Interview with Francis

I: So, just as a introduction of course there are no wrong or good answers we are just interested in your perspective what's your experiences with these kind of service, like Airbnb. And as a warm up question I would just ask you to tell us how often you used Airbnb and if it was as a guest or as a host and this kind of stuff.

F: Yeah. Well it's been a while since I used it last time but I went on exchange for one and a half year ago to US where throughout the exchange we wanted to visit different places on the East Coast of the USA. And we rented I think it was...in all... I went in three apartments with my friends and two with my family when they went over to visit me. Ehm, so I thought at least from my perspective that was a good way of sort of experiencing the American way of living compared to living in a hotel room for instance. Especially because of the differences you see in regards to whether or not you're staying in the northern part of US or in the southern part. Like... if you went to...I can't remember the hotel names but let's just Crown Plaza or something that. It would probably have been more or less the same experience. If you were in the north from the south, but like going to see how the houses and the apartments look like when you went to some families or at least their apartments you get some kind of impression of how people actually live in this in this state...yeah. So that was basically my rationale behind using Airbnb for my exchange study.

I: And how was the experience overall? Like...

F: I didn't have any bad experience to be honest but we also used...for the searching engine you can use those "super hosts" I think it's called, where you get recognised...yeah... your hosts of different apartments so I think I had the assumption that when I had a high recommendation from other users and also people or hosts who are acknowledged by Airbnb then facilities would be all right as well and... and they were. I was really satisfied with all of the experiences I got.

I: Great. So what would you say is the reason you use Airbnb, like you used Airbnb and why would you use it again?

F: Ehm, well first of all there is the...[thinking]. My impression is at least that we could get it bit more cheap than if we bought like a hotel room for seven days in New York or in Brooklyn or something like that. And at the same time, as I said before, just to get the more authentic experience of living in the city. I also had one stay in New York for five days during the exchange which was in a hotel room and it's just two completely different experiences. But... yeah I would say that both the pricing and the authenticity of living in one of those apartments is really the core of why I've chosen Airbnb.

I: Would you think one is more important than the other or...?

F: The authentic would probably be the most important cause like...Yeah, I didn't really evaluate the price as the first thing when I think of it now like...it was just somehow an additional benefit from from using Airbnb.

I: Great, great. So could you please describe the usual process that you go through when booking at a place on Airbnb? Like, from the start again to the end? What are you looking at?

F: Yeah. Ehm, actually I use the map in the right side of the of the page of their web page just to sketch an impression of where it's placed, where the different locations are compared to where I want to go visit things, for instance. Like, in Brooklyn, for me at least, it was important that it was close to like the center of Brooklyn but also close to transportation to get into Manhattan. And when I went to New Orleans it was important for us to stay in the center of New Orleans just to get rid of all the transportation. So I used a map just to sort of point out what area would be interesting to stay at and then afterwards I use the recommendations to sort of filter out those hosts that I didn't find relevant or authentic enough for the experience that I wanted to get. And then I think in all five cases it was narrowed down to like ten or fifteen different hosts in the end. And then I looked pretty much just the pictures compared to the price and...yeah, basically what...how much you got...

I: ...the pictures of the place or...?

F: Yeah, the pictures of the place and then what the price for it was. Like if it was really nice pictures I would probably be more willing to pay a higher price compared to...compared to if it was bad pictures, right? But also depending on...like, in New York for instance I didn't plan to spend that much time in the apartment so in that case it was more like, yeah... an overall sort of thinking about of how the pictures looked like compared to the price and what I expected from my experience when I was there.

I: And this whole process have you have you had any concern of any type while doing that or...?

F: Ehm [thinking].

I: Like, any risk involved?

F: Yeah well obviously there must have been some risk involved because... for instance, in New York the thing was that when I went there for the Airbnb was like in the late autumn. And therefore, like, for me it was really important that you were able to heat up the apartment and... and you were able to have that in the price as well so that you didn't get any

unexpected bill afterwards. But also I think like... the risk of just... just looking at the recommendations to see if they had any...surprises or negative surprises that didn't match what you thought that you were off when booking the Airbnb. And I think obviously that has something to do with the pricing because you expect that when you buy or when you book a place for, let's say...three thousand danish crowns for a week, you expect that to be the price including heat and electricity and so forth. And you can also...we found I think two places where we saw recommendations stating that...well, it was this time during the year so obviously we had to heat up the apartment and then they had to pay extra to do that so...like...the biggest risk will probably be not to exceed the price level that you expect it to be.

I: And do you think that trust is relevant anyhow in this whole process or...?

F: Yeah I really think so but I think it's a different type of trust like because in my case it was not necessary the trust to the host, it was more trust to people who rated the host somehow. Because my impression was [that] if they had a good experience and they would probably have a more objective view of what their staying than the host who offer the place obviously. So it was more trust for me based on the recommendation than what the host wrote himself on Airbnb.

I: So are you so you basically base your trust mainly on that or is there any other...?

F: Well, I think the level of trust that you get to the host really depends on the recommendations that person has or if he is also, he or she, is acknowledged by Airbnb as well but obviously that [trust] also increases... I think when you become a super host the price increases as well. So...Yeah well going back to the risk again, like...there's not like, at least in my opinion, there's not that much of a risk if you have a super host who also have a lot of recommendations but if you want to find that the perfect balance between getting something authentic but also in a reasonable price, [then] looking at what the recommendation were... solely...would be enough for me to sort of increase the level of trust to the host as well.

I: Are the reviews like the only thing you use to kind of start trusting someone or is there any other thing you look at?

F: Well...pictures might make...have an influence as well. I actually think that if you have pictures that you can see perhaps were taken with a mobile phone or something like not that fancy, I find [them] more trustworthy. Because then it doesn't seem like that the person try to manipulate something that the place isn't. Ehm, whereas if you have like these high exclusive pictures you...I would at least have the impression that, well... I might get some bad surprises here, right? Where in the other the case you know what you get. So, yeah, pictures might have something to say as well.

I: If we go a bit more broad, in broad terms, like... what do you generally think about this whole idea of accommodation sharing?

F: I really like it. I think...I think it's...it's becoming the new thing and I also think that we see it in many different industries... like this type of business is really profitable. Both I think because that people for a long time have had...let's say...bad experiences, obviously also good experiences, but also bad experiences with hotels or other let's say more company wise.

I: Did you have any bad experience with hotels?

F: Yeah well I think...the thing I talked about pictures for instance. Like, you always have nicer pictures than what you all actually get when you rent a hotel room for...in the big city or something like that. Ehm, and you get like perhaps such a small place. I had one in Barcelona for instance where...it looked really nice in the pictures but when we got there it was really really small and not that well cleaned and all that stuff. Where like my impression is that when people rent something out that's their own, they really want to show...show it from the best side so they clean it, they make sure that everything's all right and...like, there's some kind of familiarity to it as well, I guess. Yeah, but...it this only industry wise or...?

I: This is like your personal experience and perception. Like, for example do you feel confident in using this platform?

F: Yeah I definitely do. I think that might also have to do with what you're used to from each generation like, cause in... At least in my generation I think there's a lot of trust when it comes to digital platforms when it comes to sharing economy. Where that's just something that you're used to if you've grown up with it somehow and... you trust that people like... want to do the best for you. Obviously you know that there's a certain risk that that someone might want to screw you up right? But that might also be the case with companies. So, for me at least, I don't think there's a bigger risk of... of actually using a sharing economy-based type of business compared to an organized.

I: Not even anything about security like...?

F: No but...I think that's because if you look at it different examples I just saw I think it was two days ago a hotel or at least two people who booked a hotel in Prague via Hotel.com and they got there the hotel was burnt down. So I mean I think just to presume that that might also be the case if I book it through hotels.com, which is just pretty much just a search engine for whoever wants to like offer a hotel...that could be anyone. So why should I trust a person in Barcelona who has this hotel chain or just one simple hotel with twenty rooms more than a person who rents out his apartment in the in the same area? I think it's more or less the same.

I: Yeah but then why using Airbnb rather than any other accommodation sharing platform?

F: To be honest before going to US that was the only platform I knew. And I think... I think they have a first mover advantage, which means that like their brand awareness increased a lot and... when it comes to like a new introduction of doing business in a certain way they increased their level of trust a lot, at least it's my impression, when people like... when they have the most frequent users and the highest share of users as well, then the logic would also be that like people use it more frequently because then ratings increase compared to other similar platforms. So even though I know other platforms exist, I would still use Airbnb today solely based on the fact that I think they have the most users and as I said before, users are what built the trust in my case to each specific apartment.

I: Ok so you would not switch to like another accommodation platform, sharing platform...If, let's say, tomorrow a new concept...?

F: Ehm, no, I probably wouldn't like... cause, again, for me it's about the authentic experience and now I have experience with using Airbnb where I think the, sort of the demand that I had was satisfied through that experience so...regardless if I could save, let's say five hundred Danish crowns or a thousand Danish crowns, I would probably still go with Airbnb. So, like... if someone should sort of convince me to change [inaudible] a sort of much me to change the supply of it, [then] it should probably be like a really high discount or I should have some recommendations from like word of mouth from friends that I'm actually talking with and that a good experience with it. But that would just be...when I think of it out of pure curiosity because... if I really want to go on vacation I'll go into a big city and explore the city and the authenticity of it, I would use Airbnb cause that's where I've based my experience on so so far.

I: So... If we can elaborate a bit more on the trust part. Like, the comparison between the brand Airbnb and the users on Airbnb. Where do you put your trust in actually using this platform?

F: I think on the brand, Airbnb. Cause obviously you could also go online and find different apartments just using Google and then have some sort of private host, like you found on the second or third page for instance. But I think like...the brand really matters because then I trust that. Even though it might not be the case every time but that's the same for Hotel.com, they can't guarantee every one of their hotels. Like, my impression is still that I can trust that when it's acknowledged by Airbnb, when it's put in there. Then the employees or the brand, the company Airbnb puts in an effort to sort of make sure that all that, that all of the apartments or buildings or houses that are offered through that platform are also sort of satisfying the requirements that they sort of set to become a host at Airbnb. And also just the process of...like, if I was a host for instance, [then] I would assume that it was more difficult for me to sort of put

it up on Airbnb and make that I'm filling all of their requirements compared to just make a page of my own and make it available in Google for instance. So, that would also imply that more serious hosts are also going through the platform Airbnb because they know that then they can be trusted in a certain way more than compared to if they have their own personal site.

I: And then. You still mentioned that you look a lot about the reviews comments and also the super host batch. So does that mean that you also...like...you look more towards hosts that are experienced than hosts that only have tried it one time maybe?

F: Yeah.

I: So you still put it like...you're not completely safe or you're not completely willing to take these new ones?

F: Ehm, I might be...if I went back to New York, for instance, where I have already tried like, to get the authentic experience through a recognized host. So I think that depends whether or not I've been there before actually, because if I want to go to a new place obviously I want to make sure that I get the experience that I expect to get. But if I went there for like the second or third time then I might, yeah, consider to go with a new one just to get a new experience as well. Ehm, so...I wouldn't exclude them.

I: And it would be ok if it was like a new one that didn't, like... it only had one comment one review?

F: Yeah, I would be all right but then, again, like since I base it most on the recommendation I would probably also expect a lower price to sort of reduce or maintain the balance in my searching sort of method. But I would never do it for the first time experience. That would be for the second or third and then it should be more cheap. Yeah, just to gain like...to sort of level out the trust issue with the price.

I: Unless you have...like our topic is trust in sharing economy and, in particular sharing accommodation so...I don't know if you have any thoughts on that in general...?

F: Well, going more industry broad I would say this really is a market that's growing and I think you see the businesses, like organize businesses, are really trying to push out different ways of using...This is accommodation but like you can also see it in the car sharing for Uber or like, you can see organised businesses like Drive now in Copenhagen, which try to sort of make out a business that is more organized than just sharing economy but it's still based on the same principles so I think that's the way the market moves.

I: And what do you think then it's more organized than basic sharing? What does that mean?

F: Ehm, to me it means that for Airbnb they are...obviously they are organized brand and a company but they don't own any apartments or any buildings of that stuff they just make the platforms where it's able to sort of change apartments with host and and this is it obviously. But if you look Drive Now for instance, they own the cars but they still build their business on the fact that people should share, all right? So, like...going back to risk issue as well if you look at the car industry there's a risk in having a car cause you might have all of these expenditures of buying it, first of all. But also if you damage it or something like that, then all of the costs are given to you, where if you have a, let's say a subscription to Drive Now, then you know when you paid this amount of money, well then it's also insured by Drive Now and you sort of know what you need to pay but you don't have any risk when you left the car like...then it's their business again. And I think that's kind of of the thing that's moving up in the market and what people actually like to have cause... yeah, actually now that I think of it it's quite interesting cause it moves risk from...like obviously there is a risk of renting something compared to owning something yourself. But there's also a risk sort of attained to owning something compared to if you rent it something. And I think that where it's moving right now the risk of renting something is becoming lower and therefore people are probably moving more away from having the risk of owning something themselves to go in to use services where you can actually rent something without that much risk.

I: So if we look at Airbnb again, do you think there are any...like, these risks with actually booking it, do you think Airbnb can solve these risks? If you had any issues?

F: Ehm...[thinking]

I: So what would happen if your came to New York the first time and there was not...the host was not there.

F: Yeah...what I would say that the risk...obviously there would be a risk if you broke something, similar to the one in a hotel. So that risk would probably be the same. Ehm...that's a tough questions actually.

I: It's more...do you rely on Airbnb covering your...risks?

F: Oh, in that way. No, I wouldn't expect them to cover anything that I... but that's the difference once again, because that's where I sort of separate the platform like Airbnb where they just sort of provide this platform of sharing buildings, where on Drive Now, Drive now owns their cars so I would expect them to sort of be insured, where when it's a platform solely based on sharing I wouldn't expect Airbnb to do anything else than just ensure that I have the opportunity to go to a specific place and stay there for seven days...That they just facilitate this opportunity. So if I broke something I would expect that it will be myself who paid for it, yeah.

I: But what if the apartment that you book on Airbnb is not living up to its recommendation? You were promised that there was a bathroom and there's not. And you paid, your kind of feel that you paid for that, but it's not there.

F: Yeah, I would... I'm not really sure of what the procedure is but I think you need to write a complaint to them first and I would definitely do that. And then...

I: Do think that is reliable?

F: Yeah, I actually think if I did it I would trust that they did at least research do something about it. That they would investigate if I was right in my case. And then I would assume that if there wasn't any toilet and there was in the pictures that I would get some kind of refund. Because I think that they should also have like a responsibility, that's my point again, when you facilitate this. They need to...and, what I also expect them to do, is to make sure that, like, by keeping up with and updating whether or not the host also living up to what they're actually writing and if the pictures are correct or not. And I think they do that. I know they have a lot of employees just filtering out different apartments that doesn't look like they do on the pictures for instance. And then they exclude them from the web page. But to be honest that's what drives their business, so that should be the one thing that they're really sure that they always cover, that they really provide the experience that people expect from the different hosts.

I: Yeah, I think, that's the end of it. Thank you so much.

F: Yeah, no problem

Interview with Gabriel

I: So, you have been using both Airbnb and Couchsurfing?

G: Yes.

I: As a host or as a guest?

G: As a guest. Both of them. I also have used Airbnb as a host... as a guest both of them, but I have also used Airbnb as a host. But just couple of times. I have someone else managing this thing for, so I don't follow it that much.

I: And how often have you been using both Airbnb and CouchSurfing as a guest?

G: CouchSurfing just two times probably. It were, it was just on like a... when I was broke [laughing] and I was travelling with my girlfriend and we needed a stay in August in Menorca. We didn't have money and we had to find a cheap place. I used Couchsurfing just like for one night. Just because we really needed one. Because our... and we couldn't find anything else cheap. Then for Airbnb I have been using it mostly every time I travel.

I: And how many times do you think you have tried it?

G: I would say 15. 20.

I: In general, what have your experience been with Airbnb?

G: Quite good. It depends a lot on the country. Because you see here in Denmark, they don't give a shit, like giving clean sheets or like, they are just like, here is the place, here you can sleep, here is the bathroom and... feel yourself home. But in Italy it is different, because they are very like... like focus on having, giving like high quality, very clean place with like new sheet and everything has to be... just like a hotel.

I: And you prefer that?

G: Of course. Yeah. I prefer that. But I know that that is not... like the social thing, the social part of Airbnb. It's actually reflecting more how they do it here in Denmark. Okay, here is my stuff here is a place where you can sleep. In Italy it is much more, or in Italy or in Southern Europe, Spain as well, it's like an alternative to hotels much more than here in terms of people doing it for getting money out of it, and not just for saving money when they are broke that they do here.

I: What is the reason for you using Airbnb?

G: The reason for me?

I: Yeah, why do you chose to use that compared to hotels?

G: Mmh. The reason is because I spend the same amount of money staying in a hotel but I have, but I can host people... like I can stay with I have a kitchen, I have a full apartment that I can use.

I: So is it because you have more benefits than a hotel?

G: Yeah. I feel more free to spend more time home. Or like I wouldn't spend that much time, I wouldn't... If I was in a hotel probably think about stay in a hotel, I would have to find a place every night where to go and find dinner. That's a way I feel more local and even save money. Because I don't have to go out for dinner every night. I don't have to stay outside. I can chill at home.

I: When you go to these Airbnbs, do you have that apartment for yourself or is it a shared apartment?

G: No, I always have the apartment for myself.

I: Is that a criteria for you, that you need that - or is that by accident?

G: Most of the time, yeah. If I get an Airbnb it's because I want the whole apartment for myself or because its... because it's not only me and I'm travelling with other people.

I: So you would prefer to have no social interaction?

G: [inaudible] If... no I mean. It's just like that. If it's just for me, I would... If I was travelling alone, I would just probably get a hotel room. I never got an Airbnb just for me. Always thinking like the fact that it's cheaper when you travel with other people.

I: And you said, you used CouchSurfing two times and that reason was purely because needed a place to stay?

G: Yeah [laughing]

I: If we take that example, when you used CouchSurfing, what were you looking for? How did you find these places? The process of going through that?

G: I went on the website and then like based on... well, both of the times I was in a rush, so I had to find a quick solution. Because I was already travelling and it was from tomorrow, like I need a place from tomorrow. And I was with my girlfriend, she is not the type of girl, she likes adventure and stuff, but it was already too much. So we were "okay, we don't have money and we don't have any place to stay tomorrow, so we need to find something", and then there was this guy... and he was a... you could see that he had a high percentage of

answering and he was completely open to host people. So I contacted him, and he say yeah yeah we could meet tomorrow, and then we met. And this time.. No, when we met he actually asked us for money [laughing]. But he was like, yeah... he was one of those guys that painted on the street, characteristic... caricature... but he was really cool, and I know he was doing it for... like, he was "hey guys, of course I'm not supposed to do that but if you want, just take 10 euros for the night". It's okay. I mean, you are hosting us. So we gave him like 10 euros.

I: In that process, did you also look for other people or was this the first one you contacted?

G: No, no, it was the first one. And then... But he was really cool, because besides that he asked us for money, which was like 10 euros, so was like nothing compared to anything... he was cool because he brought us around local places and we spend the whole day together and bring us to a hidden beach, we would otherwise not go. So like, for the social side of it, it was great. We are still in touch sometimes.

I: And you have never thought about doing that also on Airbnb? Getting that social touch?

G: Nah, yeah. But it is different. Because most of the time that Airbnb, because people just use Airbnb because of money. That's the number one reason.

I: That was more about the process of CouchSurfing. So if we look at Airbnb, when you think back to the 15-20 times you used it, what do you look for?

G: I see Airbnb as a professional way to go rent your room or [inaudible] nothing like CouchSurfing even though they try to.. they brand themselves as get local experience, get to know local people, create a community there is also a social aspect there... But I still think the number one thing is money. So, I use the same approach that I use for hotels, for example in a trip, on booking.com. So price range, then reviews, and locations. Those are the main three things that I look at. I don't spend that much time going deep into analysing the host and understanding if he is... yeah, I just look at the reviews.

I: Why do you look at the reviews? What are you looking for in the reviews?

G: I... How clean it is. So, like, I mainly look at bad reviews. I filter the bad reviews and look at them. And so that I have, that I know what to expect at the very least. If they say we waited, if I see a review that says we had to wait for an hour and a half outside waiting for him to come getting us the key, or something. Then I would probably choose someone else because that like my prime... my problem. Nah, not my problem. But like the problem I see with Airbnb is like, there is not like, you are never like 100% sure when you get there and someone will be there. Even though they have 100 reviews, there is always a fear of what if I get there, I'm in a

country, my phone doesn't work here and whatever. So there is not a reception like you go on in a hotel, so you trust that the other guy is professional enough to show up or to...

I: How do you then figure out if you trust the person?

G: Mainly reviews. And mmh... yeah, reviews and I trust other peers.

I: If you were to see one who only had two reviews, would that be an issue?

G: I would probably choose someone who had more reviews unless the house is amazing and the price is very low.

I: Then you are willing to take the chance?

G: Then I might take the chance. If it is also up other than Airbnb, if it's a new site, if it's newer than Airbnb it is higher chance that they don't have enough reviews for that reason.

I: You mentioned that there is always a risk if the other person is actually showing up or not with the key. Do you see any other concerns in using Airbnb?

G: Mmh. Well, from my perspective...

I: Or any risks?

G: Risks of breaking something in the house or something like of valuable, but not valuable in terms of money, but that's like their own problem, because if they rent out their room or whatever, they need to...

I: But more from your perspective, when you rent it as a guest. Do you feel any risks with actually choosing Airbnb compared to a hotel?

G: It is just, like, the service side. Of course you don't have, you might expect the same service you get in a hotel, because you are paying and it look like a professional service now. But most of the times you don't get... cause, I remember the first times I rented out my room, the guest were always calling me for like stupid reason, like we don't have the cover of the pad for cooking, so you had... from the host perspective you had to deal a lot with the people that think they are in a hotel and they can get the same services. And but you.. it's hard for a host to actually provide all the services they are expecting. And on the other side, it's hard to receive all the services... like 24/7 assistance or whatever happens. If, I mean, that basic stuff.

I: So you have been hosting a few times, are you still doing it?

G: Yeah... but basically my family have a house in Barcelona, and they are renting it out. But... on Airbnb. But I'm not following that. I'm still doing it, but I don't know how that is going. I mean, it's going good, because I have the reports and everything, but I don't know...

I: Oh, so you get it done professionally, got someone else to do it?

G: Yeah.

I: Okay. If we then talk a little more broad. What do you think about this idea of sharing accommodation?

G: I think it is a great idea. Of course... it has been used forever. It's something that has not been invented by Airbnb, but I like... they just used the technology to scale it and make it available to everyone. So I think the idea was already there, and that's why it was a good idea.

I: How confident do you feel using these platforms? You mention using Couchsurfing and Airbnb. Have you used others?

G: I used Homestay, I think it's called. But I have problem with it. Because like I was... what happened... Yeah, I had problem with the refund, because at the end the house was not available, and they told me when I already booked it for some reason. And then, then it took one month for me calling the customer service trying figuring out how to get back my money and stuff like that. I haven't used it actually, I just tried, but it didn't work.

I: And why did you try it?

G: Because it was still in Menorca, that week where I used Airbnb, Couchsurfing, my broke week [laughing]. It was cheaper. I found like a cheap house. And then since it didn't go well with that, I went to CouchSurfing. Because there was not like any cheap house on Airbnb.

I: So you are not inclined to use Homeaway again?

G: No, no. I would not use it.

I: What about other platforms, could you be willing to do that?

G: Oh, no. I think I reached the point where I'm a loyal customer to Airbnb. So, I don't see a point in using something else.

I: Again, if we... What do you think about the security of using these accommodation platforms?

G: Security in terms of...

I: Do you think they are secure to use?

G: Yeah. Safe. Yeah. Like, I don't think there is any problem related to security, unless you don't... if you pay attention to what you are looking for, so looking at the reviews and other

people's experiences. I think that security is not an issue, but it could be for someone who have never used Airbnb... They just choose the house for price and for how good it is.

I: Do you think there could be a difference here in terms of whether you use CouchSurfing, Airbnb, Homeaway or even less famous ones?

G: Well, I'm not sure, but the difference can be simply in the amount of users who are using the platform. So maybe... I would feel more safe using Airbnb, because I know that, because I see that one user has more reviews than maybe the same thing on another platform. Because basically Airbnb have a higher volume of people using that than other platforms.

I: If we talk a bit about Airbnb again. How do you think, or how does Airbnb help you to... Like, you are still booking an apartment from another person. How do they help you trusting that you can go to that person and that he will show up? Is that purely the reviews you rely on?

G: You mean like the platform site, how do they make sure...?

I: How do they make sure that you feel you can trust to book this?

G: I think that what they do is using transparency. So as I told you, allowing everyone to write reviews. That's what, like I said, what I look at. But that's like a tool that Airbnb provides to the users to understand if there is something wrong or not. I don't know if they use any process or...

I: If I just mention different things, they have insurance, even on CouchSurfing you saw your cousin, so you have these mutual friends, you have verified profiles and these kind of things. You have profile pictures, professional take pictures. Are there any of these things you rely on specifically?

G: The insurances is a big thing. Like for sharing platforms the insurance is crucial, because, mainly because it's... I know that most of the people are not willing, like me, like we are not willing to use a sharing platform, because they don't have much experience or don't trust it. So, knowing that behind it there is an insurance that covers you in case anything happens it's good.

I: So it is important that it exist for you, otherwise you would not use it?

G: Yeah, yeah, of course.

I: Okay.

G: Then, the profile picture as you said, it is not important. But probably fifty percent of people put a high value on the picture, to actually see. [Refer to an experiment].

I: You seem to be more focused about the experience of other people, similar to what you do on hotels and what airbnb stands for. You trust them that they are as professional as a hotel?

G: Exactly. Yeah. I know there is like... Even though I don't have a physical service with the host, the 24/7... I know that there is a hotline that I can call in case that anything happens. And that's basically also important.

I: So you actually, if I can put words in your mouth. You don't think that it is that necessary to trust people in general? Like you can just trust Airbnb?

G: Yeah. Fifty-fifty maybe. But yeah, Airbnb so the trust... Airbnb... the institutional trust is something that... In sharing platform, like airbnb is doing a lot. It's defining a lot the final decision of whether user are trusting or not.

I: So for example if you saw a poster on the wall here about a stranger that you could go and book his apartment...

G: Yeah, it's the same thing. If I see a post here... of a stranger. And I know he is a CBS student. I would probably trust him, because we are in the same community, and this can be a [inaudible]. I know how is an Airbnb. I know that Airbnb build their community on some values...

I: Would you trust that as much if it was not through an organisation, just.. of course you know it's a CBS student, but you would not have the insurance for example. Would you be more concerned? How much do you rely on Airbnb actually being a part of it?

G: Mmh. No, I would need the Airbnb. Like it would have a lot of value to have Airbnb for the first time. If it's a complete stranger, I would need like the Airbnb brand covering that part that I don't know about the person.

I: And then maybe it could evolve?

G: From my experience, after I meet the host, he gave me his number and next time don't use Airbnb, just call me. And then I would trust him. Even though... Just the fact that meeting him and knowing that the other person makes him more vulnerable in terms of deciding not to have an insurance with Airbnb, or like not to have Airbnb covering it.

I: Have you used that? Have you called a host after and stayed with him?

G: Yeah.

I: How was that?

G: Perfect. In Italy, in Spain... It's actually more common to have these kind of contracts, like not having a contract or anything. Just go, and it's easier for both of you to pay in cash and spend the night.

I: And nothing have happened?

G: No, nothing ever.

I: Have you had any bad experience at all, particular bad experiences, with Airbnb?

G: No, I don't think so. Never had. Just here when my parents came here. It was like a [inaudible] because my parents are used to [inaudible] clean, super clean and they gave us... the sheets were all, have, they were all burned with cigarettes. But then like I called the guy. I was like the annoying guest that was calling you for anything. "Okay, can you please bring me new sheets, because these ones are... they have holes". But they came back with new sheets. And they were not that different [laughing].

I: But it's not that important, it's annoying thing...

G: Yeah yeah. It was more for my parents. Because both of my parents are using Airbnb a lot because they see... they want to have freedom to feel home, so they have a kitchen, not going out on restaurants and all this stuff.

I: In terms of your experience, you were in a lot of rush with CouchSurfing, but how did you consider what you have to trust? How does it differ?

G: From Airbnb to CouchSurfing?

I: Yes.

G: Yeah, as I told you. CouchSurfing is much more the social... it's like a social platform. Airbnb is much more, it became a new booking.com for people to get money from there. Just for the fact that I see someone on CouchSurfing, for some reason people on Couchsurfing normally do it for... not for profit, just for the social aspect. Because they want to host people. And also there they have reviews from other travellers. So... like... If I have to think about the individual trust... Why do I trust that individual... I would probably dig less on CouchSurfing rather than on Airbnb, because I know they are, they belong to a community that is much more social than Airbnb.

I: So just by being on CouchSurfing, you trust the person?

G: Yeah, I trust them in some way. But of course, like... You are never 100% sure. But on the other side on Airbnb... if I had to think of... I see it much more like a website for getting money. Rather than just being social. I see that there is a lot of people on Airbnb, a lot of hosts,

they just do it... that... They don't like to share their house, they don't like to meet new people. They don't care. They just want to have paid their free room. Just to cover their rent. That's why I wouldn't trust them that much. Because I know that if I go and spend two days in an apartment with another guy, I would probably have trouble with him. To my girlfriend it happened. Because, yeah "you can not use the kitchen because yeah, I'm using the kitchen from 8 to 11, so you have to use it before that". So it's much more like...

I: On Airbnb?

G: Yeah, on Airbnb. You can not use it after 10 in the afternoon, or night. I don't know. They just put all these rules that don't make you feel home. So that can happen. You can have trouble in that sense. That you don't feel like... you don't feel like a guest. You feel like someone that pay for the room, and just have to get what he pay for.

I: Again, if we compare this to the hotels, do you think... in terms of when you go and have to book a stay and have to put trust into booking this. How does this compare when you book a hotel compared to Airbnb?

G: With hotel... it's even more money focused of course, because it's like the... So... I know that the, like service wise, I'm expecting a lot, because I pay for the services that they offer me. How I do decide that is with reviews from others people that have experience with the same hotel. And I think... Like... probably in hotels, I look much more at their ability. Like I evaluate their ability to provide the service that I'm expecting. But in any case, both in Airbnb and CouchSurfing and also in hotels, like... How I evaluate it is basically try to understand and predict what is it gonna be, their behavior based on the experience of other users.

I: You are really basing your trust on another person, based on other people's experiences?

G: Yeah. That's like the first layer. Then in Airbnb and Couchsurfing I might dig more into reading reviews, and I try to get some keywords, like doing an content analysis [laughing]. Understanding it much more, trying to evaluate the individual values [inaudible]. In terms of how they actually are as a person. And their ability to provide me what I'm expecting. I'm looking for the ability much more on Airbnb than CouchSurfing, and that is one of the primary thing I look for when I book a hotel probably.

I: So, you see it more a scale. From your point of view, you have hotels up here that are super professional, then you have Airbnb that is professional and CouchSurfing social.

G: Yes, exactly.

I: But overall you are still looking for the same, the reviews?

G: The reviews yeah. And the tools that I have for me to evaluate the trust. That's the main thing.

I: Do you have anything to add?

G: Yeah, maybe also for Couchsurfing, if I don't have enough information I also go on social network and see how, if, who are this people. I try to understand much more about them.

I: Do you do that on Airbnb?

G: I would probably do. But it's not necessary.

Interview with Hannah

I: I would like to start with some general questions, so how often have you used Airbnb and was it as a guest or as a host?

H: I have used it one time, but I always, when I go travel, I always check it out. It's part of my routine. And also my parents are in the process of putting out an apartment there now. So, maybe kind of soon both I guess. Yeah, as a guest and host.

I: How was the experience with that? Can you talk a bit about that?

H: Yeah. Well, one time I used it, it was really a great experience. Me and my friend went to Croatia, or we had a interrail over Europe. And we stayed in one apartment in Croatia. And the... it was a really nice apartment and the host was just amazing. He helped us out with everything. And, it was clean. We just got all the information we could possible need from him. And the payment was, I don't know, I just felt like it was safe. He came and picked us up from the train station. So yeah, it was a good experience.

I: Great. So what would you say is the reason why you used Airbnb? Or why would you use it?

H: Well, I think it is... When I'm travelling, I think it is really nice to also get, more kind of a look into the culture, or you actually stay in someone's apartment, that live in the city I feel like more personal, than just staying in a hotel room. So I think mainly that is why we choose it. We wanted to try something different. Yeah. And I also think it is really nice to just sit in an apartment, because you have an, you can cook whatever you want and you don't have to go out and eat. So it's cheaper in that way too.

I: Okay. But the main motive, like the main motivation is for this...

H: The cultural experience... if you can call it that, I guess. Get to know the locals, who actually own the apartment.

I: Could you describe the process that you went through, when you decided to book the place? Like from the beginning to the end.

H: We just, well, we decided that we wanted to go to this place in Croatia, Rovinj [Croatian city]. Me and my friend. And then, at that time she was actually the one most excited to use it Airbnb, so she did most of the specific research. And booked the actual place. But... I don't know. We just kind of looked at the opportunity that was there. And went for that one apartment.

I: So you were not really involved in the process of choosing the particular...

H: Yeah, we chose together.

I: Do you remember kind of...

H: What we looked for?

I: What you looked for...

H: Mmh... Since we were on interrail it was important that it was an okay price. So that was kind of the first thing I think we looked at. And the map, where you can see the overall apartments. And then I guess.. It was important that it looked okay, that it was clean and.. yeah... saw this, we were not picky at all, but it was just important that it looked okay. And we looked at the ratings of the profile for the person. Yeah, we weren't that, it wasn't that important with location at that time. Because all of the apartments were really central and we knew that we could rent a bike and go everywhere, so that was not important I guess.

I: Great. And in this process, did you have any kind of concerns?

H: Yeah, since it was the first time for both of us - or no she had used it one time before. And she had a good experience. But since it was my first time, of course, I was so afraid that the person wouldn't show up as we have planned, or where he said he would pick us up. And that someone, something would go wrong with the payment or the apartment was crappy, and also...[laughing] you know, as a girl travelling sometimes you hear these creepy stories. So that was of course something I thought about as well. But it went really well.

I: Any other risk you thought were involved in the whole thing?

H: Mmh. No. No, I don't think so. No.

I: If you consider the idea of trusting someone else, do you think this is important?

H: To trust the host?

I: Yeah, or trust in general in this process?

H: Yeah definitely. Well, I feel like the whole system is built on trust, because you not only live in another person's apartment, but you also give them money, of course. But I don't know, I think it is really important that you are able to trust the other person. But I think also the ratings really helped us in deciding, because you get kind of an impression. Or hopefully you never know that either, but you get an impression of how the person is.

I: Can you elaborate a bit on this rating thing?

H: I just remember that you can rate them in terms of like star, from 1 to 5 or something. And I guess you can write a comment. So then most people will write how the apartment is and how the host is. But I think it was most important for us when we looked at the rating how the guy that owned the apartment was, compared to like the facility or the apartment itself. So that was really important to us.

I: What do you mean?

H: Like that the person, they wrote positive things about the person, that he was really nice, he helped then out, he did everything he promised, like that kind of stuff. Instead of, yeah, the apartment has a coffee machine or whatever.

I: Okay. How has the experience been? You already said it was super good. Was there anything bad that happen during the stay?

H: No.

I: How was the experience with the guy?

H: It was really good. I don't have any, anything bad to say about it at all. It was really good.

I: Apart from ratings, you didn't look at anything more specific?

H: Well, I can't remember exactly what's on their page right now, but I remember we looked at everything that is possible to look at. We really saw through the profile and the pictures and the location and everything. But I can't remember anything really specific, besides what I have said.

I: Okay, perfect. If we try to be a bit more broad. Like, what do you think about this whole idea about accommodation sharing in general terms?

H: Well, I think it is a really good concept...

I: Like for example compared to hotels?

H: Yeah, cause what I said previously, I think it is a lot more personal than going just to a hotel. And I also think, I don't know, like for me... or if I was a host, I would also think it was a great way to earn extra money, or if I'm going away and someone is actually staying in the apartment, instead of it just being empty. Yeah, I think it is a great concept, definitely.

I: How confident do you feel in using these platforms? Like how would you feel in the future?

H: I feel confident with the platform itself. But I... if I was travelling alone, I would probably be more, not insecure, but I had to be more maybe sure that it was a safe place that I was going, than if I'm travelling with someone. But I trust like the whole system and everything. So it's just me as a person, that is concerned [laughing].

I: That's the only concern about security, or is there any other concern?

H: I wish that I could say that I was really concerned about the money, and if the whole transfer thing is okay, and afraid to be robbed and stuff. But it's not my main concern. I think actually. I think it's more important for me to be safe than that some people take my money.

I: Safety over money?

H: Yeah, definitely! Absolutely!

I: Why using Airbnb rather than another accommodation sharing platform?

H: I don't know how many similar platforms there is. So I would guess for me it would be between Airbnb, hotels, hostels bla bla bla and CouchSurfing. I think, maybe I picture Airbnb safer than CouchSurfing, just because you kind of pay for it. So you should expect something more, and I think you have more rights when you pay for it. What was the question, why Airbnb?

I: Yeah, why using Airbnb rather than another platform? Is it maybe because you think Airbnb is reliable?

H: Yeah, of course. I also see Airbnb as reliable source. I think that has something to do with that you hear that everyone is using it. And of course that's influencing you cause you see it's a safe thing if all your friends are using Airbnb. Then I think it is okay for me to use it as well.

I: Going back to the trust thing, do you think Airbnb help you to trust you to book a stay at another person's place, like that you don't know?

H: Like the whole platform helps me?

I: Yes, Airbnb in general. Do you think the brand or platform helps you in trusting someone else, staying at someone else's place?

H: Yeah, I think so. Because you get a really good insight in going through the platform before you actually go there. You have the opportunity to really do the research and look into everything before you are actually there. And that builds up trust of course. And what I said about Airbnb itself, in my opinion has a really good rumour. So I would feel pretty safe using the platform. And I feel like... they are put in apartment that you can trust in, and that they have

done their research. Of course you never know, there can be so many creeps out there [laughing]. But still, I perceive it as fairly reliable.

I: When you used Airbnb that one time and if you had to use it again, would you then use it where the owner is also at the apartment?

H: In the same apartment, like shared, like you have two bedrooms?

I: Was the owner at the home...

H: No they actually stayed at... They had a big area and there were several buildings, so we had, kind of a building apartment and they lived in a differing building. And I really liked that, because when we had any questions, we could just run over and ask them. So I felt really safe. Or since we trusted them, we perceived them as good people, the whole family lived there. Then it was really nice to have them nearby.

I: What would you generally prefer?

H: I don't know. I wouldn't have them in... I'm happy that we had kind of our own space, own building. But I don't know if I would like them in the neighbor apartment, then I would rather be alone. But I guess... I didn't really think about. I don't think it is a big decision factor for me.

I: Okay. You mentioned you were very concerned before booking this for the first time. Why come that you did it anyway?

H: I think because the friend I was travelling with used it before. And she was really happy with it. And then, I always wanted to try it. So I guess I just took... the risk. I just kind of did it anyway. But it was mostly because I was with this other person. Yeah, definitely.

I: And that helps you to want to do it again?

H: Yeah, yeah yeah.

I: And how long is that since?

H: Two summers ago... Yeah, in 2015 I think.

I: So since then, have you been travelling since?

H: Yes, I have...

I: But you have not used Airbnb?

H: No. But there are several reasons for that. Or I think, I always check Airbnb out, everytime I travel. I like, yeah now I really want to stay with an Airbnb. But then... When we

travelled, me and my friend, we always tried to look for Airbnb first, but it was during the summer. So it was really hard to find available apartments, that we liked. I'm kind of always late doing things [laughing], so that's been kind of a probably that all the apartment are out. Like the good apartments are out but the time I actually search for them.

I: What is a good apartment for you?

H: Cheap. But I think... or I feel like either they are so expensive, that they are ridiculous. Or they are almost too cheap, so they look really crappy. So I just want something in the middle there. Yeah. But...

I: And that's what everyone wants...

H: Yes, exactly, that's what everyone wants [laughing] I think that has been the main thing I haven't found what I'm looking for. And also I think it depends who I have been travelling with. And where I'm going. Often when you go to the city, I feel that sometimes it can be more easy, if you are just going for a weekend, it can be more easy to stay at a hotel, just because you might get the breakfast there and it is in the middle of the city, and you don't have to schedule meetings with the other person and get instructions, how to use this and this. So I have just chosen hotel I guess.

End of interview. Small talk

I: You mention something about that you are looking in the reviews to figure something out about the person. It sounds like you kind of want other people's experiences to...

H: Yeah, yeah. That's really important for me. I think that's one of the main thing that I would look at. It's the recommendations. Even if it's, or not just Airbnb but just in general when I want a place to stay, I always look at the recommendations. It is really important.

I: What are you looking for? Or what are you not looking for?

H: Mostly, as I said, about the, I really like, or with Airbnb, if I had some small comments about the host. Just like if they are welcoming and if they helped out, and... Yeah, just that they seem like nice people, I think. And like, that's the main thing. And secondly, I would look at comments about the apartment. If it's okay and stuff.

I: Is there something that would make you not trust? Like the people that look creepy. How would you figure out if they are creepy?

H: I just remember some comments are really negative about the host as well. I don't know if it's that normal now, I don't know if they delete the apartment then. I'm not sure. But if they didn't like meeting up to exchange keys and stuff the first time, or if the apartment wasn't

clean and like, if they don't keep up with what they promise on the ad, then I wouldn't go there. Definitely.

Interview with Isabelle

I: Can you explain how often you have used Airbnb? And has that been as a guest or host?

I: I have to say I haven't... I have a profile and been looking for many times to book at Airbnb. But in my experience I never had to book it, because my friends booked it instead of me. But yeah, I mean, I have been... in many cases where I'm looking for a place to stay somewhere I'm going, I'm always like checking out Airbnb and then comparing to like hostels and those kind of options to stay. Because I find Airbnb supposed to be more price friendly option... while hostels, it is for a different type of profile, where you feel like more citizen of the world and like meeting people there. So it depends of what kind of travelling you are on. It's like [inaudible] friends and you are okay with Airbnb. If you are kind of alone you are okay with meeting people while staying at hostels. So in this case, no I haven't booked Airbnb myself so far. But, I mean now...

I: When you have stayed with other... Or when you friends have booked it... How many times have you tried that?

I: Oh, in this case... it was like, let's say four, five times so far. And as for CouchSurfing... it was more about meeting people, and I stayed once there. But... That's... Yeah, I partly knew him. I guess it was funny experience [inaudible] that I was trying to... eh, book it once for, I think needed just a night in Barcelona, and I wrote I was looking for a place and it was like 30 black guys wrote I guess, so [inaudible] too serious for booking that spot. Because you don't really have much time to go through and like contact the people with like the best profiles, and [inaudible] seems to trustable and more then it's like, I guess [inaudible], but more, but just like I'm sure it is there and it is all looking [inaudible] okay.

I: You have always used it as a guest like this, you have never hosted through Airbnb or CouchSurfing?

I: Mmh, yeah, actually. I think I still have this, on my profile that I'm open for meeting and like drinks and some, because I like this idea. Now I'm not really having an option to host people myself. But I guess if I had, I would consider, because I like to support this kind of sharing economy myself.

I: So what is the difference between you using Airbnb and using CouchSurfing?

I: CouchSurfing is about... Mmm...Free services [laughing] to say... An option to stay for free at someone's place. And Airbnb of course about paying for where you are staying. But that it [inaudible] to CouchSurfing is always problematic with finding the [inaudible], finding

the people, I think it's more time consuming, and you don't know where you are going to stay. And it's more about using the sharing room or something. And Airbnb you just see the profile and it's more about the housing and... [Couchsurfing] is more about the people, because when you staying somewhere [inaudible] about Couchsurfing you spend some more time with that person... and of course it, just as I says, more depends on your mood and I guess your profile of a trip. Are you more like as an explorer in the city alone or just a... okay with your folks and already have a plan so.

I: Why do you then go on these Couchsurfing meetings? What is your motivation to do that?

I: Because I like travelling and I like meeting new people [inaudible]. So I consider myself as a citizen of the world, so it's like usually I have [inaudible] like-minded people. So, I have been to several Couchsurfing events actually in Aarhus when I was living there, and I think a few in Copenhagen. So it's just like it's super interesting to hear about your travel experiences [inaudible]. And yeah, usually it's just quite interesting profiles of people.

I: And when you use Airbnb, you never... like, do you meet people there?

I: Oh, we do usually meet the owner of the house [laughing]... I guess from last experience it wasn't that he was that good. And we rented a place that I think the... the reality didn't match with the [inaudible] photos at some point. And, there was some more people staying in that apartment, but we didn't really meet them. So it was not super friendly environment, so, yeah.

I: Did you want to meet them? Was that why you booked it?

I: I mean that wasn't central. Because we went for a festival, so it was like, we already had enough [inaudible], so, of course, we... I was with my friends and was super like open, meeting people. And like, it's always interesting to meet someone. I actually I met some few. But just before I left, around that time. So it wasn't really...

I: Do you ever go to hotels?

I: Hotels... When company based, yeah. Usually I stay at the hostels, because it's more related that if I'm travelling on my own, then I like to stay at the hostels because it's easy to meet people. It's just about different vibe as a I said. Citizens of the world once again. And it's more, it's more chill. You know, it's more casual in this case. And because it's usual when I'm backpacking, and I don't need to stay in a hotel. I just need my bed and like the most, like main things, like shower and then food basically... So, I'm not picky at that point. It's a different type of travelling.

I: Do you think hostels are then easier to meet people than Airbnb?

I: Yeah. Because it is about, Airbnb is usually about the apartment. And hostels it [inaudible] a lot of people staying go there, like specially have common breakfast, that's included, so. I mean, this is very usual. Like at the evening if they have chill activities, and like common dinner. At least from my experience it is like, that's the option to meet people.

I: So if we think about the times you have used Airbnb with your friends and even when you look at it yourself, what is the process you actually go through, when you try to find a place you would like to stay?

I: I guess, yeah I'm first approaching the prices. And then I compare it maybe to hostels at some point. And... yeah of course, I first check on the area. If it's like close to the busses, metros, just because if you are new in the city, then you need to know like that it's gonna be easy to move around. Plus you are coming just to travel, so it means that you will most of the time will be spending just moving around. And of course I check on the photos, and..

I: The photos of the place?

I: Oh, yeah of course. And I read what other said, maybe some reviews. I do pay attention to reviews. Because, like... Yeah, as I said, my last experience wasn't, our last experience with my friends wasn't that good, so I think [inaudible] review. But, you know, the reality doesn't really match with what's shown in the photos.

I: So the place didn't look like...

I: Yeah, yeah. So that was the case. And yeah, so, I mean, I think that honest, like just [inaudible] on Airbnb. So discuss that, you know what matters in your profile, and as a renter and as a user. So, and you can see each comments. You know, one writes the review and then he can see what you wrote, and then based on that you write... But I think it should be kind of secret until you both write reviews and then you can see, cause I think there is a kind of interplay. "Okay, that person is writing a nice review"... and I was considering writing a more, maybe sceptical review, but just because he was nice, then I just wrote nicer etc. etc. So you [inaudible] everything went well, but then, you don't find out if someone was not that happy with some services or the place, and then, you write even more mean review back, so. So, and that is why I think that reviews on Airbnb are, might be slightly, yeah, not real or there's not a match with reality at some point.

I: So even if you think that, and you have had a bad experience, would you still be willing to use Airbnb?

I: Yes. I mean, it still has a good name on... I mean most of the places [inaudible] about good experience, and maybe just, you know in the [inaudible] it can happen. Maybe the

cheapest places if you stay, and like. I mean, I'm a student, so I'm not looking for super expensive places, so it's like usual trying to find this alternative price and quality about staying there.

I: That is of course one concern, if the place is as it looks. Do you think there are other concerns in using Airbnb?

I: Mmh. I don't, unless, maybe... What do you rent and like because you have this option to rent the apartment or the room, maybe, or shared room. So it actually sounds more like CouchSurfing. So I wouldn't pay I guess for that option, because then it's like, yeah, there you go for CouchSurfing, and gets it for free, a shared room. And I don't know, maybe if there is you know... Maybe if something got lost, but I mean, just because of the reviews part, I think you are kind of [inaudible] if you puts, you know, that review on, like if [inaudible] and something happened and that person gets in trouble. So I think it is still, should be, quite safe at this point.

I: So you don't consider it risky to use Airbnb?

I: I think that it might be a bit more risky than using a hostel, but less risky than using CouchSurfing. Because you get what you pay for at some point, and I don't know, maybe... If you rent a shared room in some place that, you know, that they have a fight or something in the house... but you have to listen to that to at some point.

I: You have to what?

I: You have to, like kind of listen and hear it all, something like, I don't know. Yeah, but I mean, when it's comparing Couchsurfing with Airbnb, yeah of course, CouchSurfing is less trustable because... Well, it depends on the profile, but I just hear that there were some accidents, where you know, like those profiles were not real. Some people that wanted to stay at some people, and if you don't have a lot of friends and reviews it might be not be easy. You should be more careful with those people.

I: So the stays depend on the profile?

I: Yeah. I mean on CouchSurfing it's all about the profile.

I: And what would, should be on the profile to minimise that risk?

I: Yeah, I mean... That's, you know, maybe not necessarily verified because you have to pay for that. But verified in a way, that you have your friends and reviews from the other people that have stayed at your place before. You know, that could prove that you are a real person, and not a freak. So, yeah, I guess that is the most important part.

I: You mainly use the comments to figure out if the people you are meeting up with on CouchSurfing is not freaks?

I: Friends, or sorry?

I: If the people you meet on CouchSurfing, if you had to stay there, if you had to figure out if they were a freak or not a freak.

I: No, I mean, just because I had no experience with staying but yeah, just meeting, profile matters in a way that, I just have to read about the person. And if that person sounds interesting to me, then yeah like, that's important. If it seems like a really dull person [inaudible] of course, but...

I: Okay. If we talk a little more general, what do you think about this idea about sharing your accommodation with other people?

I: I like this. Because if you have free space and you know, like guest room that are not being used a lot, and you are paying for that anyway, so why not make money at the same time and give opportunity for people to stay cheaper. So, I really like that.

I: And you think both Airbnb and CouchSurfing is equally good?

I: Mmh. I think it is about different profiles. Because Airbnb is more about, kind of, business, and CouchSurfing is about people who are quite involved into the sharing economy for a while and they are travellers them self in most case and they like meeting people. So it's about less business-minded people I would say. Of course you can, yeah, I think it is more about the people and just, their [inaudible] at some point. You can always go just to make money and. You know, the ones who were in their feed when travelling and you don't have a have a lot of money to rent a place and you are looking the for the best option, cheap option, free options... So, and I know some people who spend two years actually travelling just based on CouchSurfing and just from place to place for free. And they had great experiences and nothing bad happened, so... I think... those people who experience that, wouldn't use Airbnb for just to make money, but like would go for CouchSurfing more. Because it's more about giving and you know, giving each other the knowledge, and time together. So if I would host someone it means that I would like know the person more. And at the same time hear about his or her travelling stories and you know, just finally have a good time with [inaudible] person, and guide them a bit around. And maybe just go for a drink. And at the same time it is about making a friend. And yeah as I said, if you are a traveller yourself that matters, because then you now that, okay if you meet a person and you helped him or her, then you could go to, like, some place where he or she is [inaudible] you might have, could have a chance to stay there yourself. Or even just because you meet him or her you, when travel you can, you know, contact his or her friend point. So it's more about this travellers network I would say.

I: And since you only have used it kind of one time to stay at CouchSurfing. Why not more times?

I: I didn't really... Yeah.

I: What makes you go to a hostel instead of CouchSurfing?

I: Because I kind of [inaudible] with backpacking and travelling on my own. And [inaudible] scared of that...

I: No, but why do you go to hostels rather than CouchSurfing?

I: Because I think it's more, I like the flexibility. Because even sometimes if I'm going to some city where I have friends, I still stay at a hostel at some point. Where I don't have to care about like, the key, when and where I can take it. That I can get back whenever I need to go, whenever I want, like I can go and take shower whenever I want and so on. And just come back for a short chill. And, yeah it's more about flexibility actually. But at the same time if you want to meet people, it's about that kind of travelling...

I: So the times you used Airbnb, just to get an understanding, why were you and your friends choosing Airbnb?

I: Because we were okay on our own. Like... I mean, if it's four or five friends going, so.. you are okay with your friends, and you are not I guess too open about meeting other people, because... of course you are open, but not as much, as you don't have the demand that you have travelling alone. You kind of have demand to meet people. So it is have it works.

I: Let's specifically try to talk about trust. Do you have any trust issues with using either Airbnb or CouchSurfing?

I: More of it CouchSurfing. So that is why I'm okay with meeting people for like, just do, walk around and, you know, the person could guide my or just show some places to eat or talk more about the place. As I said, because I had experience like, especially if I travel on my own as a girl to an unknown city, I would stay at maybe a more... a person who has a lot of reviews, and more if it's like a girls place. Because it's [inaudible] more tricky to stay. At least more assurance than staying at a guys place. Especially if it's not too many reviews, as I said with the Barcelona experience, I had 30 black guys writing to me to stay. And it didn't seemed that they had a place where to stay them self at some profiles. So it was super funny, and at the some time okay, I was like, I would stay at a hostel, and then I just went for hostel, because... [inaudible] contends time and you have to really plan and if you have time to plan in the region, check on all the profiles and respond, so that's okay, but usually it's more about the time frame you have, okay, you have half an hour to plan that stuff. Because you have internet for short,

when you are travelling. And then just like, you have to make more faster decision so you just go straight to hostels.com or Airbnb and you just book a place.

I: So, it's more personally safety?

I: Yeah, safe and it's less time consuming.

I: And like trust in using Airbnb, do you consider that?

I: Mmh. Well yeah after that last experience that you know. Sometimes the reality doesn't really match with the picture. That was, you know, [inaudible]. But, maybe.. I don't know what else could happen...

I: So you feel that's pretty safe?

I: Yeah, actually. Unless not my stuff would disappear from the room. That would be...

I: So if you imagine one of these guys in Barcelona had also contacted you on Airbnb, would that have been different? And you kind of had to pay for it?

I: Because... It's different kind of, so you are Airbnb, you are looking more at the place itself, you don't really look at the person. Because you know just meet the person, he give you the key and you pay for it and that's it. And the CouchSurfing is more about that person itself, so it's more personality behind the profile you find, and then you don't really care that much of what you get, while staying there as long as, you know, a place to sleep. So... Two different profiles I find here.

I: Have you considered, I don't know what apartment you have now, but have you considered renting that out, either on Airbnb or CouchSurfing?

I: My place?

I: Yeah?

I: Yeah, actually no. I'm just renting for a few months. And I'm going to travel myself. That's not really an option that I'm renting my room myself.

Interview with Jessica

I: I would like to know how often have you used CouchSurfing and Airbnb? And if it was as a host or as a guest?

J: So still maybe with CouchSurfing, because I didn't use it this much. So I used CouchSurfing as a guest and I had to stay in Dusseldorf for one night, and my boss didn't want to pay for my stay, so I had to find a way to stay for cheap. And I didn't really like it, because I felt a little unsafe, because I was staying with a guy that was alone. So it was a bit weird, and I was staying in his bedroom, so it was also a bit weird. But yeah, I never used it again this CouchSurfing. But I think I would use it again if I would want to travel for cheap and stay for cheap. Maybe with someone else as well. For Airbnb, I used to use it a lot as a guest. And now I use it mainly as a host, because we have a house in south of France, so we are renting it out through Airbnb.

I: So how many times more or less as a guest?

J: As a guest...

I: And when was it?

J: As a guest I used it a lot when I went to Iceland last year. And I also used it when we first came to Copenhagen. And other than that I think I used it...

I: So two-three times?

J: Yeah, maybe almost ten times. But a lot in one week, we changed a lot..

I: Okay, within the same vacation you changed apartment a lot?

J: Yeah, yeah. And for host, I don't... A lot of times. Last year.

I: Okay. So can you talk a bit about both the experience you have had with CouchSurfing and Airbnb?

J: For CouchSurfing wasn't so good... the host was really nice, but I felt really uncomfortable, because as I said, it was like a guy around my age. And he was like in the beginning talking about his like ex-girlfriend and everything. And I was like "why are you talking about this?" I don't really know you. But it was really nice [inaudible] buying me food, and asking me feel like really comfortable. Because also it was my first time, so I think... I didn't feel really comfortable in his place. And he also left me like a good comment on CouchSurfing. But I didn't leave any comments for him. But yeah, I think it was nice, but I also feel a bit bad, when you stay in people's, like you don't know these people, but you stay in their place and you

don't give anything to them. So I also felt a bit bad about that. For Airbnb think I only had good experiences. In Iceland.. Like, I know that Airbnb is like most of the... Like sharing experiencing and everything, but to the most Airbnbs I have been it has only been a hotel feeling. Like you don't really see the host. You only see them to get the keys and to give the keys back. And it was the case in Iceland. Like, sometimes we didn't even see the host, we just got the keys via a keybox or something. Yeah, and for my experiences in hosting for Airbnb. I think it goes well. I only had nice guests and they have like broke some stuff. But it wasn't a big deal. And they really respectful.

I: So you are managing that yourself?

J: Yeah.

I: From here?

J: Yeah. And also the messages and my mother gives the keys and everything. And I also made the presentation of the house and everything, because she doesn't speak English. Yeah, so only great experiences.

I: Great. So, what would you say is the main reason why you use Airbnb compared to for example CouchSurfing?

J: Well, for hosting obviously to make money [laughing]. And as a guest, I think I would have a tendency to use CouchSurfing more and more, because Airbnb is getting so expensive with the fees they add all the time. So it is depending what destination I go. Like if I go to Croatia or so, like where staying is cheap I might use Airbnb because I know it's very cheap. But if go to some other places like Paris, I might go for CouchSurfing in the end. I don't know if it has changed a lot, it's been like two years I haven't used it. Yeah, the only thing that bothers me with CouchSurfing is that you don't give anything to the host. And that is a bit weird for me.

I: But there is no any other reason why?

J: No..

I: You used, or you would use... so mainly for economic reason?

J: Yeah. Also I think CouchSurfing is maybe more about, I don't know, about cultural exchange. Like people are more, like you can feel with CouchSurfers that they don't mind if you don't give them anything, because like you just exchange on culture and they just show you around, because it was really... That was really what I felt with the guy, the CouchSurfer I stayed with. It was always talking about his country, Mexico. And he was asking me if I wanted to go out for a drink and something.

I: So he was very open?

J: Yeah, I think he was very open. I think CouchSurfing is more about travelling and cultural exchange, than Airbnb. That's maybe why I would use also Couchsurfing more for economic reason but also for interest...

I: Would you say one is more important than the other?

J: Mmh. I think I would always go for the economic reason then. It's more important. If I'm not staying long in the country. Or it depends in what country I would go. Because I'm really interested in Asian countries, so maybe if I go to Japan or something, I would want to do more CouchSurfing, because I want to learn more about the culture. Because that is what I'm here for, there for. But if I go to London or Milan or just for business, I don't really care. And I already know the countries. I would go for economic reason.

I: Okay. Now maybe taking one situation per time. Maybe start with Airbnb. Like could you describe the usual process that you go through when you look, for example, when you are a guest, for a place to stay or when you are host for someone to get into the apartment?

J: Okay. [inaudible] look for a place on Airbnb, I usually have one destination in mind and like, the area around if it's expensive or something. And then I will first look at the price, and if the price is okay I will look at the reviews and how long the host has been a host on Airbnb. Like how long have been using Airbnb. And then just the pictures and comments of the guest. I think I would mainly go for, how do you call that, instant booking. Instead of the other one, because for the other one, you have to send a message first. And then the host has to agree, and I think that is a bit inconvenient sometime, when you need something right away. So I would go for instant messaging, if the price is not so different from non-instant booking.

I: So you would not care about contacting the host?

J: No, I wouldn't care, because I think Airbnb is safe enough, so if they have instant booking, I'm sure that I would get... this thing, this places. So for hosting I would also have instant booking. Because it's easier as well. And so usually if someone books the place right away, then we just send like a welcoming message. And otherwise most of the time they first send a message to us if the place is available and what are the capabilities of the house, and how is the swimming pool and bla bla bla. So, I think usually, most of the time we send two to three messages first before they book. And now we don't usually look at the user profile, if they have comments or anything. Don't really look at that. Because most... like we have a lot of guests, it was their first time using Airbnb, not the first time, but they didn't have any comments, they have been using Airbnb for a few months or something, so...

I: What about CouchSurfing, how was it?

J: For CouchSurfing it was a bit... I was a bit in a hurry, because my boss told me he couldn't pay for my place to stay four days before we had to go to the place and attend this conference. So it was a bit hard to like get an answer from the CouchSurfers. So I sent message to a lot of them, and only a few replied. And I think he was the first one replying, so I just accepted because I didn't have any other option. But I think if I would have had more time I would have looked more through the comments, because I think he didn't have good comments or not so good. But yeah... Time was the issue.

I: Was there any other concerns in this process? Did you see any risks?

J: Mmh. Well, risk.. I was really concerned about the fact that it was a male. But for Airbnb I don't mind. And also Airbnb I think, I don't know if you get a lot of like non-private rooms. But I know in CouchSurfing it's pretty common that you actually share a room. Or share the couch, which can actually be in the same bedroom or something. So I think, I have more privacy and security issues when it comes to CouchSurfing. But not with Airbnb.

I: Why is that?

J: I don't know I think Airbnb is more organized because there is a lot of money that gets to taken into account. So they wouldn't take risk. I think.

I: And not even when you are host, you said you don't see any concerns like of people coming in?

J: No, because... I think it would be different if we will be renting, like a room in our other house. But because this house is only for Airbnb, there is nothing like precious in it. Even if they break something, maybe it's a lamp, maybe it's the tv, it's not really worth much. So I think that's why we don't care so much about who we have in the house.

I: In this whole process, do you think trust is somehow important?

J: I think for CouchSurfing it is more important than for Airbnb. It is also like I said, it also depend if you just rent your bedroom or if you rent the whole house. Yeah, CouchSurfing I think trust is really important. Like it's the main, I don't know, it's the main thing you think about when you book, when you contact another CouchSurfer. Because I don't remember, I don't think there is pictures of the place or... There is only pictures of the user, of the CouchSurfer and then you just have to trust what he says. But for Airbnb, you have pictures, so you just assume that those pictures are real and you have comments from other users. For CouchSurfing you also have them, but.. Yeah, trust is my main concern.

I: How important, like if you take Airbnb, like, how do you think Airbnb helps you to trust other people?

J: I know with Airbnb you can, like the host or the guest, they have to like verify their phone number, verify their email address, so that also a way to prove they are not scams, but even with that you have the comments, and they have to have stayed in this place to, like the guest have to have stayed in the place to make the comments. The pictures as well. I don't know if they can really check on that, but. Yeah, but for CouchSurfing I don't remember if you need to verify an email address or phone number, I don't remember.

I: Okay. Why then using Airbnb rather than another sharing accommodation platform?

J: I think Airbnb now is the, I don't know if it's the biggest exchange, like staying platform, but... I think it's because it's the biggest and it's also safe... Because if you are a host you get an insurance and you can always, if they break something really valuable you can always like send a picture of the thing and the host, if the guest agrees it's easier to get money back. I don't know how it works if the guest refuses to...

I: What about as a guest?

J: As a guest... I think it's really safe, because they don't, like... For example for the payment method, the Airbnb tells you that the host won't get the money until you are actually in the place you are supposed to stay, and after one day even I think. So I think it's safe, because the host wouldn't have any interest to, like you can't get the money, if you don't get to the place. So I think as well it's safe for this reason.

I: If we go back to CouchSurfing then, can you elaborate a bit more, you talked a bit about it already, but elaborate a bit more on how was your experience with that guy? And how this compares to the experience you have had with people on Airbnb?

J: Well, I think my first impression of the guy, maybe, you like, the place we meet wasn't a good place to meet, because it was like the central station, it's where all the, I know in Germany it's where all the weird people meet, so it was already not the right place to meet. It was at night, so it wasn't good either... And then I think it was too, I don't know how to say, he was too familiar with me already. So I don't know if it's something about CouchSurfer's, but I think it is, because they are naturally open minded people, like to talk a lot, know a lot about the guests. Yeah and then I think there was part of the experiences that, I don't know, like his apartment was really small. So, I felt a bit uncomfortable also in the bathroom there was no lock. So when I wanted to take a shower, there was no like curtains either... So I think it was mainly because I was, like I'm a girl and he was a guy. You don't feel really safe. But if I would have been with a another friend, even a girlfriend, I would have felt way better. And also in his

bedroom. So it was, he had a bed there, on one side and there was a couch, so I was sleeping right in front of him, so it was also a bit weird. Yeah, I think if I tried CouchSurfing again either it's gonna be with someone else or maybe other girls place, I would feel safer and more comfortable I think.

I: Okay, just for safety?

J: Yeah, not even just for safety, because I not only. Like, guys are not always, I don't know, crazy. It's just you feel more comfortable with the same sex or the same gender. In general, right away.

I: And what about with Airbnb, your experience with people?

J: I don't really have so much of interaction with, like you are talking with as a guest or host or in general or?

I: Probably now as a guest.

J: Yeah, so I didn't have much interaction with them when I was a guest. The only thing I experiences I just go to the place, I just get the keys and they just tell me a few things about house and then they leave the place, and then I see them again when we give the keys back. And sometimes, in a few cases, you don't even talk to the same person. Like the one you message and the one was giving you the keys, or the one you give back the the keys to. It is different persons. I know the daughter, if you the [inaudible], the mother and everything. So, not so good experiences. And for Iceland, it was pretty specific maybe about Iceland. To all the places we went, it was run like a hotel. It was really different, yeah. We had like a receptionist for one of the places we stayed at. The other one was more like a, how do you call that, a youth hostel. And the other one was completely like a hotel, they just had, like the owners also had like a restaurant, a pizzeria or something in the villa [inaudible] like come at the restaurant tonight, we will make you [inaudible] something. So I don't really have the, the thing that Airbnb advertise about sharing experiences, I don't remember their motto exactly.

I: Do you actually care about the other people or meeting the other people? Do you think trust has something to do with that when you use Airbnb?

J: What I think is important that the person talk to you, the one you message or one with picture of the profile on Airbnb is actual the person you meet. Or, I don't know, yeah. Because that's the one you talk to, so I think for trust it is important to be consistent, so that people don't feel a bit weird, because if you talk to Marie and then Liz is coming and Marie don't tell you about Liz, so then you will feel a bit uncomfortable. You don't really know if, I don't know, yeah if this is really a good way to do it. Yeah, I think for trust it is important, but if they don't show me around, if they don't tell me everything about the house or even if they don't ask

me out to go to the restaurant together or something, I don't really mind of having a big effect on trust. As long as I see that the places conform to what the pictures and what people described and everything. As long as I meet the owner, when I go there, when I get there, when I give him the keys, so I'm sure that the keys will go back to the right person. Then I think I'm good with that.

I: If you try to be more specific like what are you looking exactly in a host profile before sending the reservation request or even when you receive it, when you are renting out?

J: What I'm exactly looking for in a host profile... I think I'm looking for good comments, like how many stars they have on Airbnb and if it's a superhost. Something like that. And I think, when I go through the comments, I think, it is already bad if I find like one bad review. Because I think it is important like, if the host really wants to be trusted, it is important to only have good reviews or good enough reviews. Because I think only one bad comment and I wouldn't be so sure about the host.

I: So reviews are mainly...

J: Yeah, yeah, I think reviews are most important. If I knew the pictures are not so... well done or the quality is not so good, or if it's a bit messy the place... I think the reviews are most important. That's what I base my...

I: Did you look at reviews when you were also using CouchSurfing?

J: Did I get reviews?

I: No, did you look at reviews?

J: No, no, because.

I: What did you look at?

J: I didn't really look at much or anything, because I only used it once and time was the big issues. So I just went through all the CouchSurfers that were in Dusseldorf. And I just wrote to them with my dates.

I: So it was more risk?

J: Yeah yeah. In this occasion I took a lot of risk. But I didn't really had a choice. Yeah. I took the list. And I think in the beginning... I went through the profile pretty quickly, but then I messaged, I don't know, I don't know how many people, but like 15 people. And I just copy and paste the message I send them and was changing the name, I was like, yeah, I really need to get something quick. And I just took the first one, who were accepting me.

I: Do you think this would change if you used it again?

J: Yeah, yeah, I think if I would have more time I would go through, I would see first, I don't know if it is easier, like, because I think they have like their pictures and the grades or the stars, I don't know what they have. And yeah I would just go directly through all the people in the city I want to go. And then if I see that, I don't know, between, I don't know if you can like have filters, and then I will just filter people with five to, I don't know, three stars, and I would just ignore people with only 1 or 2 stars. And then I would go through the comments. And send a message to the ones with like the best reviews and the most [inaudible] so I don't know what they have on CouchSurfing, I don't remember...

I: Yeah, perfect. If we talk a bit more in broader terms, like what do you generally think about the whole idea of sharing accommodation?

J: Just sharing or...

I: Yeah.

J: I think it is a really good idea to share accommodation for like people who don't really have enough money to like to travel, to pay for hotels that are really expensive. And it is also really nice to people who wants to know more about the culture to meet with the locals, because in a hotel you don't get anything, like you just go to the reception, get your keys and get to the room. With this kind of platforms I think it is a really good way for like...

I: How confident do you feel using them?

J: Yeah, in... I, like, using Airbnb I feel really comfortable. Couchsurfing a bit less, because I only used it once. But I think if I, I could use it more, and there is also other platforms like homeaway and this kind of platforms. I think I feel really comfortable, I think now...

I: You are not using homeaway right?

J: We also use it, but less. I don't really know why. That's... There is not as many people on homeaway...

I: As a host you mean?

J: Yeah, I never used it as guest. But we also have like...

I: And why not as a guest?

J: I never heard about it before a friend told me she was renting her house via Homeaway, and then we put our house on Homeaway as well, but it doesn't work as well as Airbnb. I don't know why. They don't talk about sharing their place or like exchanging about culture and this kind of things on Homeaway. So maybe it's less attractive. And I think prices

are a bit higher on Homeaway maybe, I have only seen big villas in southern France. Yeah, I think I feel confident with sharing economy, sharing your house and everything, because now it's been there for a while, so I think like, it's well in place. But if it would have been like in the beginning, maybe I would have been more hesitant to use it. Like five years ago, something. But now, after having used it, after using it for a few years, I think it works well.

I: And would you use it any other kind of platforms, like say smaller platforms?

J: I think I wouldn't use... yeah, small platforms I don't have any examples in mind, like a new sharing platform.

I: Like a new sharing accommodation...?

J: I don't think I would use... I think I would wait for it to grow bigger or to hear my friends have tried this one or this thing. But I wouldn't use it right away myself, I'm not a trendsetter. I would wait for people to tell me that it's good.

I: So to wrap up. If we focus on the idea of trust, are you then generally willing to, as I see, are you generally willing to take risk when you interact with a stranger?

J: No, I'm more the kind of person that don't take risk, as long as the, like... how do you say... I don't have time pressure or the pressure on me. I'm usually very cautious when I make decision. I think trust is really important. If I would have like more time for CouchSurfing, I think, like trust would have been the biggest issue, like with the comments and everything. You trust someone more, if you see that other people are also have good experiences with them. Yeah, if there is no time issues, or money, even money you can, like, I think I wouldn't take risk if it was cheaper, I think I would go for something safer and more expensive...

I: Than Couchsurfing?

J: Yeah.

I: But would you still be willing to try that again?

J: Yeah, yeah, I would be willing to try that again. But just for safety issues I would rather go for women or someone else. It's too, I don't know, weird to go to someone's else's place alone, if the other person is also alone. It's not in my culture, it's not like this.

I: While you feel more safe on Airbnb just because...

J: Just because, I like pay for it, and I know the person I go... Like I know the person has good reviews.

I: What if he has got reviews on CouchSurfing also?

J: Yeah, but I know on CouchSurfing... you don't really get anything from the person as I said, you don't get money. So then maybe you have... I don't know. I think there is more weird people on CouchSurfing than Airbnb. I don't know why, it's just my impression. Maybe it's because the only person I meet on CouchSurfing was a bit weird. But I think if I try CouchSurfing more I will see if there are a lot of nice people on this.

I: You think Couchsurfing is more about people?

J: Yeah, I think it is more about people and cultural exchanges.

I: While Airbnb, you don't really care about trusting other people?

J: Yeah, more about price first, and then if it's, like, if it will be convenient to stay there and also, like, also trust if you look at the review and everything. But then, I'm more confident, like I don't, trust is not the main issue on Airbnb, because I know that I'm going to pay for the place, and then only they only gonna get my money like one day after I actually stayed in the place, and if I don't go to that place, they don't get the money. So, I think I trust it more because they have no reasons to scam me, if it's through the platform.

I: So you basically trust Airbnb, while on CouchSurfing you don't?

J: Yeah because I don't think the website gives you any guarantee, because you just have the reviews to tell you if a host is nice or not. Other than that I don't know if there is anything else on the website. So that's why you just trust the people that stayed there. And then yeah, you just go there.

End of interview.

I: It is such a big platform now. I think, like, if it would not be safe, there would be fewer people using it then. I don't know how many people have used it, but a lot. So I think if there would be any problems or issues, then people would spread the word and then fewer and fewer people would use it. And that's why I don't think there are a lot of trust issues. And all the issue with Airbnb I think it goes well.

Interview with Kevin

I: How often have you used Airbnb and was it as a guest or as a host?

K: I have used Airbnb before as a guest. And then Marie had a house she rented out with her family, and there I helped out a bit and did a bit of tours when guests arrived. So I was involved in that as well. But mainly as a guest.

I: And how many times was it and on which occasions?

K: Always when travelling. Mostly just, okay. So for example when we did a tour through Iceland, we stayed in Airbnb's, so we kind of did a roadtrip. Then also when we did a roadtrip from Gdansk in Poland to Berlin. Some last friends last semester from Stockholm, we stayed at Airbnb's there. And then actually when we moved to Copenhagen the first two nights, when we started our Masters two years ago.

I: Great. So more or less how many times would you say?

K: Mmh. Well, maybe around ten, I don't know.

I: How was your experience overall?

K: Actually quite good. I have had a very positive experience of it because we mainly rented the whole place, most of the times. And that was really nice, because that was convenient to have your own kitchen and your own freedom to do stuff. So mainly was like a... yeah maybe a bit of a vacation apartment accommodation home. So that was mainly a good thing. Yeah, I liked that.

I: Any particular bad experiences?

K: Bad experience... No, not really. Maybe. Mmm. Well, once it was more like a hostel in Iceland. So it was on Airbnb but there was more like a hostel style and we were in this tiny room in the basement, which was kind of not as good as it looked like on the photos. So that was not too cool, and it was a bit weird, because it was really like more hostel vibe, everyone was doing their own thing, it wasn't really a community thing and that, normally if you think about Airbnb, then it is more about sharing culture and kind of interacting with the locals. And that really was more like a tourist thing. So that really wasn't a good place.

I: So which are the motives, the motivations for why you kind of use Airbnb?

K: One is that it is central, mostly... Like in cities, you can be in a very central space without paying the high fees of the hotels that is central. So it's probably the functional motive of price. Location. And maybe also a bit more individual, because it is more like your own home.

So that is, that I think is the main driver. Because you also have your kitchen and proper bathroom, and. I don't know, it just feel more natural and nicer to be there for me. Yeah, I guess that's the main motive and it is also, I don't it's good because with Airbnb's you can always, I mean the website is quite intuitive and easy and if you, for example with a group and travel, then you can always check if there is six people that can stay in place. If you would go to hostel or if you would go to a hotel, you always have to split the different rooms. And I feel like with an Airbnb it is more like you stay in your own place. And it is really like experience for the whole group.

I: So, can you now describe the usual process you go through when you look for a place to stay? So like from the beginning to the end...

K: Okay, so I guess in the beginning it's having the motivation to go to a certain place. So you agree with friends, for example, maybe I can do it from the example when we went to Gdansk with some friends from Stockholm. So we flew to Gdansk and then in the process of planning, we were like, "okay we want to go fra Gdansk to Berlin and back, how are we going to do so?". So we kind of had a road trip planned, and had the places we wanted to stay because a Polish friend of ours were like, "okay, there is nice sightseeing places that I want to show you". So we kind of had the place figured out and then we went on the website, the Airbnb website, and had a look in the cities. And then first kind of started very central. And then looked if it fit our budget. And then kind of extended the circle to more, less, to les central locations. Yeah, and then I mean, skimmed through a lot of apartments. First, like just looked at the first photo, and then kind of already saw if that is our style, it's that how we like an apartment. And then yeah, going more in depth. But yeah, you obviously have to decide how many people are coming, when you want to go, availability and things... and then as a second step, when you kind of have a pre-selection, we contacted the owners, or the Airbnb renters... So we send them a message, kind of told them about what we are up to. What we are going to do, where we are from. What kind of people we are. To kind of have a higher chance of being taken in. Mmm... Yeah. And then we normally we got very quick response from the Airbnb hosts, that it would be alright for that period. And then we booked. Yeah. And then we went there and stayed.

I: Great. In this whole process, did you have any concerns of any kind?

K: Yeah, I mean...maybe that's a bit German practises, but if you go to Poland... At least Germans they are always like "eh Poland, you could never really be sure to be scammed". It kind of has the reputation that if you go there, you always get ripped off of anything, if that is apartments or cars or whatever. So I was like "that is a bit weird". But we did have our Polish friends with us, which was really good. Because I was like "okay, if there is a local who speak the native language, that's fine". Because she will negotiate and get us the best prices and everything. And, yeah, that was actually quite good, and I feel that... I didn't really have, for the

housing at least, I didn't have many concerns, because I feel that Airbnb, the platform, is quite good. I have the feel that they do enough by ratings from other people who stayed there, and by checks and stuff. I feel that they ensure that the host don't do anything, and the host also the motivation not to scam you, because otherwise they would be punished by the platform and by the users. So I guess that was good. So actually when we, when on our trip we actually asked our host on the Airbnb platform, if, when we come back if we could stay in the place and just do without Airbnb. Just call her. And kind of save our self the fee, the Airbnb fee. So we planned on doing this, but in the end we didn't stay at the place, because we didn't have enough time. We actually just went to the airport in Gdansk and did stuff there. But otherwise we would also have done it without Airbnb, because they... she seemed very trustworthy, and yeah... She had like several apartments, so did it more on a business level.

I: So you just mentioned trustworthy, trust... So do you you think trust is relevant anyhow in this whole process in general?

K: Yeah, I think it is really, really... Yeah I think it is really important. Because normally when I use Airbnb I do it for leisure purposes, so I go on vacation or I go on a nice, yeah trip with my friends. So, like, I really want to have a good time, and I don't want anything to cause any problems. And I feel like, if it wouldn't be trustworthy, if I would have the feeling I couldn't trust the website, or couldn't trust the offers of the people who offer their apartments on the site, then I would be stressed. And because I would be stressed, I wouldn't have a good time. So it's really important for me that there is somehow trust between a host and, yeah, consumer.

I: So, in this sense, let's try to be a bit more specific, so you say there should be trust with other people - how do you assess that?

K: Mmh. I generally assess...

I: Like, what are you looking for, for example, in a profile?

K: On the ratings, so I look at how many stars does the host, is it maybe a super host. I look through some reviews, is he or she nice and polite and was the place in a good order? Was there any hidden fees? Like just to get general feedback from people who stayed there before, because I imagine they are in the same situation or they were in the same situation as I was now. And that's yeah... Then I think yeah it is also important to leave a good recommendation, or to leave a recommendation in general when you come back from your trip, because that kind of... You, I mean, you want other people to leave their impression there for you to be more sure for your journeys, so you should also give something back to the community and provide your insights...

I: Any other thing that you look into?

K: Well, I look at the photos in particular as well. So, I look, does it seem realistic? Like because sometimes you see it when, also on housing sites in general, if you see an apartment and it's kind of American radiators, so airconditioners and stuff, you think like okay that doesn't really look central European... Is that apartment actually there? Or is it fake or whatever. So, I obviously kind of look is, does it seem, also the setting, if you are like, if it's in the city center and you kind of see a window, what is outside. Sometimes you can see, at least in Poland, you could really see it was the old town, and they kind of had pictures from the window. So you could actually see it is there and that street. Yeah, so I look at the photos, at the reviews, on the stars. Yeah, that is mainly the three things.

I: Do you think they are reliable thing - like the reviews?

K: Yeah, I think the reviews are the most reliable. Like, because, I mean sometimes there are not many pictures, but if people say it is a wonderful place, we were five or six people and there was enough room, then I would still go for it.

I: Okay. Let's try to be a bit more broad, what do you think in general terms about this idea of sharing accommodation platforms?

K: I think it is really good. There is so much space that is kind of wasted, because people are on vacation or people are gone or people have a second home, because they just use it in certain months of the year, so I feel it is good from like the macro perspective of actually like, renting out the space that already exists and not building new houses, when you don't really need it. So that is really good, and also, I mean sometimes there, and... popular places when there are events, then it's seems hard to get a hotel or something, so in that case it is also good. Yeah, in general I think also it is nice to meet someone local and to also get advice for example, when we were in Iceland, we were this place of those two farmers... And we had, they had like two houses next to each other, and they lived in the one, and the other one was rented out. And they actually had several rooms, but we were the only ones there, so we actually... it was just us and them, and they actually come over in the beginning to help us park the car, because there was so much snow that we kind of didn't [inaudible] get it out, so they helped us with that. They told us where we could go nearby to like see the Northern lights and just to like have good experiences. And that is something that you, it is very limited if you go to hotel. Then maybe the person at the hotel tells you, but it's not as personal and nice. And they filled up the fridge for us, and kind of, always.. like a human touch to it.

I: Cool, and do you generally feel confident using these?

K: Yeah.

I: Have you ever used any other platforms than Airbnb?

K: Mmm. Well, yeah, I mean we used several platforms when we go on vacation to Denmark. To like rent homes. So there we, I don't know four, five, six different ones there are in Jylland. And I mean we used all of them I guess at some point. With my family. But yeah, that's normally vacation homes that people have, it's not really their proper home. And Airbnb is often their own home, right. So maybe, I don't know if it's comparable. But yeah, in that sense I have used that before.

I: Okay. Do you think these platforms are in general secure?

K: Yeah, I think it really... I think if there would be a new platform, I would be sceptical in the beginning. And I think I trust Airbnb for example, because it has such a broad user base and I mean they also know they are dependent on the reputation, so if there are like horror stories, that what happened on airbnb, then people would not do it. Or then I would also question myself "is this really a good option for me?" If this could happen. So I guess it is really important that they have a good reputation and they keep their customers satisfied, happy. But I think they generally do, because I have the feeling when there is, when people mention their concerns or something, the Airbnb community and also the company itself kind provides a lot of feedback and kind of... There is a dialogue between the brand and the consumers, which is important. But yeah, smaller companies that would just come up, I would be sceptical.

I: Do you think there is any like specific features or policies of Airbnb that make you trusting more the service? Or is it just about the reputation?

K: I think it is very big factor that it is paid. So that money is involved. Because I feel if it's a service that is paid, then you can also trust it more, because I feel like okay, it's an economic transaction, so there has to be certain criteria or certain measures keep the whole thing safe. And for example with CouchSurfing I would be more, I would questioning myself, "okay is that person actually opening the door, is he or she there? Are they really like bound to their promise of taking me in?", because I didn't pay anything. It is more like they do me a favour. So in that term, I think money is very important to secure that... It's actually more like a contract between the two parties that is kept.

I: And you have never felt insecure in this whole process?

K: No, I mean, when we were in Iceland with those farmers, it was in the middle of nowhere. And I kind of felt at night, I kind of felt uncomfortable, because it was this big house, and we were all alone, so I was like, okay... And we watched a horror movie before, so that's a bit biasing [laughing]. But, eh, I was just like, this is so weird because there is nowhere to go here, if anyone would come here... Like I don't know this house, I don't know where we could

get out, or whatever. Yeah, we would, but it is in night and you don't really know the ways. So that was a bit scary. Yeah, but I guess that's just me.

I: Yeah okay, it was kind of related to the place you were?

K: Yeah, yeah, that was just kind of because of the location and everything.

I: But nothing like because of...

K: No, and they were also like super nice, the couple that lived there with their dog. It was a really nice place, and they were really welcoming. It was probably just because I watched a horror movie [laughing]

Small talk:

I: As a kind of a wrap up, how do you see this whole idea of trust in using Airbnb, and what do you think about trusting other people in comparison to trusting Airbnb? Was I clear?

K: Yeah. I think it is probably a risk that is there, because there is always scammers, there is always people who try to rip off other people. And that is way it is so important for Airbnb to find solutions for that, and kind of having measures in place that kind of find scammers and that kind of warn their community, their users. So I guess in that sense it is very important for Airbnb to do that right. Because if they don't there will be a competitor who might do it better. And then people just like leave the platform and it loses so much of it's worth.

I: It looks like you think they are doing it right? Like you don't have any issues on trusting other...?

K: No, it feels really good. Obviously it's kind of an entry barrier, because I feel it's probably quite hard for people to start hosting Airbnb, if there is no reviews. So I guess that that's a bit the downside of it. Because of this whole trust thing, and you want to have other people check it for you. You are more reluctant to stay at someone's place who hasn't got a lot of reviews. So I guess that's a way. And that's also what we were thinking when Marie rented out the house of her grandma, like how is she getting reviews and how is she becoming a superhost to get more people. And then in the beginning I guess it's mostly about having a cheap prices, so that people feel, even if something happens, it wasn't expensive, don't lose much money. And then get good reviews, and kind of increase the price, when people tell other people how beautiful and nice it was there and bla bla bla. So, yeah, I guess that's the thing. But I guess that Airbnb is doing quite a good job there.

I: Do you think it is also because of your personality that you kind of tend to trust people in general?

K: Yeah, I guess it is. You can't, with those kind of things, you can't be 100% sure I think, because obviously there can be people who wrote their own reviews or whatever kind of found a scheme to like appear real, and then in the end you are ripped of. But, yeah, I guess that is a bit of risk that I am willing to take. But I think that some people who really need everything as described rather go to hotels, or go to a hostel or something. Because there they really know how it would be. It's not a platform that is behind it, but like an actually physical company that is hosting everything.

Interview with Liz

- I: How often have you used Airbnb and was it always as a guest or host?
- L: Yeah, always a guest but my ex-boyfriend... he was a host and, I mean, we did together.
- I: And how often more or less have you used that?
- L: I've stayed at some people... Fifteen plus maybe? Yeah.
- I: Ok, cool. How was your experience overall?
- L: Yeah, very good. Very good very good.
- I: Any particularly good or particularly bad experiences.
- L: No, I just don't... Yes, the only thing is that some places you know that they've really made a business out of it so especially when I was in Amsterdam it's, very like... you know, the personal aspect, you know... and that's why I often do it is that you have a relationship with the the host or if there is any other... and [in Amsterdam] I just felt a little bit sort of like... like he's done it a million times, do you know I mean? So I felt much more...
- I: So less personal?
- L: Yeah... and yeah I felt much more like at a hotel in this than the other... I mean it was a lovely place and it was great and this that and the other and so had that normal hotel vibe but yeah, you just know that he's done it a million times and it just takes a little bit of the specialness out of it.
- I: Yeah. So why are you using Airbnb? Is it more for...
- L: Ehm, for many reasons actually like... Ok so there's, ehm. First, curiosity, is also like... I mean, in hotel you don't see how people live, do you know I mean? When you get to a different country it's really nice to... you know, yeah see the way people live in their everyday life. Ehm, or how they interact or what even what products they use in the house sort of. So it's just interesting to learn about... you know, to get to know someone. I think the community in Airbnb the people do tend to be really open and...
- I: Why?

L: Why do I use it? Yeah I would say it's a lot about the personal aspect and also because, yeah... I've worked in a hotel and I don't really like the hotel industries in general and... [inaudible]. And yeah I like the personalization of it [Airbnb].

I: So that's main reason, kind of? Does it differ in the situation or?

L: Yeah. I mean, it's also nice for other people to get a source of income as well like... yeah. Mmm. Like, I mean, like the last person I stayed with in Lisbon she's a single mother and she's work in a job but she does the Airbnb just to be able to sustain herself and I think that's... that's brilliant. And... if you have an extra room then... why not? Like, share your resources.

I: Great, great. So now can you kind of describe the usual process that you go through while looking for a place to stay in Airbnb like... what are you looking for? What are you looking at? Like, the process overall.

L: Ok. first it depends why I'm going like... is it business or pleasure. Like, for example when I went to Lisbon it was for work, but the time before that it was for, for pleasure. So... for... yeah, so that relates to the price that I'm looking for, also the area. And I always try like being in the centre of the town. I don't like travelling, I like to wonder. But like for example when I went for the... personal, for pleasure and to Lisbon the first time I found a girl, also the person you know... she was she was really interesting and like, you know, reading the information about her... and yeah, she studied Chinese business and this and the other and she had like like things I didn't know about and I was just like wow sounds really... And I've read the reviews... price is also big aspect, you know, it depends what my budget is, but I don't mind paying a bit more. The pictures, always like look through the pictures and if they have good quality pictures because I think that also reflects, ehm, [inaudible]. Yeah quality pictures cause it means people take care...

I: Care about it...

L: Yeah. And I think, I think image quality is also very important. Yeah so, location, price, the person... Yeah I can be swayed, I can pay more if the person seems really nice and cool, interesting... And the reviews, like... I do read a lot reviews.

I: Ok. And, like, have you had any concern, any kind of concerns, while going through this process? Like, any risks involved in doing that?

L: No but I did question myself like on the the business trip I did in Lisbon last time. It was... My airbnb lady was lovely and... I don't have any problem with nudity per se but she was naked all the time and she didn't knock on my door, like... stark naked, which is fine but it was a little bit strange to get used... But that's like only happened once and she was like a really so free person but I also didn't know whether I should write something or not or... I mean, it

was fine. But yeah, it did take me a week of like...you know within a week period to get used to after two or three days, but other than that no other naked experiences or anything like. [inaudible]

I: So you don't see any other concerns in using Airbnb?

L: With safety?

I: Yeah like... Any kind... Like risks or...?

L: I think you can always [inaudible], like you know, to some extent... like you know when you meet your host, also I think in writing as well you can't tell everything from writing. A lot of them just actually just send you this generic message back that they've written to everyone ehm, you know in fact that sounds quite normal. And then when you meet them like, when you get the key or if their neighbor or their mother, so... or whoever and there's also a key butler, right? That I think some of them use. Ehm, yeah. I think you get like the gist of it or even if it's friend and then you know, if you know comfortable in a place then don't stay there. So, yeah, but often safety in concerns to the person that you're staying with or like the apartment itself like but yeah... not other than people.

I: And in this whole process do you think trust is important, like anyhow or...

L: Yeah, well I mean that's also like with the reviews and stuff I think you know you have a sort of trust. Yeah, like reviews are really really important. So, yeah I wouldn't... I would go... I mean if there's usually you know, if there's four plus reviews, then I sort of like... you know but if there's like one or two reviews then I'm a little bit more skeptical about it and I would choose someone else.

I: So. You you look a lot into that... like very specific in reviews or is there any other thing you look at?

L: How they write about themselves. Like, you know, I think you can tell quite a bit about people from, you know, how they present, like...market themselves, you know. So yeah, about that and the reviews. And then I think that can build up a basis of the trust or like "Oh I think this one's ok". Cause you can get some real fanatical like, you know... I mean, I understand but you know...when you see a lot of [inaudible], I mean yeah, yeah.

I: So, when you look at a host profile you just look at reviews or, like, how important is it the host or the person that hosts you?

L: Or the quality of the place?

I: Yeah, like in general, like... when you look at the host... how important do you think is that you trust the host or...? Are you concerned about that or...?

L: Ok, but what would they do to me? Or like...not "do" to me but like trusting in what sense? Like they can take my possessions or...

I: When you're going to Airbnb basically, you're dealing with strangers, right? So how did you see that aspect, like... Do you have any problems?

L: No, I'm excited. I'm excited about meeting someone new. And like, exactly like I said before, so when you meet them if you don't feel comfortable go to the local hostel, but also. But also the same thing is hotels...like, you know, you also have some sort of degree of trust of hostels and this and the other. You know like you stay in a hostel with x amount of people, like, you know, in the dorm or this and the other, you have to trust all the people in there, you know. I mean trust comes in [inaudible] different sort of...like levels.

I: Yeah.

L: Yeah, and I mean when someone's is not home, I mean that's not that far that they can run so... you know what I mean? So, if your objects or your possessions go then... I don't know like...

I: How would you say trusting these people would change in Airbnb rather than couchsurfing or in, I don't know... hotels? Like, how do you see this trust thing changing in these accommodations platforms or systems?

L: Yeah... people do have a higher degree of trust I think in hotels and this and that also came through reputation. But I think Airbnb, the reputation through Airbnb is getting much stronger and people are much more happy and it is much more normal to be like "Oh I check Airbnb or a hotel" or... Ehm, yeah.

I: So you think Airbnb has some like... has something to do with that... like, helps you to trust people or... Why using Airbnb and not another platform?

L: Ehm...

I: Do you get my point?

L: Yeah because like... I mean Airbnb have got like different systems like, you know like... fire alarm, you know like, for example, like... I think, please correct me if I'm wrong, but I think regular hosts they have to have like... cause I remember something about you have to have fire alarm or like this or that or that or that. And it makes it very easy to get information about the place or the person and... Yes just cause it's a massive platform really and it's like I mean, yeah like I said couchsurfing it's like, 7 or 8 years ago, I can't remember when I was in Australia,

it was a lot easier and I don't think... Oh, I can't remember... x amount of years ago and Airbnb wasn't so big then a tool. And you know people were much more ehm... "couchsurfable" and it's a lot harder, you know, people don't write about they've made a profile, you know they're not really in community some are, some aren't ehm, so yeah. And I'd rather the guarantee with Airbnb, cause there are systems in place where you know the money or, you know, there's an incentive that actually that person would come and meet you and you get the key to that and if not then you'll get your money back. So you know that's quite nice. But also people like, for couchsurfing is like, you know, you forget how great or human people are, do you know what I mean? People do actually want to help you if you are in a tricky situation like... when I hosted that couchsurfer in Aalborg, the guy literally had nowhere to live and he was just you know stayed at mine for 2 or 3 days and... yeah... and I just wanted to help someone who didn't have a place to stay like, yeah, and it's like you gain so much like, you get to learn another person learn another culture, you know, and yeah.

I: So, he reached you through the platform or...

L: Yeah, couchsurfing yeah.

I: So you had the profile and he contacted you like... how was like, like the dynamics?

L: I got an email like... When I was in Aalborg like, six years ago or something, and yeah I got an email notification ehm and yeah... he wrote and, yeah. But the thing is also that I was really bad sort of being on the couchsurfing platform cause I do remember I had my profile, I hosted one and then I kind of was like... nahhh. And you know I remember I got some email or notification messages from people like "oh yes we're coming for the Aalborg carnival" and yeah I just totally blanked because yeah, you know, it was like... Yeah, which is not so good but I couldn't do it regularly because it wasn't sort of...

I: Why not?

L: Cause it's also like... a lot of work, you know and... you know you have your... Like couchsurfing I find that is nice to do once in a while when you know... when you have a part time job and studies and this and the other is difficult to continuously have someone and hosting someone because yeah... and sadly when there is not a money incentive, well not incentive, but like... yeah. Obviously.

I: But yeah, I mean, so you just used it once six years ago... and why not any other time in this six years?

L: I'm so busy. I just don't have time.

I: But would you do it again if you have time or...?

L: Well, to be honest we had so many guest here all of the times so... We couchsurf outside of the platform, like...Yeah. Like this trust thing is usually network through network or friend of a friend of a friend or... yeah and then, yeah.

I: So you prefer couchsurfing without the couchsurfing platform?

L: Yeah, through network. And I mean that means it might actually not even have a really strong connection, it could be your cousin brothers friend's sister. Like or whatever, but you know then there is some sort of like linkage.

I: Someone that somehow you know through...

L: Yeah, yeah, but Airbnb you know, if I had a spare room, here, and also cause of the rules and regulations in Denmark I don't think actually you're allowed to rent this in particular apartment... Ehm, we are not allowed to do so. But other than that I would do it... Yeah, if I had a spare, like, I would do it regularly.

I: Perfect. If we go a bit more broad. What do you generally think about this whole idea of accommodation sharing platforms like, overall, what's your perception?

L: How many different platforms other than Airbnb are there?

I: You don't know anyone else? Like, regardless of the platform, what do you generally think?

L: Fantastic, fantastic. I think the hotel business or bed and breakfast they need it and have some sort of change. And I think it's a brilliant way of getting to learn the life or style in different cultures or countries or if there's any other. And it's just much more homely, do you know what I mean? I like being in at home and you know, it's also the vibe. Yeah, and you know, I like the kitchen and the bathroom and a sofa with a nice pillow or whatever and yeah, home is lovely.

I: Yeah, great. So, you went through that a bit before but... you don't have any security issue...

L: With Airbnb?

I: Yeah, I mean, with Airbnb because it's the only one you've used...

L: Yeah

I: So... Not any issues of anything, like...but security itself?

L: Well, doesn't it also have insurance so you can...?

I: Yeah, like these kind of things, do you care about those things or you just go there and whatever? Have you ever thought about these things or like...?

L: I was just trying to think like, trust wise... what do I need, so there's stealing, danger... of the place like...

I: Are these things something you think about when you book a place and how do you cope with these risks?

L: Intuition, I think. Intuition is a bit like...Yeah, like I said, reviews, great. How the person has written about themselves, it's a massive indicator. The pictures. Ehm... yeah, and somewhere there are these manual books, right? and you can just go through that and you know, if they sound like human, like, you know then... Yeah. And also yeah, when you talk, you know, through the messages, you know, you understand if a person are [inaudible] your messages... you can always tell, you can test by asking a question as well.

I: Ok great. But apart from the... I mean, it wasn't a bad experience, but apart from this weird experience, with the naked girl like... you didn't have any other bad experience?

L: No I mean really positive and also she was great like... she ended up giving me a lift to the airport as well cause it was on her way to work and... you know, and she was a great... yeah, I mean I didn't see her so much cause she was working and she had a daughter as well. Ehm, I didn't spend so much time with her it was just like just like, she was on her way to work, out the shower [laughing] like you know and this and the other. Ehm, yeah but I mean she was really cool like she was really nice. Yeah, I'm just not used to a lot of naked people that I don't know. Like, you know what I mean? Like, like in sauna and stuff yeah but it's just kind of yeah... the first time I was just like "hello", you know like... I mean it's fine but... And no there were no other weird experiences. Yeah lovely experiences actually, also when I was in Milan there was like a family, Italians... like... I had to fly from whatever airport... was far away in Milan and then we stayed in this little. They also gave us a lift to the airport, the mum, Italian mum, she cooked us dinner and the daughter... do you know what I mean? We met the daughter, the auntie, we sat down, there was a little fire. Yeah it was really nice. And think that's... I got there and they picked me up as well cause... my ex was in the motor race [inaudible] and yeah and we both had to get there in different times and apparently it was a really dodgy area on the train station I ended up in and yeah, my hosts they came and picked me up, took me there. Yeah and, it was lovely. Yeah it was super, literally going hundred percent out that way. And, yeah, food, and everything.

I: Ok maybe another question then would be... If there was another platform which is not like well-known like Airbnb. Would you use it? Like, do you think there would be any difference or? Like because you said Airbnb and I trust it like because it has good reputation is

massive and all that stuff. Would it change anything if it was like another platform, like... same principle but not that well-known?

L: Ehm, no, I don't think so. You know you have these things like the reviews, ratings... Ehm, you know. So I think that yeah, why not? I mean, I use GoMore, the carsharing thing and... yeah I would use... Yeah... I don't see why not... [inaudible]. It's just because I known Airbnb for years so... You know I have the app the app on my phone, I'm used to... I'm used to the interface... Well, until it changed now but like... Yeah, but I now I also cause I mean... when I'm looking for a place is like I look on Airbnb cause it's also the criteria like "ok, if I have this budget, hostels as well.

I use many different platforms, hotels, this [Airbnb], bed and breakfasts and... ehm, and if there was another platform I would check that. Yeah, when I'm searching on a holiday then I just search everything.

I: Yeah. But so hostels are more for when you're looking for more low budget thing or...?

L: Yeah it depends, yeah... I think maybe it's for my budget and so basically if there are no places available on Airbnb for my budget, then I'll check other sources. And also if the location sucks, like... you know everyone is just really far away, from the place I need then yeah I'll check the hostels or this and the other.

I: Great, but still like your kind of main, if I got it, like your kind of main reason to use Airbnb is more like this...?

L: Home and... yeah it's just more comfortable. And is nice to meet new people in a very... when you meet people in a home environment it's very different. You know there's much more relax and yeah and I like... yeah it's a lot the relationship that you build. It's also I was going to Edinburgh like two weekends ago and I looked at all the Airbnbs but it's just... I was just going with a friend and it was like a really cheap holiday and all of them they were like 600 crowns plus and it was just like it wasn't feasible and also the location was really crap so I then ended up going into a hostel. Yeah it [Airbnb] was actually the first platform that I checked but yeah. The price was the biggest criteria and it didn't fit or match so... Yeah.

I: Great. Yeah, and I think you went through all the things, kind of like...

L: But like... sporadically.

I: Yeah, no I mean I think you kind of got that the whole thing was about trust

L: Yeah yeah, I got that.

I: So yeah, the idea is to get your perception about how trust works and what's your perception of trust in like... sharing accommodation, mainly Airbnb cause is the one you used.

L: I think also when you do it a few times... it's also, a friend of mine, he hosts Airbnbers, so guests, ehm... all the time. Like, that's how he sort of draws a lot of his income and you know, I thought maybe you know, cause it's your home, like, but I see how it is because he had so many good experiences with Airbnb people. Yeah and often you know, they even bloody tidy up like... the room after. And, you know he says that quite often people take the duvet cover off and the pillow cover and they folder up for you to wash like, do you know what I mean? He says it's brilliant you know... he doesn't even have a thing about safety or security or this and the other because he's had just so many good experiences that [inaudible]. He's also Danish and I think Danes have like a much more trust based society or mindset than like for example Italians or English, do you know what I mean? And I think that is cultural difference as well. Because I mean for example Danes they just leave their handbag and then just walk to the toilet and then come back. In England, that's no [inaudible]. Ehm, yeah so that's something I'm conditioned with since the very young age.

I: You said like...since he had like a lot of good experiences, then it became like... kind of normal, right?

L: Yeah and he's no reason to question...

I: But was it like... when you did it the first time, maybe, or the first times...

L: Oh, him?

I: No, or you, like, for example... was it different? Also you just as a guest.

L: No, it was exciting.

I: Not even the first time, you didn't have any like...

L: No, I was excited.

I: I think it also depends on your own personality, right?

L: Yeah, ehm... yes. But I think you also come to these platforms as well because you're intrigued or you know, you like this that or the other. So, yeah you might have a few hesitations but again, after quite a lot of good experiences it's just like... And I mean if you do have a bad experience I mean the power of the internet is that you can tell the world about it, do you know what I mean? So it's like "oh red flag, don't go here". Ok, people don't go there, easy. You know, like... Yeah. And it's really cute when Airbnb is like [inaudible]

I: Great, cool. I mean, if you don't have any additional thoughts I think we really went through it.

Small talk, talking back to the experience in Lisbon with the naked girl.

L: [...] The first day I came her mum checked me in and then she was really busy and... first, I could see that she was a lot stressed cause she was like... you know, she's a single mother I mean, like... and you know, there's so many elements, she's sound engineer and this and the other and, so... I barely got to know her... but after that, she was really cool and calm. And then like, after that really rushed day and then she just knocks at your door the next day like naked "hi, here I am" and then you're just like. Wait wait, should I just look at the eyes or look at the [inaudible], where should I focus? And... you know, I don't mind naked people but I always have this association with naked people like, it's really weird cause it really made me think about things it's just like... because I don't really know her and I had that sort of impression that she was really stressed the first day... so you know, that's not negative but not it's necessarily positive. And then I had the same in my head, it's like using deductive reasoning like... I see naked people, normally I like the person that's naked. Do you know what I mean whether is a friend in the sauna or people in the sauna or like whatever other purpose and then it's kind of like... I don't know the person she seems really stressed and now she's naked. Oh, ok brain, right? So maybe someone that you don't potentially know is naked then that's like what do you do? It gets really weird. But then after you know... [inaudible] I was like comfortable. But yeah it was really nice, I mean.

L: This was actually my favourite host and, I'll show you [...]. Here I liked the fact that she was studying Chinese medicine and that was quite interesting [...]. And the reviews they are all so positive, you know? I mean, it was very cheap as well.

Interview with Maddie

I: So just as a warm up question, like... how often have you... Have you actually used only Airbnb or also Couchsurfing?

M: I've actually not used Couchsurfing. I've tried to use couchsurfing but it was like full. It was in San Francisco and that was like almost impossible... like you have to be [inaudible] in advance if you want to couchsurf that's quite interesting.

I: But that was the only reason...? Like, then you would use it or?

M: I've never used it since. I mean, I've tried to use it there...I wasn't, you know, every person I wrote were like... "Oh you're in San Francisco, you literally have to contact these weeks or months in advance" so I was like... Ok well, I thought couchsurfing was more of a spontaneous thing but apparently not in San Francisco. So that kind of like... pulled me off a little but because I was kind of... [inaudible].

I: Ok, but, instead, Airbnb you have used it...?

M: Yeah.

I: And how often?

M: I've used it in Edinburgh, I've used it Budapest, I've used it like couple of times.

I: Ok. Was it always as a guest or?

M: Always as a guest. I've never rented it out, no...

I: How has the experience with that been, overall?

M: Ehm, good, like good. Interesting. Cause I mean sometimes is like an apartment that you get so it's basically like being in a hotel so that is, you know, different. But when you're living like with other people ehm... yeah it can be good or it can be interesting.

I: Like, you mean, in a shared apartment?

M: Yeah.

I: Has it always been.... So like you have experienced both things: like, your own apartment and shared apartment.

M: Yeah, yeah.

I: And... any bad experience?

M: No, not necessarily bad experiences but the pressure to give good ratings with... Yeah. The one in Edinburgh with bringing up examples of past Airbnb tenants who... "oh look at this guy he complained about the smoking and the thing... Although he said nothing while he was here" and, you know, "acted as we were friends and then as soon as he left he gave this rating" and then she was showing me the rating and kind of, you know, being trying to influence what I would write and also how she would rate him because of his rating or because of his comment. So... which, which is quite interesting. I would say you kind of realize that it's... it goes I would say a lot of the... I don't know maybe in this phase of Airbnb is maybe not that accurate to the real experience. You know, people may be feeling like you're obliged to give a good rating even though... because everybody is informed of what you're actually saying and doing. Ehm... But that actually affects maybe the experience. If somebody ranks negatively then is probably really terrible. Not just like, oh yeah... It's probably horrible.

I: What is your reason for using Airbnb when you use that?

M: Price, location, ehm... Yeah. I mean I don't normally just go straight to Airbnb. I also look at hostels and other things and see what the prices are, where they're located and stuff like that. Yeah, I actually quite like staying in hostels because I think it's quite a sociable thing although I do not like being in like... sleeping in rooms with more than four people because I'm like super sensitive to sound so I'm just like, you know... Ehm, so... that's normally the thing that, I mean... if there is hostels with fewer than four people in it, like in a room, then I will probably take that. If not, and if it's super expensive, then I will look at Airbnb, as an alternative. I never go into hotels, rarely.

I: So is it mainly because of price...? Or like, is there any other motivation?

M: But also sometimes location, sometimes location as well. Cause some that I've taken had like exceptionally good location, actually. That's what I found a lot of the times. I wouldn't just go on price alone because if it was really really far away, I wouldn't take it, unless I knew that maybe is easy to get around, you know.

I: Great. So know I'd ask you to kind of think about the usual process that you go through when looking for a place to stay in Airbnb?

M: Ok, in Airbnb.

I: In Airbnb, yeah. So what do you usually do?

M: What do you mean, like...?

I: How do you start, like, what do you look at?

M: Well, I look at location. So like for example I'm going to Miami on the 12 of April. So I've already looked at... like hostels roughly. I know kind of... I wanna be in this Wynwood area. So it's like art district. So I'm also like typing in that area. Like, within Miami. So you know, that's what I normally go... by area. And then I kind of look at price after that. And so I'm like "ehm, is it doable? Is it not doable?". And then you know widen or look at different ones.

I: Yeah. And what after? Once you found like maybe 5 or 6 places then how do you decide?

M: Ehm, well I also contact the people. Cause like... sometimes you see that people have rented out but not like informed or changed their mind and they forgot to take it off or... so it's like, you know, obviously check the rating I guess and, and yeah have some communications with the people, you know.

I: Yeah, ok. And do you see any major concerns through this whole process? Like have you had or do you see any in the future?

M: I mean, the thing is like... it can be difficult to know that... I can imagine that it might be harder to rent out if you're maybe a mum who's renting it out. Ehm, because like depending who it is maybe if you're alone like you might not wanna... stay there if it's... Yeah. I think it can depend if you're like, if you're a girl going alone or you're going as a group or if you go and there's a guy with you. Yeah so I think then you might actually change who you would rent from.

I: How does that differ then, like...?

M: Well, I mean. If you're a lone girl maybe depending on the guy. And what he appears like... maybe he's not like... "Mmm yeah, no. I'm not gonna go there cause he could be like a creepy man, you know. Because there are like creepy people also renting out. So that could be something that would actually put you off from maybe going.

I: So you see a risk in that or...?

M: Well, the thing is that I'm quite much of a risk-taker anyway so I'm not really put off by things like that. But... sometimes, like... Some of the applications you're like "Mmm, yeah...". And also if they're like "yeah I'm also willing to... "you know it's also good if they're willing to show people around and stuff like that but sometimes you can tell that there's ulterior motives to the renting out and how they're biased towards only girls coming or... you know. Yeah, so... I think...

I: So how do you kind of cope with that? Like, if you're alone and you're going...?

M: Oh you mean you've already booked, you mean, if you've booked it or you mean just go...?

I: Or if you're looking for and also when you book, like, any kind of situations. How do you kind of avoid that, or... do you still take the risk? Have you taken that risk sometimes still or...?

M: Ehm, I mean...

I: Like maybe, I don't know it's a cool place, cool location, so you're like I'm gonna take it anyway or...?

M: Ehm, me I would probably do it but other people that I know... "No way".

I: Ok, no but I mean, it's about you.

M: Oh, just me. Ok well I mean I've used it five times, roughly five times...And each time I was like "Ehm... I'll just go for... I'll just go for it".

I: Ok.

M: But actually, now I'm thinking about it like... three times, three times it was women who were renting out. And, twice men. So I guess like, I mean, the sample is very small but I guess I'm slightly more biased "Oh yeah, maybe it's better if it's a woman", I don't know. But I haven't really thought about it. I've just... But consciously then I didn't... I just was like, well it's a cool apartment, this is, you know like...nice occasion. The price is good. And also there's not like too many rules, you know like. If it's too many rules I'm just like "Mmm" [shaking her head]. Because like, at the end of the day you're also normally on a holiday or something so... If there's too many rules it's just like... you can be bothered to like... you know like obviously show respect to whoever lives there but not like if there's like "not allowed to shower this time." You know, there are some people who have unreasonable things. Like, that kind of stuff I can be bothered with.

I: Ok. But like when are surfing and looking for different places like... Ok, you mentioned reviews. But is there any other thing that you kind of consider when you...?

M: Well, I mean, a lot of that is definitely location. It's a major one.

I: Yeah, but I mean... about the person?

M: Oh, about the person? Ehm... Well, the thing is that I'm quite open-minded and I've lived in many like collectives... So like now I'm living in collective and, in many many collectives so I'm actually normally ok with most people. Like, I slot in very easily and you know, I kind of handle all types of persons so... Not really, I'm normally fine with...doesn't matter if it's a middle-aged couple or like a young guy or whatever... It's normally not really a problem so... Nah, not really.

I: So are you not really digging into the profile or the bio? It's more about the place?

M: I mean, a little but, I mean... but, the place for me it's the major thing. Yeah, actually. I don't necessarily think this is quite normal, but I'm just... I'm just kind of... I think I've lived in so many places that I'm actually ok with it, you know? If that makes sense.

I: If we try to be a bit more general, then what's your general... I guess it's positive, then what's your general idea of these accommodation sharing platforms, like for example in comparison to hotels, or hostels... like specifically?

M: Yeah, I mean, I like it. I think it's a good thing like, you know, everybody wins. Like, they can get some money towards, you know, the rent or whatever. Ehm, you know, you might be able to like get into the culture and maybe get tips if they take you somewhere or you know, I think it's quite nice. I still prefer hostels if I have the choice because there's also, you know, people are more inclined to actually wanna come with you and like explore things. But I like the idea of you know, I think it's a win-win on all parts to be honest.

I: And you don't have any concern with security or?

M: Well, I mean, I wouldn't leave certain things. Like I would take the passport of stuff like that. It doesn't really matter who it is. I'm just, you know, you just never know so... like, but apart from that... no. Like I said, I've been in so many situations like... in life, that like, nothing really daunts me so I'm just like "well, I'm sure it's fine". And also I think normally I don't think I've ever been to a place where nobody has previously been. So, you know you think that maybe that would have come up if that was, you know, a problem.

I: Ok, but why using Airbnb rather another platform then? Have you ever used any other platforms?

M: Mmm... No well, apart from the attempt of using Couchsurfing. Ehm, but not knowing the situation of San Francisco, because it's super expensive so everybody wants to couchsurf, or everybody...

I: But why not trying Couchsurfing for Miami, for example, now that you will go there?

M: Ehm, well actually I'm considering doing it but the thing is that first I'm, you know, arriving like at 10pm and then off to Everglades, so there's no point doing it then like, but on like... on the return, yeah why not. I'm gonna check to see if, what there is. Is there is like... depends on who's answering. If it's something that you're like "yeah, that could be cool". I mean, if you use couchsurfing then it's completely different criteria for me. Then it's all very much like, I would say person. Whereas when I use the Airbnb is more about the place.

I: Yeah, so is that because of Airbnb then...like, that you just don't care about the person?

M: Well I do care but it's maybe the second priority whereas if you're couchsurfing I like it's more in... like... not intimate but, I don't know... yeah, so I would say then I would actually have to, to...

I: But, I mean, isn't also intimate when you share the same apartment with someone on Airbnb?

M: Yeah, yeah. But I think it's more of a... like, business thing. As opposed to, like couchsurfing. Like you can be crashing like all over the place... like on the floor or this or that. Somehow it feels less, I don't know. For me it [couchsurfing] feels more intimate I don't really know why but like... it just feels like it's, you know. Being like... as having your own room or being on the sofa, you know it's... yeah.

I: Ok, so if we talk about trust. Ehm, do you think Airbnb helps you to trust other people or...? Somehow?

M: Yeah, I would say so.

I: And how...? Like, just reviews or is it also because of the brand itself?

M: Yeah, maybe the brand and also you get to like... see the people, like the profile, this, this and that. Not necessarily that it's... I think is a bit of a false sense maybe of security. But you somehow like... it's not... everything is not unknown, you know? So I guess, yeah.

I: Yeah, maybe if we go back to your bad experience, like, if we can call that bad experience... Do you think trust was relevant in that [experience]. If you get my question.

M: If trust was relevant?

I: Or... would a bad experience like that impact your kind of willingness to use Airbnb again, or... it just doesn't matter?

I: No, I mean... it made me think a little bit more skeptically about things like ratings. But I mean it doesn't impact like... I would use it again, like, for sure. Maybe, you can be a little bit more picky depending on, you know. But, no I mean, I at everything as kind of individual situation so... you know just because she was like that it doesn't mean that everybody would be. But I how people might be like, you know... slightly put off or whatever. But, I mean, I'm not. I'm already looking at Airbnb in Miami also.

I: Ok, great. I think you kind of went through all the points. I don't know if you get it but like my topic is about trust is these kind of platforms so, yeah, I mean if you don't have any other comments on specifically trust, the idea of trust in these sharing accommodation platforms? Airbnb mainly because, yeah, that's the one you used the most.

M: Well, yeah. I mean... I think you just have to use your common sense a lot of the times. Like, you... I know that initially you can't really maybe go by that, because you're not really sure whether people are just giving good ratings because they feel bad or whatever. Ehm, I mean, I'm not really sure what people... like... If I was in a really uncomfortable situation... it would be interesting if I would actually stay in that... just because "Oh yeah, I've already like... paid and this and that" or would I get out? I'm not sure actually. Because sometimes you're like... you might forced to. So it's... it's a difficult one. It's something that you have to consider and that you don't have to consider if you're, you know, booking a hostel or hotel, you know. It's... you are, I guess, going into unsure territory. But most people are like... ok. I mean, not necessarily like "wow amazing people" but, that was a lot like "fine", you know, you're not gonna... hopefully have a problem.

I: Yeah. If you are like to distinguish between the trust you have in people and the trust you have in Airbnb, like... how would you compare that?

M: I mean, the thing is I think people have to remember that like... even though I think a lot of people would believe something you would feel trust because it's on Airbnb, it's still like... anybody can register on there. So you just have to be like, you know, a little bit have your wits, so you known...not being completely naive about things. So, like, I go... you know. I understand that it's like, you know... I don't necessarily have trust just because of Airbnb. I would rather go by "ok, how does this person sound?" like, and... "what are the ratings?". You know... and even if it was on another platform.

Interview with Nina

I: How often have you used Airbnb? And as a guest or as a host?

N: As a host, maybe once. As a guest I used it quite a lot in Paris, when I did my exchange there. Ehm... Where else have I used it? I can't remember right now. I used it a couple of times before [inaudible] when or how...

I: It doesn't matter when or how, but you have used it a bit more than just in Paris.

N: Yeah I have used it a bit more than just Paris, yeah.

I: And how often on that semester?

N: Oh, during this past semester, almost every weekend.

I: That's sounds like quite a lot...

N: Yeah, but that was in one city, so I developed a very specific pattern... as to, you know, when I was scrolling and looking for apartments, I had very specific streets that I wanted to stay in.

I: Why so?

N: Because I have preferences. Because I used to live in Paris, so I know the city, and for example, if I have visitors coming and I knew that we were gonna spend our entire weekend in one area, then I would probably go "okay, this is a cool street, or a cool area" - let's say area, so I would start from there.

I: And did you already have a home, or anything in Paris or did you only use...?

N: I had a home, but outside of Paris. So I lived on campus, which is like 30 minutes away by car. But it wasn't really suitable for, you know, if I had visitors for example, or if I wanted to go out in the city during the weekends. Then I did Airbnb friday through sunday and then I went back.

I: Okay, so it was mainly weekend bookings?

N: Yeah, yeah.

I: And when did you host?

N: That was also in Paris. Back in 2014. And that was during the summer, I planned for going back to Sweden for holidays.

I: So why did you rent out?

N: Yeah, money for the rent basically. We didn't want, because in Paris the rents tends to be very high, especially in the area where I lived. So I had a 1000 euros in rent, and if I could get, I don't know 400 or 500 euros to cover at least half of it, well it's a way, then, yeah, that was good. Because sometimes I was away for a month or two in a row without even using in my place.

I: How has that experience been?

N: Great. Yeah, awesome. People left like notes, and some even left a bottle of wine.

I: No bad experiences with that?

N: No.

I: So if we look more on the guest side. How has that experience been?

N: Just in addition to your previous question, the reason I didn't have any bad experience i think is because I was also very picky also with who I took in.

I: In what sense?

N: Only families and couples, for example. So I rarely did, I never did big groups of guys coming to Paris for a weekend.

I: And what is the reason for that?

N: Because then I know I won't get an issue with, you know, because people tend to host parties, they have pre-parties or whatever, and they crash the apartment, you know. So in order to try to keep that intact, couples are to be preferred, because they, no offense, they have kind of a boring schedule [laughing]. They wake up in the morning, they put on their jogging shoes, they go out and do tourist the entire day and they are then tired and go to bed. So, that's what the do. They use the apartment for sleeping basically.

I: So, if we take... just to sum that up, you use Airbnb as a host to earn some extra money, because you weren't using the apartment at that time.

N: Yeah.

I: Okay. And then you use it as a guest, because you have a specific need with your friends and this specific weekend where you had to go to the inner city.

N: Yeah.

I: Did you ever stay with the hosts of the apartment?

N: No.

I: So it was always an alone apartment?

N: Yeah.

I: And what was the experience in overall terms, both good and bad experiences?

N: Eh. So, I... good experiences, the apartments that I ended up choosing were, you know, were up to standards. They were clean, they were nice. The first... So for example let's take two extremes. One of them was rented out by an actual person who lived there. So he just rented it out to me for a weekend. And I actually met with that person and he gave me the keys and showed his home. And then there was another one, which was quite big, a family that lived in Nice. So they weren't there at all during the winter season. So they had some sort of agency that came and gave me the keys, and you know all that. So that was a bit less personal experience, or, ehm... it was more detached. Which was fine. It felt almost like renting a hotel room. Bad experiences, neighbors who are tired of Airbnb guests coming and going. In especially, in these apartments where a family for example owns an apartment in Paris, they don't live there necessarily, other than a couple of months during the summer or spring season. So there tends to be a lot of traffic. And the neighbors get pissed of. And they are like, 'this is not a hotel'. Other than that, no nothing.

I: But this is more the neighbor that got pissed. Have you had any bad experiences?

N: Oh yeah, actually one. One I did. We did book the Airbnb, we were three people. And when we got there, there was sort of only room for two, so one of us had to sleep on the couch, and there was no blanket and it was in January, it was freezing. And the toilets weren't properly cleaned. I remember.

I: What did you do about that?

N: I complained.

I: To them?

N: I think you do it through the website, I can't remember. I think I first contacted the host. And told "hear, you know, FYI the cleaning lady might not have done the best of job. I don't care, but in the future"... And then she responded with something like, "I highly doubt that the toilets weren't clean". And I was like, "okay, well, screw you, there is no blankets here". That's when I got irritated. And went to complain, like the Airbnb, I think they have like a way where you fill out a form.

I: Can you remember if something happened?

N: Yeah, so I got refunded. Not for the entire stay, but a small. So that has to be an agreement between me... I gave an offer to get refunded a certain amount, I can't remember, let's say one night. And also I request, you know, a blanket for the third bed. The blanket never came, but the refund was accepted by the host.

I: Okay.

N: But I wouldn't stay there again, and...

I: At that particular place?

N: No. And I didn't give them any review, feedback, review, what's it called.

I: Neither a bad review?

N: I didn't give them anything.

I: So why do you actually choose to use Airbnb and not hotels or other options?

N: Ehm... Price varies if you are more people. In Paris it does at least. Otherwise you end of staying at a shitty hotel. So you might as well get an Airbnb, because for the same amount of money you get a standard that is quite a lot higher than in a hotel. And also, it is kind of cool that you have a kitchen. And you have like a couch you can hang out. you know, like a living room. And then also, yeah it depends.. speaking of Paris particularly now, the areas where the hotels are affordable aren't the most.. it is not the coolest of areas, it's like near a big station, and we had very particular demands of what area we wanted to be in, and in those areas, it's residential areas, basically there is no hotels there. And that's why we ended up staying in Airbnb.

I: So you both got better price, but you also got better quality or what can say?

N: Yeah, better areas.

I: If you can remember the times not in Paris. Can you remember the reason for actually using Airbnb?

N: Mmh... New york. Yeah. Okay, New York... Yeah. Ehm. We Airbnb'ed in New York for three or four days.

I: How many?

N: Two people.

I: Why did you choose that?

N: I think that was also because of price. If... yeah. I think it was a question of price.

I: So in general, do you think Airbnb is the same as a hotel, just price is different?

N: No, it's not the same.

I: So why are you more going towards Airbnb?

N: Ehm, so in New York I wouldn't do it again. In Paris it is okay. I think...

I: Why not in New York?

N: Because the standard was shit, basically. I mean, I could have, and that's why we only stayed for a couple of nights, because we ended up in a hotel afterwards anyway.

I: And why not another Airbnb?

N: Yeah. Because it is tedious, right? You have to get in touch with the host, and then there is the whole "oh yeah, let me just find somewhere where I can get you the keys and this is how it works and yadda yadda yadda". It's like an apartment, it's a place, it's somebody's home. Whereas a hotel, you go to the lobby and like "hey, do you have a room. Thank you." And that's it. There is no, there is... in terms of practicality, it takes longer. The process is more tedious with the whole Airbnb. But I guess you know, it's a trade off between money and time. If you are willing to invest more money, you save some time. And the other way around.

I: Okay, if we then try to focus on Paris, your experience in Paris, what do you go through when you try to find an apartment that you would actually like to stay at? How do you decide that? So the process you go through on the website.

N: Right. So first of all the area. And then I have, I have three things that I look at... Four. First, the area. Then second I determine a price range, which I'm pretty flexible with. Third, the quality of the place, like the pictures, they tell quite a lot. And then fourth I look at the reviews, and if one, two, three is good, but the reviews are sort of half good, half bad, then I move on.

I: And what is half-half on the review?

N: So, a really good Airbnb for me in Paris, then you know everybody said that's fantastic, there was such good place, there was clean, and nobody really had anything to comment on. But as soon as people start just mentioning small bad things, it means, okay there was something here. Otherwise you probably wouldn't have put it down there. If you really liked the place where you stay, then you are so excited about, so you probably just put in a good review. And you like the person who gave you the apartment.

I: So, not to put worth in your mouth...

N: No that's okay.

I: ... Are you looking more at the bad reviews?

N: Yeah.

I: Because you look for what could go wrong?

N: Yeah. Yes, I am.

I: You are also mentioning if the place is good, location is good, the apartment is good. What about the person?

N: The one renting out?

I: Yeah.

N: I don't care.

I: Not at all?

N: No.

I: So the profile picture, the biography and all these kind of things...

N: Couldn't care less.

I: Okay. So that also leads me to ask do you have any concerns in using Airbnb besides the tedious part? Any risks?

N: Yeah sure. I mean, you could, you could get, I guess... There are scams out there, right? You have heard of people who have gotten... ehm, who have paid and didn't get the keys, and the person didn't exist etc. etc. So I guess that's risks. You book something that doesn't exists.

I: Do you think about that when you use Airbnb?

N: No.

I: Why not?

N: Because, you know... if you... I do it in a sense that if there is not a lot of reviews, so if there is a limited amount of reviews, I'm like "okay, either this person is very new, or this place, there is something dodgy going on here". So, I guess I look for heavier amount of reviews, so I know a lot of people have stayed here and it's super good. But I don't go into the profile picture and go "oh, do you exists? Do you seem shitty?". Because I'm thinking, if you are a scam, then you are probably gonna paint the picture, as if you are not, right. You are probably gonna

paint a perfect picture of yourself. So, in anyway that would be misleading, I would never be able to investigate on that.

I: And what about the communication back and forth? Are you using that for anything?

N: Yeah... Yeah, I mean the communication I have had so far has been good..

I: Have you tried having communication where you ended up, "okay, this I don't.."

N: This doesn't feel good?

I: Yeah.

N: No. I should have in New York. But, I ended up not.

I: Why?

N: Well, because the person on the other end, seemed so nice and fair, then you know, it's New York, standards are not, they are not awesome, so... And especially not in Williamsburg. In that part where we stayed. But that had nothing to do with the person, the host. It was purely...

I: Okay, so you think it is the standards in general?

N: Yeah, for that price, yeah.

I: That actually leads me to, like the first time you used Airbnb, if you can think back to that. Why did you end up trying Airbnb at that time?

N: I think it... it was probably a friend. He was like "yeah it's awesome, it's great" like... "It's cheaper than a hotel" and the whole thing, like "you can come a group of people", and.. I remember there was a lot about "oh, yeah, you actually have a fridge, and a kitchen". It was a long time ago, it was like back in 2012. But yeah, that was the primary reason. A friend told me about it, yeah.

I: Since you use it, I guess you also like the idea of sharing accommodations. But can you put words on what you actually think about this sharing economy, especially sharing accommodation. What do you think about that?

N: I think it is awesome. Like if, for example, especially in big cities, where, me as, if I would, like I said, if you have a place that costs you a fortune every month, and you know, "okay, now I'm away for a week or two", it is a great opportunity to be able to earn some extra money and also make someone else happy, because... I think a lot of people, for example, the people who rented from me in Paris, they were super happy with location. Like...where my flat was

allocated, there is usually just a five or six star hotels in that area. So they couldn't afford to live in a hotel like that in that area. But to get an apartment there in the middle of the city and have like, walking distance to, you know, the Eiffel Tower and Champs-Elysees and all that. That is something that they really appreciated. Which is cool right? It's an exchange, which is happening.

I: Again, more general, how confident do you feel using these platforms. Maybe compared to hotels then?

N: Less confident, of course.

I: Of course, why that?

N: Due to the whole, you know, if it's a hotel, then you are sure, that this is a place that exists. It is validated somehow. You won't get, you won't come to a... like if you google a hotel then it probably exists. You rarely hear that, "oh no that hotel went up in flames". Whereas with Airbnb, it might be that this place doesn't even exist.

I: Are you concerned about that when using Airbnb?

N: Like very little. I don't think about it too much to be honest.

I: So would it have any value if you could have a trust stamp so to speak, that this is real by Airbnb?

N: Yeah, I guess that would... No, that would for sure mean something for me. Yeah, definitely. But it would also mean that if you don't have a trust stamp, then you would fall out immediately.

I: So it should be something for everyone?

N: It should be something for everyone, like... innocent until proven guilty right. So... because otherwise you sort of cut people by the ankles if you don't get that stamp.

I: But now you say innocent until proven guilty, do you generally trust that things are real then?

N: Yeah, like I said, if the reviews are there. Then yeah, I trust it.

I: But you would have a hard time, if they didn't have any reviews?

N: If they would have zero reviews, I would probably move on, straight away. And also the whole thing of "too good to be true" is probably "too good to be true".

I: We have been through it, but maybe you can elaborate on it, so what do you think about the security in using these platforms?

N: I mean it's not the best right? How does it work again? You book something and then the host accepts...

I: Yeah, so you pay to Airbnb, and then the host accepts it.

N: Right. And then gets the transfer?

I: I think after the stay.

N: The host gets the transfer after the stay?

I: Yeah

N: Okay, well that's fine. Then the security is fine.

I: But you haven't considered it that much?

N: No. And again, that comes back to the fact that I have trusted, what I have booked.

I: So if we imagine that we have the same host, just on another platform that you didn't know about. Would that make a difference?

N: The same host on another platform?

I: Yeah.

N: It would totally make a difference. I think the fact that it is Airbnb and people are using it, I think - yeah - the quantity of people actually using this platform called Airbnb and people are talking about, "oh, it's great" you know. That in a sense validate it. Whereas if I would go online and find a completely random platform with the same host, then you know, unless I knew the host, unless I have stayed with the host before, I wouldn't book it.

I: So why are you using Airbnb compared to other platforms?

N: Because I don't know any other platforms.

I: Okay. Do you know CouchSurfing?

N: Ah, yeah. I associate that to sleeping on a couch. And I don't want that [laughing].

I: So even though that is free, That is too low quality then?

N: Yeah, it's out of question. Oh, it's free, I didn't know that. But no, I wouldn't.

I: We have talked a lot about this, but again more specifically, how do you think Airbnb then [inaudible] you to trust to book a stay with another person? Like what is the main factor influencing that?

N: Yeah... I'm realising that I've done so little there, like the whole security part, now that you ask me these questions. But I guess, now that you told me about how it works with the payments, and that's one thing. Give me the question again...

I: I think then, if you haven't then considered so much about looking at the host per se, and figure out... What is it then that makes you trust it?

N: Because everybody else is using it. And the reviews. So word-of-mouth is super important.

I: So it's something about the reputation of Airbnb.

N: Yeah, of Airbnb and of the host.

I: If you put a hotel up next to Airbnb, and think about the process and so on, you seem to trust in booking a hotel, so where does it differ with Airbnb? Like, do you consider anything more when you actually use Airbnb than a hotel?

N: Yeah... Again, practicalities, like when I book an Airbnb, I know that there is not necessarily gonna be towels for example. I'm not sure that it's gonna be clean. I'm not sure... I'm not sure of what I'm gonna get. I guess in a sense you don't know that with a hotel either, you can only base it from what you see on the pictures.

I: What makes you then still go for Airbnb?

N: Price.

I: Okay, so you take this 'chance', because the price is good?

N: Yeah. Especially in big cities. But for example, I know... we used Airbnb in Southern France, in Villefranche-sur-Mer, it's by the coast. I can't remember if it was more or less expensive. But there for example it was not a question of price when we booked it, it was a question of, we were a family, we were ten people. We wanted a big house. Like we wanted to feel we were like on vacation in our summer house. And we wanted our own pool. We didn't want to share with hotel guests. And we wanted to be able to cook dinners there. So we needed a kitchen. So, then it wasn't a question of money. But in big cities it probably is. Because if you wanna stay like I said in certain areas, then the hotel rates tends to... increase quite a bit compared to Airbnb.

I: So you feel you take a bigger risk doing that or?

N: Doing?

I: Like if you had to chose Airbnb in that area for hotel also...

N: I feel like the risk with Airbnb is bigger, yes.

I: Because you don't know...

N: Because I'm not necessarily sure what I'm getting. And also, I can't, the whole process of complaining is not as easy. Cause once you have the keys, you have the keys. There is no reception you can go to, and be like "this place is shit, I want my money back". There is like no direct contact with anybody. Unless the host is actually in the country, or in the city or whatever.

I: Have you tried any issues of that?

N: Just the one time in Paris.

I: Okay. So the process with Airbnb is...

N: That process is tedious and unnecessary. If I would have stayed in a hotel, then I could have gone down personally to the reception and be like "guys, my room isn't cleaned properly. We are three people and we only have bed sheets for two. What's up?" Whereas here I could complain, but still I had to rely upon a host, who is somewhere else, and you know, I obviously paid for this already, and if I want my money back, then I have to ask Airbnb, or not Airbnb, then I have to tell the host I want my money back and then the host has to accept. And then Airbnb has to control it somehow, regulated it or whatever. I'm not sure how the process works.

I: So now, the reason you still go for Airbnb, even with all these things, is because of price..

N: Yeah.

I: But how do you feel confident to do this, and still risk that it can ruin your stay? Ruining your weekend if things are not as expected?

N: You do your research right. And that particular place where it was, that was maybe one of those things that I learned from, they had some bad reviews and I'm not moving on. If they have some bad reviews, the hell no I'm not going for it. But of course when you book it, you know that there is a slight chance or risk that this might turn out to be shit... Bad, sorry.

Interview with Olivia

I: First of all, how often have you used Airbnb?

O: As a guest I used it twice in Milan both times.

I: And as a host?

O: I think, as a host... 15... 20.

I: And when did you do this? Is it far ago?

O: It was... the first period was in the summer 2016. And then I had two guests, or two different guests in February 2017, and one the week after in March. The first week of March.

I: And when were you a guest in Milan? When was that?

O: Two years ago. The summer. The first time. And the second was last spring.

I: Also in Milan?

O: Yes, both.

I: Did you use Airbnb as a guest before you used it as a host?

O: Yeah.

I: In general, how has your experience been with Airbnb both as a guest and as a host?

O: As a guest. The first was a little complicated, because there was no internet, and [laughing] it was a little bit creepy, because we didn't know Milan, and we had... The apartment was in a little dodgy area of Milan. Yeah. And again, there was no internet, and we, I think the profile was fake. So it was not like the girl on the picture, so even though it was connected to Facebook, but we didn't even think about that before we booked it. But we got some money back, because there was no internet.

I: And they promised that there should be internet?

O: Yes.

I: Okay.

O: On the webpage. Or on Airbnb, right. She understood, or whoever it was. But it was a nice apartment, it was clean. The second time was really good. He came with the keys,

everything worked, it was nice and clean. Many, like towels and stuff. Yeah. It was really good experience.

I: So if we just take the first one again, why do you think it was a fake profile?

O: Because we found her picture on Google, and it was like not her picture, you know. I don't, it was my ex-boyfriend who did the googling stuff, he was really good at research. So, and he was like "it's a fake profile" [laughing]. And then we were like, "are they coming and taking our bags when we sleep?", or "what is this?" because that was not the...

I: Oh, so you knew this before you actually went there?

O: No. We went there, and then we just, like googled it, because it sounded suspicious at some point. Yeah, but it was fine, and the communication was good. I just think, maybe the person didn't want to be associated with Facebook and I don't know.

I: And what made you suspicious?

O: I think it was, again it was my ex-boyfriend who got too suspicious, I'm too naive. I just "eh-eh". So I think it was the picture he said, I don't think it's her. And then he googled and searched and did some, yeah research on Facebook, and then he figured out it. I was like..."Shh, not her real picture".

I: And the money you got back was that from the fake profile?

O: Yeah.

I: How did that work?

O: We complained...

I: To her?

O: Yeah, to her. And then she was like "fine, that's fine. You just get some money back for, like as an apology for the lack of internet". So it was fine. I mean, even though it was maybe a fake profile, it was still a human being behind it. Yeah, so it worked out fine. Little creepy experience, but it worked out.

I: Okay. And your experience being a host?

O: Very... Argh... Good and bad. The guests I had here in 2017 was really nice. Some of them I had in the summer was also nice, but I had, people, it... we are from different cultures, some people different perceptions of how to treat other people's stuff and what is... like, what they put weight on. What they notice, so. I think, like...

I: What was the bad experience in this?

O: Bad was when people just left their trash everywhere, didn't clean once, they just left the bathroom, like...it was over floated, the toilet. Not nice. After they have been using it, so. And they didn't say anything. They just left. Oh, and once I came home, because I had a check out at 9. But I'm flexible, so if people say "oh, we are gonna fly, maybe at two, can we stay until 10". I'm like "fine". But this time they didn't say anything, so I went to the apartment and was about to clean it. And their bags were still there. And the man, it was a family, he left a note saying, "oh, we will be back at six." Not cool. So he knew that it was not okay, but they went on a day trip anyway. So I called him and said, you have to get back and get your bags right now. Because there is coming guests and I need to clean, and there is coming a cleaning lady and everything. But then again, you know, he was with his family, I wouldn't only ruin his day, but also the childrens. So I said, "okay, you can be back at one, but you need to..." I think it was so rude, so [inaudible] rude. Yeah, people are nasty, like, they put stuff everywhere and hair and... argh. I really don't like it. But ehm, yeah, some of them are really sweet and left like a gift or, yeah, a note. Especially the Americans [laughing].

I: Do you ever stay with them?

O: No. Never. It's the whole apartment.

I: And are you out of town, or?

O: I go often to my parents place, to be honest. It is a way to earn money. I would like to have it as a thing where you could go on a trip, so it, you know... So you go on a trip and get it paid, because you can like rent out your apartment. But I never done it actually I always stayed at my parents place or friends place.

I: So I guess the main reason for you hosting people is to get money?

O: Yes.

I: And why are you then using it as a guest?

O: Eh, I think it is a really nice way to put pressure on the hotels. I think it is nice to, it's cheaper. What I don't like it is a bit more risky. You don't know, like, in a hotel everything is in order. But in Airbnb apartments you never know, because you don't know the host. And, you don't know how the clean it is, for example, the first apartment I was a guest in in Milan, it didn't look like the pictures on the internet. So, like okay [laughing].

I: So why did you still go for it the second time?

O: Because it is cheap. It is cheaper than a hotel. I think we were three people, yeah. And it is easier to book an apartment with two rooms, two bedrooms and a kitchen, than a hotel

room. Then you have to maybe book two rooms or a suite, and it's expensive, and yeah. That was actually why. It is cheaper and you have a kitchen. That is really nice.

I: Have you been travelling since last time in Milan?

O: No, not in Milan...

I: No, but to other places?

O: Yeah, I went to Paris, but I didn't use Airbnb, but a lot of my friends they used it.

I: But why didn't you?

O: I actually knew one who had an apartment in Paris, so I went with that one. But I know they have really good experiences with their Airbnb hosts. So maybe looking back, maybe I should have done the same thing.

I: So if we look forward also, would you then, like would you prefer to stay at hotels or Airbnb?

O: I think as a student or to save money, I would definitely use Airbnb. I like hotels, because there is no complications, it's nice. You know it's clean.

I: So the decision-factor here is money?

O: Yeah, I actually, yeah. I think so, yeah. Because I am really trying to look for apartments which look like they are no inhabited all the time. Like it is just an apartment they have specially for Airbnb guests. I don't like the personal stuff, like with pictures of family, and yeah.

I: So you would like the apartment that you rent on Airbnb to completely look like a hotel?

O: Exactly. Looks as neutral as possible. To be honest. Yeah, that is what I'm looking for. I mean the apartment I just looked at with you, that looked nice. I mean it was not too personal. It looked clean. Yeah. Definitely.

I: Can we then try to go through the process, maybe first when you look for an Airbnb to stay at. So the process you go through when you enter the website, and like how do you choose the specific apartment and why do you then end up actually choosing that?

O: Okay, so when I decided for a destination I, like, do the price, I regulated so it's the right price for me. What I want to pay per night. Then I look at the map and see "okay, which area would I like to live in?". And then I look at those apartments, and then I look first at the pictures.

I: Of the apartment?

O: Yes. Of the different apartments. And then what is the fee for the cleaning. Now I saw [refers to the introduction phase when she looked at the computer] that she had like a, you have to pay 1.500 insurance. It is a little minus for me. Because again, I don't trust people that much, when I don't know them. So, yeah, I had a problem with that. But like small things like that afterwards.

I: And what does then make you trust them?

O: Yeah, that is a good question. For me it is always like a chance. Because I don't know how to find them on Facebook and stalk them in that way. I really don't want to text back and forth. But maybe it is a good idea to send them a longer text, so they have to send you maybe a longer and more personalised text back. Maybe ask for recommendations if they are nice and willing to help you, it will show that they are just normal people who need money like me.

I: But you haven't done that?

O: No.

I: Why did you end up choosing that particular place over another one?

O: I think it was actually other people who decided. We looked at the pictures and prices, and then they had the contact. So they were doing all the contact, informations, booking... so, I didn't, I just trusted my friend to take care of that. But next, if I'm going to do it myself next time, I would definitely write a longer message. Just to get like confirmed that they are nice and I trust them.

I: So you will trust the message you will get back if you could get a good feeling?

O: Yeah, exactly. That is the only thing I can imagine I could do to gain more trust in them to be honest.

I: But you still use Airbnb, so I guess you... What is the reason you actually then dare to take that chance?

O: The price [laughing]. Yeah, definitely. I think it is based on the price. I don't want to live at a hostel, you know. It is much more nice to have an apartment, because of the kitchen and you can like cook yourself, yeah.

I: And then if we look at the host side... How is the process like from you get the request and then choose if you would allow them to stay at your place?

O: Yeah, that's a good... I think you actually have to sign a... like a discrimination agreement with Airbnb saying you can't discriminate. But of course I do. I like to select older people, and they usually select me or write, text me because they... my apartment is at the ground floor. So they don't have to carry the bags all the way up. So I like the older more mature people.

I: Why so?

O: Because they are more calm. They just want to have a nice time in Copenhagen, go for dinners and a walk. I had a young couple living in a, my apartment in the summer. And they lost the key to the front door. There is two doors, one front door and then the door to my apartment. And they lost the key for the front door. And they text me, I think it was a Thursday night at one o'clock and say "oh, we lost the key, can you come and get us a new one? We are sure it is inside, we just need to get inside." Because they had the second, they had the key for the second door. And I said fine, I'm just around the corner. You can just go there, it will take two minutes. Like literally two minutes. And they said, 'oh, it's fine, we got in.' And I was like, okay fine, they got in. And the key is inside, so they will manage. And then they... I got like the most angry message from my neighbor Monday when they were leaving and saying that they had been buzzing them self in the whole weekend in the middle of the night. So they woke everybody up. They just like, because they couldn't find the key. And instead of telling me that, they just buzzed them self in. And I got so mad, and I called her. And I like really yelled at her. And was so mad. And she didn't even, you know, "oh, I'm sorry, I didn't know." Like eh, how stupid can you be. Yeah, and she didn't even ask if she should like give me money for the lost key or anything. And I said, you have to leave some money for it and bla bla bla. It was a huge bang out of it, it was so annoying. I had to apologize to everybody in the building. Yeah, so that is why I'm not, like, actually people from England. They ruined it for me [laughing]. Young people from England, I don't trust them anymore. They are not, yeah.

I: Is it because you are afraid that bad things will happen for instance that you choose older people mainly?

O: Yeah, exactly. And they are so nice. And they always answer very fast and they just, yeah.

I: Is that the only criteria if they are old, or do you look more at their profile before also?

O: I look at their recommendations. Of course.

I: For what?

O: If people say that the... where they have stayed before, if they say that they would like to invite them back again. Definitely that's a good sign. If they have good ratings for the cleaning, and the behavior and actually the, how do you say it, the way of communicating, if it's fast, efficient. I like that too. Yeah.

I: So now you mention the key. So did you have to pay for it yourself?

O: No, she put the money because I told her how much it was and she had to leave the money. Not that it was that much. But I was really pissed at her. And I gave her a really bad recommendation, so.

I: Did you get a bad back?

O: No, she didn't dare to give me one I think [laughing]. That's, like the ones with the bags who just left them and went. Like he didn't even give me a good recommendation or anything for being flexible or cleaning up their mess. I mean, it's unbelievable.

I: It sounds like you actually have had quite a bad experiences both on the guest side and host side. Why are you still using it?

O: Eh, the money. And I think it is just that the bad stories are so bad, so they sound, like, worse... it sounds like that there is more bad experiences than positive. But I think it is actually more positive experience. Many of the guests have been so easy. Like I just give them the keys, they leave, I don't have to do anything. Sometimes they even clean and take out the bed sheets. I mean. So yeah, but if it's bad, it's really bad. Like argh.

I: That is just something you feel you have to overcome then?

O: Yeah. But I definitely try to be more selective with people. Like after the younger ones, I said no. No more young ones. Actually people from Asia is quite messy. Like, and I think it is not on purpose, they just have a different culture. I know a lot of my other friends who rent out on Airbnb, they have the same experience with Asians. So they make a huge mess, trash everywhere, invite extra people in without paying for it. So I'm actually a little worried about Asian people as well, because they have a bad reputation among whom I know. Like everyone, so I look for that, but I don't discriminate just because of that. If they are old, they are welcome [laughing].

I: Let's try to be a little more broad here again. So if you think about accommodation sharing in general, what do you think about this idea?

O: I think it is a really good idea. I like the sharing part. I mean the whole, for me the whole concept is that we can exchange apartments and by that see the world in a cheaper and

easier way, just by sharing. I think that is a really nice concept and idea. And that is also why it is important to back it up and keep it going.

I: You both had bad and good experiences, but how confident do you actually feel using these platforms?

O: I feel pretty confident now I think. Even though I have both bad and positive experiences. Yeah.

I: When you say now, what has changed?

O: I think the first time I was a little like "ehw", you know, you used to be in a hotel where everything is in order, and now you are just renting another person's apartment. Like, it is a very personal thing, for me at least... To go into somebody else's home. But after the first time, I understood the concept and it was fine.

I: What made you actually do it the first time?

O: It was cheaper.

I: So it was purely because you could save some money that you were willing to do it?

O: Yeah, yeah I think so. And also because, I don't know how many years it is, is it three or, two or three years since I used it the first time. I don't know when Airbnb was launched in Denmark. But I think it was pretty new for me. I have heard about it, but I never used it, I didn't know anybody who actually used it. So maybe it was actually also trying something new, instead of going to a hotel. Yeah. And again having an apartment with the kitchen and yeah. I like that part too.

I: You have been talking a bit about a few of these things, but what do you think about the security in using these platforms?

O: I mean, in Denmark it is not good. If something breaks or they steal something, the police they don't give a shit about it. So I heard, I never tried it. With the keys, they recommended me on Airbnb to solve it myself with her, the guest.

I: Oh, so you contacted Airbnb?

O: No, I read everything I could on Airbnb's web page to see what should one do in that kind of situation. And they said if it's a small thing, you should try to solve it out yourself. And. But I think that if the police is getting involved, it is not good. And I don't know about the insurance here in Denmark, if they do something which breaks up, I don't know, something big. I actually don't know how that will work out.

I: What do you think about the risk that if they actually break something?

O: I mean if I had a lot of really nice furnitures, like designer furnitures or huge expensive tv or something, I probably wouldn't like rent out my apartment to be honest. But I have nothing of value they can steal [laughing]. Like I take my computer and my camera with me, when I leave. And I take my closet and that's it. Honestly I have nothing they want to steal. And I hide my good China [laughing] in the closet. And nothing have ever been missing. But again it's not expensive, so why should they steal anything?

I: So you don't think the risk is that big of hosting people?

O: Not for me, no.

I: So, if we talk specifically about Airbnb. Why do you use that platform compared to other platforms?

O: Because it was really global at the time when I began. And my friend was using it. And they have like a gift for each, if she recommends me to use Airbnb, she get some money and I get some money if I'm invited, so I think that was why. She could get like around 800 Danish crowns just by inviting me and me saying yes and having a guest. So we went out to dinner for that money [laughing]. And I think was actually started there, and she was comfortable with it. She had done it a lot for times. And said it was a really good platform, they come out and take pictures and...

I: Who?

O: They offer like a photographer.

I: Have you also had that?

O: No, actually no. I took my own pictures and they looked fine, and I mean, my apartment is placed in a really nice area. So I was not really concerned about if they didn't like it. It is very like neutral, bright stuff everywhere.

I: Okay. Have you considered using other platforms?

O: No. Actually no. I don't even know if there is other platforms.

I: We have been a bit into this already, but if can try to elaborate maybe a bit more on it. How does Airbnb then help you to trust this stranger that books you place?

O: Through their recommendations of other hosts. That they are connected to Facebook and they have a lot of, like different informations, like you get their number and email address or something like this. Like you can choose which one you want to show to the host.

I: How is that helping you?

O: It looks like people just are genuine. That they just want to rent apartment, they are not about to cheat you for money or anything.

I: Do you think that is a big risk on Airbnb?

O: No. No, I mean the money, like they transfer the money to Airbnb, who transfer it to me. So if they don't pay, like they are not coming. I mean it's not like I let them in, and they then don't pay me. So no, I think their system is very trustworthy. It is only, like the trust is only when people maybe break something, and just leave or behave in like bad way or a disrespectful way. That's the only negative thing that I can say about Airbnb and the trust issue. It's not about the Airbnb, it's more about the actual people. But if people have bad recommendations, they are not getting in anywhere. So I think people start to realise that they have to behave nice.

I: So do you generally trust the people that you invite to stay at your apartment?

O: No. You can't trust anyone, can't you, these days [laughing]. No, again, I really try to screen the people that I host, and again, it's more mature people who ask me a lot of different things. Like where to go and which museums and like, nice and calm stuff. Yeah. Everybody, like most people have been so sweet and nice, so no. But you never know. You never know.

I: If I can try to wrap up on this. You are just using Airbnb because you know that Airbnb works...

O: Yeah.

I: But you don't really trust other people, because you also had bad experiences...

O: I trust them to some extent, but again, if I had...

I: And what is that extent, like what do you trust them for?

O: I trust them with the things I leave behind. I mean, I think that is fine. But again, if I had nicer stuff... like designer furnitures or designer TV bla bla bla, I may not use Airbnb. Or even rent out my apartment. Just because if they spill anything. I mean, I can't make them buy a whole new couch because they make one stain, but the couch is maybe ruined for me, because it has a stain. And I can't sell it for the same price bla bla bla. Something like this.

I: And you don't think Airbnb could cover that?

O: I don't know... I think it is a long and complicated process. And again, in Denmark, I don't know how it works in other countries. But I think it is in Denmark especially, it is really

complicated because they don't like Airbnb that much. Like the government and the police. So I have heard. But I never tried to like that they ruin something really big or took something or.

I: So the [inaudible] like, right now you are okay to use Airbnb, but actually if the situation was different it would be harder to put trust in the platform?

O: Exactly, yeah, definitely.

I: When you look at a profile on Airbnb, if you are a guest or a host, and there are all various things, you have the verified photos from a photograph, you have profile pictures, mutual friends sometimes, reviews, all these kind of things. How important are all these kind of things? Like are you considering them?

O: Yeah. Yes of course, yeah.

I: But to what? What are you using them for then?

O: To gain trust in the people I invite in my home I think... For example, this guy he, it was actually a younger guy, he was about 40 I think. It looked like that on the picture at least. But he had a kid on his shoulders. That was really nice, because if... Yeah, I think I choose to host him because he had a kid. Like he looked calm and nice. And him and his friend rented the apartment here in March, and they were so nice. And they asked if they could come back and bla bla bla. So I mean, I'm really happy that I took that choice, even though he was not like the mature part of the population.

I: Oh, so you actually think he was a younger one and came with a friend, so that would usually have been bad?

O: Yep, definitely.

I: And then because he seemed like a dad it was okay?

O: Yeah, yes. They should like guy young men a puppy or like a baby [laughing].

Interview with Patricia

I: To start up, I'll just ask you very quickly how often have you used Airbnb and Couchsurfing and was it as a host or as a guest?

P: Yeah. I used it all of the times as a guest, I've never been a host. Yeah, couchsurfing I think I've used it like 3 or 4 times, it was four years ago when I came to Denmark. And Airbnb three times as guest.

I: Yeah. Where? When?

P: Yeah. Couchsurfing was here in Denmark when I just arrived. My sister used it a lot and she recommended me so that's why I said "Ok, safe" [laughing]. Because you always say like...does this actually work? How is that like the people trust other people? But went everything fine. And Airbnb was... the first time was when we went to Berlin, like three years ago. Then, when we went to Dublin, the second. And then Boston last year.

I: And it always was with your husband or...?

P: Yeah, yeah, yeah. The three times I went with my husband.

I: Perfect. Can you talk a little bit about the experiences? How they were overall? Like, Couchsurfing compared to Airbnb?

P: Yeah, couchsurfing, I mean... You need to read a lot. I mean both of them you need to read a lot, the reviews and everything but Couchsurfing is more like people want to get to know people from other cultures and things like that. And... Airbnb I know they try to do it something like that also, like... they want people to make friends but honestly I think it works more like a hotel, I mean. When I went to Airbnb the first time when I went to Berlin, I mean, the woman who was like the host there... she was nice and everything but we didn't share anything. It was just like "hi, hi", if you need anything just let me know but it's not that we got to know her or anything. And that was fine by me, I mean, because I didn't go to make friends... I mean, I just went for two three days and, yeah, that was the objective. And then the second time in Dublin, yeah, the woman... it was another woman, and she was living there but most of the time they weren't there, so that was also nice. And yeah, she was very helpful and everything but, yeah, we didn't like... make friends or anything. Ehm, and let me think... And the third time in Boston that was absolutely prepared for Airbnb. I mean, he was a guy who wasn't even living there and he was like renting different rooms and it was like a small hostel or something with people who didn't know each other and it went well I mean.

I: So, in that case... he wasn't in the apartment while in the other cases it was shared... or?

P: Yeah. The two first times we had to share like the toilet and things like that, and the kitchen. And yeah, the third time was the same but there were more people living in other rooms and it was like a big apartment.

I: Yeah. And what about the Couchsurfing instead?

P: Ok, couchsurfing is different and... Ah, and in both cases [Airbnb and Couchsurfing], as I told you, for me it was like really important to read the reviews and look at the pictures... But the reviews are everything.

I: Ok

P: And with Couchsurfing... Ok, I told you, my sister recommended me. And... I remember I did something wrong because... you know Couchsurfing?

I: Yeah.

P: There is like a wall, like... a place where you can post something, I don't know you find "Copenhagen" and you can post questions or things like that. And I remember I posted there like... "I'm coming in March", it was like... first time. And when I posted that, of course a lot of people wrote me back and my sister I remember she saw it and she told me "no", that it was a mistake that "you shouldn't do that" because of course you will get a lot of people like writing to you and most of them were men and... Couchsurfing could be also a bit dangerous for girls especially. And... So I received a lot of messages and some of them were weird. And some of them were people that... I remember there was one guy for example who was writing me like "Why you don't answer? I see you're online" or things like that and I got scared. I was still in Argentina. Ehm, that freaked me. And regretted doing that but that was the first time I was like... trying to use it... and yeah it was a mistake but... anyway, the point is that...among all those people who wrote me there were also nice people. Most of them were men, I mean, that was also a little weird too. But yeah, I looked at the reviews and some of them got like a lot of reviews and they seemed like normal people. So... I said ok, I will take the risk and when I came here like the first time I went directly to a Couchsurfing place for one week or something like that. My sister also told me - my sister is the experienced one - and she told me "no, it's not one week, you need to... couchsurfing is less time". But whatever, I mean, they let me to stay one week and it was fine. And it was until I found a place where to live, I mean...in my head I was thinking like I can use a lot of Couchsurfing and save a lot of money [laughing]. Ehm, so I went to a house of this Danish person and he was like... very helpful. He lived in Brazil, he... I mean, he used couchsurfing in Brazil so he was telling me about his experience there and that all the people were so helpful with him that he wanted to give back to the community and like the

couchsurfing community cause they have like... this spirit or something. Ehm...So I couldn't believe when they gave me like the keys of the house. I was like... because I come from Argentina, you know? In Argentina you don't trust very much in people in general. So yeah, I mean. For me it was very weird and I was thinking "how is Denmark?" like... Is it like that? All the people trust so much in each other and it was like... but yeah, everything went really well, I mean he was also helping me to find another person, like the next one. Because then I stayed like two more days in another place. And he didn't did anything weird. I mean, I was always thinking like... maybe... people were telling me like "be careful", but no, he was like completely fine. He told me that he wanted to give back because he got helped when he was in Brazil and everything. So... Yeah, the second time was the same but it was only one or two days so I didn't get to know very well the person and also with this guy I mean... We were sharing time together. He was asking me a lot about my country and things like that and he also talked Spanish so that was really nice.

I: Ok, cool.

P: And with the other people also the same it's like you share dinner and things like that. I mean you make friends. And the third time was a couple actually. It was a Danish girl and an Italian guy. And yeah, they...I'm speaking too much maybe?

I: No, no.

P: And yeah I mean they were also really nice and they also helped me to find another person but that wasn't through Couchsurfing so it doesn't count, it was only a friend of them. And by that, at that point I already had a place where to live but I needed like time to... it's not that I was going to live forever in Couchsurfing. But, yeah. But the fourth is not couchsurfing so...

I: Ok. Great. So... What are the reasons why you used Couchsurfing and Airbnb? What would you say are the main reasons?

P: Yeah, couchsurfing because I wanted to save money. Yeah. And also because it sounded like... fun to meet new people I mean when you just go to a new country you know how it is... it's nice to get to know people from the country and...

I: But mainly for the money... You would say?

P: [laughing]

I: I mean, there is nothing wrong in saying that

P: Yeah... I mean I remember I told my mum about my experience and everything and she also made a profile there and she hosted a girl in Argentina. Because... she was so happy

that we had like... a good experience. So she said like "ok, now that I have free rooms I can help other girls that are doing what my daughters are doing", whatever. No, like... I think is something really nice. But you have to be really careful and you never know. Now I look back and I think it was very risky because...

I: And what about Airbnb?

P: Airbnb because sometimes is cheaper than staying at the hotel, not always. I remember one of the times I went to visit my sister in Stockholm, she's living there... we were looking at Airbnb and hotels were cheaper so it's not always that it's cheaper but yeah... also for the money.

I: Ok. You already kind of touched upon that but... could you go through the process that you usually go through in looking for a place to stay? Like, first in Airbnb and then in Couchsurfing.

P: Yeah, I mean...

I: Like, what do you start by looking at and, yeah, try to think...

P: Yeah, I mean, that it is in good location of course, price of course and the reviews are the most important thing in both cases.

I: Is there any difference between Couchsurfing and Airbnb in this process or?

P: Mmm, I think it's also very important to read what the people expect because I remember I looked at some profiles and they were saying... I mean... In Couchsurfing I knew that you have to share time with the people and it was fine with me, I mean. It was not that all about the money... I mean I also wanted to meet people at that point. And... but I remember I read a profile saying like... If you come here it's not a hotel, you need to know that. It's perfect, I mean. Yeah, Couchsurfing is always like that unless people want something, like money back, but that wouldn't be Couchsurfing. And Airbnb I know the host they also wanted to do it maybe, like... make friends. So maybe there are people who expect that. So I think it's important to read if they expect something else but... Yeah.

I: Ok, perfect. And in this whole process... I mean, you already mentioned that a bit but... Do you see... Like, what are the major concerns that you see.

P: Ehm, yeah. Safety could be, like, for girls especially. I mean, there are people and I know a lot of Argentinian you know with all these working holiday visa... A lot are coming, a lot of people from Argentina are coming. And I recommended it to a lot of people, "you should use Couchsurfing", but for example some guys told me "No, I never got an answer", I mean, it's

more... for girls it's always easier in that case. But some of them also had a good experience. But, yeah... you just need to be careful that you...

I: So, but that's for couchsurfing... And do you see any concerns in Airbnb?

P: Airbnb could be the same I mean. Two of the times... no, actually three... the three times I've used it was also shared on a... yeah.

I: And... Did you see any risks in that case or...?

P: No, I didn't see a risk but... Could have happened, I mean, you never know.

I: Ok.

P: And... Airbnb my sister used it when she came to Copenhagen and sometimes there is a risk - but that can happen in a hotel, too - that they show something, like a picture, and then you got there and it's not... but whatever.

I: Yeah, but that's still a risk, right?

P: Yeah.

I: So, you mentioned trust before. You said something about trust... Could you elaborate a bit on that? Like... Do you think trust is relevant in these two platform and how trust differs in these platforms?

P: Yeah I mean... you kind of... the only way to trust is by reading reviews of other people. That is how it worked, but... yeah, I think you also have anyway to take the risk but... I don't know what else to say about that [laughing]. I'm not sure actually about what... what do you mean.

I: Ehm, like, if you take for example Airbnb. Ehm... like... how has your experience with strangers been through this platform and how to do you figure out if you can trust a stranger? Is it just through reviews or is there anything else like...?

P: Yeah, I mean, it's not only the reviews because I guess everyone starts without any... any review. I guess it's just because now there are a lot of platforms like this [Airbnb] and if you do it also of course some years ago it wouldn't work... but now people are more used to. The same with Uber. It's also risky and... but now people know... I mean, maybe they don't read the review but they know the concept works and it's just people in the other side. I mean, there are psychos also but in general it's normal people.

I: There are... sorry? There are also?

P: Psychos [laughing]

I: Oh, psychos, ok.

P: But in general you know that a lot of normal people like, you and me, use it. So... I guess it's because people are more used to these kinds of platforms nowadays.

I: Ok, cool. Let's try to visualise the host profile, right? So... When you look at the host profile... so, there are the reviews but, just to mention some other things... like photos, common friends, bio, like... are these things some things that you consider or?

P: Yeah

I: Or you just go through the reviews?

P: No, no, everything. Yeah of course the pictures are important and... yeah.

I: Did you write reviews yourself or?

P: Yeah, I always do. Yeah, after I used Airbnb or the other, Couchsurfing, I always write a review because I know it's based on that.

I: Ok, and do you trust them [the reviews] or...? Like do you think they are reliable or...?

P: When I just started using actually I just asked my friends to write reviews in the couchsurfing because I didn't have any. So my sister wrote one and then other friends, so... always, you know, it could be the case that some of your friends write.

I: Ok.

P: But, yeah, I think in general I try... there should be a lot of reviews so I can trust, not only a few.

I: So, you trust just if there are a lot of reviews?

P: There should be like, yeah...

I: What if like... there is a place that looks nice but there is like one, two reviews...?

P: No I think that I would go for something with more reviews like... and looks like really trustworthy. And I also google the person and stuff [laughing], to see..

I: You also google the person?

P: Yeah [laughing]. You never know, I mean, it's important.

I: Ok. So, if we take Couchsurfing and Airbnb, why are you using or have you used these platforms?

P: I don't know, are there [other platforms]?

I: Let's say, like, have you ever used other platforms than, Airbnb for example, for sharing accommodation or stuff like that?

P: No

I: And why so?

P: Because Airbnb is most popular. I'm sure there exist others, but I don't know. What are the others?

I: I don't know either. But I mean, maybe you knew other and you...

P: Ah, no, no... not really.

I: Ok. So do you think like Couchsurfing.com or Airbnb helps you to trust someone you want to book a stay at?

P: Yeah, the way that it's built to help with that because if you... I don't know, if it was like... just reading in... like in the old days, like in the newspaper and something or someone saying "hey guys I have a place to rent", then you kind of go, I mean. I was manly like... with the picture, with the reviews and yeah... well-done. That's it works.

I: Yeah. Let's take Airbnb for example. What if there was exactly the same platform but it's like a small platform, not like that well-known, would it make any difference? Is there anything in Airbnb, like any feature, that make you trust the service or the people?

P: Yeah... only that... it is well-known.

I: Only that? So nothing about like... insurances or stuff like that? You're not concerned about these kind of things?

P: Insurance? Mmm, I forgot that... that exists [laughing]. Yeah, I mean... I know they can cancel at last moment and then, yeah... I don't remember how it works.

I: So you're not really concerned about that or...?

P: I guess, because I had good experiences in general and that it shouldn't happen but of course sometimes happens. I think it counts that it has the insurance. For example, you remember I told you I went for a month in Argentina, we were thinking also to be like... to rent as Airbnb, the apartment. And I didn't feel safe to be a host in Airbnb. I mean, I would use it, but I wouldn't host.

I: Why not?

P: Because I don't think Airbnb, even if they have insurance, will take care if someone destroy your apartment.

I: Ok.

P: And... and I have only one room and I don't want to. I mean if I had two [rooms]...like a guest room, maybe I would do but... [laughing].

I: So that kind of means that you don't really trust people in that sense or...what?

P: [laughing]

I: I mean, there's nothing [wrong]...

P: Yeah, no, but it's different. If you are a a girl it's different. You are going to a place, it's different to be a host.

I: Can you elaborate a bit on that?

P: Yeah, yeah I know you're talking about trust. But, yeah, I think I wouldn't trust...You know.

I: Ok, yeah. But you didn't have any bad experience or...?

P: No...

I: Always positive? In both couchsurfing and Airbnb?

P: I mean... Couchsurfing was like... For me it was crazy that people trusted you so much. It was like, for me, it was a cultural shock. It cannot be...like, I was thinking that something is wrong. But no, it wasn't wrong I mean... they just trust you. And... in Airbnb the only thing I didn't like, but it was like because I chose to be like that, is that you have to share and that's why so...

I: Ok, let's try to be a bit more general. What's your idea or perception of sharing accommodation in general? Like, these platforms, what you think about them?

P: I think it's a really good way for people to... I mean, it's like... are there options besides staying in the hotel or hostel?

I: What do you think for example in comparison to hotel or hostels? Like, are you using hotels and hostels as well or...?

P: Yeah, hostel no, but I do use hotels.

I: What makes you choose an Airbnb over hotels or couchsurfing over...?

P: Ehm, yeah because... that's also like renting an apartment. I mean, in a hotel you don't have like... you only rent a room and then you're... missing on other things. You have like... you know in Airbnb you can have the kitchen so things like that and a bigger place I guess, that it's why. And you have like... more options... I remember once we looked at the map it's like you have a lot more options than hotels to pick.

I: You also touched a bit upon that but what do you think about security in these platforms, like, is there any difference then between Airbnb and Couchsurfing if you think about security issues?

P: Mmm, yeah. I think couchsurfing is more dangerous of course because in the other [Airbnb] the exchange is clear. In couchsurfing, I've heard like about bad stories. It didn't happen to me but after I used it luckily I've heard there are sometimes like cases that is not so safe. So I think it could be dangerous.

I: But do you think that these platforms, like the platform itself, are generally reliable or...?

P: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think they are.

I: So it's more about the people or...?

P: It's just that you need to be careful. Just, yeah... [thinking], yeah.

I: Ok. I think we went through kind of lot of things.

P: Yeah, I talked a lot. I told you very detailed...

I: And that's great. But I mean, as you probably understood the theme here was trust. So, yeah, unless you don't have any particular add-on.

P: No, you make me think about that... I trust when I go and I am the guest but I don't trust [to be a host]. Yeah, I guess it was more like I would be a host and of course I would go through the same process as [being a guest]... like reading the profile of the people, if someone wanna stay at my place and everything but... yeah, I guess I just didn't want to go through that process. But yeah, I mean, it should be the same way because you also get to see the same like the reviews and everything and you know. Yeah, but I... I would trust. It's just that it's, you need to work and reading and everything.

I: Yeah, here it was also about understanding also if you like... what's the role of the platform in this trust process. So, like, if you trust the platform and if it's just about trusting the platform and... or also about trusting the people like... what's the difference in that. So, yeah.

P: Yeah it's both. You need to trust both.

I: Yeah. Maybe just one last question. Do you think that your perception of these whole trust thing has changed over time or...? Like if you compare the first time you used Airbnb or Couchsurfing maybe... do you think you had different concerns or you were thinking at it differently than now?

P: Yeah, I would have never used Couchsurfing for example if my sister didn't tell me she used it and it went well. It's like... you always need to hear someone close to you or someone you... at least from me. And yeah, I don't know, ten years ago I wouldn't have done it. But... it's only because I know people who have tried, in the case of Couchsurfing. And Airbnb... I hear that everyone use it. I mean, it's the same, I know you're not talking about.

I: But I mean, maybe when... when was it the first time you used it... again?

P: Couchsurfing?

I: No, Airbnb.

P: Airbnb three years ago.

I: Ok, so it was already kind of well-established, yeah. But yeah, maybe not as much as now. So... Did it differ?

P: Mmm no, for me it's more or less the same I don't think it changed very much, at least in my perception.

I: Great, I mean, if you don't have any further things that come to your mind...?

P: Mmm [shaking her head].

Interview with Quinn

I: So, just as an introduction can you tell kind of how many times have you used Couchsurfing and was it as a host or as a guest? And... How was your experience overall?

Q: I was using couchsurfing for 14 times I think, but I met people through couchsurfing, so I didn't couchsurf or didn't host or surf. I just met people there and made some friends there as well. And... the question?

I: So, you haven't slept at the place of anyone or... yes?

Q: Yeah, I slept... I also surfed. So I slept at somebody's place and somebody slept at my place but I also just wrote to people and I made some friends through couchsurfing actually.

I: And how was the experience overall?

Q: Ehm, I really really like couchsurfing. However, I'm not using it actively at the moment. But when I travel I use it and I try to find a host. Actually I found my accommodation in Copenhagen through Couchsurfing as well. So... it's actually an amazing platform. I really like it, but nowadays I feel that it's getting more... ehm... more mixed. Because it's easy to register with Facebook.

I: What would you say it's the main reason why you use Couchsurfing?

Q: The main reason? Because I'm open-minded and I like to travel and I like to meet people. I think that's it. A lot of people are afraid to surf or host because they don't trust. But I really trust people on a basic level. So, I don't have problem with that and I just want to experience how it is.

I: So it's mainly to meet people. How would you say? Like, the main reason to use that?

Q: I think the main reason is the whole experience of couchsurfing, like... meeting people when you travel. Meeting locals... So the main reason is that I'm really... I'm a curious person and I really like to meet new people. And the best thing is that they are local so they can show me things that maybe a travel map cannot show... Yeah.

I: Yeah. And... can you describe kind of the process that you go through when you...?

Q: Use Couchsurfing?

I: Yeah. So like, when you use the platform what is like the process that you go through in using that?

Q: Usually if I surf I'm starting to... when I surf I search people in the geographical region and then sending them requests, letters... I read through the profile, and I try to do a custom made letter. If somebody surfs then I just get a message that they want to come. So basically it's really easy.

I: And... You mentioned before, but... do you have any concern in doing that or...?

Q: What do you mean concerns?

I: Like, do you see any risks in this whole process?

Q: In finding the host or something...?

I: Yeah, in the whole Couchsurfing experience.

Q: Risks?

I: Yeah.

Q: A lot of people say that hosts are not reliable, they can rape you, whatever...but I think it's a matter of trust and of course you have to be clever because all the time when I surf of course I check the reviews of the person. So I make sure that they have enough reviews to contact them.

I: Yeah. So you don't basically see any risk involved in that or...?

Q: I think if you do cleverly there's no risk.

I: So you mentioned reviews. Do you think they're reliable? What do you usually look at in the profile of a host?

Q: I first look at the description. What are they telling about themselves and if I want to... of course I check the reviews as well. So that's really important to check the reviews otherwise it's risky if you don't check the reviews. But I've never had any problems. And reviews are trustworthy, so there is no problem with that, actually.

I: Can you give some examples more specifically of like some reviews that they were good or some that they were bad and why?

Q: Yeah, if there is a negative review then I'm not gonna contact the person. Negative review... I never give negative review, but I've seen negative reviews like "he approached me in a sexual way", which is not ok, you know? But then you know that you will not go to that person.

I: But then you said I also always give positive reviews. So isn't this kind of a biased thing probably...

Q: No, no.

I: ...A lot of people do that just because they...?

Q: No, I give reviews because it was a positive experience. I would never never do a positive review just because I'm afraid.

I: When you've done this... in practice. How was the experience with the person...?

Q: Ehm, usually they pick me up at the airport or they just give their address and I go to the address. And you... This comes before everything. Like... where to meet and what time. And it's easy. Most of the time I get their phone number as well, and they also get my phone number so... that's it. It's easy.

I: And you said you also hosted people?

Q: Yeah.

I: So what's the difference kind of...? Do you think there are like more risks or any concerns in hosting people than being a guest? Like, what's the difference?

Q: Ehm, I think hosting people is not that risky because there you can control. And, I don't know... There is just this trust. I often get the key of the apartment of the... of my host. And there is this whole professional camera set worth two thousands euros, you know? And they trust me. So I think I wouldn't give them my key, honestly because I'm more you know a safe person but to me many people gave their key to their houses. So... I think it's up to you and hosting is of course more dangerous but you also watch the review of the person so you can decide whether is risky or not.

I: Does it change anything in the type of person? Like gender, family, single, couple?

Q: What do you mean?

I: Do you look at it also, like, or....?

Q: Well, yeah, because if I host I can only host one person at a time, maximum two. I would host families because... and I think families don't really surf, maybe. But the gender, I don't care.

I: Ok. But when you're hosting you don't feel like there's any problem? Like, you've never had any bad experience?

Q: Honestly, I've been surfing more than hosting but whenever is hosting I've never had a problem at all.

I: Ok. And not even when you were surfing?

Q: No. I've never had a bad experience on Couchsurfing. Only positive ones. I've heard bad experiences but, not much.

I: Do you think when you did it the first time was different from like...maybe now or?

Q: Mmm. I think no.

I: So even when you did it the first time you didn't have any concerns?

Q: Never. And I mean, all the times I was at men, on my own. So.. I don't know I'm...I'm an odd person from this part.

I: You're what, sorry?

Q: Odd.

I: Odd? Ok [laughing]

Q: Most girls wouldn't do that, I think.

I: And why do you think you do that?

Q: Because I trust people generally. I trust in people, and I trust in the spirit of the community, I mean, the website. And... That's why I feel it's safe. But I'm... As I said to you I'm odd so... Yeah. I have this sense that I can read people well so... If I would feel that I'm in danger, you know... I'm conscious about what I'm doing, you know? So, I never felt this... danger at all.

I: But, do you also think this is because of the platform itself, like... Couchsurfing.com?

Q: Mmm...

I: Like, I mean, why using that platform? Are there any other platforms? Like, why using Couchsurfing.com and not just like any other kind of method to do that?

Q: Because Couchsurfing has a spirit. So it's not about free accommodation. It's about meeting locals and meeting new people. So all the people who are interested in this experience, they are going to link to Couchsurfing.

I: So do you, like... Do you think at yourself as part of this community? Like, do you feel part of the community or?

Q: Yeah, yeah of course, I feel, yeah. But I'm not really into these couchsurfing events like cooking together, crowdsurfing, bla bla. I know they do this, but... and I cannot name myself a couchsurfer but... I can relate to this community very well.

I: Ok. If we focus on the platform now. Do you think it is a reliable platform? Like do you think if... like something bad would happen to you they can help you somehow? How do you see the platform apart from like, the whole idea of community?

Q: I think the platform cannot help me if something bad happens. I can only write a bad review. And that's it.

I: And do you think the platform itself is like... trustworthy?

Q: As I said it depends on the people. I think the platform is trustworthy because of the reviews. You cannot fake reviews, right? That's it. And you cannot delete it, cannot control it. Nothing. So I think that's like... It's trustworthy.

I: Do you think there is any other particular feature of Couchsurfing that makes you more trusting the service or it's just because of the reviews?

Q: Mmm. I think the whole idea behind it, the ideology of the platform. Like, meet locals and... because it's much different when you see a place with locals, you share some stories, you have common experience... than when you just go like a tourist according to a tourist map, you know? It's much different, it's more human. So I think that's why it's trustworthy to me. And it's... attracting people who are like-minded, you know?

I: If we talk a bit more generally. What do you think of sharing accommodation in general? Like also if you take Airbnb and all these platforms. What do you think of this idea? Like, what's your opinion about it?

Q: You mean, couchsurfing or renting the house from somebody?

I: Yeah, like, kind of everything. You can think as all these kind of accommodation platforms as having... I mean, in different ways but, having the same services, so... What's your general idea about it?

Q: I think it's really nice. But I wouldn't do it at a certain age maybe? Because I want my own space I think. So, couchsurfing is really good if you travel. Airbnb is also very good if you travel, you don't have money for a hotel but you still want to feel comfortable. Sharing accommodation in that terms, to live together with somebody you don't know, really, that's not good. Because it's hard to get along, you know?

I: Are you talking about Airbnb now in this sense or...?

Q: No.

I: What do you think is the difference in Airbnb and Couchsurfing? And do you see any difference in terms of trust?

Q: Well, Airbnb is totally different than couchsurfing because it's monetized so there's not the human spirit in it. Couchsurfing is the human spirit in them. So like something which brings you value and Airbnb is more like business. So the two is totally different.

I: I think you've covered kind of everything, the topic here is, I think you got it, is about trust, specifically in couchsurfing cause it's the one that you used. But, I mean, it looks like you don't have any issues with trust and...

Q: No, but as I said to you, many people are not like that. So I'm maybe not the most representative person but.

I: No, but I mean everyone is representative, it's just like getting different opinions and trying to understand why you think so and what's your idea of trust in this kind of platforms.

Q: What do you mean like... Why do I trust it?

I: Why do you trust and how do you see trust, what you think it is, like... all these kind of questions. So, broadly speaking, like...

Q: I can trust in something which varies people to people. I think trust is something you cannot really define. It really depends on the person itself. If you've travelled a lot maybe, you have like... I generally have a trust in people which is not good all the time because you can get a lot of... rejections or, you know? But, I think it's something that comes from maybe your culture, maybe your upbringing, your connection with your mum, dad... I think it's quite complex how you trust. I think it's really important to see the culture. For example in China, if you know that, people are really relying on friendship because the government is not trustworthy. So... to make business in China your first have to be friends with them. After that, you can do business because they trust you. So I think it's much of a cultural thing maybe and also it's a matter of person, how open-minded are you and how can you go to the unknown. How much your fears letting you back from doing things. So I think it's a matter of person and culture.

I: And as you said, it's not only trusting people it might be also trusting kind of institutions, companies...

Q: Yeah, yeah exactly.

I: ...So it's also like a mix of this right? So it's also here that we wanted to understand how much one influences the other. Cause maybe in Couchsurfing...

Q: I think many people... Because now it's getting so popular like... everybody is on Couchsurfing, I think it's not the same as it used to be... it's still ok, it's still working.

I: When is the last time you used it?

Q: Ehm, I think I've surfed two years ago but... I was also hitchhiking with a guy from couchsurfing. I also travelled with another guy from couchsurfing in Croatia. Ehm, I think it was one year ago when I was using it actively and maybe in June it's gonna come a guy from New York which I'm gonna guide in the city. So spent sometime with it but not surfing. So it's not only for surfing and hosting, it's also knowing people. I know people who find their girlfriend or boyfriend through couchsurfing so it's much more than just a platform to surf and host. It's more like... finding like-minded people as well. I have a Finnish friend from Couchsurfing I just wrote her on Couchsurfing then "hey, you seem so nice let's hangout because I'm here and since then we are friends. So... it's a platform of everything, you cannot compare it to Airbnb at all."

Interview with Raphael

I: I would like to know how often you have used CouchSurfing and if it was always as as a guest or as a host?

R: I have used it both as a host and a guest, but mainly as as a host, no as a guest. I have hosted once through the platform, but I already knew the guy, he was my friend. So he just stayed at my place, and then in order to like get his profile started, I wrote him a recommendation, he wrote me a recommendation, so it was kind of cheating [laughing]. No, so I don't use it because I live in one room at a dorm. So it is not very shareable. So I have just used it as a guest. And I have done that like, on an intense basis for about two years.

I: Okay, and how many times more or less?

R: How many people I have stayed with?

I: Yeah.

R: Mmh. More than 20. Maybe 30.

I: Was it all around Europe?

R: None of them has been in Europe. It started in Hong Kong. Where I stayed at one guys place. Then it went to Japan. And I CouchSurfed Japan for three weeks straight. And I think I stayed at, I don't know, eight different people in Japan. And then to Taiwan for two weeks. I stayed at maybe six different places. Then to Shanghai, one place for three days. That was like the first, my first round. That was like in one travel. And then I have used it in Israel and Palestine. And I don't think I have tried it other places.

I: Okay, so mainly in these places. Not in Denmark for instance?

R: No, no.

I: How was your experience overall?

R: Like overall it is very positive. That is also why I keep doing it. Cause I think it is fun. There has been very few less good experiences. But none of them has been really bad.

I: Like for example?

R: One thing that is always coming to my mind is, in Japan there was an Australian man, who were just hard to understand. Like his, like on a personal level, he was just talking, talking, talking, talking on all kinds of different things. And about like very extreme theories and almost kind of racial, eh, racist sometimes. And just.. And I wasn't sure how to handle it, because

you need to be polite and all these kind of things at the same time. And he just invited me to his home, so I can't also not say, 'okay, shut up, I'm gonna leave now,' because I need a place to stay. And then for the few days I stayed at his place there were times where he would just call me, and say 'you need to come home now,' cause I'm leaving. And then I'm like one hour away from his home, and I'm saying, but you said I could just be home before eight, and now, you know, now it's four. I can try, but I'm not sure I can make it within half an hour. He say, 'yeah, you have to be here within half an hour, just hurry, hurry.' And I would almost have to run through trains and stuff like that. So that wasn't so cool. But it's not like I have been threaten on my life or anything. And most experiences have been amazing.

I: Okay. And what would you say is your main reason why you have been using that? Like you have been using Couchsurfing?

R: One reason is to definitely save money. And another reason is for the adventure of it. Just because, you are not sure what is going to happen. As opposed to booking a hostel, you kind of know what you can expect. When you are using CouchSurfing you can meet somebody who is really cool and will take you weird places, and you'll meet awesome people. Or they can be like just a host, who says 'here is your couch,' see you tomorrow. So I like the adventure of that. And the uncertainty. And the last and third thing is to just get closer to local experiences, like understanding the culture better and I think that is easier when I live at somebody who is from that place, and live in the area. Than staying at a hotel.

I: And, among these, what would you say is the most important one? Maybe it differs depending on situations?

R: Yeah, it might differ depending on which country you are in. I would say [inaudible] go to Japan, it is a lot more expensive to stay in Japan. So the price would have like higher importance there. But also the culture is very different in Japan, so that would also be a reason to stay there. So I would say it depends. It also depends on your mood. And, like it changes all the time, sometimes you just feel like finding a hostel and just relaxing there. Oh yeah, I forgot to stay. I was in Romania and Serbia and I also used it a little bit there. But I didn't use CouchSurfing that much, because I was just feeling lazy. And there was a lot, I hitchhiked a lot. Like everyday almost. So it was just too much of a hassle to try and find hosts all the time, while being on the road with no data. So I did like a mix. So there I got all the things I liked from CouchSurfing, I got that from staying on the road hitchhiking. And then I just paid the money. So when I used CouchSurfing in Romania it was just to save money mostly.

I: So mainly for save money, or?

R: Yeah..

I: Okay. Can you describe the usual process that you kind of go through, when you look for a place, like in the platform?

R: Yeah. So I figure out where I want to go, let's say I have decided on a city. And then I just go to the platform, I sign in with my profile and then I write the city name where I want to go. And then it will provide you with an overview of different hosts, and I quickly just get fixated on certain people. Those are the ones with a lot of references and that I can see have a high rate of answering back, like the percentage. And sometimes also when they have been logged in the last time. So if they haven't been logged in for half a year, they are not very active. And then I just choose between maybe five people. Where I like look at them differently and then I see who do I fit best with on a personal level. The reason why I do this, is because it is easier to write a text to them and ask them if I can stay at their place. Because then we have something we can bond, whether that being like music or hitchhiking or technology or whatever. And then I find, from those five I might write like my two favorites. More or less. And then ask them for the same date. So maybe two days at a certain time. And then whoever responds, or just responds first, is the one I'll stay at. And I do like that for different days. So I do like maybe two days at a time, like in after each other. So two days, two days, two days, two days or whatever like how you are gonna travel. And I usually do it just, like a week before I go for the first couple of days. And then when I get there I continue for the next couple of days. So like very short time spend, so it is flexible.

I: And in doing this, do you have any major concerns?

R: Oh yeah. There is a lot of times where I haven't felt secure about my host. Whether they would be there or not, and where we meet exactly and I don't have their phone number. I don't have the exact address, I just have a meeting point. And those times I have been really insecure whether they would show u, and if they didn't show up I would just be fucked [laughing]. But that was mostly some problems I found in the beginning, like when I did Asia in the start. And I learned to mitigate that more.

I: So how did you mitigate it?

R: That's by doing, like having a plan b. So I have a host and we know where to meet or something, but I also look up like something the best hostels as well, just in case something happens I know where to go. Just a name or a point, and I put it in my phone, like on Google maps or preloaded. So I know where to go if something fucks up.

I: And do you see any other risks involved in using CouchSurfing?

R: Besides the not showing up?

I: Yeah.

R: Ehm...

I: Maybe related to some experience that you have had.

R: No, not really. I mean, there can be something where you are not really sure about the neighborhood. And you are not sure where they live or, like, is it very far away from everything and will I have troubles going from their place to the city. and back and forth. Then I have had some concerns if I could make it on time, because I'm hitchhiking. But that's not so related to CouchSurfing. I mean, I haven't been afraid of being raped or anything like that. Or being killed. And I haven't been near it either. [inaudible] [laughing].

I: Do you think trust is relevant somehow in this process?

R: Yeah, definitely, and that is why I don't book a place at people who doesn't have a lot of references. And that's why I also try to collect some references on my way, like with my CouchSurfing experiences, like just once in awhile. So there is like trust within the platform. So I would say that the platform provides the trust, you don't have to establish it so much. After you have like the first 10, five or ten references it gets a lot easier than in the beginning. Because people can see that you are trustworthy. And people would have been writing about you, like how you are a nice guy and bla bla bla. Whatever. And I also only choose places at hosts who have a lot of references. So if I can't find a place at like the top five people, I would just book a hostel. Because of the trust. I would never be so desperate that I would book at place somebody who had zero references and rarely logged in, although he said, yeah you can come to my place. I would maybe not do that.

I: Why not?

R: Because I just don't know the guy and it can be hard to know if he just made a new profile because the other one had so many bad ratings or whatever.

I: Okay. So you just look at reviews, or is there any other, like when you look at the profile of the hosts, how do you do that?

R: Yeah I look at the pictures as well. The first thing is the references, that's the most important. If they have a lot of positive, then it should be fine. If it's like, ehm, in between, like not so many references, but there are some I would also just make subjective analysis of them, like as a person. By looking at their picture. If I think they look weird and like the pictures are weird, I wouldn't trust them that much. Or I would at least be more sceptical. And then if you start a conversation with them maybe, and you are still sceptical that conversation can change, like it in either direction. If they write in a weird way, it would be a no go. But I have often stayed at people's places, where they just write in a weird way and they are are bit weird people, but it is still a really fun experience.

I: So you don't think it is a problem actually? So even when people were writing in a weird way..

R: I would still go to that place, because they then have a lot of references. So they could have a lot of references, but they are still kind of weird [laughing]. But then it's fine, then I just trust all the other people that have been there before.

I: But not the other way around?

R: I don't trust the person solely on just the way they look and write, no. But when I meet them and hang out with them, and I think they are a bit weird, I can still think they are okay and I trust them. You can be weird and trustworthy at the same time [laughing]. Maybe they think I'm weird, I mean, whatever.

I: You said it is the platform that kind of helps this process, right? But why using Couchsurfing.com and not another platform?

R: I don't know any other platform. I know platforms that take money for staying at people's places. But Couchsurfing provides a community, so the community evolves around opening your door to other cultures. And then it is about both giving and then also taking. So I like the mentality and the vision of CouchSurfing. It is not about profits, it is about getting to know other cultures. And that's why I'm using Couchsurfing.

I: And do you think it is generally a reliable platform?

R: Yeah, yes.

I: If we go a bit more broad, what do you think about the whole idea of accommodation sharing, like platforms. What is your perception of it?

R: I think it is great. It is nice that it challenges the conventional industry, like hotel chains. Because if you have an excess amount of capacity in terms of housing or residence, there is no need for you to not share it. So a lot of people have big houses, big apartments, and they don't need the space for it. So I think it is cool that that either let people come and stay for free, that is the coolest. Or I also think that it is okay that they take some extra money for renting it out. If I can save some cash and then go stay at a cooler place, and the person at the same time can earn some extra money from the excess capacity they have, then that's fine with me. It gets a bit weird when people are just on Airbnb just for the money. Or if I kick out the guy in my apartment, I can just rent it out on Airbnb and earn more money. Then it kind of sucks. But...

I: Why, in which sense?

R: Just because, then you only, it's only about maximising your profits. It's solely about profit maximisation, and not thinking about your place in the society and city you live in. And how you are part of a community with a lot of different people. And you don't give a shit if people are on the streets, as long as you are earning more money.

I: But you also said that you mainly do that for economic reason. Like when you couchsurf for example..

R: Yeah, I do it to save money.

I: To save money. But [inaudible] also community aspect has something, or do you kind of feel part of the community?

R: Yeah I definitely feel part of the community. I mean when you are on the platform, Couchsurfing, you feel you are part of it. Like this global community of 100s of millions of people who also share this vision of sharing your place and experiences. So I feel definitely like a part of that. More and more, the more I use it.

I: More generally speaking, you don't see any.. like what do you think about the security of such platforms?

R: Like any of them?

I: Yeah, more specifically Couchsurfing.

R: I think it is, for Couchsurfing it is a little bit different cause money is not really involved. It is about trust only. And I know that Airbnb has some initiatives where they put up money if, in case your apartment is gonna be trashed and all these security initiatives. But CouchSurfing doesn't have that. But I think that is good. Because I think if they start doing that it will just be less trustworthy. So I think they should stay how they...

I: Like the platform would be less trustworthy?

R: Yeah, because it would just change, like the reason for using Couchsurfing. People would be, I mean sceptical or sad about the direction it would take. Because it would be focusing on putting security inside the platform where there is no need for security in the platform. I would just give mistrust between people. People would think, 'oh why is this here, is that because you can't trust the other people?' Do you see what I mean?

I: Yeah.

R: So, they have also... Another thing, they made a headline on the frontpage that said something like, 'travel anywhere for free.' And a lot of people in the community was a bit sad

about it, because then it was suddenly about travelling for free. And it should be more about like local experiences and sharing cultures.

I: But do you think there is any other element in the platform, Couchsurfing, or about the platform that makes you trust to book a stay at the people, at the people's place? Apart from this like overall idea ?

R: Well, sure, they have [inaudible] a system that facilitates the booking. So that it is not just a group of people on one side who are host and a group of people on the other side who are guests and then you can just contact them and say yeah, we will meet you soon. They have like this process flow, so that gives me some safety in a way. Like I feel certain that okay, now it is booked. So I press like 'book now' and he accepts. So the fact that I get this acceptance tells me, okay we have it. More or less on paper, if you can say that. And then you talk after that. So that, this feature gives me some safety. Not like on, you know safety as in not being raped, but okay I should use another word [laughing]. I feel safe from these feature, because then I know it and I can look it up and see, yes I have a booking this day and this day.

I: You kind of touched upon it already, but does it depend on the kind of people whether you accept to go to a person? Like the gender or if it's like a family or I don't know. Have you experienced different kind of people? And does it depend anyhow on that?

R: I have tried different kind of people. Everything from like expats, young students to full-time workers, to families with cats and dogs. And I don't prefer one thing specifically more than the other. They are all like nice experiences. The families are great for just getting really local cause you sit at the table with them and the TV is running and their kid is walking around and speaking the local language. And with the expats it is more like hanging out, maybe going to a party. So when I'm at CouchSurfing, yes I am looking for specific kinds of people. As I said, I look for like people I can bond with on a personal level mostly. So people who are more or less my age first and foremost. Doesn't matter if it's a male or female. Usually it is just easier to stay at a guys place. But also sometimes, if there is not a lot to choose from, I would always also go with the family as well and then it would be a different reason for it.

I: Okay. You also said you have been hosting, right?

R: Not really. Not through Couchsurfing.

I: [inaudible] it was never through the platform?

R: Yeah, we can say never through the platform.

I: Because it was just that time for...

R: Yeah it was just because he was my friend and then after that we included CouchSurfing experience. So I wouldn't say.

I: And would you do that maybe if you had the opportunity?

R: Yeah, totally. I would do that. It's just because I can't do it right now.

I: Do you think there is any difference in the two things?

R: Ehm. Well, you can be. I mean you can be more sceptical, you don't owe anybody anything. So you can be more sceptical and just turn them down if it doesn't suit you. But other than that it is kind of the same more or less. And I think it is also something I should do, since I have used it a lot. So it is also my, I need to do my part and invite people in as well. Same as, when I get a car one day I'm gonna pick up all the hitchhikers, so it goes both ways. That's karma [laughing].

I: But do you see any different kind of concerns?

R: If I was hosting?

I: Yeah

R: Yeah, I would be concerned that they would trash my place. But, I mean I think I would feel safe quite quickly, [inaudible] after I met them and talked to them. And just because I know I would never steal anything or trash anything, and I would take really good care of their things, I just expect that people would do the same for me. So I think I would be concerned a little bit and worried. But I would just have to think back of whenever I was on CouchSurfing and being a guest, that I would never do that. So of course they are not gonna do it either.

I: Do you think this depends on your personality somehow?

R: Yeah, I think it depends on the personality. Cause not everybody would like to CouchSurf. So just like using CouchSurfing that tells something about your personality.

End of interview. Small talk.

R: There is like, trust is provided in itself by the people on Couchsurfing. Then they added features to help you decide on who you can trust of the people. For instance references, and then you also feel a bit more comfortable about your bookings through the process flow of booking and then acceptance of the booking from the host. And that in itself is enough. there shouldn't be more. I think if there comes more features, that like leans towards more security and stuff like that. It is not gonna be a good influence, it's gonna be a bad influence. There would be less trust.

Interview with Susan

I: First of all, how often have you used CouchSurfing?

S: I think I started on CouchSurfing, I signed up around one year ago. And I mostly hosted people. And I think I hosted around 30 times. Approximately. And then I have had CouchSurfed myself two times.

I: How come you have hosted a lot more than...?

S: I don't know, I think I just haven't travelled that much, or...within the last year. I have couchsurfed when I kind of have had the option. But I think when I started, it, I don't know, I think a lot of people think that CouchSurfing is a place you can stay for free when you travel. And for me, and I think for a lot of the 'professional' CouchSurfers it is more about giving and a kind of cultural exchange. So I, in the beginning, I thought to host people was a good way to get into this community to show that you are not just a free rider, but you also want to give something and to host people. And I also thought it was maybe, yeah a good way to, yeah, to figure out what this was about and a bit more... maybe I felt a bit more comfortable in the beginning to host than to CouchSurf somewhere and I didn't really know where. So to host people have, yeah, it gave me an idea about this universe and yeah.

I: What made you actually go to be interested in this community?

S: I think I heard about it a lot of years ago when I thought it was sounded interesting. I liked the idea and the concept that you can actually trust random people and you give something and you don't necessarily get something in return that directly. But you give something and then you kind of believe that when you need a place to stay somewhere, there will also be some nice people who will... yeah. So...but I think when I started, I knew about this website, this community, and then I think I moved to Copenhagen. We... I lived with my boyfriend back then, we had a nice apartment. And, I don't know, I felt like, it... doing something new. I was in this point of my life and yeah, we actually also thought about Airbnb, or something. But then, yeah, I don't know, I just started to do some research, and then signed up and jumped into it.

I: Now you mention Airbnb. Why didn't you rent out your apartment and earned some money on it?

S: Ehm, yeah good question. I think it was, I actually liked the idea that there was no money between us. I mean the people I hosted. I did it to actually meet people, and spend time with people, make friends around the world. Yeah, so I think that is the difference. There is actually a pretty big difference between Airbnb and CouchSurfing because of the money.

I: If you can talk about in general how your experiences has actually been with using CouchSurfing?

S: Yeah, it has been great. I think it has actually kind of changed my life, or the way, my point of view on many things and my way of travel. I wouldn't have thought in the beginning that I would have actually, I thought it would be nice, but I have actually just met a lot of people who I'm still in touch with and people who I consider as close friends. And I have visited them after they stayed at me. So, so I really love it.

I: Have you had any bad experiences with it?

S: Ehm, no. I wouldn't say bad. Some better than others, but not something very bad. I had a guy who stayed with me, and he didn't really, when I get up in the morning and I had to catch a plane, so in the end I had to get a taxi to make it in time to the airport. But I think that is the worst I experience [laughing].

I: And the people you actually meet on CouchSurfing, are they 'professional' CouchSurfers, or are they also... have you met freeriders for example?

S: Yeah, yeah, okay. That's. I had one more, not bad I would say, but yeah, not the best experience. I had a couple who stayed and I had the idea that they were kind of freeriders. They had a lot of nice references, and seemed like they wanted to... that they knew what CouchSurfing was about. But I think they, yeah kind of just stayed out all day and night and came home and we didn't really get the chance to talk to them. And also, just, some people you just get along with better than others. And yeah, there was some, I don't know, cultural differences that... I think I found them a bit rude and, yeah, but not like... A lot of people ask "wow, how can you do this, how [laughing] can you let strangers into your home and isn't it dangerous?" But I haven't ever really experienced anything really bad.

I: How come you could then do it the first times?

S: The first times... I think it's a lot about your personality and your point of view of life and other people, human beings. So I think I liked the idea that this was possible, and I wanted to believe that you can, in general that you can trust people. But the first times it was a bit, I don't know, I was a bit more nervous about this. How would it be like and.. But, I don't know, and I think the first experience was just okay. And actually maybe not the best guy, he was all over the place. He just kept talking all the time, and we didn't get that much along with him. But then we had some great experiences the next few times. Some people I'm still friends with. So I think that kind of motivated me to keep doing this. And then I just had some many great experiences.

I: So, what is the main benefit of using CouchSurfing for you?

S: It is the network I think. I think there is many things. It is about the network and experience the culture, for example if you go somewhere, it has really changed my way of travel. I would, I wouldn't say I would never stay at a hostel or hotel, because you also use a lot of energy on this, because you need to spend time with people and actually get to know them. Not that you have to spend all your time with your host. Of course you are going somewhere to experience the place. But you use a lot of energy on that. But it also give you very different, it is a very different way of travel. You don't have a checklist, I have to see this and that. But it is about getting to know the people who live there. And I think it is, it just make so much sense. And, I think for me, I really meet a lot of amazing people, maybe because people actually sign up on CouchSurfing we already have some, a lot of things in common. Some values and interests.

I: What is these kind of things? Why do you think you fit in this community?

S: I think it is about trusting people. And also, I think I meet a lot of people who inspire me. There is a lot of people on CouchSurfing, of the 'real' CouchSurfers, who do what they want, they quit their job and go travelling if that is what they like. There is a lot of creative people I think, in general, it is a big community, but I think in general.

I: So you feel there is a personality match somehow?

S: Yeah, yeah. I think so. Of course I also choose who I stay with and who I want to host. But I think in general there is...

I: So let's try to go through that, like, can you describe the process you go through when you are on the CouchSurfing website or app and you have to decide what person actually have to stay with you?

S: Yeah. Okay. It is different when I host. Right now I'm having a break, I don't host people. But when I did, I got maybe ten requests everyday in the main season. So I read if it's a personal message or if it's just a standard "hey, I want to stay, I'm from Copenhagen". Then it is just, okay good for you, but what... There is a lot of new members on CouchSurfing who just believe that, "oh, this is smart, I can stay for free". But of course it is not like that. That would be too easy. Because people actually do it to get something out of it. Not money but experiences. So you want to have the, get an idea about, yeah, the people actually, yeah that you have something in common and values. That people want to spend time together, that... So I read if it's a personal message, if the person, yeah, if it's seems like they send out some good vibes somehow. Good energy. Yeah, and then I look at the profile, I look at their references if they have any. I think, if they don't have any references, they have to do something extra [laughing] to show that "I'm new, but I'm actually...", yeah, what do you say, yeah that they are kind of serious about this. So I look at the profile, I read the profile, their interest, and if they seem

positive, open-minded people that I could have something in common with. Read the references. Yeah, it is kind of, when you get so many requests, it gets important what the references say, and also the pictures. If it's a profile with just one profile picture I would usually, yeah never host...

I: Why?

S: I think it builds trust when there is more pictures. I want to know when I meet the person who it is. So that is actually a pretty important thing for me. That there is more profile pictures.

I: So you kind of mention one concern, you want to know how who the person is. Do you think, do you perceive any concerns in this whole process where you have to host a person you don't know?

S: Yeah, I, of course, because it is about trust. And you want to trust people. And in general I do I think. But still, you know, it is the internet. So I'm not naive and I know I sometimes get some creepy messages. Or I want to do what I can to make sure that it isn't a psychopath [laughing] who is...

I: Have you experienced something where you, who can you say it, the risks of this were too much say you didn't go forward?

S: Yeah, yeah I think so. I get a lot of messages, I used to when I hosted, like... This sounds very judging, but if I get one message from one guy without no references, maybe also I must admit some different countries I'm a bit more concerned, because I know there is some differences in values. So, yeah, I think in general if people don't have any references and don't write anything and they don't have any profile pictures I just automatically decline. I don't want to take that risk.

I: You talk a bit about this trust, and I kind of want you to try and elaborate on that. Because in what sense do you think trust is important for you to trust this platform?

S: I think you have to trust people in general. Because otherwise you would not sign up on this page. There is a lot of people who don't understand this. And for me, it is kind of the opposite, because I have had so many good experiences. And I think I, just, I have no reason not to trust people. In general. But because it is the internet, like every other, on Facebook, on Tinder, whatever, you always take care of yourself. You try not to be too naive. But it is like, I think, a lot of, like when some people say, you 'no, you can't go to Africa, it's too dangerous,' I don't think it is in general. Maybe there are some places you should avoid. And I think it is the same on CouchSurfing, if you just use your, like common sense, it is not dangerous. For me it is not an issue anymore, the safety thing. It is more about how well do I get along with these

people. And that is what I try to figure out. Of course there is the safety, it is part of, I think about, but it is more like if a person don't have any references, I don't really consider it. Or if there is like no references, no pictures, no description in the profile, I just, yeah, throw it out. I don't think so much about it. Because it is just, like.. yeah, move on and try to figure out who do I get along with, so it's more my focus now.

I: You say it's the focus now, but what about in the beginning? Was safety more an issue...

S: Yeah, I think so. It was more.., I think I just quickly got more used to it, but in the beginning I didn't really know what to look at maybe and to get a feeling, will this, is this going to be a good experience? It was a bit more random, like okay, this guy has some references, it was a pretty nice message [laughing], so yeah, why not try it. And was a bit more insecure...

I: Did you do anything to increase your safety?

S: Yeah, in the beginning I was more careful about, I would never give out my address, for example. And I don't, actually I never do that. But in the beginning I made sure that we met at a public place and I walked with them to my house, around 15 minutes walk [laughing] so I could have the possibility to just know them a bit. And if they just seemed too weird, or I felt something was wrong, I could always, you know, come up with something like "my grandmother is very sick [laughing] and I can't host you". So yeah, yeah.

I: But today you are not meeting people, or?

S: Yeah, I still do. But I'm more like, they can maybe... because I only host people I have a good feeling about. So I can, in the beginning I wouldn't give them my phone number and that is something that I'm, yeah, don't worry that much about anymore. And maybe I will tell them that I live on this street, and we can meet outside the shop if I'm in a hurry when I'm going to meet them. So I think I became a bit more loose about all these things.

I: Have you ever tried having someone coming and then you didn't let them stay at your place?

S: No, no I have not.

I: You have mentioned a bit about it, but maybe you can elaborate, why is it that you choose exactly CouchSurfing compared to other platforms.

S: I think it is very different. I think for me it's, I think, for example Airbnb and CouchSurfing is completely different things. Because on Airbnb, I know some people actually, it is very different. Sometimes I think the host maybe have some recommendations for people, you can go to this restaurant, and you meet them and maybe sometimes, sometimes you

actually spend some time with the host. But it is more a business, I think Airbnb. It is to make money and then if you rent all your apartment out, of course you can also just rent out a room and then you will also get to talk to people a bit. But I think CouchSurfing is more, I think it is very different, and it makes it a special bond between people from the beginning. Because it isn't the money, it's you. And I think that is very special. And that is why you can really make friends. I don't know, I just experience on CouchSurfing, I had a lot of people, who you just meet them and talk like you have been friends for 10 years. And I think it is because you know that these people they don't get money or something out of this. They are just, yeah...

I: So if you imagine there came a new platform that kind of did the same as CouchSurfing, how would you think about that?

S: Ehm...

I: Or how important is the CouchSurfing community itself today?

S: I think it is important that, yeah I guess. I guess a lot of CouchSurfers, it is a part of their identity somehow. That it is not a usage, it is also about, a lot of CouchSurfers travel in a special way. There is some, some special values about this platform. Connected to it.

I: If you try to think about the platform itself. Do you think it is a reliable platform?

S: Yes.

I: Do you see any other features that maybe you haven't mentioned, that make you more trusting to use the service or to stay with the person?

S: No. They... On CouchSurfing there is this, they have this safety, you can kind of valid you profile. But I actually didn't do that in the beginning. And I don't look that much at it. I'm more looking, yeah, at the references. And if people are actually describe something in their profile. I'm always automatically decline if there is no description in their profile, if it isn't completed. I think it is more about the people...

I: And when you actually have people at your home, like, are you concerned about anything there, like if they could steal anything?

S: No, not at all. Maybe the first times. I think CouchSurfing, they are actually not, the website is actually not that good when you are a beginning, a newbie on CouchSurfing, because I was like, what do people do, do they give the keys? Or how does this work? So I have to, just, yeah, start to get some experiences and get into it. But I just decided that I wouldn't give the keys out, that the people who I hosted had to leave, when I leave. And so on.

I: Always only in the beginning?

S: In the beginning, then I also started to get a bit more loose. Some people, if I... I wouldn't just in the beginning, say "hey, you can have the keys" but maybe some people who stayed there one day and I felt that I knew them a bit more and there was something, if I was leaving very early, I was "oh, you can just have the keys, no worries." So I have done that, yeah, quite a lot of times, just giving them the keys. So I think I also trust more now than in the beginning. For sure.

I: So you are not nervous that anything will get stolen or broken or?

S: No, no, no, it's... I don't, it's not an issue at all for me if people would steal anything or if it's like a dangerous violent people. It's more about will I get along with these people, or will it just be okay. Because I am looking for the very great experiences and people I can really connect with and stay friends with after they...

I: We touched a bit upon that, but how much interaction do you actually have with the guest before accepting them?

S: Ehm, before I accept them. Not much. They send me the message. And then I, what I used to do when I hosted a lot, was like I got a lot of messages and then I... okay had like a few I wanted to host, and some people that I just decline immediately if I know I'm not going to host them. And then I have some maybes and then I don't answer right away. I, also some people they ask one month ahead of something, and I don't know about my plans, so I can't accept them, then maybe I accept one week before, two weeks before... [laughing] what was your question again?

I: Yeah, like how much interaction and which type is it? Is it also through the platform or does it go also through in like other, for example social medias?

S: Yeah. On CouchSurfing we often use WhatsApp, but it is more when you, yeah also before you meet actually, because it is easier. Usually I connect with people on Facebook, but it is after, when they leave [inaudible] to keep in touch. But it's on Couchsurfing to start with, because... people when they travel from, yeah around the world, they don't usually have wifi. And just to make sure that you can find each other, or that something doesn't go wrong, it...we... I almost all the time exchange numbers, because it's more easy...

I: While at the beginning you, were you doing that?

S: Sorry?

I: Also at the beginning?

S: Yeah at the beginning before I meet people, and maybe you talk on WhatsApp, where to meet at what time. And they can call or you can call if they don't have wifi, and you are

at the meeting the point and can't find each other. So, but it's mainly on CouchSurfing, and most of the times it is... I get the message, and I answer "no, I don't have time" or... Yeah, I think in the beginning or I also maybe sometimes asked some more questions. Just if there was something I wasn't really sure about or I think, a few times I hosted some people who didn't have a lot of references, yet. Maybe there wasn't that much information in the request, but their profile text was good. But maybe if I wasn't really sure I would ask something like "okay, where are you going? Do you have any specific plans in Copenhagen? What are you going to do?", just to get a feeling about the answer. And maybe tell them, I'm not sure if I can host you I have to check my calendar, my schedule and then go back to them, just to kind of test if... So I have done that a couple of times, but it was also in the beginning.

I: So nowadays, if you had the same person, would you then trust that situation straight away?

S: No, I think, maybe I would still ask some questions. But... Maybe not that much about safety, but more like "are you a free rider or do you have any plans, do you expect that you can...?". Also it can be the other way around. Sometimes people expect you to show them around and be their personal guide or you are going to have dinner every night. And also you want to make sure that they don't expect too much that it is equal, that they can take care of them self, but they also, yeah, want to spend some time.

I: Is there any other security check that you do while you message with a person. Like checking his profile somewhere else or?

S: No.

I: Like Facebook or anything?

S: No, actually, no I don't do that.

I: So everything stays just within CouchSurfing?

S: Yes.

I: Have you, from any of the other CouchSurfers, have you heard stories that went really bad?

S: From CouchSurfers I know, not... Yeah, I think I remember... Let me see... I remember a girl who stayed with this guy, and he hadn't gotten any references really. And he was a bit creepy. But it wasn't actually because something he really did to her. He was just a lonely freaky guy, who... It was, yeah, I think he was lonely and started crying, and talk about "oh, I'm so lonely and I feel so terrible" and she was like, "okay". So it was very awkward, but it wasn't really dangerous. She didn't get attacked or something. But I think...

I: So bad experiences doesn't sound that common on the platform?

S: No, it is. Or you hear about it sometimes, or you read something. But I think it is when people get too desperate, if they are travelling somewhere and they don't have a hostel, they don't, they didn't find a host, and "I need a place tonight" and maybe they make a public request. That's also a request that everyone can, you can browse through them and see if some CouchSurfers need a place. And my experience is that you get more of the creepy guys [laughing]. If you make those public request, you get some "I can host you" from a guy who have no references at all. And I would just never do that. And I think that some people do, and that's when you get the bad experiences. If you use your common sense and if you don't just take the chance, when I think there is a pretty high risk, you don't have an idea about this person. So I think the bad experience, they do happen. But it is not something I think that would happen to me, or it's not something that I worry about because I, I think I know what to look for. Or I just do my research on the profile.

End of interview. Small talk.

I: Like what we are really interested in is the trust aspect.

S: Yeah

I: Like, what makes people trust to use this platform.

S: I think it is, for me, it is a lot about the people. I don't, I don't know if I trust the platform more than like the internet in general. I know it is the internet, I know like there can be some creeps out there. But I think in general people are good and yeah have the right intentions.

I: So that's just a platform connecting you, but you still have to do you on job to..

S: Yeah, yeah, for sure.

I: Ok, let's say that's it.

Small talk.

S: I know some colleagues they were like... They talked about I think they actually talked about Airbnb and like "Oh I could never do this. What if people look in your private papers." And I was like: "Why would people do that?", really. And I was like "oh they should know I'm couchsurfing I don't even get the money I don't have any insurance [laughing], or anything.

I: Don't couchsurfing help with anything or?

S: No, not really. You can notify them if... you can tell them if... if you experience something bad you can write a bad, negative reference. But, but that's it. You can't...What do you call it? Like, close people's profiles and so on but yeah, that's it.

I: Ok, so you have to call the police yourself and your insurance.

S: Yeah, yeah.

I: But wouldn't you like them to have like some emergency features or stuff like that?

S: No, I don't think I would use that. I'm actually not really sure, I don't think that much about the safety, the security. I'm not sure actually, maybe if you read the section "security" maybe there is something more.

I: You don't even read it?

S: I think at the beginning I read it, but it was more like "what can I do to avoid those situations?". So I haven't really thought about that.

I: You're just not concerned about it

S: No, no [laughing]. In the beginning of course I was a bit more... It was something new and I was like "how does this work?"

I: Yeah, great.

Interview with Teresa

I: So first of all, we would like to know how often you have used Airbnb?

T: I have used Airbnb about, I think for travelling myself, maybe five times or something. Six next week [laughing]. Mainly in Europe, only in Europe actually. And I have rented out my own apartment, or the apartment that I live in, for maybe six or seven times. Six times I think.

I: And are you always using Airbnb when you go on travelling?

T: When I travel in Europe I always check it to see if it's less expensive than a hotel. And it usually is. And that's usually why I book. It's what I have stayed at for my last five or six trips in Europe at least.

I: And how has your experience been with being a guest?

T: Being a guest has been only positive actually. Yeah.

I: No negative things?

T: No. I mean, no. One of the apartments smelled a little bit, but [laughing] that's the only thing. I think it was good.

I: What was good about it?

T: Well, I have picked the ones where they had nice recommendations. So the hosts has been very nice to welcome us, and it is very flexible because you can meet them whenever you want. I think it is, it is usually very clean. And it is mainly like a hotel, only it is cheaper and you get a more local experience. And usually you can stay closer to the center because it is cheaper as well, and you have a kitchen. And things like that

I: And your experience with hosting then?

T: Hosting has been mixed [laughing]. I have had about, well most of them has been really nice. It has been a good experience and people have been clean and very appreciative and given nice reviews and everything. But one time I did have a woman and her 17 year old son staying from Germany. And they didn't speak English very well. So we didn't communicate that much. But I let them stay there for four days I think, and it looks like, cause we have two bedrooms, it looks like she stayed in my friend's bedroom and the boy stayed in my bedroom. And whenever I rent out my apartment I put all my valuables in my laundry basket and then wrapt some towels around it. And I have done that with some expensive bottles of gin and stuff like that. And then put some pillows on it and put it in my closet. And I have done that the same

way this time and then when I came home, the gin was standing on the floor. So they had been down, in my laundry basket. Which wasn't that comfortable. And I can see that they have maybe tried on some of my clothes. And also they took my watch [laughing].

I: Okay, so you got stolen from?

T: Yeah. I mean, it can't really be proven cause, I haven't spoken to them about it because they didn't answer my text afterwards. And, but it's not there anymore and it was there before. So I guess, yeah. They stole it.

I: Was that one of the first times you used Airbnb?

T: No, that was actually the last time. I wrote a bad review for them. But they didn't write one back. And because they didn't write one back, it didn't get published on their site. Cause both parties have to write a review for it to be public. And because it was only a watch for a thousand Danish crowns I didn't report or anything.

I: Neither to Airbnb?

T: No, but I probably should have [laughing].

I: Why didn't you do that?

T: Because I was busy with a lot of other stuff [laughing]. I wrote a private text to her about that she said know that I think her son had maybe taken it or something. Just so she knew. But.. I don't think she knew about. She was quite nice when we texted afterwards a little bit. But as soon as I mentioned the watch she didn't answer. But I think maybe she was embarrassed for her son [laughing].

I: And that was last time?

T: That was last time, yeah. It was actually just the end of the summer, so it was our last booking. And it hasn't really, it's not because of that, I would still do it again. It's just, we haven't done it. But I would do it again. I think all the other experiences were really nice. And I think, because I like doing it myself I think it is nice to give other people the opportunity. And it is not that big of a fuzz and it pays the rent.

I: Are they renting your apartment alone or are you staying at the apartment some of the times you have been hosting?

T: No, only the whole apartment.

I: Because you are not interested in staying there...

T: No, I don't think I would be comfortable with other people in my house while I was there.

I: And when you are a guest, are you then also renting the whole apartment?

T: We have only stayed in whole apartments or houses. But I am staying in a room in Barcelona next week, because it was so expensive.

I: So you are going to have a room for yourself?

T: So we are only gonna have a room in a flat. Yeah.

I: So, what do you see as the main benefit of using Airbnb?

T: The main benefits are the prices and the local experience.

I: What do you mean with the local experience?

T: I mean it is nice to stay in an apartment in Paris, because it is very different from a hotel room in Paris I think. Because you have the balcony and you have the French interior. Which is, like it is a bit more personal and you get to sort of feel that vibe I think

I: And how important is that compared to the price?

T: The price is the most important part I think...

I: If we imagine that you would have one apartment with this local feeling and you had a hotel and it was the same price.. What would you go for?

T: Mm,... Yeah... Good question, because usually if you get an apartment it would have a living room and a balcony and a kitchen. And the hotel room would only be a room with a bed. So in that case I would choose Airbnb.

I: Because you get more...

T: Because you get a bigger place with more, like you get a living room and a couch and everything. Yeah, so usually I would probably choose Airbnb if it was the same. If the Airbnb place looked nice.

I: When you actually look for an Airbnb apartment. Can you then describe the process you go through in terms of you deciding if you actually want to stay at this place or not?

T: I narrow down the map to the area I would like to stay in. And then you can see all the prices on the map. And then I look at the ones that are the cheapest and then I go higher and higher in price until I find one that I think look nice and have good recommendations. And is clean and bright and has a nice bed

I: So you just base it on...

T: The pictures and the reviews.

I: What are you looking for in the reviews?

T: Positive experiences. Where people say that the host is nice and that the apartment is clean. And central I think.

I: Maybe we can also go through the process when you actually accept some requests?

T: I usually look at their recommendations as well, their reviews. And then I try to figure out what they are doing. Cause if it's four young girls from Sweden going to Copenhagen for a crazy weekend, I probably would their request. Because I don't want people partying inside..

I: And how do you figure out if...

T: Usually I have chosen families or like a couple.

I: Because..

T: Because they are less likely to be (laughing) to be drinking and whatever in the apartment. So people who are going there to be tourists mainly. Yeah, because then they are not going to be in there that much.

I: In that sense, I can interpret you have a concern that your apartment gets trashed..

T: [laughing] yeah.

I: ...what do you think are the concerns with actually using Airbnb?

T: I think the concerns is getting valuables stole, like I experienced. And maybe coming home with the feeling that someone was there too much. Which I haven't all the other times. Only the one time with the German woman. Because that wasn't very comfortable.

I: But how do you trust that even though, that was not four young people, who do you trust that they are not...

T: I guess, I take my valuables with me usually. So I guess I don't trust them completely and then I don't have that many expensive furnitures and whatever. So I guess the risk is acceptable to the earning.

I: This is about trusting. How do you actually trusting using this platform?

T: I think, because you, it's not.. I only accept requests after having read their email and profile and everything. So I guess you get a bit of a personal connection to the guest. So it is not a complete stranger who is coming. Usually I text with them before and write to them about tourist attractions and they write back with questions. And usually they write an email when they request the apartment, where they write, where they are going to, what they are going to do there and who they are and what the purpose is. So I think that establishes some trust.

I: What are you then looking at in profiles?

T: Calm and nice people.

I: What specifically? Like how can I show you that I am a calm and nice person?

T: I guess just writing a friendly email. And establishing that you are just going to come to be a tourist.

I: And if you are then on the guest side. What are you then looking for?

T: When I'm a guest, I usually don't write that I'm going there to party [laughing]. I would write that I was going there to be a tourist with some friends and we were going to see attractions. And we think that the apartment looks really nice. And we hope to have a nice stay there. So that the host has a nice experience as well.

I: So are you lying sometimes?

T: I guess, yeah [laughing].

I: Don't you think people could do the same towards you?

T: yeah, but I wouldn't accept four young girls in my apartment. So I guess that is the difference. Because I would never let someone into the apartment without meeting them first when they arrive.

I: Oh, so you meet the people before...

T: Yeah, I give them the key.

I: Have you ever tried not to let them in?

T: No. I would only do that if they weren't the people they had told me. That would be weird.

I: Then you also mention the reviews you are looking at both when you are finding a place to stay, but also when you are hosting. Is there any difference when you look at them in those two situations?

T: No, not really. No. I guess it is just about finding someone who seems reliable..

I: And how do you...

T: I mean if other people has written that they are nice guest and that they left the apartment in a clean situation. Then I guess I would think, okay, that's okay, I can do that.

I: Maybe we have talked a bit about it, but what do you think about the security of using this platform?

T: I think it's a lot about trusting people. So, I guess it's not for everyone and I guess it's also about how valuable you find your apartment and the things in it.

I: So if you got more values, would you still be using Airbnb?

T: If I had really really expensive furniture and stuff that I wouldn't want other people to... maybe I would be more... think more about it.

I: And since, you say, you generally have to trust people here. Do you think you generally trust people?

T: Yeah.

I: So, you don't have any... could you imagine renting out still to a person that has no references, reviews...

T: I did that with the German woman. So probably not again, after that experience.

I: Interesting

T: [laughing]

I: So you use Airbnb. Have you used other platforms?

T: For... renting?

I: Yeah, or being a guest?

T: No. Only hotels and apartments that you rent through bigger companies.

I: And, why so?

T: Well the... that was with my parents so it was really their decision so, Airbnb is something that I've done in my older days.

I: Ok, but then why not Homeaway or Couchsurfing or some completely other platforms?

T: I think airbnb is well-established and well-know and it has... I think it has some good things. Like, they handle the finances and there's a bit of security in that.

I: In what sense?

T: In the sense that they are a third part in the situation, so... I guess if something went completely wrong I had a feeling that I would call them and they would help me. I don't know if that's true but...

I: And you would feel less...? You don't think HomeAway or Couchsurfing would do the same?

T: I don't know them as well and I haven't really heard about them from anyone else who's tried it.

I: Ok, so we have been through this but I kind of want to ask you another way so... How does Airbnb help you to trust to book a stay with a stranger?

T: Like, when I'm a tourist?

I: Yeah

T: Mmm, well Airbnb has set the cancellation policy... so that you can see... there are different levels of it. So you can see if it's strict or it's like medium or if it's weak or whatever so it's... so they handle the financials in the sense that as soon as I give them, or make the booking, they take the money from me but then they keep it until the day that I arrive. And think that's a good thing cause I'm... And also if the host decides to cancel my booking a few days before, then if there was a strict booking policy then... they can't do that, I guess. So there are those kind of security I guess. And also when I'm hosting, if the guest chooses to decline a booking a few days before I still get 50 per cent of the payment because they have already given it to Airbnb. So they only get 50 per cent back.

I: So you are more relying on Airbnb than, maybe trusting...?

T: Financially maybe yeah I think it's nice that they are there to handle the finances because it's a little bit easier to not pay someone when you haven't met them.

I: So you have to trust them until you meet them and then you...

T: Yeah.

I: Ok.

T: Cause there is not any question of "am I going to get paid or not?". That's not an issue. I think that's a big part of it. And it's not an issue for them either. There is no way they can escape paying because they can't book it unless they give their credit card information. So I guess that's a big part of Airbnb being a help. Because if that wasn't there then I guess I wouldn't have to wait until they arrive to get money and then they would wanna maybe bargain about the payment and all that.

I: Maybe in the first time you used Airbnb, was that as a guest or as a host?

T: Guest

I: And can you remember why you ended up using Airbnb?

T: Ehm, we were going to Paris and the hotels were very expensive. And Airbnb was very popular at the time. It was maybe one and a half year ago when it was just...

I: Popular in what sense?

T: I just have heard about it from a lot of friends and it was on social media and stuff. So I guess that's why we decided to try it.

I: And were you more concerned at that time than...?

T: We were a little bit more excited to go there, yeah. Because of the whole meetup and the apartment and was it gonna clean and... all that. But now I have more expectations if you can say that cause I've had a lot of good experiences so I have expectations for it to be the same way every time I go.

I: Yeah

T: And I'm not nervous because it's usually good, yeah.

I: Maybe a bit more specifically into the like... part as a host. Like... how much interaction do you have with people in the whole process?

T: I like being a host so I try to make the stay nice for them so I made a guide to Copenhagen and I usually lay up maps as well in the apartment and I usually, like... make the bed and clean the apartment very nicely before they come there. And then I usually write them a few times before that, if they have any questions and whatever, they can text me and I give my phone number so that they can call me if there is anything when they're there. So I guess we have a little bit of interaction so it's nice to make them feel welcome before they arrive. Because it's also about getting good reviews, so you can put the price up of the apartment.

I: Is that mainly why you do it?

T: No I think I just have a natural, like, feeling for being a host [laughing]. But afterwards I would like if I can put the price up so that would be nice too...

I: But when you look at profiles of people would you say there is any difference when you're a host or a guest?

T: No, not really.

I: Like, maybe you dig more into that in one of the two cases or?

T: No, the only thing is, what I mentioned earlier, that there's only a few like...I would rather want tourist types of people to stay in the apartment than young people who go in there to party. And I guess that's something that you look at when you're a host, cause I don't really care.

I: While when you're a guest you just... don't care about it or...?

T: I mean I guess it's a lot about how the apartment looks on the photos. So if it's a very old person who has the apartment you can see that on the photos and then I wouldn't choose that anyway. But that wouldn't be because of the person. It would be because of what the apartment looks like, I think.

I: Was it there any case in which you said "ok the apartment is nice, but the person is not so I'll not go for it"?

T: Yeah, but it would be about the reviews. I always look a lot at the reviews when I'm a guest myself. I would never book somewhere with no reviews, I think.

I: You also mentioned that it's almost like a hotel, Airbnb. So how is it similar and how is it dissimilar Airbnb and a hotel?

T: Well first of all like I said it's usually a whole apartment. You have the living room and it's usually bigger, usually has a garden or a balcony or whatever. I think that's nice and it's usually in a more local area of the city, I think, which is nice. And it's more... it's more personal and I think it's a little bit more cultural if it's a local apartment.

I: So it's... it's mainly the look of the apartment you see different. You don't think so much about that it's an actual person and it's a big corporation? Like of course it is, but do you think about it?

T: I think it's nice to support local people as well, I guess. Because I know that it's nice for myself when I have guests. I get a little bit extra [money].

I: But what about security in terms of those two...do you think a lot about that there might be more security in one of them?

T: In... like in the hotels?

I: Yeah, and in the Airbnb...

T: I guess there is more security in the hotels in some way but I'm not that concerned when I'm travelling in Europe, really. I don't think about that a lot.

I: Why do you think so?

T: I wouldn't be really concerned with security either of the places I think. I wouldn't be thinking about that much.

I: Ok.

T: Cause you have the keys and usually if it's a nice person and you can see from the reviews that it's a nice person and usually they are going on holiday themselves for something. So they're not gonna be there and... cause why would anybody else come in a local apartment like that? It could be the same in a hotel, I mean, people get stolen from the hotels as well.

I: Would it change if it's not in Europe or?

T: Ehm, I think I would be more concerned with like...with they cancel the booking or whatever. I actually have a booking with my family at an Airbnb house in Bali this summer. I guess it's nice and everything. I think it's gonna be good but it's just... I would be a little bit more concerned if they cancel the booking, because it seems further away and, I don't know... Maybe.

I: Yeah. Maybe if you have any like final comment on trust. Yeah like, what we are looking at is specifically how you come up trusting to use this platform.

T: Maybe one thing to add is that usually when I book I look for local apartments instead of the ones that business rent out on Airbnb and that can be difficult to tell sometimes.

I: Because...

T: Because sometimes they look local and then it's really just one person owning ten apartments and then renting them out. And I think that's not the concept of Airbnb. And I think that's not the concept that local people can rent out their own apartment when they cannot use it themselves. But I think the other concept is a waste of apartments and... yeah. It beats the idea of Airbnb that should be people could rent out their own apartment.

Interview with Ursula

I: How often have you used Airbnb?

U: I have used it for about two years, and I have used it primarily as a host. And I have used it 28 times to rent out my apartment.

I: And as a guest?

U: As a guest.. I have been a guest maybe 5 times. But it was not myself renting and arranging. It was like as a guest with another person who I was joining.

I: And where you involved in that?

U: In the booking process?

I: Yeah.

U: Not that much actually. I was just mostly trusting the person booking for me. Like a friend or boyfriend at that time.

I: So they just told you where...

U: Yeah. They just said... We just discussed what place to go and then they said "okay, we found a good place". So I haven't actually booked an apartment myself.

I: And how has your experience been as a guest those times?

U: It has actually been good all the times I was renting. I don't... I haven't had any negative experiences actually.

I: Why has it then been good?

U: It has been good primarily because of the costs. Much cheaper than a hotel. Like we booked an apartment, me and a friend, in New York. And it was very much cheaper than renting a hotel. And also I think it was a good experience, because of, you know, you live at a person's home. And maybe you experience some cultural differences. And yeah, it's just more cosy, and feels like you are visiting someone and not just a clinical, you know, boring hotel room.

I: How important is that?

U: I think it is, yeah, it is the place where Airbnb differentiates itself from exactly the hotels. So, yeah, it is mostly because of the price but also because you see something else that you are used to in a hotel room.

I: And have you in between the times you have been a guest on Airbnb, have you then used a hotel also?

U: Yeah, I have.

I: So when do you decide to go on an Airbnb and when do you decide to go on a hotel?

U: I have been looking at Airbnb, the webpage, all the times. But then sometimes when there wasn't something that matches my preferences, then I would maybe choose a hotel. If it wasn't that expensive...

I: Like preferences in terms of quality or...?

U: Yeah, in terms of quality and does the pictures look nice and, you know, I don't want to live somewhere where I'm gambling in terms of like, is it clean or is it looking nice. If it looks nice at the profile and there is good references and good recommendations, then I would probably go there.

I: So the times you have been a host, have has that experience been?

U: It has also been, almost only positive experiences. People has been really nice and kind and friendly. I think it is also a specific segment who uses Airbnb and not hotels. So my experience is that people who visited were really quite open-minded, and they like to, you know, hear about my recommendations for visiting Copenhagen. I could tell them to go to this specific restaurant, or go to this street to shop, don't go to the Strøget or the walking street to shop, it is very crowded and boring and touristy. But go to this street instead. And, I'm living in Nørrebro, which is also quite a nice, interesting part of the city to be in for tourists I guess. Because there are maybe not that many hotels, but if you go to an Airbnb apartment, you can, yeah, experience something else.

I: So are you living in your apartment along with the guests?

U: No, I wouldn't do that. I wouldn't like to do that anyway. Yeah, I have my own apartment and I like to live there by myself. I wouldn't feel comfortable having guests when I'm there myself.

I: So when you give them recommendation have is that then working...

U: When I give recommendations for being a guest?

I: Yeah. Are you not doing that in person then?

U: No, I'm doing it only at, yeah, the app.

I: Okay.

U: It is a specific system where every time someone leaves my apartment it... I have to give an update or recommendation..

I: Oh, I was thinking about what street should you go to shop and so...

U: Ah, okay. I do that in person, because I always welcome them in the apartment. I'm there to give them the key.

I: And then after that you don't see them for the stay?

U: Yeah, then I don't see them again. Only if it's, you know, if it can be arranged that they can give me the key in person. But normally I just tell them to leave the key at the table and then just close the door, as it locks itself. And it works fine. Really, the only like bit negative experience I had was a family visiting me. And they were really posh, and not that satisfied with the apartment. It was like they expected some hotel actually. They just didn't seem very satisfied. Or very impressed. You know, usually people are very friendly and like "oh, that is so nice, cosy apartment you have" and bla bla bla. They are friendly and kind and talkative. But this family I had some, just bad feeling. It is difficult to explain, but you know, a bad feeling in the stomach about them. I thought to myself, "why don't you go to Angleterre [laughing] to stay or..."

I: Did you think about that even before they rented?

U: No, I didn't get that feeling from visiting their profile. But I had that feeling definitely when they arrived. But it was okay, it was fine.

I: So you mentioned that it has mostly been positive experiences, but what have been sort of the negative besides this one?

U: Ehm... Yeah, but actually I haven't really had any other negative experiences. People have been so nice and have even, most of the guest I have had, they brought me gifts and put it on the table. Yeah, I haven't had any troubles. There was an old couple, two friends, two ladies... who rented my apartment. And they had some problems, and they couldn't figure out how to use the dish washer. And they called me and I had to come and show them. And they also looked themselves out, so I had to go there and give them another key. And stuff like that. But you know, they were still very friendly and kind and it wasn't like negative. So I would definitely do it again. Now I haven't been doing it for the last half year or something like that. But it is mostly because I need to be somewhere else when I'm renting out my apartment. And at the I was renting out a lot, I had a boyfriend, who I lived with when I wasn't in my apartment. But now we split up, so obviously it is not that convenient anymore [laughing] for me. And also because now I am working full time, so I like to have my space when I come home and I like to

have my own apartment and not staying at someone's sofa. And I don't really need the extra money in the same way as I did when I was studying.

I: Was that the primary reason why you also rented out?

U: Yeah, the money?

I: Yeah.

U: Definitely. It was really good money also because it was tax free, you just get the money, you know, directly in your pocket. And when you are studying it is really a great way to earn some extra money and easy way.

I: So you would think it is less relevant now for you to rent out?

U: Right now I am only using Airbnb when I am going on vacation myself. Otherwise I don't really feel the need to do it.

I: Can you maybe describe the process you go through when you get a request from a person that you have to decide if you want to accept or not? So how do you decide that?

U: To be honest, I guess I'm discriminating, a bit [laughing]. But I'm really looking for if people look nice and if they have other recommendations from other hosts, and also how they respond when we like, when we are writing before they come here. And if its three young guys from Australia, which look party [laughing]. You know, if they look like party freaks or something like that, then I'm not going to accept them. Because there are so many requests, so you know, it is easy for me to say yes or no to people. I think normally couples or people who writes to me that they are just going to enjoy the city and look at some tourist sites, or people who are going here to work for a week. They are also, I have had some business men and woman living there as well. But you know, of course if it looks like trouble [laughing] I'm not going to accept it.

I: And you mention if they look nice. Is that in terms of their profile picture or?

U: Yeah. And the description. Mostly the description.

I: What are you looking for in the description?

U: If they tell a bit about themselves and they explain what they are doing. You know, you get a picture of the person. If you get like an imagination of how that person is. If it's just a profile with no information or only like very badly written, then I don't have the same gut feeling about this is a nice visitor I am going to have. So a good description and a friendly looking picture, or you know, not some party [laughing].

I: So that is probably one concern, that you can get some party people in. But have you considered any concerns with using Airbnb as a host?

U: Yeah, you know, there are all of these stories about prostitutes renting Airbnb apartments to use it as a, yeah, a way to prostitute themselves in another person's apartment. And of course that is really not something you want to be caught, or be set up in that way. But I haven't experienced that. And I also have an okay good relationship with my neighbours. So they also know that I use Airbnb and I think they would tell me if something unusual was happening. Or if someone was, yeah, partying all night.

I: But what if anything gets broken or stolen?

U: I had this locker in my room. It is actually just an, what do you call it, a closet from IKEA, where I have a key. And I put all my valuable stuff in there and lock it and I have never had any experience with people breaking in or stealing something.

I: So you are not afraid that could happen?

U: No. Also because, yeah, of course I have some valuable things. But I guess when you let other people in and let them live in your apartment you also need to have some trust in other people. Just like basically. Because, you know, I'm there when they are, when I hand over the key. And I usually use, I spend some time to talk to the person and get a feeling of the person. So, and yeah, people have generally been very nice. I haven't had any concerns when I have left the apartment and left people alone there.

I: Maybe you can think about when you started, the first time. How was the concerns? Like has it changed because of your experience?

U: Yeah it has changed for the better. Maybe in the beginning I was a little more nervous about how is this going to end up...

I: So why did you do it anyway at that time?

U: Because it was good money. To be honest. It was really like, you can earn.. Being away three days, you can earn maybe, yeah, 2000. Just to go directly in your pocket. It is a lot of money when you are a student. So that is the main reason, honestly. And then because it is easy to do.

I: So in that way you overcome those initial...

U: Concerns, yeah. Exactly.

I: When you then look at the profile to see if they are actually nice... I mean, if it was a scam, they could probably just write the nice things anyway. So why do you trust that it is a person with real intentions?

U: Yeah, but I think it is a... I think it is really like a lot about how you look at other people generally. Because I have a lot of friends who have said to me, "oh, it is so nice that you earn so much money, maybe I should do it as well" but "no, I would not trust people" or "no, I would not feel comfortable with other people living in my apartment". They could look in my closet then, they could... yeah, do this or that. But I think if you choose to be a host in Airbnb, I also think you need to have that basic trust in other people. And if you don't have that, I don't think you should be renting out your home. Because then you would all the time consider different kind of scenarios. Different kind of issues that could arise.

I: And you are not thinking about that?

U: No, I just choose to not to. I just don't like.. It's an apartment. It's things. It could be.. If they broke my sofa even, then I could get a new one. Then I could maybe get it, get some help from Airbnb, or you know. I don't consider it...

I: Now you mention Airbnb, do you consider it possible to get help from them?

U: Yeah. I do. Actually... There was something I needed help with once... I actually don't remember what it was. But I remember it was quite difficult to reach them, because I needed to call someone in Spain or whatever. And there was quite a long queue for speaking to someone. But I think eventually they solved my problem, so it was okay.

I: In general, what do you think about Airbnb behind this. Like how important is it, that it is Airbnb?

U: And that it is Airbnb and not another renting rental service?

I: Yeah.

U: It is not the most important, if it had another name or it was another company. I would probably use that as well. But now I just use Airbnb because that is the first I heard of. They are good at branding them self and it is just, yeah.

I: Have you heard about Homeaway?

U: No, actually not.

I: So if I mention they do kind of the same. Would you consider using that platform?

U: Yeah. Yeah, actually I would. But, maybe I wouldn't do it because of the trouble of, you know, making a new profile, and making a new reputation there as a host. And getting

recommendations and so on. Because now I'm using Airbnb and I haven't had any real issues with that. I have been satisfied. They are, I think in their margin they are taking 3% of the total amounts that the customers pay. And I don't consider that to be a lot. I'm satisfied with the service that Airbnb has.

I: You also mention one thing that for you to figure to trust another person to come is if they look nice, but you also say the reviews...

U: Yeah, mostly the reviews... Because I think it is a good way to, if they have ten other recommendations, or even just two or three, I'm okay.

I: And what is a good recommendation

U: Yeah, it is that people write that, 'oh, they were really nice,' and 'no problems,' and 'they left the apartment clean and looking nice.' Yeah, respectful guests.

I: And you say even two might be okay.

U: Yeah, it would be fine as well.

I: What I am really interested to understand here is why do you come to trust people? Is it the people, is it the mechanisms, is it the Airbnb brand? Like if you can think about and elaborate on what is it that actually makes you believe that everything will be fine?

U: Yeah. It is both Airbnb as it functions. Because it has this. You know, people give feedback, people give recommendations. And I think that is a very trustable way of securing that it is someone that you will let into your home. Because it is other hosts who has been doing the same. And I think, why would they recommend someone, if they haven't been nice to them. And why would they evaluate them badly, if they have been good guest. So I think it is really, you know in this concept there is a lot of trust build into the system. And I think when people choose to use it, most people do it because they think it is a genius way, or a good way to visit other countries and exchange services. So I think it is a lot like this with all of those new sharing economy services. Also like GoMore or... I also use GoMore a lot, I think it is brilliant. Instead of paying 500 Danish crowns to go to Jutland when I'm going home then I can pay 100 to go with car instead. And talk to other people and yeah, maybe expand my whatever network or... Yeah, I think it is great with all those...

I: So you think it is great just because of the money saved?

U: Yeah, but it is both the money saving and also the concept behind it. That you share your, like I'm away from my apartment, should it just be unused in the mean time, why not share stuff, why not give that extra seat in your car for an amount of money.

I: Why is that important for you that it is important to share these kind of things?

U: But it is also if you think more deeply about it, it is also about the environment or, you know, the green thought about it, the sharing stuff with each other. Instead of be just using and using and using, you know, resources... But that is not the reason I am do it, it is because of the money. Basically. It is the main reason. But the other things are nice, and I like that idea that it is also something, some reasons you can consider for using it. Yeah, saving money is [laughing], to be honest, the main reason.