Re-thinking agency in alternative tourism –
hosts’ motivations to participate in collaborative economy

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Keywords: Feminist economic geography, tourism geography, diverse economies, collaborative economy, co-creation, hospitality, tourism, Couchsurfing

Abstract:

Drawing on the intersection of tourism geography and economic geography, this thesis contributes to the lack of diverse economic studies in tourism research, and deconstructs the hegemonic concept of singular economy and its agencies in tourism industry. Collaborative economy and co-creation of tourism experience enable alternative agencies in tourism industry by empowering the visitors and locals. Thus, understanding co-creation and including various stakeholders contributes to more sustainable tourism development. This thesis focuses on locals’ point of view and their motivations to host, and how they as new agencies challenge the conventional views of commercial tourism agencies. Through a case study I examine the motivations and experiences of individuals, who take part in resident-visitor co-creation as hosts, accommodating travellers in their homes via non-monetized social networking platform called Couchsurfing.

Applying sequential mixed methods research design, I conducted semi-structured interviews and an online survey. I limited my focus on Finnish hosts only. The main analysis methods were content analysis, factor analysis, and comparing percentages and cross tabulations. Data and the interpretations suggest that hosts are motivated by trust, strong ideological assumptions and experienced intangible compensations such as social, cultural and self-developmental aspects. Also, tangible benefits and possible reciprocation of hospitality motivate to accommodate. Hosts’ actions in diverse economies are also affective, creating intangible compensations and can’t be reduced to one’s own competitiveness. The intangible features and affective labour challenge the categories of capitalist economies, and through sociability enable alternative human agencies in tourism. By including locals as new intermediaries, diverse economic practices do not only change the way how tourism is done, but also where it is done.

Shifting thinking from tourism without development into tourism without mobility, future research could take into account other alternative agencies and practices in collaborative economy, not only those within hospitality. Since co-creation and collaborative economy enable alternative tourism experiences, it also raises questions of how co-creation and collaborative actions alter the urban fabric, and frame and reframe existing tourist destinations.

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Date: 23.10.2017
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1 INTRODUCTION

From a postmodern perspective, tourism is a relational force field, which creates spatial and temporal structures and tension between everyday life and other realities. Tourism itself is a constituting force that brings together different urban, cultural, economic, political, societal, spatial and material processes. New intermediaries, networks and technologies are opening up the system of conventional tourism consumption and production (Veijola et al. 2013, Russo & Richards 2016). Tourism is fragmenting into more heterogeneous tourism spaces, and the booming sharing economy and other diverse economic practices reinforce this development. It affects the relations between people, space and place, allowing already existing places and spaces to be used differently. The simultaneous everyday lives of the residents and the tourist experience are intersecting in the process of resident-visitor co-creation, where tourists and locals interact and cooperate in creating tourism experiences (Binkhorst & Dekker 2009, Maitland & Newman 2009).

Tourism is spilling into new areas, and forming new localities as tourists are interested in the everyday urban lives and experiences outside the traditional hot spots in city centres. Tourism in postmodern context is rather characterized by the idea of being a traveller, who is actively looking for experiences (Binkhorst & Dekker 2009, Maitland & Newman 2009, Russo & Richards 2016). Tourists look for new tourism experiences by interacting, cooperating and sharing with the local people, not only companies but also residents. Traditional top-down approach is challenged by the altering guest-host relationship, and actively participating tourists have more power and control (Binkhorst & Dekker 2009). There are plenty of notions that locals and travellers are more willing to find something that is perceived alternative, authentic, ethnic, or creative. The notions of a creative tourist itself is replacing the idea of a merely passive consumer (Collins 2007, Novy 2010, Pappalepore et al. 2010, Richards 2011, Germann Molz 2013, Füller & Michel 2014).

Alongside the host-guest –de-differentiation, tourism industry is affected by the emerging diverse economic practices which are reorganizing the distribution channels of commodities. Sharing already existing resources reduces the need to produce new commodities to own, simultaneously reinforcing the lifestyles and ideologies behind it
(Botsman & Rogers 2011). Societal, environmental, economic and even cultural processes behind the rise of sharing economy and other alternative economies have been recognized. Changes in consumer behavior, ideological change to prefer access over ownership, technological development and the rise of platform economy, ecological awareness, economic crises and the pressure to cut out hyper consumption, young entrepreneurs, and new business activities are all drivers of that change (eg. Lahti & Selosmaa 2013, Lahti 2015, Jakonen & Silvasti 2015, Botsman & Rogers 2011). When it comes to tourism, these practices are often combining the travellers’ desire for more authentic and local experiences, and locals’ desire to share and co-create with other stakeholders. Diverse economic practices and collaborative economy, through which locals share their accommodation, cars, tools, meals, and local knowledge with each other, are emerging as a new stakeholder to be taken into account (Heo 2016, Mosedale 2012).

With the emerging practices of co-creation and cooperation, tourists become embedded in local communities in new ways through alternative forms of tourism. It contributes not only to tourists’ perceptions, but also alters the locals’ way of thinking of their own localities (Pappalepore & Smith 2016, Russo & Richards 2016). Pappalepore and Smith (2016: 89) argue that the meaning of the city is co-created too, as its meanings are socially constructed. Blurring concepts of workers, residents, and tourists become challenged in the world of mobilities (Sheller & Urry 2006). Urban spaces are transforming into spaces of networks, places of mobility, getting influenced by a “world on the move” (Sheller & Urry 2006). Increasing amount of tourists and mobility affect the existing interactions of visitors, residents, workers and other urban people who are together creating new urban places as well as intersecting localities and preferences. It’s more difficult, if even relevant, to separate tourist activities from other urban processes (Maitland & Newman 2009, Russo & Richards 2016).

In its social and economic context, tourism offers many possibilities for diverse ways of doing tourism (Crouch 2013: 250) and possibilities to rethink the capitalocentric views of economic activities (Mosedale 2012). On the other hand, according to World Tourism Organization UNWTO (2016), tourism is one of the fastest growing industries
in the world and its social and economic impacts on the local communities are growing. Tourism is also used as a tool for regional development, prompting local economies thus contributing to more sustainable tourism (Richards & Hall 2000). Achieving and maintaining sustainable tourism in urban destinations benefits from understanding of the shared interactions and experiences (Armenски et al. 2011) and understanding collaborative practices also from the locals’ point of view contributes to this agenda.

The above-mentioned topics are intersecting in the interests of tourism geography and economic geography. In the field of geography, there is growing body of research that focuses on alternative and diverse understandings of economy (eg. Gibson-Graham 1996 & 2008, Richardson 2015), tourism economies and agencies (Mosedale 2011, Mosedale 2012) and their spatial consequences of reshaping the new localities of tourism (Russo & Richards 2016). In this thesis I approach tourism from its postmodernist perspective, deconstructing the dichotomist logic of tourism geographies and thinking of tourism as a relational force field, something that is between fixed and mobile understandings of place (Russo and Richards 2016). Russo and Richards (2016: 5) recognize a creative turn, which repositions cultural tourism, focusing on tourism experience as negotiation, relationship and encounter. The passive gaze of tourism has in the last decades shifted more towards active forms of tourism involvement, and alternative tourism practices in the tourism destinations. Alternative tourism also refers to an alternative way of tourism that reflects the moral understandings of the visitors and hosts, as a reaction to mass consumerism or as a reaction to exploitation of developing nations (Cohen 1987). This positions diverse economic practices into the core of alternative tourism.

This thesis builds on the changes within the society as well as within the academic thinking, where a shift towards “tourism without development” (Russo & Richards 2016: 262) could be addressed. Diverse economies, new platforms and intangible resources as ‘soft’ local factors contribute to a process what Russo and Richards (2016: 1–2) call a paradigm of tourism without development. Interpreting Russo and Richards’s thoughts through a shift in agency, I aim to rethink agency in alternative tourism. De-differentiating host-guest –relationship leads to a situation where local communities have an increasingly important role, rather than external developers. Within these trajectories, co-creation of tourism experience and online networks enable alternative agencies in tourism industry
by empowering the locals. I’m focusing on how it challenges the conventional views of commercial tourism agencies. Approaching the topic from the hosts’ point of view, I am asking what motivates locals to participate in the activities of co-creation and sharing as hosts. Through a case study I examine the motivations and experiences of individuals, who take part in resident-visitor co-creation as hosts, accommodating travellers in their homes via a social networking platform called Couchsurfing. Online platforms that are based on peer-to-peer co-creation of tourism experience are on the rise, and Couchsurfing has gained a lot of attention being the most popular non-monetized platform. Couchsurfing is often seen to be in the core of sharing and co-creation activities due to its non-monetary nature, which also makes it a practice of diverse economy (Cheng 2016a: 61; Gibson-Graham 2006). Research questions for the thesis are:

1. What motivates Couchsurfing members to host and take part in sharing and co-creative tourism practices?

2. How the emerging practices of collaborative economy and co-creation challenge the agencies in conventional commercial tourism?

The first research question is more concrete and directly aims to find out the reasons why an individual is willing to participate in sharing and co-creative tourism practices as a Couchsurfing host. Therefore, the second research question is more interpretative and it reflects the motivational features behind the hosting. It binds the collaborative economy and co-creative practices into a wider context of economic agency within tourism. This thesis is driven by the aim to rethink economic agency, and provide different readings and interpretations of the phenomenon by performing different ontologies within tourism research (Rosenau 2001, Gibson-Graham 2006). In the context of tourism without development (Russo & Richards 2016: 1–5), this thesis reflects how tourism, from the local’s point of view, could be considered as tourism without mobility as well.

I apply the concept of co-creation and principles of diverse economic practices in tourism from the hosts’ point of view. The role of the local community in urban tourism has mostly been a neglected subject and the research is mostly done about community impacts and attitudes towards tourism (Ap 1992, Rátz 2000, Russo & Richards 2017), yet
the locals’ point of view often seems to be left in the dark in co-creation studies (Besculides et al. 2002, Haanpää et al. 2013: 105). Local people have a major impact on the social construction of the city. In Shakespeare’s words, “what is the city but the people”? (Shakespeare & Parker 1994). The concept of co-creation allows approaching locals as new intermediaries and take into account the local perspective in urban context of de-differentiation. The categories of locals and non-locals should not be reduced to binaries, they are rather socially negotiated and flexible (Germann Molz 2013). In this thesis I focus on resident-visitor co-creation and Couchsurfing is used as a case study to exemplify the alternative ways in which sharing and co-creative practices are performed in collaborative economy, and how it challenges the conventional commercial tourism agencies.

After the introduction, the theoretical background of alternative and diverse economies as well as alternative hospitality is introduced. Linking both hospitality and diverse economies with co-creation and collaborative activities, I introduce my case study platform Couchsurfing and go through the sparse body of literature about motivations to participate in alternative hospitality and economic activities. Moving on to my data and methods, and reflect my data with the theoretical background. In the end, I draw the conclusions based on my research questions and assess my approach as well as my methods, and also assess the future research needs.

2 PERFORMING TOURISM ALTERNATIVES

Researching diverse economies and collaborative economies in tourism contributes to the lack of diverse economic studies in tourism research. Drawing on the intersection of hospitality and economy, this thesis contributes to deconstructing the hegemonic concept of the economy and its agencies in tourism, by exploring the alternatives in tourism economies and hospitality. These two partially overlapping and entangled alternative understandings of economy and hospitality are combined in order to critically rethink human agency and its role in alternative tourism.

Feminist economic geography focuses on unravelling the economic alternatives and diverse economies by performing different narratives and discourses, views that are traditionally marginalized or repressed in economic geography (Gibson-Graham 2006).
Gibson-Graham (2006) states that researching diverse economies does not only depict the alternatives but also performs them in ontological sense, deconstructing binaries and constituting diverse economies with “loose sense of grammar” (St. Martin et al. 2015: 4). Therefore, Gibson-Graham is against a culture of thinking and singular framing of economy and its capitalist hegemony. Respectively Mosedale (2012: 194) states that tourism research “either fails to mention alternative economies or simply views them as minor distortions of a capitalist system”.

Understanding tourism requires holistic visions and integration of various agencies and actors, not only because of the complex and dynamic relationships beyond a simple capitalist economy itself (Mosedale 2012: 194), but also because of the complexity of the tourism economies (Fernández & Rivero 2013). Tourism is neither only a sector nor a specific product, rather an industry that consists of various stakeholders, local people and residents, who are also one stakeholder to be taken into account (Heo 2016, Russo & Richards 2016). With local agencies I refer not only to local tourism employees or entrepreneurs as agencies in conventional commercial tourism, but also to the locals embedded in tourism through a multitude of practices and performances. Although Dredge and Gyimóthy (2017: 9) state that their groupings of collaborative economy actors are overlapping and interdependent, their framework depicts a relational approach to conceptualise collaborative economy and its individual and collective agencies (figure 1).
I focus on the local aspects and the local residents as agencies in collaborative economy, and highlight the emerging collective capital that emerges from the local residents and communities. In this thesis, hospitality is understood as a tourism related subsector within the accommodation sector (Weiermair 2006), and alternative agencies in hospitality are included through interpretations of a case study of Couchsurfing, which I identify as a diverse economic practice. The next section clarifies the concepts of diverse and alternative economies, and alternative hospitality as practices of performing tourism alternatives.

1.1 Diverse economies
According to St. Martin, Roelvink and Gibson-Graham (2015: 3), it was Gibson-Graham’s critique of capitalocentrism, a discursive framing of capitalism as a singular order of the economy, which started bringing diverse economies into being within academic thinking. Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham, writing together as Gibson-
Graham, are geographers whose critique evolved from their disciplinary bases in economic geography and Marxian political economy, and the limited scope of these approaches. Although economic diversity had been realized by activists and thinkers outside the academy, the idea of economic difference has been applied by many geographers and other social scientists only since the late 1990’s, pioneered by Gibson-Graham (Gibson-Graham 2006, St. Martin et al. 2015: 2–5).

In regard to tourism, non-capitalist social relations produce alternative spaces of mobility and hospitality, which operate in the interstices of conventional economy. Couchsurfing, volunteer tourism, and home swapping are examples of diverse economic practices which are transforming capitalist market systems into alternative forms of production. (Mosedale 2011: 24–26). According to Mosedale (2011: 26) this kind of marginal mobile practices are “--with reference to empowerment, activism and resistance to the hegemony of the dominant capitalist economy”. Diverse economies in tourism challenge the logic of conventional tourism that is usually based on neoliberalist and fee-for-service perspectives. Alternatives extend beyond mass consumption and offer non-monetary possibilities, which might be based on sharing or other ideals and transactions, and are often influenced by ethical values (Gibson-Graham 2006, Deville et al. 2016: 92).

The diversity of economic practices is seen in the different modes of transactions, labour and the configuration of production and the organizational form of the practices. Hospitality and its transactions, for an example reciprocal exchange or sharing, are socially negotiated concepts and don’t follow supply-demand -logic (Mosedale 2012). By constructing diverse economic activities based on various kinds of transactions and ways of negotiating commensurability, diverse economic practices deconstruct the dominant practices (Gibson-Graham 2008: 59–61). Economies are diverse and can’t be reduced to competitiveness of an individual or a company, thus they’re powered by alternative motives rather than capitalocentric growth and commodification (Mosedale 2012).

Processes of disintermediation are opening the closed system of tourism production and consumption (Russo & Richards 2016: 252–253). Focusing on both the social structures and human agency gives space for wider interpretations of individuals, not only as economic subjects, but as actors participating in producing and reproducing economies (Mosedale 2012: 196). Conventional commercial tourism economy tends to exclude the local communities, but by engaging in diverse economic practices, local people can gain
monetary or other personal benefits (Dredge & Gyimóthy 2015: 294). Reflecting Richards’ (2013) idea of locals as new intermediaries, most of the online platforms of collaborative economy activate locals, and operate without involving a third party apart from the website or platform itself.

Table 1 illustrates Gibson-Graham’s (2008: 68–74) view of the diversity of economic activity. The axes of economic difference highlight Gibson-Graham’s aim to view capitalist forms of economy only as one part of economic activities. Mosedale (2012: 198) further updated the table in his representation of diverse practices and economies in the field of tourism and mobility. He presents diversities of the economies in degree of capitalism, nature of the market and the quality of wages.

Ethical values, social justice, equality and sustainability shape alternative forms of capitalism. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is one example of alternative capitalism, with the recognition that a corporate has social, economic and ecological responsibilities, and that the responsibilities should extend beyond the profit maximization (Mosedale 2012: 197–199, Veijola et al. 2013: 22). CSR hotels, for an example distribute part of their surplus to outside stakeholders. Non-capitalist, communal ownership based examples are rare in tourism. For an example in China, there are organizations like Xidi Tourism Service, that are based on solidarity and some of the surplus is distributed to other stakeholders (Mosedale 2012: 197–199, Deville et al. 2016: 92).

Gibson-Graham’s (2006: 71) framework regroups diverse economies also by transactions. There are a variety of transactions, such as market, alternative market, and nonmarket transactions in the field of tourism. Not all of them follow supply-demand – logic but the transaction and its equivalence could be socially negotiated, like in home swapping or Couchsurfing (Forno & Garibaldi 2015). Alternative transactions can be based on voluntary fees or state funding of museums or national parks for an example, or transactions of gift-giving and charity (Mosedale 2012: 200–203).
Table 1. A framework of diverse economy, adapted from Gibson-Graham (2006: 71) and Mosedale (2012: 198).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENTERPRISE</th>
<th>TRANSACTIONS</th>
<th>LABOUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAPITALIST</td>
<td></td>
<td>WAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus appropriated by owners</td>
<td>MARKET</td>
<td>Remunerated with money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST</td>
<td>ALTERNATIVE MARKET</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State enterprise</td>
<td>Sale of public goods</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green capitalist</td>
<td>Ethical “fair-trade”</td>
<td>Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially responsible firm</td>
<td>Local trading systems</td>
<td>Indentured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Alternative currencies</td>
<td>Reciprocal labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Underground market</td>
<td>In-kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-op exchange</td>
<td>Work for welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NONCAPITALIST</td>
<td>NONMARKET</td>
<td>UNPAID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>Household flows</td>
<td>Housework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Gift giving</td>
<td>Family care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feudal</td>
<td>Indigenous exchange</td>
<td>Neighbourhood work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slave</td>
<td>State allocations</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State appropriations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gleaning</td>
<td>Self-provisioning labour</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Hunting, fishing,</td>
<td>Slave labour</td>
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<td>gathering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Theft, poaching</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Labour is usually combined with wage compensated labour, but there are again wider meanings of labour and how it is performed and compensated. In Gibson-Graham’s (2006: 71) framework, labour varies from unpaid or in alternative forms, self-employment to cooperatives and in-kind payments. Exchanging labour for food and accommodation is an example of an in-kind payment and is an increasingly popular phenomenon in tourism. Volunteer tourism and family labour are examples of unpaid labour which don’t involve a monetary compensation but are often compensated via social factors (Mosedale 2012: 203–204, Deville et al. 2016). The work done in the non-monetary economies is changing the meanings of work and labour, contributing to something that might be described as immaterial or affective labour, creating intangible ‘products’ (Mikolajewska-Zajac 2016). It is framed both as beyond the capitalist economy or as a part of it – it constructs diverse activities and simultaneously deconstructs practices of dominance (Gibson-Graham 2008, Richardson 2015).

2.1.1 Collaborative economy and non-monetary sharing
The emergence of sharing economy and other economic alternatives based on monetary or non-monetary exchange have created various local and global initiatives and platforms (Botsman & Rogers 2011). The impacts of sharing and collaborative practices in tourism are an under-developed and fragmented discourse, partly because of the novelty of the topic. Even the concepts of sharing economy, solidarity economy and collaborative economy are sometimes used in interchangeable and overlapping meanings (Cheng 2016b, Dredge & Gyimóthy 2017, Eskelinen & Kumpuniemi 2017). In his research note Cheng (2016b) states that it is to be seen how the booming sharing economy, and its possibilities in tourism redefine the roles of visitors and locals. Couchsurfing differs from recent monetary sharing economy practices, many of which tend to be technology facilitated business models driven by market-based logic (Eskelinen & Kumpuniemi 2017). However, Couchsurfing combines features from platform, sharing and solidarity economies, and in this thesis I placed it under a broader concept of collaborative economy which I adapted from Dredge and Gyimóthy (2017).

Also other scholars and researchers talk about collaborative actions. Already in 2011, Botsman and Rogers introduced the concept of ‘collaborative consumption’. They
describe a development of the old ideals of coming together and sharing, being refreshed and reinvented through technology – “creating a culture and economy of what is mine is yours” (Botsman & Rogers 2011: xv). Their view aligns with Russo and Richard’s (2016: 1) thoughts of collaborative tourism, which they regard as a creation of the current network society. These collaborative concepts encompass a cultural turn – reinventing and reframing the collaborative practices in modern communities, especially in urban contexts. Through new technological possibilities, it becomes an economic turn, a possibility to move away from hyper consumption and create diverse economies on a global scale (Botsman & Rogers 2011, Pesonen & Tussyadiah 2017).

Initiatives and platforms bring together people who share similar interests, and who are collaborating in order to share more intangible resources such as skills, space, and time (Botsman & Rogers 2011: 73). Botsman and Rogers (2011: 71–75) divide economic activities into three service system categories: product service systems, redistribution markets, and collaborative lifestyles. Product service systems refer to changes in individual private ownership – access over ownership. Redistribution refers to the recycling of commodities, mostly via online platforms. Collaborative lifestyles, such as Couchsurfing, are altering the ways in which sociality is operated and how it forms among strangers (Bialski 2016: 35).

Different stakeholders from grass root activists to media and ICT (information and communications technology) industries are participating in creating contrasting and contradictory discourses of collaborative economy that intersects with sharing economy, and scholars use different and sometimes interchangeable meanings for ‘sharing’ itself (see Rogers & Botsman 2011, Belk 2014, Grybaite & Stankeviciene 2016, Hamari et al. 2016, Eskelinen & Kumpuniemi 2017, Dredge & Gyimóthy 2017). To Hamari, Sjöklint and Ukkonen (2016: 2047–2048) sharing economy is an umbrella concept of the emerging economic-technological phenomena, and it refers to sharing of the consumption of goods and services online, including activities like renting, swapping or sharing. Belk (2014: 1595–1596) as well highlights the use of digital platforms by stating that sharing economy and collaborative consumption are practices based on non-ownership, relying namely on the Internet and Web 2.0. Belk (2014) however differentiates between monetary and non-monetary sharing activities, problematizing the meaning of sharing itself. By including non-monetary compensation via bartering, trading and swapping he
excludes practices like Couchsurfing, by positioning it as a sharing activity which doesn’t involve tangible compensations. ‘Non-monetary sharing’ refers, according to Eskelinen and Kumpuniemi (2017), merely to a view of sharing economy as reorganizing capitalist market relations rather than genuine sharing.

Table 2 presents the variety of platforms in different groups of innovations, such as accommodation, car and ride share, employment markets and platforms for sharing and circulating resources. They range from marketplace based, peer-to-peer networks to online communities and business-to-consumer access-based sharing opportunities. All of them include ICT regime, which indicates the importance of technological improvements in the emergence of diverse economic activities (Martin 2016). Eskelinen and Kumpuniemi (2017) argue that too often diverse economic activities are categorized under the label of sharing economy, like in table 2, in which Martin (2016) lists genuine sharing practices but also practices in which sharing is based on monetary exchange. Eskelinen and Kumpuniemi (2017) call for a conceptual demarcation between actual sharing economy and something they call solidarity economy. They state that while sharing economy is reorganizing the capitalist economy, solidarity economy builds diverse economic structures beyond conventional commercial economy.

Eskelinen and Kumpuniemi (2017) criticize the usage of the sharing economy as an all-encompassing concept. They emphasize the role of solidarity economy, not as closed platforms with predestined trajectories but as collective and open processes, which can’t be reduced to individuals’ competitiveness. Sharing economy might be used as a general concept, also referring to economic activities which are not based on reorganizing the capitalist economies but rather fostering societal change and constituting political alternatives, which could according to Eskelinen and Kumpuniemi (207) better be described as solidarity economy. Solidarity economy highlights the human agency whereas sharing economy emphasizes utilizing unused assets and more efficient usage of natural resources, reinforcing the neoliberal paradigm (Martin 2016, Eskelinen & Kumpuniemi 2017).
Table 2. Groups of innovation within the sharing economy niche, adapted from Martin (2016: 152)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups of innovation</th>
<th>Corresponding regimes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation sharing platforms</td>
<td>Tourism, ICT</td>
<td><em>Airbnb</em></td>
<td>• Peer-to-peer marketplace for people to rent out residential accommodation (including their homes) on a short-term basis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Couchsurfing</em></td>
<td>• An online community of people who offer free short-term accommodation to fellow community members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car, ride and bike sharing platforms</td>
<td>Mobility, ICT</td>
<td><em>Easy Car Club and Relayrides</em></td>
<td>• Peer-to-peer car rental platforms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Lyft and Uber</em></td>
<td>• Peer-to-peer platforms providing taxi and ridesharing services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Zipcar</em></td>
<td>• Business-to-consumer vehicle rental platform offering per hour rental of vehicles located within communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-to-peer employment markets</td>
<td>Employment, ICT</td>
<td><em>PeoplePerHour and Taskrabbit</em></td>
<td>• Peer-to-peer marketplaces for micro employment opportunities (i.e. piecemeal contracts or hourly work).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the other hand, sharing economy and collaborative practices are seen as more sustainable forms of consumption, and as an economic opportunity on the other. Arguments of promoting individuals’ economic empowerment and creating new forms of work can be found within tourism sector too (Martin 2016). Supporters highlight the social benefits such as meeting people, finding new friends or economic aspects such as saving costs and in some cases the possibility to earn extra money by sharing underutilized assets. Through better use of the resources sharing economy contributes to sustainable consumption (Lahti 2015). In many conceptualizations, sharing economy encompasses activities from monetized rental or for-profit service provision to gifting and non-monetized activities, which usually happen on online peer-to-peer networks (Martin 2016).

Collaborative economy and especially monetized sharing has raised criticism and it has been seen as a disruptive innovation. Economically successful peer-to-peer platforms such as Airbnb and Uber are thought as opening unregulated marketplaces and commercializing aspects that have previously been outside the markets, reinforcing the neoliberal paradigm (Richardson 2015, Martin 2016). Traditional service providers often see the situation unfair when sharing economy platforms and their services are not
regulated in the same way (Grybaite & Stankeviciene 2016: 8). Unfair competition, possible tax avoidance, illegal markets combined with lagging legislative frameworks are regarded as risks to both, consumers and industries (Martin 2016), therefore hampering the development of economically responsible and sustainable tourism (Veijola et al. 2013).

The demarcation between sharing and solidarity economy is important in order to create appropriate legislative frameworks (Eskelinen & Kumpuniemi 2017). In the field of tourism, commercializing private homes, local culture and neighborhoods are relevant issues to be mentioned in regards of sociocultural responsibility. Local people and their daily lives are also affected by the new off-the-beaten-track tourists, and clashing interests and attitudes might occur reducing the quality of life in the neighborhoods (Veijola et al. 2013, Russo & Richards 2016).

The concept of sharing economy is particularly problematic since my case study Couchsurfing doesn’t aim to monetize underutilized assets as sharing economy is seen to be doing, but rather it is based on intangible compensations and affective labour (Mikolajewska-Zajac 2016). Therefore, I apply the concept of collaborative economy, which I see as combining the aspects of sharing one’s space and time (Botsman & Rogers 2011), and also reorganizing capitalist economy by being based on solidarity and other ideals and transactions instead of commercial supply and demand (Gibson-Graham 2006, Eskelinen & Kumpuniemi 2017).

1.2 Alternative hospitality
Hospitality is connected to tourism and mobility, referring to host-guest –relationship and the kindness of welcoming guests and strangers (Botherton 1999, Germann Molz & Gibson 2016). According to Germann Molz (2012: 66), it also refers to the ethics of human encounters and the reciprocity arrangements between the hosts and guests. Especially technological development and Web 2.0 contribute to the emergence of new alternatives within tourism, connecting online and offline worlds and enabling new networks and platforms for hospitality (Germann Molz 2016, Belk 2014). Germann Molz and Gibson (2016) refer to mobilizing hospitality, which de-differentiates the concepts of hosts and guests in contemporary mobile world. Networked hospitality platforms reflect
the sociocultural changes as well as respond to the demand of socially produced and trustworthy forms of hospitality, which are easily accessible on peer-to-peer platforms (Russo & Richards 2016: 16–17).

Russo and Richards (2016: 20) recognize different forms of tourism hospitality ranging from commercial to sociable models, which again vary between private dwellings and collective establishments (figure 2). In commercial hospitality and conventional tourism, services and accommodation are exchanged for money. In alternative options, such as Couchsurfing, hospitality is more case-by-case based, personally and socially negotiated (Germann Molz 2013). Homes and the feeling of being ‘at home’ are seen as central to hospitality, making homes spaces of hospitality. Online hospitality platforms mobilize the concept of home, reasserting and performing homes as places of hospitality and mobility (Germann Molz & Gibson 2016: 11).

Figure 2. Forms of hospitality ranging from private to collective and from peer-to-peer to mainstream, adapted from Russo & Richards (2016: 20).
Richards (2013) argues that tourism is not only based on, but also promotes cultural and social exchange, problematizing the very concepts of hosts and guests. The concept of ‘local’ is replacing the ‘authentic’ and ‘being local’ gathers more meanings to itself as an opposite to inauthentic mass tourism resorts (Richards 2013, Forno & Garibaldi 2015). Residents and local people are crucial in the construction of tourism destinations (Russo & Richards 2016). Thus, relational tourism reflects the ideals of co-creation, since relational tourism is “created and enjoyed through the establishment of interpersonal relationships in which organizers are not just profit-driven, but strive to establish an atmosphere of honest and shared hospitality” (Forno & Garibaldi 2015: 205).

Diverse ways of collaborative or co-creative tourism are increasing as new networks and online platforms for interaction and hospitality occur, emphasizing the importance of local community rather than external developers (e.g. Belk 2014, Forno & Garibaldi 2015, Russo & Richards 2016). Online networking platforms are providing new ways for people to connect, and often they’re connecting and establishing hospitality between strangers rather than close-knit communities and small villages (Sundararajan 2016: 38). Through co-creation, the exchange of knowledge and skills of both the visitors and residents, become part of the place making, and tourism as a form of consumption is also seen as a way of self-development and learning, to which creativity is linked (Binkhorst & Dekker 2009, Richards 2011, Pera 2014). In the next part I’ll introduce the concepts of co-creation and collaboration and their implications in the field tourism research.

3 CO-CREATION AND COLLABORATIVE ACTIONS

In this thesis, I refer to collaborative economy as a set of practices, which combines sharing and co-creative dimensions. Co-creation is a concept emerging from business and management studies and it’s getting more foothold in tourism studies (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004). The term focuses on the interaction and collaborative actions between different stakeholders in order to create value (Fernandes & Remelhe 2016). Pappalepore and Smith (2016: 87) suggest that “co-creation should not be seen merely as something relevant to marketing and value co-creation, but as a concept that helps us to understand tourism more widely”. In this thesis the concept is used to better understand
diverse economic practices in tourism and the human agencies co-creative practices depict and perform.

Cheng (2016a) recognizes tourism and hospitality as pioneering sections in contributing to the emergence of collaborative economy. Sharing and collaborating becomes a direct part of the tourist practice, changing the very way how tourism is done by empowering the locals and interaction between residents and visitors. Several online platforms vary from monetized or non-monetized accommodation, bike, and car sharing thus contributing to tourism and mobility (Bialski 2016: 35–36, Botsman & Rogers 2011: xv–xvii). Some of the businesses such as Airbnb and Uber have emerged from sharing a fraction into big for-profit business models (eg. Belk 2014, Cheng 2016a). Nevertheless, non-monetary initiatives such as Couchsurfing are seen as the initial concepts in sharing practices (Cheng 2016a: 61). Peer-to-peer exchange is restructuring the tourism marketplace, and Russo and Richards (2016: 1) observe that this collaborative tourism is beginning to compete with conventional mass tourism industry. Co-creation enables new forms of consumption by offering a wider range of services and options to choose from, intertwining changing demand and offer in the field of tourism (Olson & Kemp 2015: 8, Grybaite & Stankeviciene 2016: 7–8).

In the very definition of co-creation lies the assumption of interaction between and with stakeholders, who are traditionally viewed as consumers and producers. Therefore, the concept of co-creation highlights the social and cultural aspects of diverse economy practices. It comes with the assumption of the citizens as important partners in the development and re-designing services, products and concepts is in the core of the concept (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004, Voorberg et al. 2014). Co-creation links creativity, innovation and involvement to increase value of the experience economy (Binkhorst & Dekker 2009: 312). It is a process of peoples’ sense-making and a way to create added value by involvement itself (Voorberg et al. 2014: 1335, Pappalepore & Smith 2016: 88).

Three major stakeholders regarded in the tourism literature are tourists as consumers, locals or the tourism destination, and the tourism industry or the business owners (Heo 2016: 168). Co-creation refers to equitable interaction of these traditionally viewed consumers and producers, creating through cooperation, engagement and personalization (Ind & Coates 2013: 87, Minkiewicz et al. 2014: 43). The concept of co-
creation is entangled in the rise of diverse economic practices. Co-creation could be seen as a form of collaborative consumption, individuals participating in sharing practices and creating intangible products (Belk 2014: 1597, Heo 2016: 168) and personal social value expands along the value that is provided to the community (Botsman & Rogers 2011: 90). Haanpää, García-Rosell and Kyyrä (2013: 110) suggest that by considering a wider range of stakeholders and enabling dialog between the stakeholders, it’s possible to promote more responsible and sustainable endeavours of tourism development.

3.1 Co-creation of tourism experience
During the 21st century, the paradigm of tourism experience production has shifted towards a wider understanding of tourism experience, that is co-created with various stakeholders including tourists, local people, organizations, those who work in tourism industry and the tourism destination itself (Lüthje & Tarssanen 2013: 69). According to Binkhorst and Dekker (2009: 318), co-creation implicates an innovative approach on tourism viewing “tourism as a holistic network of stakeholders connected in experience environments in which everyone operates from different spatial contexts”. Spatial connections between the stakeholders alter the ways how tourism is done (Bialski 2016: 35) and where it is done (Russo & Dominguez 2016).

Shared experiences are fundamental in tourism phenomena and value is simultaneously produced and consumed, or ‘prosumed’ (Pappalepore et al. 2014, Pappalepore & Smith 2016: 88– 89). Pappalepore and Smith (2016: 92) argue that co-creation in urban environments has existed already before applying the concept to tourism research, yet it seems to be intensifying. Co-creation is also seen as a way of creating tourism experiences that meet the tourists’ need and fit the local communities. From the tourism service provider’s side, it helps to minimize the risk of creating something that doesn’t fit the market or conflicts with the residents (Guimont & Lapointe 2015). The characteristics of unique experiences and lower prices are associated with sharing practices as well (Olson & Kemp 2015: 7).

Economic globalization, increased connectedness of the marketplace and the emergence of the number of products are empowering the consumers by offering a greater variety of opportunities (Russo & Richards 2016). Belk (2014: 1598) points out the
intensification of sharing and collaborative actions, addressing the importance of the advancements of Web 2.0. Web 2.0 refers to user-generated content and peer-to-peer connections on websites, therefore it is entangled with co-creative practices (Belk 2014). Emerging IT-technologies and Web 2.0 contribute to co-creation by enabling the interaction and sharing of experiences through different platforms (DeJager 2009). Technological development and the possibilities of mobile and internet technologies have been identified as one of the macro-scale trends restructuring tourism industry (Buckley 2015: 59). According to Binkhorst and Dekker (2009: 318) the co-creation between locals and visitors possibly starts before the actual travel and continues afterwards, mostly via technology facilitated online platforms. Direct encounters between locals and visitors during the travel contribute not only to the visitors’ experience but also to the locals’ experiences.

The impacts of co-creation could also be negative and hamper socially responsible tourism development, which should consider the needs and rights of various stakeholders (Veijola et al. 2013: 22). For an example, Airbnb has received criticism and the interests of residents and visitors are conflicting in areas that were not touristic before (Füller & Michel 2014). Couchsurfing is also spreading tourism into new localities and it might prompt conflicts among hosts and local people in the neighborhoods. The case of Couchsurfing also raises the question of conflicting interests among Couchsurfing members themselves, if socially negotiated roles create a mismatch between the hosts and guests.

Also commodifying the local culture in a way that is not seen as local or genuine by the locals themselves is not promoting responsible or sustainable ways of tourism (Lüthje & Tarssanen 2013: 69). Russo and Richards (2016: 97–98) point out that the actual co-creation is embedded in the new localities and the values and meanings attached to them. Thus, they suggest co-creation to act as a barrier to the mainstreaming of local or alternative tourism spaces. In the context of the changing spatial and temporal seasonalities in tourism industry, the altering localities and resident-visitor interactions are affecting the everyday lives of the residents and their perceptions of tourism impacts. As Armenski et al. (2011: 2) point out, positive interaction between residents and tourists is crucial for tourists’ perception of the destination and residents’ acceptance and tolerance, therefore fostering culturally responsible tourism (Veijola et al. 2013: 22).
3.2 Resident-visitor co-creation

Deriving from social constructionist views Pappalepore and Smith (2016) argue that the city being a social product, co-creation shapes the experiences of both locals and visitors. Some locals want to avoid crowded tourist spots but some residents and workers seek the interaction and sociability. Therefore, public urban spaces and their participatory abilities contribute to co-creation between visitors and locals. People, rather than cities itself, shape the urban experiences (Pappalepore & Smith 2016). Not only the co-created tourism experience is socially constructed but also the spaces of tourism become co-created between hosts and guests. New co-constructed localities of tourism are constructed in the guest and hosts’ encounters and relationships in their private homes, in the cities and at the attractions they visit. These places of tourism are often different from the conventional places of mass tourism (Pappalepore & Smith 2016, Russo & Richards 2016).

Although the focus of the emerging topic of co-creation is shifting towards a wider range of stakeholders, residents or local communities’ point of view in co-creation studies remains rather underrepresented (Haanpää et al. 2013: 105, Pappalepore & Smith 2016: 93). Co-creation research tends to focus on the other stakeholders, visitors co-creating within the visitor community (tourists with other tourists) and with the supply side (tourists and workers). Distinctions are harder to make since mobility and co-creation itself foster processes of disintermediation and blur the binary categories of hosts and workers, visitors and locals (Russo & Richards 2016). Blurring notions of residents and workers are making the identification of contemporary stakeholders more difficult. Workers are usually local residents, but also the residents are becoming workers, who might earn money from hosting visitors (Pappalepore & Smith 2016: 92–93). Social communication platforms for finding an accommodation with a local host, for an example Couchsurfing and Airbnb, are challenging the concepts of residents and hospitality workers (Germann Molz 2013).

Interaction and co-creation between tourists and residents get new appearances within the emergence of social networking platforms (Pappalepore & Smith 2016). Co-creation as for local guides, like-a-local -tours, are a common example from various
European cities (Binkhorst & Dekker 2009: 318) and local people usually represent something that is perceived as authentic and non-commodified (Richards 2013). People are willing to share their knowledge and spend time with the visitors. Locals are contributing to online forums like TripAdvisor, providing content even more than fellow tourists (Mansfeldt et al. 2007). Interacting with different stakeholders contributes to tourists and locals’ self-development and learning - taking part in workshops, working with the locals, and being a volunteer tourist enable the tourists’ self-development and learning in co-creation with locals (Binkhorst & Dekker 2009, Forno & Garibaldi 2015).

Peer-to-peer network communities consist of residents and visitors, members who are willing to co-create, for example by offering or looking for an accommodation. Online communities such as Couchsurfing, home-exchange communities and commercial model Airbnb share specific cultural and social assumptions. They are based on reputation and personal affirmation rejecting the linear rational model of the conventional hospitality industry (Russo & Domingues 2016: 17–19). Forno and Garibaldi (2015: 207) state that peer-to-peer co-creative tourism is negotiating the terms of hospitality as it’s based on reciprocity and mutual collaboration, rather than monetary exchange. Germann Molz (2013) points out the importance of social networking technologies as facilitating moral exchange and generating trust, since the platform itself acts as an intermediary between strangers to generate trust within the social network.

4 CASE COUCHSURFING

Web 2.0, developing information and communicating technologies, especially social networking technologies, and the emergence of sharing economy have given more power to the consumers and locals, turning the traditional dynamics of commercial companies upside down within the tourism industry (eg. Germann Molz 2013, Buckley et al. 2015, Russo & Richards 2016). Couchsurfing is an interactive online hospitality platform, which facilitates co-creation and alternative hospitality between local people and visitors. Couchsurfing was established in 2004 and is now probably the most popular example of an online community facilitating social interaction, with the primary function of finding free accommodation and added functions for cultural encounters (Cova & White 2010, Rosen et al. 2011). However, many of the Couchsurfing members were also members of
previous hospitality networks such as Servas or HospitalityClub which are online or offline networks based on non-monetary exchange (Mikolajewska-Zajac 2016: 211-212). Therefore, we should bear in mind that free exchange of hospitality is not a new invention in the field of tourism, although it has been intensifying alongside the technological development and sociocultural changes.

Couchsurfing is a worldwide community that comprises of its registered members on its website. Once one becomes a member of the website, one can look for accommodation, offer accommodation, find travel company, look for events held by fellow members or discuss mostly about travel-related topics on the forum. Couchsurfing is nowadays a community of 12 million users, Couchsurfers, 400 000 of them are hosting in over 200 000 cities (Couchsurfing website 2017b). Couchsurfing has reached the critical mass by attracting enough willing hosts and providing social proof of its safety and utility, enough to motivate users to participate (Botsman & Rogers 2011: 177-178).

Couchsurfing is more than just an online community platform: it extends to offline world and contributes to reshaping new localities, processes and structures of tourism, changing the spatial logic of where and how tourism happens (Russo & Richards 2016). Couchsurfing promotes sharing and connecting people, “creating a global community” (Couchsurfing website 2017a). The values are listed on the Couchsurfing website and they include tolerance and kindness, staying curious, and learning as global citizens (Couchsurfing website 2017a). Couchsurfing answers to the travellers’ needs to find something that is perceived local and authentic (Richardson 2015). It challenges traditional social norms as people interact with strangers and welcome them to their private homes (Rosen et al. 2011: 982). As a technology of hospitality, it enables planned encounters, but on the contrary to some other social network platforms, Couchsurfing is focused on connecting strangers rather than pre-existing contacts (Bialski 2011: 246).

Couchsurfing and similar online platforms are blurring the notions of hosts and guest – a Couchsurfer could be both, a host and a guest, depending on the situation (Bialski 2011: 246). Couchsurfing is a platform that allows the locals and travellers themselves become hosts, to find a free place to stay and for the hosts to share their apartments with travellers and co-create experiences. On the website, there is no tracking system to track whether the members are giving as much they are taking. Other members can see the number of hosts and guests on the profile and they can read the references.
There are members who have only hosted or members who have only used it as guests and of course those, who have used it for both (Sundararajan 2016: 38–39). Although I refer to Couchsurfing hosts in my thesis, it could also mean that they have been guests as well, using Couchsurfing to accommodation finding purposes. The binary concepts of hosts and guests and the roles are situational and socially negotiated, encounter by encounter.

Trust is in the core of online peer-to-peer exchange networks as hospitality is based on trust and open mindedness (Cova & White 2010, Rosen et al. 2011). With the case of Couchsurfing, trust is generated in four different ways: verification, personal profiles, references and vouching (Botsman & Rogers 2011: 177). By updating their profiles members can tell the other users about their selves and their travels. Friendship feature links users and allows to vouch other members and get references from others. Accumulating friends and references in the social networks represent trusting relationships. Users can also verify their profiles by paying an annual membership fee. Verification is not necessary but it builds more trust and potentially helps to find a place to stay (Rosen et al. 2011: 938). Verification is also a way of financing the corporation, and in the year of 2017 the annual verification fee was 20€.

Members can update their status according to their willingness to host guests or not. Members who are looking for an accommodation, can send a request to stay at their place. Hosts can gather information about their potential guests who have sent them requests, and eventually hosts make the decision if they are willing to host them. According to Bialski (2011: 258) this leads to a situation in which the hosts can subjectively choose whether they want to give their hospitality to specific person or not. Members can go through each other’s profiles and they might end up choosing their hosts or guests based on compatibility, reinforcing the intercultural encounters only between certain, often like-minded people (Germann Molz 2011).

Networked hospitality refers to the technology facilitated hospitality between geographically dispersed people. Couchsurfers are dependent on technological knowhow and it creates a bias in the website – those who have the access to the website and knowledge how to use it, can participate. A generational and a global digital divide makes it possible to build “meaningful connections” only between certain kinds of people (Germann Molz 2013). According to Germann Molz (2016: 75) it “forges a global
community in which members are open to each other, but enclosed within this economic chain of reciprocity and obligation”. She highlights the moral background and the paradox of Couchsurfing community, which is actually a closed community of open-minded people, who are expected to be curious and cosmopolitan.

4.1 Couchsurfing as an alternative practice

Thinking of Couchsurfing hosts as a network of actors, who by performing non-monetary sharing take part in alternative economic practices and social endeavors, places Couchsurfing as a diverse economy practice. Couchsurfing hosts’ actions don’t reduce to individual or corporate competitiveness (Richardson 2015). Couchsurfing community directly represents non-monetary values and a strong ideological ethos as it encourages to “travel like a local, stay in someone’s home and experience the world in a way money can’t buy” (Couchsurfing website 2017b). Couchsurfing forbids exchange of money or labour for accommodation in their conduct policy (Couchsurfing website 2017c) and constructs a specific moral landscape of alternative tourism by following the agenda of ‘creating a better world, one couch at a time’ (Couchsurfing website, quoted in Germann Molz 2013: 211). ‘Pure’ peer-to-peer models of networked hospitality eschew the commercial motivations – they are based on the encounter of the two parties, their reciprocal interests rather than financial profit. It conforms to the personal aspirations to encounter, to be curious or to extend their personal social networks (Russo & Richards 2016).

Couchsurfing started out as a non-profit organization and accepted donations but applied for charity status in 2011. After the rejection, it ended up converting to a for-profit corporation in 2011, which means that it accepts venture capital funding. The directors however state that Couchsurfing will be free for its users even though the business model changed (Harris 2011, Couchsurfing Blog 2011). Mikolajewska-Zajac (2016: 211–212) notes that many Couchsurfing members have become members of other non-profit initiatives such as BeWelcome or started listing their apartments or rooms on monetary platforms, because of the conversion to for-profit corporation. Regardless of the shifting organizational logic, members’ own activity in Couchsurfing is still non-monetary exchange, and company’s conduct policy forbids asking for money or labour
in exchange for accommodation (Couchsurfing website 2017c). My main focus is on the economic agency of the hosts themselves, not primarily the organizational logic and ideological assumptions of the company. Nevertheless, the economic organizational structure of the company influences the economic agencies it enables and reproduces.

Germann Molz (2013) has approached Couchsurfing from its moral perspectives. She states that by challenging the for-profit logic of mass tourism, Couchsurfing is promoting a specific moral agenda, referring to Bauman’s (2003) concept of a ‘moral economy’. Moral economy is based on physical proximity instead of virtual proximity, which endures relationships and face-to-face proximity and enables cooperation and sharing between friends, neighbors and family. Germann Molz highlights the moral grounds of alternative hospitality as a “rejection of the supposedly impersonal and exploitative character of commercialized mass tourism” (Germann Molz 2013: 212), moral economy taking place within the online and offline relationships of that geographically dispersed community (Germann Molz 2012: 170).

Bialska (2012) combines Couchsurfing with reciprocity-based ideology, suggesting that the reciprocity within the Couchsurfing community is indirect. Germann Molz (2013: 222) refers to this as a ‘generalized reciprocity’, since hosts don’t know the respondents of their good will. Based on her empirical research Germann Molz (2013: 219) states that it became clear that “Couchsurfers understood their participation in the network as a resistance to consumer society and as a form of solidarity with other travellers committed to creating a better world”. In this kind of alternative markets, the exchange and hospitality is socially negotiated and Couchsurfing as a form of alternative tourism offers more meaningful ways of connecting with the world (Germann Molz 2013).

Diverse economic practices could also be defined as affective labour (Mikolajewska-Zajac 2016) or emotional labour (Russo & Richards 2016: 264). It requires human proximity, includes affects and emotional responds and produces immaterial informational or cultural products (Mikolajewska-Zajac 2016). As Mikolajewska-Zajac (2016) points out, spending leisure time with travellers is not easily termed labour. However, as a sharing economy platform Couchsurfing encourages its members to “share, create connections, offer kindness and stay curious” (Couchsurfing website 2017a), and enthrones the human aspect and proximity of the encounters. It reflects the values of mutual respect and cultural exchange, reflecting the importance of
locals and localness. It is important to note, that ‘sharing’ through Couchsurfing also includes material components of co-creation – homes of the hosts, the couches that they share and the meals they cook. Mikolajewska-Zajac (2016: 217) states that “homes are means of production as well as means of consumption of travel experiences”, and argues that intangible and tangible aspects of sharing activities could not be totally de-differentiated. This way, tourism becomes inseparable part of local people’s lives through co-creative tourism practices.

4.2 Couchsurfing as a co-creative tourism phenomenon

Interaction and co-creation between tourists and residents get new appearances within the emergence of online hospitality platforms, such as Couchsurfing (Pappalepore & Smith 2016). Local people can be engaged in urban tourism in many ways, but more emphasis has been on economic factors and how to engage local entrepreneurs. Focus should also be paid on how the local communities in urban areas are engaging in tourism. Binkhorst et al (2009: 324) suggest that with “the growing interest to learn about other cultures, tourism experiences increasingly are a means for interaction with others”. Couchsurfing is an example of co-creative tourism led by the growing interest to engage with other people and culture. Its popularity reflects the travellers’ willingness to engage with the local people, but also the locals’ willingness to interact with the travellers.

Co-creation of tourism experience starts already before the actual travel and might continue afterwards, when hosts and guests are keeping contact and possibly even visiting each other in the future. Meaningful encounters and social aspects are part of the popularity of Couchsurfing – it is “a new idea with an old ethos” (Botsman & Rogers 2011: 180). Sharing, sociability, collaborating and collaborative lifestyles are not seen as stigmatizing as before and connecting and collaborating easier through global online platforms, making it easier for travellers to adopt as a part of their lifestyles (Botsman & Rogers 2011: 180).

Co-creation and the shift from ‘market to’ consumers to ‘market with’ consumers (Russo & Richards 2016) in its core are highlighted in the Couchsurfing community’s agenda (Couchsurfing website 2017a). I added Couchsurfing to Pappalepore and Smith’s (2016) initial figure (figure 3) and located Couchsurfing to the intersection of the three
stakeholders embedded in urban co-creation practices. As hosts, they are something between a traditional hospitality worker and a resident, since members are hosting and accommodating the surfers. As guests, they are basically tourists who come to visit a certain place or destination. Couchsurfing members could be placed to different categories at different times, depending on which role they negotiate in the Couchsurfing community as well as in the society.

![Figure 3. Co-creation in an urban tourism setting, adapted from Pappalepore and Smith (2016: 93).](image)

5 MOTIVATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN COLLABORATIVE ACTIONS IN ALTERNATIVE TOURISM

For Williams (2009: 10), motivations are the key to understand different forms of tourism and their spatial patterns. Travel motivation contributes to the reason why people travel and visit particular places but it's not the only driving force of tourist behavior. From the spatial point of view, different places are visited due to different needs (Hsu & Huang 2008). In the same way, motivations to participate in sharing practices in tourism industry and co-creative tourism are the key to understand the new forms of alternative tourism. Local people’s willingness to take part in co-creation implicates their own agency in the field of alternative tourist economies. In this thesis Couchsurfing and hosting through the
platform is understood as a practice of co-creative tourism and as a practice of diverse economy - Couchsurfing contributes to resident-visitor co-creation of tourism experience, as locals are sharing their homes and time with the visitors. To further understand the motivations behind Couchsurfing hosting, I'll consider the motivational factors of participating in co-creation and alternative economic practices.

From the guests’ perspective, the main motivations for choosing an alternative accommodation (guest houses, commercial homes, home swapping) are home-like atmosphere, value for money, getting to know the locals and the perceived authenticity of the guest-host-relationship (Gunasekaran & Anandkumar 2012, Forno & Garibaldi 2015). Based on their empirical research about customer motivations for co-creation, Fernandes and Remelhe (2016) suggest that the main motivators for users’ participation in co-creation are intrinsic motivations and the gained knowledge. When focusing on namely voluntary tourism, reciprocal altruism is one of several motives behind it (Paraskevaidis & Andriotis 2017). These findings from the guest side suggest that the reciprocity of co-creation in tourism is also framing the participation.

Despite the rise of the topic, there is a lack of studies on the motivational factors behind engaging in sharing and collaborative activities (eg. Hamari et al. 2016, Böcker & Meelen 2016). Keeping in mind Eskelinen and Kumpuniemi’s (2017) call for demarcation between sharing and solidarity economies, I have to note that most of the previous research mentioned here is based on purely monetized sharing platforms or combinations of non-monetized and monetized sharing practices. As Eskelinen and Kumpuniemi (2017) and Mosedale (2012) point out, these two practices may rise from very different starting points and therefore might be powered by different drivers than capitalocentric growth and commodification.

Existing literature about the motivations often highlights economic, social, and environmental motivations behind sharing economy practices. Botsman and Rogers (2011: xv–xvi) mention the possibilities to save money, space, and time, increase use efficiency and social factors such as meeting new people as motivational factors to participate in collaborative practices. Böcker and Meelen (2016: 9) distinguish between economic, social and environmental motivations, but highlight that the sharing economy is not one coherent phenomenon. According to their empirical research, they also state that the motivations to participate on sharing depend on what is shared – ride and car
sharing are more likely to be motivated by environmental factors than accommodation sharing (Böcker & Meelen 2016).

Lahti and Selosmaa (2013: 20–21) present a survey made in the US, that reflects the motivations to participate in sharing economy. According to them, motivations could be divided in rational and emotional motivations. Saving money, being more ecological, being more flexible, and trying out new things were seen as rational motivations. Learning and self-development through interaction could be counted as rational motivations (Remelhe & Fernandes 2016). Emotional motivations were related to factors such as the desire to share and be generous, to have a responsible lifestyle, to be part of a community and “the culture of sharing”. Also Hardy (2017) points out that non-monetary transactions occur from affective needs and the willingness to enhance sense of belonging.

Social motivations are mentioned to be entangled with affective motivations. Co-creation is often described to be motivated by social motivations and the involvement itself (Voorberg et al. 2014, Pappalepore & Smith 2016), and people’s desire for a stronger sense of community and meaningful relationships are, according Botsman and Rogers (2011), the main drivers of sharing economy. Via networks promoting free hospitality exchange travellers are looking for more authentic and intimate tourism experiences (Germann Molz 2013: 211). Intimate experiences and perceived authenticity derive from the social relations that Couchsurfing creates. Lauterbach et al. (2009: 346) point out that Couchsurfing promotes cultural experiences and understanding, and these are the main motivations to host without monetary compensation.

Some studies highlight the importance of economic factors as motivations to participate in sharing economy activities – saving money and monetizing underutilized assets are seen as drivers for participation especially for specific user segments (Grybaite & Stankeviciene 2016, Pesonen & Tussyadiah 2017). This is however not the case with Couchsurfing hosts, since they are not getting immediate economic gains from the hosting activities. However, through reciprocity hosts could benefit when they themselves are travelling and using the community for finding a free accommodation. Sometimes the guest also cook for their hosts or bring some gifts and the hosts appreciate it, but the hosts won’t get paid for their hospitality.

Sustainable endeavours and the resistance of mass consumption are recognized as drivers for sharing economy (Germann Molz 2013, Grybaite & Stankeviciene 2016).
Based on their survey Hamari et al. (2016) state that sustainability alongside personal enjoyment and economic gains were the main motivations to participate in collaborative consumption. On the other hand, Lahti (2015: 176–177) points out that environmental endeavors and saving the environment are not necessarily the primary motivations to participate in sharing businesses, sometimes it’s just more convenient to use shared assets which are easily accessible through online platforms. According to Lahti (2015), sharing economy encourages to pay more attention to the quality of the product, increasing mileage and therefore indirectly prompting ecological sustainability.

The participation in sharing economy is characterized as a desire to ‘do good’, to share with the community (Hamari et al. 2016: 2048). Lampinen and Cheshire (2016: 2–3) suggest that instead of monetary motivations, peer-to-peer exchange could be motivated by collectivist motivations as an opposition to monetary and self-interested motivations. Reciprocity refers to behavioral ideals of people responding to positive actions with another positive action and it generates trust and sociability, which enables sharing and collaboration activities by regulating behavior informally (Botsman & Rogers 2011: 132, Proserpio et al. 2016). Couchsurfing prompts ‘generalized reciprocity’ – hosts do not necessarily stay at their guests’ place in future, therefore reciprocity is directed to someone else within the community (Lauterbach et al. 2009: 345, Germann Molz 2013: 222).

Sundararajan (2016: 39) finds Couchsurfing to be “the closest example to a pure gift economy I have encountered in the modern sharing economy”. According to Sundararajan, the strongest motivations are hospitality and the desire to connect. Couchsurfing is different from recent monetary sharing economy practices, many of which tend to be technology facilitated business models driven by market-based logic. Couchsurfing seems to be driven by social motives, which according to Dredge and Gyimóthy (2015: 292) are served by altruistic endeavors to reinforce social bonds. They state that both reciprocal activities such as gift-giving, bartering and swapping and altruistic activities are based on mutual trust and/or intimacy, often facilitated by technology.
6 DATA AND METHODS

In order to answer my research questions, I collected data from Couchsurfing members in Finland. The data were collected in two different phases, with interviews and an online survey, applying mixed method research design. I decided to narrow down my focus on the hosts in Finland, since I did the interviews in Finland and later on I could conduct the survey only in Finnish. Also focusing on people living in similar cultural context reduces possible cultural differences in hosting motivations and experiences. In the first phase, I conducted five semi-structured interviews with Couchsurfing hosts to discover their experiences and define the research problem. In the second phase, I created and conducted an online survey based on the interviews, aiming to focus deeper on the motivations and the non-commercial ideology about Couchsurfing. I wanted to gain more knowledge about the sociodemographic factors of Couchsurfing hosts in Finland, to understand how the hosts perceive themselves as hosts, and why they are willing to participate in non-monetary activities when there are plenty of monetized activities available.

Mixed method research combines the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Usually the aim is to better understand the phenomena, and different methods and results bring more depth to the study. Mixed method approaches are common in case studies (Cresswell 2009: 203–210). Multiple method strategies are also connected to triangulation, which aims to enhance the interpretability, in this case by involving both qualitative and quantitative methods (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2014: 39). Data can be collected sequentially or concurrently, and combined at one or more stages during the research (Cresswell 2009: 203–210). Heimtun (2007: 245) states that while most tourism research fall into quantitative paradigm, applying qualitative approaches can create different epistemologies in tourism research.

Following a sequential research design, I had two distinctive phases of data collection, in this case interviews and survey, and the latter builds on the former phase (Cresswell 2009: 212). After reviewing existing literature and exploring Couchsurfing website and community guidelines as a secondary data sets, I conducted three interviews with five hosts. I collected and analyzed qualitative data, by transcribing and applying content analysis to the semi-structured interviews I had conducted. In the second phase, the data were collected with an online survey, in which I combined quantitative and
qualitative data, following a sequential research design. In the end, I interpreted the entire analysis drawing together the interviews and survey (figure 4).

Figure 4. Sequential research design, adapted from Cresswell (2009: 209).

According to Cresswell (2009: 212), the researcher has to make decisions based on the initial qualitative research – which themes or focuses one wants to add into their subsequent quantitative phase. Qualitative research is interpretative, and researcher’s own background, experiences and values are inseparable part of the researcher’s role (Cresswell 2009: 177). They affected the interpretations during the study, as initially my focus was only on the motivations and experiences of Couchsurfing hosting. I analyzed the qualitative interviews and used content analysis to group motivations into several themes which were partially entangled and overlapping due to the openness of the semi-structured interviews. From the categorized themes, I chose what were the most interesting for me regarding my thesis and approach from the hosts’ point of view, and formed my eventual research questions.

In the quantitative phase, I decided to delve deeper into the motivations to participate in sharing and co-creation activities, and especially the non-monetary nature of the sharing practices and alternative understandings of intangible compensations. The study was also guided by the theoretical perspectives of tourism studies and feminist economic geography as well as previous research, or the lack of it. The interviews were analyzed with content analysis and with the survey data I applied both qualitative and quantitative methods, mainly content analysis and supporting statistical analyses, such as factor analysis and cross tabulations, when applicable (table 3).
Table 3. Summary of methods of data collection and analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative phase</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative phase</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Comparing percentages and means,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cross tabulations, factor analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are one of the most commonly used qualitative method. An interview is based on the conversation between the researcher and an informant, where the researcher attempts to elicit information from the informant. Semi-structured interviews are more informal and conversational than structured interviews, but still to some extent the questions and themes are in predetermined order. Semi-structured interviews can be used as ‘stand-alone methods’ or complementing other methods (Longhurst 2003: 117–120), like I did for my thesis, and combined semi-structured interviews with survey.

There is not much research done about Couchsurfing in Finland and in general, especially in the context of host motivations. As I don’t have my own experiences of Couchsurfing hosting, I decided to carry out interviews to gain more knowledge about the Couchsurfing phenomena itself and the hosts’ perspective. All in all, I interviewed five persons, three women and two men, who have been hosting Couchsurfers. Some of them had used Couchsurfing platform to find an accommodation during their travels and joined Couchsurfing events or weekly meetings in their cities and abroad as well. Before conducting the interviews I also went through the Couchsurfing website and related articles in order to form an outline for the interviews (see Appendix I).
The initial idea was to keep the semi-structured interviews flexible enough to gain additional information for my eventual research focus. The outline of the interviews included questions about experiences of hosting and motivation to participate, but mostly the conversations were self-directed and open. The first interview was carried out in Oulu, when I joined a Couchsurfing meeting. It was the easiest way to get in touch with the Couchsurfing community, since the meetings are organized in Oulu on a weekly basis and the participation has been active. I interviewed a group of three Finnish hosts in the beginning of a weekly meeting in March 2017. The interview was a group interview that was based on the interviewees’ experiences about Couchsurfing hosting, and the motivations to do it. The second interview was carried out in Joensuu and the third one in Oulu during March and April 2017. Both of the later interviews were conducted with Finnish Couchsurfing hosts I contacted via Couchsurfing website. The interviews lasted from 30 to 60 minutes and were recorded for later transcription.

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2014: 53) state that in many cases relatively open and unbound interview technique is as its best, offering a flexible and informative way to encounter a person. As an interviewer, I kept the interviews flexible and spontaneous in order to grasp different perspectives, therefore also the interview outline is relatively short and consisted of wider topics related not only to hosting but the Couchsurfing community as well. Conducting the group interview was an effective approach, and an informative first step in the data collection phase. The interviewees were completing each other’s views and collective understandings about Couchsurfing. The group dynamic, however, might have had an impact on the openness of the conversation, as Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2014: 61–63) point out. After the meeting and the interview I also stayed in contact with some of the interviewees, and got more insights especially to some more personal questions via email. In this thesis the interviewed hosts are referred to as Hosts 1–5, to maintain the anonymity of the interviewees.

After transcribing the interviews, I used content analysis to develop themes and categorize the motivations to participate in Couchsurfing (table 4). In this thesis content analysis is understood like Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1278) describe it, “as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”. After reading and re-reading the transcribed interviews, I systematically coded and identified themes within
the content of text data, which also included my subjective interpretation of the data. I applied directed content analysis approach, aiming to identify and quantify certain content. Codes derive from theory or relevant research findings and were defined before and during the data analysis (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1279–1286).

Table 4. Summary of the interviewed hosts and the mentioned motivation categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host</th>
<th>Member (years)</th>
<th>Hosted</th>
<th>Surfed</th>
<th>Motivations mentioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Host 1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Trust, social, cultural, self-development, ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host 2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Trust, self-development, ideology, social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Trust, self-development, ideology, social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Trust, social, ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host 5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Self-development, social, cultural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Survey
Second set of data was collected with an online survey, which based on the conducted interviews. Sequential approach from qualitative interviews to quantitative surveys is common, and qualitative phase might also complement the latter quantitative phase (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2014: 30). Survey is also a common data collection method when the research focus is on opinions, attitudes or values (Vehkalahti 2008: 17). Since the research focuses on people, who are hosting via Couchsurfing, and they are registered users of Couchsurfing platform, online research method is an appropriate choice. Online here refers to the means of data collection and the online platform as a focus group (Kananen
Online surveys have advantages, since it offers a fast, low cost and efficient way to conduct a survey from a large geographic region (Sue & Ritter 2007). The online survey was created with Webropol 3.0, and the link was shared on the Couchsurfing website, on the forum as well as on social media platforms, namely on Facebook groups.

Survey was carried out in Finnish (translated later, see Appendix II) and it included background questions about demographic factors and the respondents’ history as Couchsurfing members. Survey included five open-ended questions, to which the respondents had delightedly thoroughly answered. I wanted to gain information about the respondents’ motivations to participate in Couchsurfing as hosts, and how they co-create the tourism experience; whether they spend time with their guests and what they do with them. By asking their opinions and desire to participate in monetized accommodation sharing, I wanted to find out the ways how Couchsurfing challenges monetized platforms. Finally, there were 23 statements regarding Couchsurfing and respondents’ experiences, based on the identified themes in the interviews.

During three weeks in June 2017, survey got 65 responses. The size of the convenient sample is rather small, and some statistical measures were not applicable, because even combining groups did not provide enough observations per cell. More emphasis was put on the open-ended questions and their categorization and analysis, which supports the aim of the study of more interpretative readings than merely descriptive generalizations. Applying content analysis I coded and categorized the open-ended questions before entering the data into IBM SPSS 24.0, with which the later statistical analyses were made. Missing data (household, age) were replaced with mean values. Although the number of survey respondents was relatively low (N=65), respondents had answered the survey thoroughly and I didn’t have to exclude any responses from the final data set. Even though the survey included a few longer open-ended questions, the quality of the open-ended survey responses was good and most of the respondents also left comments regarding the survey, their experiences or the research topic itself.

Couchsurfing appears to be an urban phenomenon and the highest concentrations of respondents were in the six biggest cities in Finland: Helsinki, Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa, Oulu and Turku, with Helsinki (F=16) and Oulu (F=14) comprising the biggest respondent frequencies (figure 5). Also some individual smaller cities and towns were
represented. Approximately half of the respondents were female (49%) and half male (48%), with two respondents (3%) rather not answering. Respondents were aged between 23 and 73 years with the mean age of 33. Half of the respondents lived alone, one third with their partners, 12% in shared flats and 15% lived in a household with children. On average, they had been Couchsurfing members for six years (see Appendix III for background variable summary).

Survey respondents’ city of residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of residence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oulu</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampere</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turku</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jyväskylä</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Espoo</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lappeenranta</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotka</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mäntyharju</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pärkkälä</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pori</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rovaniemi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vańskoskoki</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vantaa</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vihti</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Survey respondents were mainly from southern Finland and the biggest cities, which follows the population density of Finland.

Three quarters of the respondents (75%) were active hosts, who said they had hosted within the last 12 months. Hosting activity of the active hosts (N=49) was on average 8 surfers in the last 12 months. Respectively almost half of the respondents (49%) said that
they mainly host when asking about the primary function within the platform. Survey is based on a convenient sample, and also those respondents, whose primary activity was something other than hosting, were included. Table 5 presents the background variables of the survey respondents.

Based on the interviews, I divided the main motivations to participate in Couchsurfing into trust (7.1.1), intangible compensations (7.1.2) and ideological aspects (7.1.3). I identified the same themes within the open-ended survey responses, in which the respondents were asked to list three of their main motivations. In the survey responses two additional categories could be identified. The first one is related to alternative tourism and the second one to hosts’ own traveling. Trust didn’t come up in the open-ended survey responses. I categorized it as a “prerequisite” to the participation, although the respondents didn’t directly identify and name it as a motivation within the survey responses or during the interviews. Two additional categories in the survey answers could be explained by a broader focus of the survey question, that dealt with more general motivations to join Couchsurfing, not only the motivations to start hosting (“Q4. What are the main reasons why you decided to join Couchsurfing?”). I asked the respondents to list maximum three reasons why they joined Couchsurfing. Respondents mentioned one to three reasons and the final number of reasons to categorize was 137.

I used statistical approaches to compare different background variables and their significance behind categorical variables, such as hosting motivations or willingness to use monetized platforms. Statistically significant relationships behind the variables could not have been found with the \( \chi^2 \) test of independence. Instead, I applied statistical descriptive procedures such as cross tabulations, and comparing percentages and frequencies of categorized open-ended responses as well as statements. Also factor analysis was used to analyze the statements, in order to reduce larger number of variables into factors and find correlations between variables (Metsämuuronen 2003: 534).
Table 5. Summary of the survey respondents’ background variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background variables</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mean (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or vocational school</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower academic degree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher academic degree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living..</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alone</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>together with my partner</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in a shared flat</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with my/my partner’s children</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-41</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-73</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member of Couchsurfing (years)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hosted surfers (within 12 months)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Using the website</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosting</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events home</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events while travelling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not really an active member</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondents in total</strong></td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7 INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The following part examines the data and binds it together with the theoretical background. As already mentioned, this thesis doesn’t aim to conduct mere results or findings, but more importantly aims to offer a different reading and interpretation of the collaborative economy, and hosts’ motivations and experiences. Therefore, I refer to interpretations and discussion. First, I interpret my data through a lens of the first research question and analyze the motivational factors of the hosts to take part in Couchsurfing. The following section moves on to the second research question, and discovers the ways in which Couchsurfing and the agencies it promotes, challenge conventional tourism. Second research question is more interpretative, and helps linking also the first research question into a wider theoretical and background.

7.1 Motivations to participate

Table 6 presents a brief summary of the motivations to participate in Couchsurfing hosting, drawing together the data collected with interviews and the online survey. The data and the interpretations suggest, that people participate in Couchsurfing as hosts, because they perceive the platform safe. They see that they can gain something intangible from it, through the experience of co-creation and affective contribution. It offers an alternative opportunity to meet people and get to know cultures, to learn and experience new things and act out their ideological ambitions. Motivations related to one’s own travelling and more tangible compensations are also important. They can also contribute to hosting too, through the reciprocal nature of Couchsurfing and socially negotiated host-guest relationship.
Table 6. Summary of motivations to participate in Couchsurfing as a host, based on the empirical data collected with interviews and surveys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOST MOTIVATIONS</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Prerequisite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intangible compensations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social</td>
<td>Meeting people, being part of a community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural</td>
<td>Internationality, cultures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-developmental</td>
<td>Learning, experiences, cross-cultural understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>Reciprocity (direct/indirect/un-established), Altruism, Alternative experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible compensations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Saving money Making own travel easier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the open-ended survey responses (figure 6), the main motivations to join Couchsurfing were related to social aspects (66.2% of all respondents had mentioned it), respondents’ own travelling (44.5%), cultural aspects (32.3%) or getting alternative experiences (18.5%). Self-development, which was mentioned by one fifth of the respondents, comprises the category of intangible compensations together with social and cultural aspects, which are marked with green in figure 6. Alternative tourism motivations (mentioned by 18.5%) and ideological motivations (25.6%) were categorized into the category of ideological aspects marked with purple. Own travelling was mentioned by almost one third of the survey respondents, it falls into the category of tangible compensations which is marked with yellow. Other reasons (3 responses) mentioned were mainly personal reasons such as positive feedback from friends.
Q4. What are the main reasons why you decided to join Couchsurfing?

![Chart showing the main motivations to participate in Couchsurfing, represented by percentages of the respondents (N=65).](chart)

Figure 6. The main motivations to participate in Couchsurfing, represented by percentages of the respondents (N=65).

Statistical connections ($\chi^2$) could not have been found between background variables and different motivation categories, partially due to the small size of the data set. However, based on cross tabulations, it seems that men have listed more motivations within the social category: 36.9% of men and 26.0% of women listed motivations within the social category. Women on the other hand listed somewhat more motivations related to own travelling: 26.2% of women and 18.5% of men listed motivations within the own travelling category. Women also listed more ideological aspects, as 13.8% of women and 9.2% men listed motivations related to ideology (figure 7). Also based on cross tabulations, not statistical connections ($\chi^2$), it seems that those who live with children, have listed more motivations within the cultural category. Those who live alone, mentioned more motivations within the social category (figure 8).
Figure 7. Men listed more motivations related to social aspects and female listed more motivations related to own travelling and ideological aspects.

Figure 8. Those who lived with children listed more cultural reasons than the other groups.

7.1.1 Trust
In the interviews, trust appeared to be an essential factor and a prerequisite for hosting. Trust was the motivation to join Couchsurfing in the first place. Secondly, trust enables the members to host, and of course to surf, via Couchsurfing. Members were motivated to host, if they thought that the person who asked to stay at their place was to be trusted. Couchsurfing and hosting is based on socially negotiated practices, and trust is entangled
in the emergence of the peer-to-peer co-creation networks. According to Lahti and Selosmaa (2013: 20), the main barrier for participating in sharing economy activities is distrust. According to my data, trust is an important factor, but in non-monetized platform ideological reasons might be more important: being a member of the Couchsurfing community itself was perceived as a sign of trustworthiness and reliability.

Couchsurfing website generates trust in four ways – profile, friendship feature, references, and vouching are ways to make sure that the person is trustworthy and reliable (Botsman & Rogers 2011: 177). My interviewees indicated that they trust the community and the security measures of the website, and therefore they are willing to host people, who are complete strangers to them. One interviewee said that he trusts the system, and if someone is “not an okay guy” (Host 1), the community would react by giving neutral or negative feedback and reviews of that host. He said that sometimes the people outside Couchsurfing community are the most suspicious ones “– when I have told my friends about my Couchsurfing hobby, the first question usually is if I have been robbed by my guests.” (Host 1). The host himself didn’t have any bad experiences with his guests.

Getting references, comments, and vouches from other members of the online community reinforce the feeling on safety and generate trust (Germann Molz 2013). Hosts leave references to their guests, but also guests leave references to their hosts. References can be positive, neutral, or negative. One interviewee said that he feels like sometimes it’s just a standard procedure to state that “yes, he is a nice guy...” even though they wouldn’t mean it (Host 1). However, he stated that he feels that the negative and even the neutral comments are taken seriously by hosts themselves. 54% of the survey respondents agreed with the statement “I have sometimes declined a couch request from a person who has negative references”, while almost 30% disagreed. More than half of the respondents therefore trusted the peer-to-peer evaluations made by fellow Couchsurfers, enough to decline a couch request.

No one mentioned trust, or the trustworthiness of Couchsurfing website or the community in the open-ended motivation question of the survey. Although trust is an important feature in participation and more profoundly an enabling factor, it wasn’t identified as the main reason to join Couchsurfing. Staggering 92% of the survey respondents agreed with the statement “Couchsurfing is reliable”, while only 1.5% disagreed and 6% somewhat disagreed. From the hosts’ point of view at least,
Couchsurfing members find it very reliable. Based on my data, statistical analyses did not confirm any statistical connections between stronger trust and those who have hosted longer, or those who mentioned ideological motivations to host. Most probably those who have hosted have good experiences and the co-creation again reinforces the feeling of community and trust – also my interviewees highlighted their positive experiences, although acknowledged the possibility of dishonest surfers. “I think it’s like the basic idea. If you want to do this, you have to trust people. It’s like an attitude, that’s what it takes.” (Host 4).

Some interviewees said that they don’t even contest the kind nature of the Couchsurfing community. “My unconscious principle is that everybody is an ok guy, until proved otherwise.” (Host 2). This host’s comment reinforces my interpretation of Couchsurfing membership as a special ideological assumption, which is based on open-mindedness and sharing. It partly differs from Germann Molz’s (2016) view of seemingly open minded, closed community, which seems contradictory to the ideology of Couchsurfing itself. My findings suggest that Couchsurfers form an open community, although they are willing to meet like-minded people. Since outsiders seem to be the most suspicious ones, sense of togetherness might be one of the critical aspects that generate trust. Assuming that the members within the community are sharing the same values and same lifestyle generates trust, and if the members assume to meet like-minded people, they are more willing to trust the other members. Perceiving Couchsurfers as a community of like-minded people promotes a sense of community, which binds the geographically dispersed people together.

Most of my interviewees even said that they don’t look into their guests’ profiles too deeply before accepting their requests. They said that one could already see from their personal messages, if they were trustworthy or not. However, many of the hosts also said they don’t get too many requests because of their remote location, and might even change to monetary platforms in order to have a bigger user community. It might be that hosts in more mature tourism destinations get more requests, and therefore they can be more selective to whom they want to be hospitable and whom they trust.
7.1.2 Intangible compensations

Couchsurfing is not based on monetary exchange or monetary sharing, and this is clearly in the core of the ideology of Couchsurfing itself. It is a motivation for individual hosts, not only mentioned in the Couchsurfing policies (Couchsurfing website 2017c). This shifts Couchsurfing more into an understanding of solidarity economy, rather than a platform-based sharing economy practice. Rethinking Couchsurfing hosting as immaterial and affective labour which creates immaterial products (Mikolajewska-Zajac 2016), hosting is based on intangible compensations and immaterial outcomes, rather than monetary compensation. From this perspective, I divided the hosts’ perceived intangible compensations into three recurrent categories: social aspects, cultural aspects and self-development. These three categories represent immaterial products or intangible compensations, that the hosts perceive they get in return of their hospitality. Giving and receiving hospitality do not reduce to dichotomist categories of hosts and guests, giving and taking. According to my data, the hosts also perceived themselves as receiving something, an intangible compensation rather than monetary one.

7.1.2.1 Social aspects

When asking directly about the hosts’ motivations to participate in Couchsurfing, social aspects and meeting new people were the main motivations, highlighting the interaction that is in the core of the co-creation. Richards (2013) points out that tourism in general is not only based on, but also enables social exchange. My interpretations of Couchsurfing as a form of tourism without mobility align with Richards’s view. In the survey, social category was by far the most popular, two thirds (66.2%) of the respondents mentioned the social aspects, with social category comprising one third of the total set of responses. Social motivations included aspects such as meeting people, getting friends and taking part in events. Affective motivations, such as sense of community, were mentioned to be the social motivations to participate in Couchsurfing.

Couchsurfing hosts and guests co-create the tourism experience in various ways, but social dimension seems to be valued because of the participation itself. “— in general, the main thing is to do [things] together. It can be cooking, going on an excursion, or going to some event. It’s nice to stay at home too, talk and get to know each other.” (Host 1). Most of the interviewees said that they wanted to spend time with their guests, and
more importantly, they seemed to expect that their guests were interested in spending time with them too. Interviewees also said that it depends on their own schedules and interests, as well as their guests’ plans, whether they have time or interest to interact with their guests. In the light of the survey, most of the hosts want to spend time with their guests. 62% of the respondents agreed with the statement “I assume that the guests are interested in spending time with me”, while almost one third neither agreed nor disagreed. 82% agreed with the statement "I want to spend time with my guests", while only 5% disagreed, and 14% neither agreed nor disagreed. Hosts seemed to be even more eager to spend time with their guests, than expect it from their guests themselves (figure 9).

![Spending time together](chart.png)

**Figure 9.** Social aspects, spending time together was important for the guests as 81% stated they want to spend time with their guests, 62% assumed their guests to do that.

Meeting new people and getting new friends, either via hosting or taking part in Couchsurfing events, was important for all of the interviewees. “You get to meet interesting people, you know that they are interested in travelling – I think it’s just great to meet like-minded people.” (Host 2). This comment highlights the social aspects of Couchsurfing – it is seen as a way co-create meaningful experiences. The people become a crucial part of the tourist experience for the hosts too. According to the survey, 83% of respondents agreed with the statement, “I want to make new friends”, (while only 4.6% disagreed and 12% neither agreed nor disagreed). 95% wanted to meet new people and
66% wanted to meet like-minded people (figure 10). This aligns with the ideological assumption of seemingly paradoxical Couchsurfing community (Germann Molz 2016) – most hosts want to meet new people, who are also like-minded.

![Meeting people and making friends chart]

Figure 10. Statements related to social endeavors were highly agreed with, especially hosts want to meet new people, since 90% strongly agreed with the statement.

### 7.1.2.2 Cultural aspects

For most of the interviewees, hosting Couchsurfers was motivated by its international and cultural aspects. Hosting offers a possibility to get to know international people, get to know about guests’ cultures, and also share their own culture. In the survey responses, one third (32.3%) of the motivations mentioned were related to cultural aspects of Couchsurfing. Motivations in the cultural category included aspects of cross-cultural interaction, either getting to know different cultures or presenting host’s own culture. International guests were highly appreciated. Couchsurfing is a channel to meet international people in Couchsurfers’ lives. However, only one third of the respondents (32%) agreed with the statement “Without hosting via Couchsurfing I wouldn’t meet people from different countries”. This suggests that for most of the respondents, hosting Couchsurfers is not the main way to get to know international people. Couchsurfing
members form a community, whose members tend to be cosmopolitans, who have international contacts also without Couchsurfing hosting.

Most of my interviewees said that they prefer international guests over domestic travellers. Domestic guests were seen as traveling for different reasons and they would use Couchsurfing just to find a couch to crash rather than actually encounter and share. Using Couchsurfing for accommodation purposes only is acceptable for some hosts, but some expect more meaningful encounters. Also 43% of the survey respondents agreed with the statement that they prefer foreign guests over Finnish guests, while 32% disagreed. It suggests that international guests are valued more than people from the same country.

For the hosts, hosting travellers was also a way of getting the perks of travelling, without even leaving home. “I love travelling and I do it whenever I can. But when you have a job, you’re tied to staying in one place, it’s great to have travellers in our home. It’s like travelling yourself, when they come to your place. It’s like a burst of travel in your home.” (Host 2). This interesting comment summarizes the experience, what seems to be in the core of co-creation between Couchsurfing members and motivations to participate. Accommodating travellers and spending time with them provides variation and allows to experience the joy of travelling and meeting people without actually travelling. This suggests that Couchsurfing as a co-creative tourism contributes to a shift in spatial logic of tourism – hosting represents tourism without mobility. It aligns with Russo and Richards’s (2016: 262) view of tourism without development, but from the hosts’ point of view.

88% of the survey respondents agreed with the statement that they wanted to share their own culture. 95% agreed that they are interested in hearing about their guest’s culture. In figure 11 we can see that sharing their own culture is not as radically strongly agreed with as hearing about guests’ culture. This suggests that hosts are willing to hear about their guests’ cultures and have cross-cultural experiences even though cultural motivations were mentioned in a bit more than one third of the motivation responses. This emphasizes the cultural interests of the hosts and the importance of cultural aspects as intangible compensations.
Figure 11. Cultural aspects, sharing one’s own culture and learning about guests’ culture were important. Almost 90% of the responded Couchsurfing hosts want to share their own culture with their guests, and 95% want to hear about their guests’ culture.

7.1.2.3 Self-development

Binkhorst and Dekker (2009) point out that co-creation with locals enables tourists’ learning and self-development, as co-creation simultaneously enables the exchange of knowledge and skills. According to my data, not only the tourists but also local hosts learn and develop their personal skills when they interact with travellers. Couchsurfing equally contributes to the hosts’ self-development and learning. Host motivations included aspects such as developing language skills, developing social skills, widening world view or getting to know one’s city from a different point of view. This aligns with Fernandes and Remelhe’s (2016) argument that co-creation is motivated by the gained knowledge through the participation. Therefore, it applies also to the host motivations.

Self-developmental motivations were mentioned by one fourth (20%) of the survey respondents, and also the interviewees mentioned self-developmental motivations. Category included aspects such as developing language skills, developing social skills, widening their world view, or getting to know one’s city from a different point of view. My interviewees said that they would even go beyond their normal hospitality and make special arrangements to host surfers, who appeared to be interesting for them. Interviewees highlighted the fact that they liked hosting people from whom they thought they could learn something new about their home countries. Learning new languages and practicing their language skills were mentioned as motivations by my interviewees. Hosts preferred people with whom they could speak different languages, especially languages
apart from English and Finnish. 83% of the survey respondents agreed with the statement that they wanted to improve their language skills while hosting Couchsurfers, and learning languages had the biggest frequency within the self-development category motivations of the open-ended survey responses.

Some hosts said that their geographical world view had changed and they knew more countries and places thanks to hosting surfers from different countries. Spending time with people from different countries had improved their knowledge of different countries. Even the countries they knew, might appear in a different light after such a cultural exchange. “For an example, countries which you think are familiar, like Denmark. I thought it’s like Finland. But then we were talking while we had dinner at home and I learnt so much, and realized it’s really a different place. I think this is the best.” (Host 3).

Almost all of the respondents, 96%, agreed with the statement “I have learnt new things about my guests' home countries” (figure 12). This is also one aspect of the self-development category, and the percentage of those who agreed with the statement is higher than the amount of self-developmental reasons as motivations (21%) in the open-ended responses. According to the statements, learning and self-development is highly appreciated by the hosts, but according to the open-ended survey responses not that much. Self-development might be regarded less important than the three most common motivations asked in the survey. Personal development and learning as a category is also more immaterial and indirect, therefore it might be difficult to recognize and was not mentioned in the open-ended survey responses.
Couchsurfing enables hosts to learn about their own cities and their guests’ home countries, and developing their language skills was desired by four fifths of the survey respondents.

7.1.3 Ideological aspects

Couchsurfing represents a strong ideology of sharing and non-monetary transactions, both in the community’s values (Couchsurfing website 2017a) and conduct policies (Couchsurfing website 2017c). Germann Molz (2013) states that Couchsurfing community represents a specific agenda based on moral assumptions. My data reveals that ideology and moral assumptions are important for the hosts too. Ideological aspects as motivational factors were mentioned by one fourth (24.6%) of the survey respondents. Motivations of this category were related to altruism and reciprocal ideas, such as the willingness to share and help, “give back”, and give others the possibility to travel cheap. Previous studies have shown that reciprocal altruism is a motivator for other alternative tourism practices, at least for voluntary tourism (Paraskevaidis & Andriotis 2017).

When asking about the interviewees’ motivations to participate in Couchsurfing, some directly pointed out the aspect of sharing. “I share my personal space, my home, I share my time and my personality. I open up to that person. And that person opens up to me, we encounter each other. I think the encounters are the thing for me [in Couchsurfing].” (Host 4). All the interviewees pointed out that the most enjoyable encounters and memorable surfers were the ones, with whom they had spent time with,
and who had time to encounter them as persons. Some pointed out that for them, it actually is the ideology of Couchsurfing – to encounter and to share, which are also embedded in the social aspects of hosting.

Germann Molz (2013: 219) states that Couchsurfers see their contribution being more than just “arranging free hosting”. Community and the participation reflects the agenda of meaningful encounters and it became evident in my interviews. “Most of the hosts don’t like if they’re regarded as hotels” (Host 4), said one of the interviewee to exemplify the ideology of sharing and encountering, that she sees in Couchsurfing. For most of the interviewees, meaningful encounters and the will to get to know each other were, in a way, a prerequisite for the participation. The hosts are more willing to host surfers, who seem to be interested in their lives and eager to get to know them. “It’s not against the rules, but it has a bit of a bad feel to it.” (Host 2), one host referred to people who only use it for accommodation purposes, with little or no interest in getting to know the host. Ideological assumptions are therefore strongly linked to social aspects and social motivations of Couchsurfing hosting.

The interviewees represented different reciprocal ideas behind Couchsurfing ideology. For some, it meant friendship whereas for the others, it was the knowledge that they would have a place to stay at in their former surfers’ homes. “Usually they are super nice people, we stay in contact while we travel and so on but when we get back home, we won’t stay in contact. And it doesn’t mean anything bad, but you just can’t stay in contact with so many people. It’s understandable. But on the other hand, those who left me comments [former surfers and hosts], oh he lives in Bonne, if I go there I can send him a message. If I would go there, I could ask if he’d like to meet.” (Host 2). This interviewee summarizes her experience of the nature of these encounters and friendships. For her, it is a reciprocal thought that after hosting someone, the relationship lasts even though they wouldn’t stay in contact otherwise. Reciprocity could also be direct “--if we happen to go to that city, we can stay at their place. -- it would be nice to visit the surfers we have hosted. We might even go to visit that specific place just because we know they are there.” (Host 3).

One interviewee had controversial opinions – for her it was okay if someone just needed a couch to crash and if someone used Couchsurfing for only finding accommodation without the interest to connect or encounter. She highlighted the
importance of networking and for her the role of one individual member is small. “It’s a fascinating principle. People don’t expect anything from you specifically, there are so many people [on Couchsurfing] that there is always someone to meet the expectations. You don’t “owe” anything for one single person. When someone gives you something and you can give it back, that’s kind of the principle.” (Host 3). For her, the ideology seems to be sharing and giving too, but more altruistic or generalized reciprocity. According to Botsman and Rogers (2011: 133) social networks make reciprocation indirect, reciprocity between strangers who are geographically dispersed. This generalized reciprocity (Lauterbach et al. 2009, Germann Molz 2013) motivates hosts and was also reflected in my data – hosts want to return the favor of finding a place to stay at by being hospitable to someone else in future.

Freeloaders are seen as unwanted guests, who take more than give, and take advantage of the generosity of the others. Reciprocal exchange binds people in sharing and offering hospitality, creating a moral code within the community (Germann Molz 2016: 67). To some of my interviewees, this kind of ‘parasitical’ behavior was perceived as something offensive and it was looked down on. On the other hand, hosting as a reciprocal action was not seen as an obligation, but rather something that was done out of the desire to help and participate. Hosts did not expect everyone to do both hosting and surfing. Some of my interviewees were much more active hosts than guests, and they saw themselves not only in the position of a host who gives, but a host who receives. They were not thinking that they’d be exploited by their guests, because they gained something from these interactions. Whether it was the experience of the co-creation itself, meaningful encounter or the possibility to practice their language skills, the host I interviewed were overall satisfied with their guests.

Also the survey revealed similar understandings of reciprocity. Almost two thirds of the respondents (63%) agreed with the statement that they don’t mind if someone uses Couchsurfing only to find an accommodation. Reciprocity can be indirect, not necessarily addressed in the same host-guest –relationship. Respectively half of the respondents agreed with the statements that they host because they have surfed (51% agreed) or hosted in order to use it for surfing (51%), which reflects the reciprocity of hospitality and the ideology of Couchsurfing (figure 13).
Figure 13. Couchsurfing is based on a special ideological assumption of reciprocal hospitality.

The open-ended survey responses included also responses related to alternative experiences and an alternative lifestyle – being curious, getting new experiences and adventuring were mentioned by almost one fifth (18.5%) of the respondents. ‘Localness’ and local people attract tourists, who are willing to find something that is considered more authentic and outside the traditional tourist spots (Richards 2013). My data reveals, that Couchsurfing hosts as locals are interested in these alternative experiences as well. Although the responses in this category might be related to the respondents’ own travelling or lifestyle itself rather than hosting, it again refers to the postmodern tourists’ ideology of off-the-beaten-track –experiences, which seem to expand beyond the tourist experience, into the local life and hosting. Dichotomist categories of hosts and guests are wearing off along with resident-visitor co-creation.

7.1.4 Tangible compensations

When asking about the motivations to participate in Couchsurfing, almost half (44.6%) of the survey respondents listed factors related to their own travels too. Many people do actually start by surfing and start hosting later on, often doing both at the same time. Motivations related to one’s own travelling were mainly related to how to make it easier, which I categorized as tangible compensations. The most common notice was that the respondents wanted to travel cheap and save money, which can motivate people
especially in the beginning to register into the Couchsurfing website. Also finding an accommodation and/or travel company, getting to know the locals and getting alternative tourist experiences were categorized into the tangible compensations. Category of own travelling reflects thus more the general motivations to participate in Couchsurfing, not specifically to host Couchsurfers. Members might have later on, through reciprocity or realizing other intangible motivations, started hosting through Couchsurfing.

7.1.5 Statistical analyses
First 15 statements of the survey were based on the motivation categories, which I identified within the interviews, and I used factor analysis to test whether the statements form logical factors on a bigger scale. Two statements (no. 5 and 10) were not included due to their small communalities (< 0.3). The final four factors (extracted with maximum likelihood, varimax rotation and unlimited number of factors) explain 61% of the total variance. Factor loadings (Appendix III) formed four factors, which I named intangible compensations, co-creation, like-minded assumption and reciprocity. Factors illustrate the different dimensions of the motivations. They align and partly overlap with the motivation categories I identified within the interviews, which enhances the validity of the analysis (Metsämuuronen 2017: 147).

Intangible compensations -factor included seven statements related to social interaction and meeting people, sharing culture or learning about other cultures, and self-development. Second co-creation -factor comprises clearly of statements, which are related to spending time together and learning about one’s own environment. Third factor got only two factor loadings and the strongest loading (0.938) suggested it could be named as like-minded ideology. Third factor emphasizes the like-minded assumption behind Couchsurfing – willingness to meet like-minded people and return the reciprocated hospitality. Fourth, reciprocity -factor got only one but strong (0.993) loading for statement “I want to host because I want to surf via Couchsurfing”. This aligns well with the tangible compensations within the motivation categories, which I identified within the survey responses as its own category. Through reciprocity, hosting a surfer becomes a tangible compensation related to one’s own travelling and benefit.
7.2 Challenging conventional tourism

As discussed before, Couchsurfing represents specific social and economic categories, which are based on non-monetary compensations as well as ideological assumptions. Following Gibson-Graham’s (2008) and Mosedale’s (2012) ideas of deconstructing prevailing economic agencies and constructing new agencies and networks, I argue that Couchsurfing does exactly that. By involving the locals as Couchsurfing hosts and enabling co-creation, Couchsurfing constructs new agencies and networks of alternative tourism. Diverse economic practices alongside co-creation challenge conventional commercial tourism agencies by offering diverse ways of doing tourism and practicing hospitality. Based on the empirical data, I state that Couchsurfing challenges conventional commercial categories and agencies of tourism by how it’s done and where it’s done. ‘How’ refers to the alternative hospitality based on non-monetized category as well as sociability and intangible compensations, and ‘where’ refers to the new localities it reconstitutes by enabling the emerging local agencies. The next section presents the social and economic categories of Couchsurfing, and how they challenge the conventional commercial tourism agencies in more detail.

7.2.1 Sociability in new localities

The ways and forms of cultural exchange has changed through the rise of hospitality networks, such as Couchsurfing, and shorter and longer-term locals exchange and co-create without traditional tourism companies as intermediaries (Richards 2013). Couchsurfing emphasizes the importance of human agency. Sociability and cultural exchange is clearly a motivation, not only for the guests but also for the hosts. Hosts are willing to engage in co-creation of tourism experience by offering a place to stay, even free of charge. Local people as a new agency alters the localities in tourism, and also Couchsurfing hosts want to show something local and authentic outside the commercial tourist localities. This could be defined as tourism without mobility, since one can experience the intangible dimensions of tourism without the mobility itself.

The hosts I interviewed were willing to spend time with their guests and were happy to show them around the city, visit various events, cook together or just hang out at home in the evening, depending on their own time and interests as well as their guests’ time,
interests and budget. Co-creation got as many forms as there were participants and there are no standardized procedures. Hosting is rather every time socially negotiated and constructed in the co-creation process. When asking about the things what the hosts usually do with their guests, many hosts listed things which usually urban tourists do when they visit a new city – they went to see city and the sights, visited pubs, clubs and restaurants, visited museums, or different events. Besides restaurants, local cuisine was introduced at home and many hosts said they often cook with their guests. Hosts also said that they try to listen to their guests’ wishes and show the places of which they are interested in.

The data of this thesis suggests that Couchsurfing hosts actively take their guests to local places and they use various services from local supermarkets to gastronomy services and events. Therefore they are also benefitting in the local economies of the area. Travellers using peer-to-peer platforms to find accommodation also use the other services within the destination, and therefore are deriving revenue in the new localities. Spending time in nature, going for a hike or going into a sauna were also mentioned as local things that Finnish hosts wanted to show their guests. Although the responses were too diverse to categorize, one concurrent theme in the answers was the sense of localness – hosts wanted to present some local places and local culture. For many it was a city tour, which was also mentioned by my interviewees. Surrounding environment works as a landscape of co-creation – Couchsurfing hosts show their guests their favorite places, odd statues and other “sights” which are not listed in tourist guide books or presented by official tour guides, open up their homes and everyday lives to their guests. “And also one thing which I really like, maybe because of location and I live in the city center, but I really like to explore the city center and take a look around together. I can be like their guide!” (Host 1).

Hosts actions reflect the idea of authentic experiences, which is according to Richards (2013), embedded in the process of co-creation. Getting to know the locals is the aim of many surfers, but also a motivation of the hosts who are driven by social and cultural motivations. They are eager to show their culture, their cities and open up their lives. The idea of creative turn in tourism, even the “new philosophy of travel” (Russo & Richards 2016: 18), where learning from friends and peers, sharing experiences, getting in touch with the locals, being aware, and connected while travelling are valued by both
Couchsurfing guests and hosts. These processes extend the de-differentiation into the locals’ lives.

Pappalepore and Smith (2016: 95) state that postmodern de-differentiation of the tourist experience and everyday life allows residents to co-create a new sense of locality, and I continue that Couchsurfing hosts and guests reinforce that de-differentiation. Most of the interviewees said that guiding or hanging out with travellers could sometimes make their own day to day life and environments look different, they would see their surroundings in a new light. “You begin to see the city a bit differently because they [guests] might see something, take photos of rowan berries. You don’t think that it would be somehow special.” (Host 1). Taking part in co-creation made their own everyday environments more interesting and provided possibilities for interesting encounters. Also, the survey respondents listed various everyday life activities, such as hanging out at home, watching TV, playing games or meeting friends. Many of the respondents mentioned encountering and talking, getting to know each other, which again highlights the meaningful encounters and the act of co-creation itself as added value.

One interviewee pointed out that the co-creation and interacting with travellers had made her realize the things people actually wanted to see in Oulu or why someone would want to visit that specific place. Therefore it also contributes to hosts’ own learning and self-development. “I never thought that these things would be like an experience. Like walking on sea ice in Nallikari. Or how everyone talks about seeing the northern lights. You realize why people come here, but for yourself, it’s not that special. These things won’t suddenly just become special, if someone else thinks so.” (Host 3). Hosting widened her view of the city and its localities as well as other peoples’ views, but on the other hand it didn’t change her views of what she herself perceived special.

Hosts are willing to show their own off-the-beaten-track sights and promote alternative images of the cities. “My city lacks the must-see sights other cities have -- instead, we walk around and I usually show my guests this odd statue by the river and I am joking that this is the main sight in here.” (Host 2). Hosts thus have a crucial role in constructing the urban perceptions of the city – as Richards (2013) suggests, things perceived as local, are valued more authentic and they appear more interesting for the guests. Hosting Couchsurfers enables the hosts to act as intermediaries, and by co-creating and engaging the local community it contributes to opening up the closed system.

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of tourism production and consumption, to which also Russo and Richards (2016: 252–253) refer.

Urban surroundings also played a crucial role for the hosts – some said that they get a lot of requests, if they are well situated in or nearby the city center. However, on the Couchsurfing website it’s not possible to see the listings on a map, the users can only set a radius how far from the city center they want to look for hosts. Some interviewees pointed out that this makes it more difficult for the traveller to compare different hosts in specific cities. For some it was also a reason why they preferred Airbnb when they are travelling – once booking via Airbnb, it’s possible to see the location on a map and thus it’s easier to choose a place that fits the preferences.

Couchsurfing might promote new tourism destinations, and reinforce the development of already existing destinations by offering an alternative way to experience the place, ways which are perceived as more authentic and more interesting. Some of the interviewees and survey respondents pointed out the lack of visitors in their cities. It highlights a certain spatial mismatch between the Couchsurfing hosts and guests – hosts’ locations do not necessarily match the places where people would otherwise like to travel. On the other hand, alternative accommodation platforms such as Couchsurfing might also prompt tourism in the new localities. Couchsurfing enables hospitality in completely new localities and environments, especially in residential areas that are not affected by conventional tourism and its agencies. Couchsurfing offer alternative localities and tourism destinations on different spatial scales, ranging from national and regional scale to neighborhoods and private homes.

7.2.2 Uncommercial nature of Couchsurfing
Based on the data collected, I used Gibson-Graham’s framework (table 7, see also table 1) to place Couchsurfing within the field of diverse economies. Gibson-Graham (2006) points out that economic subjects occupy multiple sites in the diverse economy. Individual member’s actions in Couchsurfing could be thought both as unpaid and alternative paid labour, including transactions in alternative markets and nonmarkets. Couchsurfing includes unpaid housework and volunteer work by the host, with nonmarket transactions such as gift giving (Sundararajan 2016). Couchsurfing includes also the possibility to reciprocal labour and intangible compensations, which are alternative
payments in Gibson-Graham’s framework. Intangible compensations, as things that the hosts perceive they get in return of their hospitality, could be thought as alternative payments in alternative markets. Reciprocal ideology of Couchsurfing also enables reciprocal hospitality as alternative payment. As a company, Couchsurfing International Inc. and its employees represent capitalist endeavors since the conversion in 2011 (Harris 2011).


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Applying Germann Molz’ (2013) thought of moral economy to Couchsurfing, it challenges the for-profit logic of conventional tourism and its agencies. Couchsurfing is not based on monetary exchange and it happens on a smaller scale than conventional mass tourism. Ideological assumptions about Couchsurfing and its non-monetary nature were clear within my interviews and survey responses. I asked my interviewees whether they
had listed their rooms or apartments on other monetized platforms (figure 14), e.g. Airbnb, and what they thought of them compared to Couchsurfing. Airbnb is a platform for accommodation sharing but on the contrary to Couchsurfing, it’s based on competitive market-based logic and monetary exchange rather than non-monetary sharing (Bialski 2016).

Q6. Have you listed your room or apartment on other monetized platforms?

- Yes
- No, but I could consider listing my apartment/room on a monetized platform
- No, I don’t want to list my apartment/room on a monetized platform

Figure 14. Only four respondents had listed their apartments or rooms on monetary platforms, while one fourth of the survey respondents could consider it and 70% stated they wouldn’t want to do it. (N=65).

With its ideological focus, Couchsurfing could be thought more as a practice of solidarity economy than a sharing economy practice, in its narrow sense of reorganizing neoliberalist paradigm (Eskelinen & Kumpuniemi 2017). Airbnb is in many sense more social and alternative option than traditional hostels or hotels, and it might be motivated by social drivers but also the will to monetize underutilized resource, which is a common denominator in sharing economy practices (Sundararajan 2016: 40, Eskelinen & Kumpuniemi 2017: 185).

Based on cross tabulations, men where slightly more eager to list also on monetary platforms (56.3% of men and 37.5% women could consider) and women more eager to state that they don’t want to list on monetized platforms (53.3% of women and 44.4% of men). Also those who lived alone or in shared flats, were not as eager to list on monetized platforms as those who lived with partners or had children. Respectively the youngest age group from 23 to 28 year olds were the most against listing on monetized platforms (80%
within the age group said no, don’t want to), while the older age groups were more willing to try it out.

All the four respondents (6% of total 65 respondents) who had listed their rooms or apartments on monetized platforms, said that they prefer Couchsurfing over monetized platforms. All of them mentioned the social benefits of Couchsurfing. They saw Couchsurfing bringing more “mental capital”, and viewed it as an opportunity to actually spend time with the guests. They regarded Couchsurfing travellers more social than Airbnb guests, for an example. One fourth of the survey respondents hadn’t listed their apartments on monetary platforms, but stated that they could consider it. When asking about the motivational factors to change the platform (figure 15), biggest category comprised of the platform qualities. Respondents said that they could change to another platform, if there were more users or the user experience was better. They disliked the emerging commercial features in Couchsurfing, such as the verification fee, which were linked with the changing organizational logic of Couchsurfing. Some also mentioned the fact that it takes considerable amount of time to send messages to people through the website.

Q8. What would motivate you to change from Couchsurfing to another platform?

- Apartment characteristics
- Monetary compensation
- Would keep both
- Platform qualities
- Other

Figure 15. One fourth of the survey respondents, who stated they could consider listing their apartments or rooms on monetized platforms, listed reasons related to apartment and platform characteristics, monetary compensation or they stated they would actually use both platforms (N=16).
Other motivations to change the platform were related to monetary compensation or apartment-related qualities. Money was mentioned as a motivation to change the platform, for an example if there would be a sudden need for extra income. Monetary platforms were also seen as requiring a bigger apartment and more space, if the host wanted to ask money for the accommodation. In other words, the hospitality offered through Couchsurfing was not seen as demanding as monetized hospitality, and the respondents thought they could host Couchsurfers also in more modest settings. It partly overlaps with the mentioned reasons not to change to a monetary platform – some people had different opinions about the willingness to change but basically the reasons were the same. Few also said they could keep both, which too suggests that Couchsurfing represents an alternative ideology compared to monetary platforms. If people are willing to keep both platforms at the same time, Couchsurfing would be motivated by more social endeavors and the desire to encounter, and as Bialski (2016) suggests, monetized platforms by the willingness to monetize underused assets.

It became clear that especially with the case of Couchsurfing, non-monetary nature of sharing was in the core of the phenomenon. Accepting money is seen as contradictory to the ideology of Couchsurfing, and charging for an accommodation is prohibited on Couchsurfing’s conduct policy (Couchsurfing website 2017c). One interviewee said that someone tried offering him money, but he wouldn’t take it because “money is not part of this.” (Host 5). My interviewees saw their hosting as outside the traditional fee-for-service capitalist perspective, and they highlighted the sociable features instead. “I don’t want to host on Airbnb. For me, the thing is meeting people. It’s not the money.” (Host 4). Therefore, Couchsurfing remarkably differs from traditional sharing economy platforms, if they’re understood in a narrow sense as Eskelinen and Kumpuniemi (2017) present them, merely monetizing unused assets and reorganizing capitalist markets.

People mentioned multiple reasons why they wouldn’t want to list their rooms or apartments on monetary platforms. I categorized the open-ended survey responses into reasons related to ideological, apartment-related, personal and other reasons (figure 16). Ideological reasons had more emphasis on the interviews, but also apartment-related tangible reasons, which comprised one fourth (26%) of the survey responses. Apartment characteristics, such as lack of space or inability to sublease a rented flat were seen as possible barriers. Almost one fifth (18%) were personal reasons: bad experiences, lack of
interest or time, respondents also mentioned that they wouldn’t want to leave their apartments or rooms for the use of strange people. Personal reasons also suggest that the respondents are not expecting that there is a similar sense of community within monetized platforms, which was also evident in ideological host motivations.

Q9. Why you don't want to use monetized platforms instead of Couchsurfing?

![Figure 16. Respondents’ (N=45) reasons not to use monetary platforms were categorized into ideological, apartment-related and personal reasons. Other reasons (F=2) were not specified.](image)

Slightly over half (53%) of the reasons mentioned in the open-ended survey responses were related to an ideological assumption behind the unwillingness to list their rooms or apartments on monetary platforms. Ideology behind Couchsurfing was seen to be non-monetary, and therefore monetized exchange and monetary categories were seen against it. Money was not their main motivation to take part in such networked hospitality. Often respondents said that money brings along requirements and hosting becomes an obligation. “I earn money by working, Couchsurfing is a way of living”, answered one of the survey respondents to the question why she doesn’t want to use monetized platforms instead of Couchsurfing. She clearly differentiates Couchsurfing hosting from work, which she sees as an action that provides a living. At the same time she positions Couchsurfing into an ideological category of an alternative lifestyle.

According to my interviewees, the ideology of Couchsurfing wasn’t thought as an alternative option for Airbnb as a monetary platform “– when you sell something, the level of expectations rises – it’s a different thing to host someone, be hospitable, I think it’s a different ideology, as a system.” (Host 3). Shifting from non-monetary sharing to
monetary exchange was seen as bringing something more, making it more official. “It comes with some kind of responsibility when you ask someone to pay for it -- if you would ask for money, it would be work, now it’s just play.” (Host 4). Non-monetary exchange as affective labour was described in a way easier and less demanding than monetary exchange. This reflects the meanings of hosting and the meanings of non-monetary exchange – as they didn’t ‘sell’ their hospitality, it stayed as an informal practice. Guests were not seen as paying customers and possibly with higher expectations.

Accepting money was seen as work and according to one interviewee, she didn’t want to take the step of making her hospitality offering too “official”. “I could [host via monetary platforms], but it sounds like a lot of work, I should pay the taxes. It sounds like work, if I don’t have to do it I’m not going to do it. Maybe if I was unemployed and really needed the money, then I could do it.” (Host 2). Non-monetary nature of Couchsurfing positioned their activity as something else than work or labour, my interviewees didn’t want to think of hosting as an obligation. In their comments, work was seen as something that requires something more to meet the assumed expectations of their guests: more time with the guests, more spacious or better equipped accommodations. Interviewed hosts related ‘work’ to monetary services and as based on non-monetary exchange. In keeping with Mikolajewska-Zajac’s (2016) view of affective labour, hosting Couchsurfers was viewed more as an affective practice, creating intangible products such knowledge, relationship and emotional response.

Couchsurfing is linked to more altruistic principles than commercial platforms. One interviewee said that her role as a host was more of being a friend to the travellers, being hospitable just for the sake of it. “I’m more like a friend [with the guests]. -- I just like being nice, they are tired when they have been travelling, they can sleep and take a shower. Just these very basic things, you do what you can. Make it a little bit easier, tell where they can buy breakfast. Simple things, being kind.” (Host 3). Also the ideological motivations within the survey responses were related to the desire to help the travellers. Sense of community was mentioned to be an important factor in Couchsurfing and it wasn’t expected to be so high in monetized platforms. “Sense of community and equality is more difficult to justify, when the other is a paying customer”, one survey respondent summarized her expectations of how the sense of sense of community changes when there is money involved.
Although in some cases reciprocity might not be established, my interviewees stated that they are willing to host although they don’t know if they will be hosted themselves in the future. Some hosts are not even using the Couchsurfing website for finding an accommodation, they are only hosting and seemingly contributing to a public good. Indeed, only the two of my interviewees combined had hosted over 200 guests but had used it for accommodation seeking purposes only a few times. In this case reciprocity was not only indirect (Bialsli 2012) or generalized (Germann Molz 2013), but it remained unestablished. This connects hosting to more altruistic principles and the appreciation perceived intangible compensations.

8 FINAL CONCLUSIONS
In the concluding part of the thesis I reflect my own situatedness, and the reliability and validity of the conducted research. The following part goes through the implications and conclusions of the research, based on my interpretations of the data collected. In the end, some suggestions for the future research agenda for diverse economic practices in tourism research will be addressed.

8.1 Reflexivity
Drawing on postmodernism, this thesis doesn’t aim to reduce the individual experiences and views into observations and findings. Rather rethinking agency, this study offers a different reading and interpretation of the phenomena itself, performing different ontologies within tourism research (Rosenau 2001, Gibson-Graham 2006). I used quantitative research methods alongside qualitative, and the results of the survey are based on a convenient sample. Therefore, the outcomes of this study can’t be, and are not meant to be, generalized neither to the whole (Finnish) Couchsurfing community nor different diverse economy practices. However, the results offer some insights to the emerging topic of collaborative economy within tourism and hospitality.

Driven by the critique to think and write different ontologies into being (Gibson-Graham 2008, Mosedale 2012), my own positionality and research interests guided me in the exploratory interview phase. I used the data to shed light to the themes I found the most intriguing. This thesis originated from a notion of a growing amount of peer-to-peer
platforms of co-creation, with a special interest in Couchsurfing as a practice of collaborative economy in the field of tourism. Going through the secondary data on Couchsurfing website and conducting the interviews proved to be suitable methods to gain more insights about the hosts’ point of view. Therefore, the survey allowed me to focus on the recurrent themes. Existing literature was also part of the knowledge creation process, and it allowed me to reflect the themes of my interviews and survey with theoretical background, from the chosen perspective.

For Rose (1997), reflexivity is a strategy to situate knowledge. Acknowledging the fact that all knowledge is partial and situated, my knowledge and my informants’ knowledge, is the key to work towards critical knowledge creation. Social interaction and its contingency plays a central role, especially with qualitative data collection, as the researcher has a reciprocal relationship with the informants. Thus, the means of data collection challenge the ‘neutrality’ of the relationship between the researcher and an informant (Dowling 2012, Vannini 2012). My observations and interpretations are outcomes of my own situatedness and positionality, of my role as an ‘outsider’ researcher outside the Couchsurfing community. Situatedness appears also in regard to interaction with the environment, as scholars are involved within a specific context (Rose 1997, Vannini 2012). It is also the outcome of a person interested in studying alternative ways of doing tourism, and understanding the Couchsurfing phenomenon in the context of societal and economic changes. Harris, Wilson and Ateljevic (2007: 43) point out that processing one’s own situatedness is more important than the outcome. This process was conscious, and throughout the thesis I haven’t tried to fade the researcher’s voice by avoiding writing in first person, for an example.

Using quantitative data brings along different questions of reliability and validity of the results and interpretations. Quantitative data, as well, is produced from a certain situated viewpoint. As a researcher, I had an effect on the categorization of the open-ended survey responses. Categories were mostly based on the themes identified within the interviews, which again reflects my situatedness. It’s also one measure of reliability of the interpretations, since the same categories were recurrent in both of the data sets. Validity of the results builds on reporting the analysis and resulting conclusions, therefore I aimed to report the whole research design and the chosen methods for the data collection and analyses (Elo et al. 2014).
Small data set has its limitations and the number of respondents on the survey remained rather low (N=65). It might have been possible to increase the amount of respondents by offering the survey also in English and by widening the target group to hosts in other countries. Based on profiles of Couchsurfing members, many of the Couchsurfing hosts in Finland seem to be non-Finnish speaking, which only highlights the cosmopolitan nature of Couchsurfing community. Including international hosts in Finland and hosts from different countries would have increased the number of respondents, and a wider range of statistical approaches would have been possible. Transcending the specious concepts of hosts and guests and focusing on the community as a whole would have broadened not only the target group, but also the nature of the research. It wouldn’t have been possible to focus mainly on the host motivations anymore.

Method-wise, sequential research design proved to be an appropriate approach, and combining two different methods in sequential order allowed me to utilize the strengths of both approaches. Interviews gave an extensive basis and a broad focus, which I was able to narrow down with more precise quantitative approach. The interpretations of both of the data sets were similar, which derives from the used sequential research method: the second phase builds on the first one. Since the motivation categories were similar, it also indicates the consistency of the data sets and adds to the validity of the study (Cresswell 2009: 190–191). I decided to draw these two data sets together and present the interpretations under the same heading, since the interpretations are entangled and complementing each other.

Interviews could have also been complemented with participatory or ethnographic methods. It would have enabled considering local agencies and hospitality from alternative positions, but in the scope of this thesis these methods were not possible. However, the combination of qualitative and quantitative data proved to be a convenient research design for interpreting how hosts think of their own hospitality within Couchsurfing, in which ways Couchsurfing as a co-creative practice challenges monetary platforms, and enables alternative economic agencies in the field of tourism.
8.2 Implications
As stated in the introduction, this thesis aims to rethink agency in tourism, in the context of de-differentiation that emerges from the possibilities of collaborative economy. I located co-creative and sharing practices to the core of collaborative economy, and presented them through a case study of alternative tourism and Couchsurfing. Couchsurfing as a case study offered a possibility to focus on the intersection of hospitality and economic geography, from the hosts’ and locals’ point of view. Also my aim to write different ontologies into being in tourism research and rethink agency contributes to Russo and Richard’s (2016) notion of tourism without development, and leads to my notion of tourism without mobility.

One of the outcomes of this thesis was the notion of tourism without mobility. Hosting people and benefitting from tourism in various ways challenges the conventional definition of tourism as displacement and mobility (UNEP & WTO 2005). Focusing on the hosts’ point of view, alternative tourism might be described as tourism without mobility as well – Couchsurfing hosting contributes to same kind of cross-cultural exchange as conventional tourism. As conventional tourism does, Couchsurfing enables cross-cultural exchange and experiences for the hosts too, also without their own mobility. People are willing to co-create the tourism experience together and postmodern tourism reflects not only the act of “have been there”, but rather a more social experience of the place. Important is also the locals’ desire to interact with the travellers. Co-creation is entangled in the exchange of knowledge and skills (Pera 2014) and self-developmental motivations were mentioned by one fifth of the survey respondents, however interviewees put even more value to motivations related to self-development and learning. Co-creative practices offer not only the tourist but also the locals more meaningful ways to encounter people, participate in cross-cultural exchange, learn and share, even without the act of travelling itself.

One could argue that there is nothing new in the forms of “new hospitality” – hospitality has occurred in private homes and accommodating friends and relatives is still common. However, the ways in which hospitality is managed through peer-to-peer platforms has its spatial consequences, and Couchsurfing represents some of the features of contemporary platform economies. Online communities extend to offline world in an increasingly globalized and networked world, and as Russo and Richards (2016) argue,
personal contacts and sociability as well as individual experiences gain more significance. Other distinctive feature of this “new hospitality” is that it happens without a third intermediary, and often between strangers (Russo & Richards 2016). Therefore, trust is an important aspect as a motivational factor and a prerequisite to participation. Trust as a motivation remained hidden in my data and the open-ended survey responses, but it was pointed out in the interviews and in the statements of the survey. Although trust is fundamental for networked hospitality, it hardly is the only reason to decline a couch request, but here the focus is not on the barriers of hospitality or reasons to decline the couch request.

It became clear that for my interviewees, the ideology of Couchsurfing and their practices as hosts are based on non-monetary exchange and a specific ideological assumption. In keeping with the previous research about the motivational factors behind sharing economy, the main motivations of Finnish hosts were related to social, cultural and reciprocal aspects – sharing and getting to know people, to participate in cultural exchange. As an alternative economy, sharing is not based on money but other, more intangible and affective aspects such as experiences, learning, sociability and reciprocity. Therefore, co-creation is in the core of the phenomena with the motivations related to the involvement itself – members of Couchsurfing are willing to be together and create experiences together. Co-creation of tourism experience, interaction and sharing offers something that is perceived more interesting and valuable. Couchsurfing is considered as a possibility to learn, share and co-create experiences in a world that has come to be more and more technology driven and open. It is a possibility to share and make meaningful connections, to travel without mobility itself.

Survey revealed that motivations related to the hosts’ own travelling were also drivers for participation and hosting. After all, the roles of hosts and guests are socially negotiated and they can be renegotiated in every encounter. Therefore, altruistic principles or intangible compensations do not fully cover the motivations to participate in non-monetary sharing. The indirect reciprocity that Couchsurfing promotes by enabling the reciprocation of hospitality, tangible compensations become involved in the hosts’ motivations too. Reciprocity might be direct, when hosts become surfers and visit their guests. In most cases, reciprocity is indirect as Bials (2012) suggested: if the former hosts are using Couchsurfing in accommodation purposes and end up surfing in a
different location and are hosted by different people. My data also indicates that reciprocity might stay unestablished as well – some hosts have never used the website to find and accommodation, and they don’t expect to get a reciprocal compensation in return of their hosting.

Tourism is based on, and promotes cultural and social exchange (Richards 2013), and according to my data these two categories were also important motivations to participate in Couchsurfing hosting. The meaning of sociability of tourism experience is in the core of Couchsurfing as a form of alternative tourism. Its popularity reflects the travellers’ willingness to engage with the local people and find something that is perceived local or authentic (Richards 2015). According to my data social motivations were the most important individual motivation category in participating in Couchsurfing hosting, and the social benefits are often mentioned by the supporters of sharing economy (Lahti 2015) as well as a driving force for solidarity economy (Eskelinen & Kumpuniemi 2017).

Forno and Garibaldi (2015: 205) state that relational tourism builds on personal encounters and shared hospitality through co-creation. By co-creating tourism experiences with their guests, Couchsurfing hosts as alternative tourism agencies are not profit-driven, which gives more meaning to interpersonal relationships and socially negotiated encounters. Sharing experiences, cultural and social exchange is also linked to more ideological endeavours of the hosts, which was mentioned as a motivational factor by one third of the survey respondents. My interpretations of Couchsurfing hosting motivations align with Lampinen and Cheshire’s (2016) suggestion that peer-to-peer exchange would be motivated by collectivist motivations instead of monetary or self-interested motivations.

Emotional or affective motivations, such as a sense of community, helping people out and the willingness to share and be hospitable also recognized by Lahti and Selosmaa (2013: 20–21) and Hardy (2017: 267) were seen in intangible compensation –motivations and in ideological aspects. Rational motivations, such as trust and tangible compensations were present too, and also being more flexible and trying out new things were mentioned. No one mentioned ecological motivations for their participation, and sustainable endeavours are, according to Böcker and Meelen (2016), not the most usual drivers when it comes to accommodation sharing (Germann Molz 2013, Grybaite & Stankeviciene
Economic motivations were mentioned in the context of surfing but not hosting, apart from the context of possible reciprocal dimension of hospitality. There might be differences in the motivations of monetary and non-monetary platforms, as the interviewees and the survey respondents mostly agreed that they believe that there is a stronger sense of community and ideology within the Couchsurfing community.

Through co-creation, Couchsurfing reinforces the importance of the local people and human agency in tourism. Hospitality that is not based on monetary compensation emphasizes personal encounters and social negotiability within the collaborative practices. As a result, tourism is spilling into new tourism localities and areas which have not been touched by tourism before – hosts open their homes and everyday lives for tourists, who are able to get to know the everyday life landscapes of their local hosts. It is to be mentioned that Couchsurfing doesn’t exist in a vacuum, but rather as Mosedale (2011) describes, the diverse economic practices act in the interstices of conventional economy. Couchsurfing hosts and guests do things that are often connected with conventional tourists too – they might use public transportation, visit restaurants or pubs, go to museums or various events, therefore also interfering with the incumbent operators in the tourism industry. Thus, spaces, places and new localities become co-created and co-constructed between the hosts and guests.

Places are created and re-created in social processes and Couchsurfing creates alternative spaces of co-created tourism. If place is understood as Shaw and Williams (2004: 104) point it out, “being the product of socialized human beings, i.e. as more than the outcome of profit-seeking activity” co-creation has a major impact on how spaces and places of tourism are created. Sharing and co-creative practices are a highly urban phenomena, and encountering and networking creates meaningful experiences and connects people at local and global level.

Altruistic and reciprocal arrangements challenge the monetary categories of capitalocentric economic practices by facilitating hospitality, which is based on non-monetary sharing and collaborative actions. Hosts mentioned ideological reasons as motivations to use non-monetized platform instead of monetized platforms. They saw Couchsurfing as a more social endeavor, and linked it with a stronger sense of community. Couchsurfing promotes economic agency that is not motivated by the urge to make profit, rather it appears to be motivated first and foremost by intangible
compensations and ideological motivations. Growing number of sharing economy practices has raised the question how to regulate these alternative capitalist systems. Contested meanings of sharing itself leads to a situation, where more and more practices are put under same categories (Martin 2016, Eskelinen & Kumpuniemi 2017). However, emerging diverse forms of practicing economy are driven by different motivations and they produce diverse economic agencies. With the emerging concepts and practices of diverse economies and challenges connected with sharing and platform economies, it is important to recognize the human agencies behind such practices. Taking into consideration the alternative agencies in tourism contributes to more sustainable tourism development.

This thesis builds on the idea that there could be a compensation based on non-monetary and intangible resources, reflecting Gibson-Graham’s (2006: 62) idea of socially negotiated commensurability. In this way, Couchsurfing is a practice of diverse economy – tangible assets are shared and the compensation is something non-monetary or reciprocal. Couchsurfing is based on sharing non-monetary and intangible assets, as hosts share their time, space and a moment in their lives. They get something else in return – the experience of co-creation. Hosts might practice their language skills, the other learns more about the world and different cultures by hosting different people from different countries. Hosting and sharing enables the locals to perform as alternative economic agencies. Sharing their already existing tangible (physical space) and intangible (local knowledge, time, and personality) assets they become part of the tourism industry, translating the conventional economy into diverse and alternative practices.

Reflecting Mosedale’s (2012) thoughts of economic agencies and structures, Couchsurfing as an online platform, as well as the network of actors it creates, are social structures which enable human agency and allow individuals to produce and reproduce economies, perform as economic subjects. Performing as economic subjects empowers the locals and residents in the field of tourism, and looking at the hosts’ perspective, alternative economic agency of the Couchsurfing hosts. Non-commercial online platforms and alternative forms of tourism, such as Couchsurfing, challenge the traditional ways how tourism industry operates and where it operates. It empowers not only the tourist, but also the local. Therefore, to understand the quality of tourism experience, human agencies at the local level need to be rethought.
8.3 Future research

Implications of this thesis suggest that alternative tourism and alternative hospitality that functions in the margins of conventional economy should also be rethought by empowering the local perspective and the collective potential it performs. Hospitality is only one dimension of the tourism industry, and taking into account the de-differentiation of various stakeholders, and also other local agencies throughout the tourism industry could be localized. Different understandings of diverse economic agencies could be identified using the relational approach of Dredge and Gymóthy (2017, see also figure 1), which I found useful in identifying the agencies Couchsurfing frames and reframes.

Future research agenda could include the spatial dimensions of co-creative tourism and diverse economic practices. By including locals as new intermediaries, diverse economic practices do not only change the way how tourism is done, but also where it is done. The notion of tourism without mobility brings the attention to local issues and to the local community. Monetary and non-monetary hospitality alters the urban fabric and even forming new localities, which turn out as how Jones and Woods (2013) defined relational space and permeable boundaries: relational spaces with permeable boundaries of tourism and everyday life. Thinking of city as a relational space would offer various geographical approaches to study the locals’ economic agencies and their spatialities.

Sharing economy is said to be foremost an urban phenomenon (Botsman & Rogers 2011), and this thesis focuses largely on urban issues of the collaborative economy and co-creation practices. Few of those hosts who answered the survey or few of those whom I interviewed, mentioned also the lack of users on the platform. They said that they would actually be willing to host more guests but not that many travellers contacted them due to their remote location. There could be differences between emerging or more mature tourism destinations. Therefore, future research agenda could take into consideration the altering the urban fabric and spatial consequences of these forms of non-monetary hospitality, which are not following the supply-demand –logic, but not existing totally outside the capitalist economy. How and to which extent these practices are reshaping or reframing already existing tourist destinations? How co-creative and sharing practices are already taking place in more rural settings and what practices could be implemented?

Also focusing on reasons why people are not hosting would have brought more depth into the motivations of hosting, through the barriers of hospitality. My interviewees
had hardly any negative experiences with Couchsurfing hosting, but in the media, there are ongoing debates about the safety of using Couchsurfing. It might also be that the Couchsurfing members in different countries and contexts have different opinions and experiences, but also the guest experience is in many ways different from the host experience. Russo and Dominguez (2016) note that hosts’ personal capabilities have a greater influence on the patterns of alternative hospitality, but also the power-relations between hosts and guest have an impact on perceived safety and the established hospitality. Therefore, more critical understandings of guest-host -relationship would offer an appropriate viewpoint in regard to socially negotiated hospitality.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX I

Interview outline

Couchsurfing
- How long have you been a member?
- How do you use the platform?
- Are you more active as a host or as a surfer?

Motivation
- Why did you join Couchsurfing in the first place?
- Why do you want to host?
- Do you prefer Finnish or international surfers?
- Barriers to host?

Experiences
- Do you spend time together?
  - What do you usually do with your guests?
- Do you have any bad experiences? Side effects of Couchsurfing?

Other platforms
- Have you listed / could you consider listing on other platforms?
- What do you think of monetary platforms compared to Couchsurfing?
Online survey

Survey for Couchsurfing hosts

Welcome to answer a survey about Couchsurfing hosting and your own experiences as a host. This survey is meant for those who are hosting or have hosted via Couchsurfing. This survey is a part of my master thesis and all data will be kept private.

Next →

Survey for Couchsurfing hosts

Apart from providing accommodation, do you do something else with your guests? *

- No, I only provide an accommodation
- Yes, I spend time with my guests

What kind of things you want to do with your guests? *

Name maximum five activities/things you do with your guests

← Previous  Next →

Survey for Couchsurfing hosts

What are the main reasons why you decided to join Couchsurfing? *

Name maximum three of the most important reasons for you

← Previous  Next →
APPENDIX II

Survey for Couchsurfing hosts

Couchsurfing and other platforms

Have you listed your room or apartment on other monetized platforms? *
Hosting on a monetized platform means that hosts get a monetary compensation. Eg. Airbnb

- Yes
- No, but I could consider listing my apartment/room on a monetized platform
- No, I don’t want to list my apartment/room on a monetized platform

← Previous  Next →

Survey for Couchsurfing hosts

Do you prefer Couchsurfing or monetized platforms, why? *

← Previous  Next →

Survey for Couchsurfing hosts

What would motivate you to change from Couchsurfing to another platform? *

← Previous  Next →
# APPENDIX II

## Survey for Couchsurfing hosts

**Why you don’t want to use monetized platforms instead of Couchsurfing?**


## Survey for Couchsurfing hosts

**Through (hosting via) Couchsurfing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want to meet new people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to practice my language skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to share my culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t expect to get anything in return of hosting a surfer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I host because I can’t travel that much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to host because I have also surfed via CS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to meet like minded people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have discovered new sides of my city</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect that guests are interested in spending time with me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to find a partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I host because I want to surf via CS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I also want to spend time with my guests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m interested in hearing about my guests’ culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to make new friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have learnt new things about my guests’ home countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Survey for Couchsurfing hosts

### How well the following statements describe Couchsurfing? *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Couchsurfing is reliable</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The best thing is that it’s for free</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Couchsurfing community is so big, that not all the members have to host</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couchsurfing is a better option than commercial accommodation</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How well the following statements describe your participation in Couchsurfing? *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without hosting via CS I wouldn’t meet people from different countries</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have sometimes declined a Couch request from a person who has negative references</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t mind if someone uses Couchsurfing only to find an accommodation</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to host foreign surfers over surfers from my own country</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Background information**

**Sex **
- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

**Year of birth **

**City of residence **
APPENDIX II

What is your highest education level? *
- Elementary school
- Comprehensive school
- Upper secondary or vocational school
- Lower academic degree
- Higher academic degree
- Other, which?

Currently I live
You may choose multiple options
- alone
- with my partner
- in a shared flat
- with my parents
- together with my/my partner’s children

Survey for Couchsurfing hosts
Related to Couchsurfing and hosting, is there something relevant that wasn’t asked on the survey or is there something you’d like to say?

Thank you for your answer!
marika.kettunen@student.oulu.fi
## APPENDIX III

Factor analysis and factor loadings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Through hosting via Couchsurfing..</th>
<th>Rotated Factor Matrix²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intangible compensations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to meet new people</td>
<td>.881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m interested in hearing about my guests’ culture</td>
<td>.835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have learnt new things about my guests’ home countries</td>
<td>.682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to make new friends</td>
<td>.574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to share my culture</td>
<td>.462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to practice my language skills</td>
<td>.451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t expect to get anything in return of hosting a surfer</td>
<td>.423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect that guests are interested in spending time with me</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I also want to spend time with my guest</td>
<td>.408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have discovered new sides of my city</td>
<td>.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to meet like-minded people</td>
<td>.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to host because I have also surfed via CS</td>
<td>.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I host because I want to surf via CS</td>
<td>-.005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.
## Motivations by gender crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations multiple response set</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Rather not say</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideological or moral motivations mentioned</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within motivations</td>
<td></td>
<td>56.3%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within motivations</td>
<td></td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social motivations mentioned</strong></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within motivations</td>
<td></td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-development motivation mentioned</strong></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within motivations</td>
<td></td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Own travelling related motivations mentioned</strong></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within motivations</td>
<td></td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative motivations mentioned</strong></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within motivations</td>
<td></td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural motivations mentioned</strong></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within motivations</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other motivations mentioned</strong></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages and totals are based on respondent
### APPENDIX IV

**Motivations*household crosstabulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations multiple response set*</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% within motivations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideological or moral motivations mentioned</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>4,8%</td>
<td>2,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within household</td>
<td>11,3%</td>
<td>7,5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Social motivations mentioned    |       |                      |
| % of total | 22 | 10 | 5 | 7 | 44 |
| Count | 50,0% | 22,7% | 11,4% | 15,9% |  |
| % within household | 35,5% | 25,0% | 27,8% | 26,9% |  |
| % of total | 15,1% | 6,8% | 3,4% | 4,8% | 30,1% |
| Count | 6 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 16 |
| % within household | 37,5% | 31,3% | 6,3% | 25,0% |  |

| Self-development motivation mentioned |       |                      |
| % of total | 4,1% | 3,4% | 0,7% | 2,7% | 11,0% |
| Count | 11 | 11 | 5 | 3 | 30 |
| % within household | 9,7% | 12,5% | 5,6% | 15,4% |  |

| Own travelling related motivations mentioned |       |                      |
| % of total | 7,5% | 7,5% | 3,4% | 2,1% | 20,5% |
| Count | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 13 |
| % within household | 17,7% | 27,5% | 27,8% | 11,5% |  |

| Alternative motivations mentioned |       |                      |
| % of total | 6,5% | 12,5% | 11,1% | 7,7% |  |
| Count | 10 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 24 |
| % within household | 41,7% | 25,0% | 8,3% | 25,0% |  |

| Cultural motivations mentioned |       |                      |
| % of total | 6,8% | 4,1% | 1,4% | 4,1% | 16,4% |
| Count | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| % within household | 16,1% | 15,0% | 11,1% | 23,1% |  |

| Other motivations mentioned |       |                      |
| % of total | 3,2% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 3,8% | 2,1% |
| Count | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| % within household | 66,7% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 33,3% |  |

| Total |       |                      |
| Count | 62 | 40 | 18 | 26 | 446 |
| % of total | 42,5% | 27,4% | 12,3% | 17,8% | 100,0 |