

Master Thesis

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**House Swapping: With the mindset of the sharing
economy towards conscious tourism?**

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Abstract

A shift in consumer behaviour does affect the traditional tourism industry: the evolving sharing economy promotes collaborative or peer-to-peer consumption, which unfolds itself in new services facilitating accommodation sharing and hospitality exchanges. Embracing the idea of interchanging accommodation without a monetary exchange, house swapping developed into a successful global tourism phenomenon that seems to embody some of the core principles of the concept of conscious travel – a notion and movement that takes an utmost interest in the impact of the tourism activity on the destination and consequently promotes considerate consumption. The present study explores and analyses house swapping as a facilitator or even small-scale realization of this alternative form of travel, with the aim of contributing to both knowledge and practice of alternatives to the conventional (mass) tourism system. Building on consumption and consumer behaviour theory and its application within a tourism context, the conceptual interest of the study revolves around three realms: the emergence of a conscious consumer and a new tourist; consumption determinants and approaches to frame alternative (tourism) consumption; and the human tourism system under an alternative ecological model as conceptualized by Pollock (2012a). The research around the question *How does House Swapping as a form of collaborative travel move tourist practices and experiences towards the idea of conscious tourism?* took a qualitative approach. Based on semi-structured interviews with house swappers and tourism practitioners and visionaries, as well as an analysis of secondary data, the study found house swapping to break away from the conventional (mass) tourism practices that were developed under the industrial model, embracing instead the concept of non-market consumption that revolves around a human dimension. As a form of collaborative travel, the phenomenon establishes a framework for goodwill on which the exchanges build. Focussing in its promotion on intriguing travel experiences, house swapping was also found to constitute a successful approach of embracing and representing conscious travel practices as a ‘hedonistic alternative’. In terms of knowledge, the findings contribute to a better understanding of the house swap phenomenon by illustrating how it frames the tourist consumption. Besides that, the study contributes to a comprehension of the importance of peer-to-peer travel consumption for conscious tourism. In terms of practice, this knowledge proves beneficial for destinations that aim at attracting

and embracing more conscious forms of travel, this being especially interesting in connection to the growing trend of sharing cities. In the realm of marketing, the findings indicate that the promotion of conscious travel benefits from a focus on the unique experience, drawing the image of a ‘hedonistic alternative’.

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1 Introduction

...if you look into indigenous cultures, they have what they call the gift economy. [...] you were considered wealthy by the extent to which you gave things away – completely alien to our culture in the West, which is you are wealthy to the extent to which you've hoarded stuff. (Anna Pollock, Interview 21.03.2014)

Embedded in the wider capitalist economic framework built around a boundless production and consumption cycle, the development of (mass) tourism followed an industrial model – embracing the maxim of continued economic growth and a logic of expansion. However, increasingly lacking to deliver rewarding experiences to the tourist and worthwhile returns to the host, voices critical of the tourism framework can be heard:

...in an industrial model, where neither guest or host views the other as an equal partner but as an object to be manipulated or an adversary to be beaten, the effect is the same over time – the downward pressure on price, yield and satisfaction. (Pollock, 2012a, p.5)

Seemingly addressing the critique that is being raised, a shift in consumer behaviour does affect the traditional tourism industry: the evolving **sharing economy** promotes the idea of **collaborative or peer-to-peer consumption** (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Buczynski, 2013; Gansky, 2010) which unfolds itself in new services facilitating accommodation sharing and bartering, hospitality exchanges, carpooling, dinners with strangers, tours guided by locals etc.

Following the idea of interchanging accommodation without a monetary exchange, **house swapping** (also 'home exchange') developed into a successful global tourism phenomenon similar to *CouchSurfing* and *Airbnb*. However, the phenomenon has received little attention from the academic research society (Arente & Kiiski, 2005; Grit, 2008). This surprises even more in a time when (tourism) scholars demand and struggle to grasp and define alternatives and new trends in the system referred to as responsible or **conscious tourism** (Pollock, 2012a). Since house swapping seems to embody some of the core principles associated with these concepts – educated, respectful and meaningful experiences that embrace the concepts of reciprocity and sustainability – the current study strives toward exploring and analysing house swapping as a facilitator or even small-scale-realization of conscious tourism.

With this aim in mind, a review of relevant literature and contemporary academic articles focusing on alternative mindsets and new trends in consumer behaviour and consumption

theory (e.g. Seyfang, 2009; Soper, Ryle & Thomas, 2009), as well as their application within a tourism context (e.g. Pollock, 2012a; Sharpley, 2002; Fiorello & Bo, 2012), will reveal the conceptual interest of this study and establish the theoretical framework.

Framed by these conceptual considerations and following a qualitative approach, the research is led by the question **How does house swapping as a form of collaborative travel move tourist practices and experiences towards the idea of conscious tourism?**

In order to allow for a comprehensible analysis of the research question – both with regard to the underlying literature and the collected empirical and secondary data – three areas of interest shall be illuminated specifically. 1) By drawing a profile of the users of home exchange networks, it will be examined how behaviour and practices displayed by house swappers reflect an alternative form of travel. Connecting this to the literature about the emergence of a conscious consumer and a new tourist (ch.3.4), the first sub-question is: **In how far do house swappers classify as ‘new conscious tourists’?** 2) In a second step, it will be examined which aspects of consumption are influenced by house swapping (ch.3.3), and what their role is in facilitating a more critical and sustainable form of tourism. Hence, the focus is on how house swapping frames alternative consumption (ch.3.5). Consequently, the second sub-question reads: **How does house swapping influence the tourism consumption?** 3) Reflecting the theoretical considerations on conscious travel around the human tourism system under a more holistic, ecological paradigm as described by Pollock (2012a) (ch.3.6), the third sub-question asks: **How does house swapping affect the tourism system of place, host and guest?**

Based on the elaborations around these three questions, a well-founded concluding consideration of the main research question makes a **contribution to both the knowledge and practice of tourism**. In terms of knowledge, the wider contribution the research aims to make is in line with Forno’s believe that “investigating these phenomena can help us to find useful insights that may help to make our societies work better towards a ‘sustainable future’” (Forno & Garibaldi, 2013, p.2). Tourism as a global activity with enormous growth potential is thereby a pivotal element. In terms of practice, the research strives toward improving the understanding of the practical dimensions of conscious travel with regard to applicability and successful promotion. A better comprehension of the factors that frame (conscious) travel consumption can be of use to businesses in the collaborative travel realm and destination management organizations alike.

The paper starts with an introduction of house swapping as the case of study and hitherto research on the phenomenon. Subsequently, a literature review presents the theoretical framework, followed by a display of the methodological considerations that guide the research. The findings of the research and a discussion in connection with the presented theory are integrated into the analysis part, while the conclusion brings out the most significant outcomes of the study.

2 Introducing the case

“A home-exchange vacation is part cultural immersion, part creature comfort and wholly a relief from overspending” (O’Neill, 2004, p.93).

The phenomenon – that has its origins in the early 1950s and registered an exponential growth both in numbers of members as well as mediating organizations in the last decade – presents yet another option on the traveller’s plate.

Being the case of the present research, the phenomenon of house swapping – that gives tourists “the opportunity to organize custom tailored trips without seeking the services of travel mediators” (Forno & Garibaldi, 2013, p.4¹) – will be presented in this chapter². The case introduction is comprehensive so as to even out the limitations of the empirical data collection (as presented in ch.4.6) and will consequently be used in the analysis. After giving an overview of main characteristics and the development of the phenomenon, as well as the profile of house swappers and their reasons to participate, the process of a home exchange will be outlined. Subsequently, the rather small body of research focusing on house swapping will be displayed, illustrating the contribution the present study aims to make in the academic field.

2.1 What is house swapping?

House swapping is an alternative form of travel, where two parties exchange their home for an agreed upon period of time without monetary exchange. Home exchange organizations facilitate the interaction between their members through a database of listings and integrated communication tools, but the participants negotiate their own terms and rules of the actual swap. Transactions are not limited to houses, but can include as well condominiums, apartments, mobile homes and boats for example.

The origins of the concept date back to the year 1953, when Swiss and Dutch teachers discovered home exchanges as a way of economic travelling and a means to foster cultural

¹ This report presents a study conducted by the University of Bergamo on the homeexchange.com community.

² Apart from the indicated sources, the contents of this chapter are shaped by secondary data like newspaper articles and member stories that were read during the preliminary research process.

understanding. Back then, ads were displayed in catalogues which were printed and distributed by country representatives of the two first home exchange organizations *Intervac* and *HomeLink* (Grit, 2008). With the expansion of the internet, which enabled the global access to information and made communication with people all over the world easier, the home exchange intermediation became more efficient – leading to a quick expansion of the phenomenon³. Positive media coverage additionally quickened the popularization of the alternative travel form. Next to the two popular movies “The Holiday” (2007) and “Tara Road” (2003), numerous newspaper and journal articles presented success stories of the exchange participants, listed the benefits of house swaps and offered how-to guides with suggestions on planning and executing an exchange (Arent & Kiiski, 2006).

Besides the increasing popularity of house swapping among travellers, also the number of home exchange organizations saw an exponential growth, as expensive production and distribution processes were no longer needed. KnowYourTrade.com⁴ lists currently 67 home exchange clubs⁵, which generally give members for a (varying) membership fee access to a centrally organized databank, search facilities and integrated communication tools. However, with the exponential growth especially in the last five years, providers can face the need for controlling the growth of their database: “When the number of candidates residing in less popular areas becomes too large, it will be difficult to find home exchanges for them in more popular regions” (Grit, 2008, p.6). In the mid-1990s, HomeLink for example reacted to this problem with a price increase (ibid., 2008).

Lately, trends of specialization, diversification and integration shape the house swapping landscape (ibid., 2008). While on the one hand increasingly specialized offers attract particular segments of the population of certain age groups, professions or lifestyles (e.g. retirees, high-end home owners, eco-conscious travellers), several providers diversify their portfolio by offering service related transactions like house rentals, B&B, student exchanges or house sitting. Additionally, an integration of other online social networking services is more and more common (e.g. the login via Facebook or LinkedIn, which capitalizes the established online reputation).

³ In a press release from Jan. 13, 2014 HomeExchange.com states that it is the largest home exchange service in the world with 50.000+ members with around 75.000 swaps in 2013, and 120.000 exchanges expected in 2014. <https://www.homeexchange.com/en/press-releases/74/>, Retrieved Mar. 10, 2014.

⁴ <http://knowyourtrade.com/>, Retrieved Apr., 19, 2014.

⁵ In November 2009, as of KnowYourTrade.com the top 8 exchange networks according to member numbers were: HomeExchange.com; RoofSwap.com; HomeLink.org, 1stHomeExchange.com; HomeForExchange.com; Intervac-HomeExchange.com; HomeXchangeVacations.com; HomeForSwap.com

Home exchange organizations represent intermediating bodies that suggest and frame the participation in the network by explaining procedures, laws of conduct and membership experiences (ibid., 2008). By providing a platform for self-organization, they create market spaces that allow their members to market and negotiate their transactions and where “(vacation) times in homes are traded with other (vacation) times” (ibid., 2008, p.6). As such, the home exchange phenomenon represents a pioneer of the sharing economy and its “expansion coincides with the re-emergence of a much broader system known as Collaborative Consumption” (Forno & Garibaldi, 2013, p.1), in more detail explained in chapter 3.7. This facet is supported even more by the web-based providers of today: The guidelines to creating a profile with photos and stories about lifestyle, family, region etc. represent a narrative approach, which reveals a focus on community building (Grit, 2008) – a crucial requisite of the sharing economy. In this sense, Jim Pickell, new COO of HomeExchange.com, points out: “I’m joining a company with a more than 20 year track record of building community and trust while introducing the masses to the sharing economy, a concept that’s only now realizing its huge potential” (homeexchange.com⁶).

2.2 House Swappers and their motivation

Despite the prospect of saving a considerable amount of money on vacation accommodation – the average house swap being quoted as saving a family around \$2000 (Alford & Alford, 2013) – letting a stranger into one’s home is not for everyone. Sure enough, it requires an open personality free from the compulsion to control and an overly protective attitude towards one’s private property. Arente and Kiiski (2006) describe the typical home exchangers as “open-minded, risk-taking, flexible, altruistic and adventurous people, who like communicating with folk” (ibid., 2006, p.77). Furthermore, they are independent travellers, open to exploring new cultures and meeting local people (Grit, 2008).

Looking at listings and member stories, it becomes apparent that house swapping is by and large a western phenomenon with members predominantly from (Western and Northern) Europe, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. According to a study conducted by the University of Bergamo on the homeexchange.com users, most community members are between 35-64 years old, and just about 6% are younger than 34 (Forno & Garibaldi, 2013). Based on interviews with country representatives, Grit points out that home exchangers in

⁶ <https://www.homeexchange.com/en/press-releases/74/>, Retrieved Mar. 10, 2014.

general are in their 50s-60s with no dependent children or in their mid-30s-40s with dependent children. They are middle class, educated professionals (most represented are teachers, journalists, architects and doctors), self-employed or retired, generally with a higher-than-average income (Grit, 2008). He however notes an increasing diversification of candidates, this fact being confirmed five years later by the study on homeexchange.com users, which discloses “a surprisingly diverse set of demographics” (Forno & Garibaldi, 2013, p.2).

Reasons to engage in house swapping are diverse. While saving money – by not having to pay for accommodation, restaurant bills and often even car rentals – is motivation number one, most house swappers appreciate the wider benefits like immersion in the local culture and society, independence, adventure and flexibility, the ease of having a ‘home away from home’, authentic encounters and relationships and an escape from the ‘tourist’ image. Additionally, a home exchange can represent an easy way to visit family and friends without living in their pockets (with the possibility to invite them over as well), attend events or spend time in a city one plans to move to (Alford & Alford, 2013). What is more, there is the benefit of not leaving the home vacant, having somebody to look after the property, pets, the garden and the mail.

While there is a high level of satisfaction with the overall process and the outcome among house swappers (Forno and Garibaldi found that over three-quarter of the homeexchange.com community are “Very Satisfied”), there are some shortcomings in comparison to ‘traditional’ tourist accommodation (see e.g. de Groote & Nicasi, 1994). First, there is a “psychological threshold” (ibid., 1994) to letting strangers (unattended) into one’s home. Most non-home exchangers indicate the perceived risk and unease connected with providing the private property as a reason for not joining the community. Active house swappers also mention the amount of work necessary to prepare and execute the exchange. While the intensive communication and negotiations at the beginning require time and involvement, it is as well the preparation of the house before leaving as well as restoring the host’s home after the vacation that add up. No standards and objective control mechanisms for the process imply furthermore the risk of receiving less than expected, since each host interprets his home subjectively. Avid house swappers address this problem by intense research and by asking for references (which again is time consuming). Finally, since most house swaps rely on individual verbal agreements (formal exchange contracts are an exception) there is always a risk – albeit small – of cancellation or unforeseen changes through one of the parties.

2.3 How to organize a house swap

To become a successful house swapper, the first step is to sign up for one of the numerous home exchange websites, pay the subscription fee⁷ and upload a detailed profile including photos and details of your home, descriptions of where you live and a presentation of you and your family. In most cases, you can also specify when, where and who with you would like to exchange. The home exchange sites usually provide guidelines and instruction on how to create and what to include in the profile. Once all this is set up, the search for a match via the site's search tools can begin. Upon finding an attractive listing, a request e-mail is sent out over the communication tool of the website. If the other party is interested as well, this initiates an – often long – dialogue and the process of negotiating expectations and the details of the swap, getting to know each other and building a relationship, so that “by the time you do the swap, you feel like you are lending your home to friends” (Alford & Alford, 2013, p.18). While the bigger part of house swappers stresses the importance of making the initial contact several months (up to one year) ahead, most websites feature the option of a ‘last minute swap’ for spontaneous members. Another option is to wait and see what offers arrive. Despite the widespread assurance that the home does not have to be a dream mansion in order to get a ‘deal’, apart from the intrinsic feature of the house the popularity is dependent on the region, leisure possibilities (including festival and events) and the available time slots. Normally, home exchanges are arranged for week-end getaways or vacations over a couple of weeks up to several months. “Home exchanging is highly accessible, whether for a two week vacation or a longer, more complex trip” (Alford & Alford, 2013, p.10). People planning on a multiple stop trip over a longer period of time can consider the option of *multiple swaps*, which can facilitate location-independent living, but require a significant organizational effort (ibid., 2013).

The most common (and original) form of house swapping is a *simultaneous* exchange, in which the participants stay at each other's home at the same time. The ownership of a second or vacation home opens up the possibility of a *non-simultaneous* swap. Here the home exchangers stay at each other's property at different times. A third form resembles the transactions taking place at networks like CouchSurfing, and consequently carries the name *hospitality exchange*. Here, the travellers take turns welcoming each other into their homes.

⁷ There are a few free home exchange sites, but most organizations ask for a monthly or yearly membership fee upon registration.

Once all details are settled – in the fewest cases nailed down through a formal exchange contract – travel arrangements are made. Thereby it is important that insurance policies for e.g. house and car are checked on both sides for coverage (O'Neill, 2004). Finally, before departure the house should be subjected to a decent clean and tidy round and certain objects with a high monetary or emotional value can be put away. It is furthermore recommended to leave a “home exchange pack” for the guest, containing information that allows them to fully use the home without problems (e.g. user manuals for appliances and tips and recommendations for local area).

Other than in other accommodation sharing networks (e.g. CouchSurfing and Airbnb), house swapping integrates neither comprehensive safety features like verifications or vouching, nor an insurance provided by the companies⁸ (Airbnb for example offers its hosts a \$1.000.000 insurance on their property). Building on direct reciprocity without any monetary exchange, the system relies on trust, integrity and on agreeing upon clear terms (Alford & Alford, 2013). In order to strengthen trust and the relationship factor, many house swappers like to meet up in person with their exchange partners before the swap if the opportunity arises. After all, with no ‘horror story’ to be found, “house swapping has a fantastic reputation” (Alford & Alford, 2013, p.42).

2.4 Research on House Swapping

“Very few studies have focused on home-exchange in spite of its rapid growth, which has recently been observed even in countries where it has long remained a niche phenomenon” (Forno & Garibaldi, 2013, p.2). Referring to its rather long history, Grit (2008) adds: “Although the home exchanges phenomenon started in the 1950’s, academically it has hardly been covered” (ibid., 2008, p.1). Joining the interest in creating a deeper understanding of house swapping, the present study focuses on the phenomenon from a sociological-qualitative point of view. It approaches it as an alternative form of travel that is gaining momentum in times when ‘collaborative consumption’ increasingly becomes a buzz phrase and calls for holistically sustainable, conscious forms of tourism become louder. In the following, an overview of the existing studies on house swapping will be given, pointing out the relevance to the present study.

⁸ An exception is the start-up *Knok*, launched in mid-2011, which includes an insurance that covers members’ homes while swapping for up to \$200.000.

A first (academic) analysis of home exchange as an alternative product in the tourism market was undertaken by de Groote and Nicasi (1994). A SWOT analysis and a case study of the Belgian market led to the assessment of house swapping as a “very valuable form of alternative tourism”, based on “confidence, respect, open mind, inventiveness, preparation, enthusiasm and flexibility” (ibid., 1994, p.26). One threat factor disclosed by the SWOT analysis is worth mentioning in connection with the present study: The authors point out that a rapid growth of the system might endanger the reliability of the system, which is based on respect and confidence. This provides a starting point for assessing the potential of house swapping as a true alternative to traditional forms of tourism based on the industrial model.

A more comprehensive approach represents the study of Arente and Kiiski (2006)⁹, who conducted in-depth interviews with home exchangers to examine the phenomenon against the background of sociological theories of postmodern consumption, building on concepts of motivation, lifestyle and identity construction. Exploring the oxymoron of postmodern consumer travel choice (being a tourist without being a tourist), they conceptualize house swapping as an expression of liberation and emancipation from the traditional tourist image, and as such an important contributor to the identity construction of post-modern travellers. Their investigations furthermore unveil a ‘home-exchange fraternity’, which “encloses ‘like-minded’ individuals who love to travel their own way” (ibid., 2006, p.77).

Especially interesting for the present study is their debate on alternative, non-institutionalized travel trends, which oppose mainstream tourism and give consumers “a unique opportunity to organize custom tailored trips without soliciting the services of travel mediators” (ibid., 2006, p.III). Offering valuable clues on the integration and active role of the home exchangers in the creation of the travel product, the authors point out that through the communication process potential exchangers act both as ‘buyers’ and ‘sellers’. The fact that home exchangers have to deal intensely not just with the organization of their trip and the characteristics of the destination, but as well with the attractiveness of their own homeland and the other party’s vacation planning represents an interesting fact for the exploration of the phenomenon in the realm of conscious travel (in more detail explained in ch.3.6). It raises the question in how far this direct involvement correlates with the components of the alternative ecological model conceptualized by Pollock (2012b, p.7).

⁹ Please note that this study is a master’s thesis. Having been cited by at least two more recently published academic papers on house swapping and being rather conclusive and relevant in the eyes of the author, it was decided to present and draw upon the findings in the present study.

Grit's article *An Analysis of the Development of Home Exchange Organizations* (2008) discloses the historical development of home exchange intermediation processes (including the role of web-based networks), member profiles and media attention. Being part of a larger study, which focuses on the experiences in self-organizing hospitality spaces and the roles of hosts and guests, the article elaborates as well shortly on how the physical absence of hosts affects the host-guest relation. Since the guest is free from the host's control, the tourist can escape performative scripts and roles. This provides the opportunity for valuable, transformative and unique experiences. On the other hand, the home – as a non-objectified and non-commodified space – reflects the everyday life routines of the host. How these aspects frame and influence the tourist practices during a house swap will be explored in the study at hand.

The most recent contribution in the explorative-academic realm is the study by Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis (2013), who explore house swapping as a non-commercial vacation alternative around the dimensions of hospitality exchange networking, asymmetric exchange, market escape, trustiness, domesticity and local authenticity. The authors state that the “study can be utilised in compiling a preliminary conceptualisation of home swapping, as a form of non-commercial hospitality, with its own characteristics” (ibid., 2013, p.11). The specific characteristics that set home exchanges apart from other forms of non-commercial hospitality are distinguished as 1) the host not being physically present during the guest's stay; 2) the item of exchange being known and agreed upon; and 3) a direct reciprocity with the objects of exchange being similar in nature. While the dimensions displayed give indeed a general idea about the particularities of the phenomenon, the elaborations – based merely on a literature review – seem shallow. The present study aims at deepening the understanding through empirical research, focusing especially on the dimension of market escape, and building on the concepts of trustiness, domesticity and local authenticity.

Relying on quantitative methodology, the study by Forno and Garibaldi (2013) represents research into home exchangers' profiles, motivations, travel habits and their social involvement and trust. Interesting for the present study is the picture they draw of home exchangers, who are “travelers filled with curiosity, seeking unique experiences, concerned with their environment and passionate about their own culture and the cultures of others” (ibid., 2013, p.10). The authors conclude that home exchange – as part of the collaborative consumption that reverses the individualistic turn of contemporary society – models a “consumption that emphasize usefulness over ownership, community over selfishness, and

sustainability over wastefulness” (ibid., 2013, p.20). However, given that the surveys are only based on the homeexchange.com community and that the study is prominently published on the homeexchange.com website¹⁰, the validity of the study results can be questioned.

¹⁰ <https://www.homeexchange.com/en/press-releases/43/>, Retrieved Apr. 20, 2014.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Challenging the industrial model of tourism

In her paper “Can Tourism Change its Operating Model”, change agent, strategist and visionary Anna Pollock (2012a) points out that the system of (mass) tourism as we know it has largely been built on the industrial model of production and consumption which turned places into products, guests into consumers and market segments, and experiences into packages. The growing (mass) demand for cheap global travel required a model of continuous growth that resorted to capitalistic principles, by Ritzer (2007) identified as rationalization, homogenization and standardization, in order to increase efficiency and control. How these concepts contribute to the commodification pressures tourism exerts on culture, environment and social capital has been deplored extensively (see e.g. Greenwood, 1989; McLaren, 1998) and the unsustainability of incessant growth relying on a planet with finite resources has for quite some time been source of a fierce debate. While numerous industry and society sectors are rethinking themselves to meet the challenge of prosperity without growth, tourism has been generally reluctant to address and face the great transition that is deemed necessary at a point where “we either break down or break through” (Pollock, 2011¹¹). Yet, as the probably biggest connecting activity on the planet, it is crucial that also – and especially – tourism asks itself the ‘uneasy questions’: Is the currently predicted growth rate of 4% to 4.5% (UNWTO, 2014) achievable, or even desirable in the first place? What might the impact be and how will it influence the tourist experience? With exponentially growing tourist numbers, actions for change have to be taken now, as “we have [only] one generation left to change [...] from ignorance to curiosity, from superiority to deep respect, from [...] mean spiritedness to gratitude, from extraction to regeneration, from indifference to activism, and from disdain to love” (Pollock, 2013¹²). With these considerations in mind, Pollock argues for the necessity of a new tourism mindset that embraces a more **conscious** form of **travel** – where all participants are awake, alert and aware to make mindful and informed decisions.

¹¹ Anna Pollock: Why Conscious Tourism?. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqPBHvgUWfM>, Retrieved Apr. 04, 2014.

¹² Anna Pollock: Presentation at 2013 Adventure Travel World Summit. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPcIRYnvLKw>, Retrieved Apr. 08, 2014.

A noteworthy trend in the travel sector that seems to address the abovementioned questions is the popularization of the sharing economy. While its influence and consequences are becoming apparent in a wide spectrum of industry sectors, travel specialists, businesses and researchers in particular become aware of the change potential the phenomenon has for the future of tourism:

With the global economic downturn and increasing trust of the Internet and online payments, there has been a major shift towards access of goods over ownership of them. The travel industry is the sector most affected by the meteoric growth of sharing and collaborative consumption. (Skift Inc, 2013¹³)

In order to explore the relevance of these trends for a new tourism mindset within the background antecedents of wider thinking, the first part of the literature review will look at the fundamental shift that consumption patterns – and with them the economic framework – have undergone in the last decades: from conspicuous hyperconsumption to a more moderate and considerate way of consuming, culminating in the much acclaimed collaborative consumption. Having in mind the context of the aforementioned tourism debate, this establishes the wider framework for the realm of this study: the concept of conscious tourism.

3.2 Beyond capitalism: limitations to the growth imperative

In the 1990s, the acceleration of economic globalization led to increasingly pervasive and intensified capitalist social relations (Leyshon & Lee, 2003):

The end of the twentieth century was marked by the so-called ‘triumph of capitalism’ [...] The closing decade of the century saw the expansion of the global economy, based on the ideals of free market liberalisation, on an unprecedented scale. (Gold, 2004, p.1)

The “‘corporate takeover’ of civil society” (ibid., 2003, p.2) by the capitalist system of the West with its intrinsic maxim of continued economic growth and the logic of expansion (Seyfang, 2009), however, did not remain uncontested. Complex issues like climate change, sustainability, resource depletion and overpopulation positioned the challenge of “Prosperity without Growth” (Jackson, 2009) at the top of the agenda. While recognition that there are

¹³ <http://de.slideshare.net/skift/report-7sharingeconomypromo-1>, p.3; Retrieved Apr. 24, 2014.

limits to growth dates back centuries – the English cleric and scholar Malthus contemplated the Earth's carrying capacity already in the 17th century (Avery, 2013) – the matter received unprecedented attention at the beginning of the 21st century in the light of the far-reaching impacts of industrialisation and globalisation.

Also the capitalistic processes of bureaucratization, rationalisation and standardisation (Ritzer, 2007) – going hand in hand with rising inequality – led to overt discontent and opposition to the global financial system. Having disappointed the hopes and expectations of a new age of international co-operation and solidarity heralded by the UN Millennium Report¹⁴ (Gold, 2004), the beginning of the 21st century saw a rise of anti-capitalist and anti-globalization movements like the Occupy Movement¹⁵.

Of course, the phenomenon of mass tourism with its origins in the same logic of maximal growth did not escape the aforementioned issues and is starting to pull the rug out from under itself. The competition in a mass market on price instead of value shifts the focus towards utmost efficiency and away from customer fulfilment and happiness (Pollock, 2013¹⁶). What is more, by implicating problems such as strain on scarce resources, pressure on historical, cultural and religious heritage and environment, (economic) dependence and stressing inequities, the system seems to “contain within it the seeds of its own destruction” (Pollock, 2012a).

Next to the environmental (sustainability) concerns and cultural- and social-exploitive aspects identified by a growing number of alternative thinkers and scholars as the arising theoretical and practical challenges to the economic system, it is increasingly the concern that materialistic (hyper-)consumption does not contribute to happiness and well-being that supports the call for change. The recognition of “the negative legacy of the consumerist lifestyle [...] for consumers themselves” (Soper, 2009, p.1) serves as a catalyst for a shifting mindset.

Before exploring in more detail this shifting mindset that affects as well the realm of travel, the next section aims at explaining the driving forces behind consumption – pointing out the particularities of tourist consumption in this context.

¹⁴ Annan, K. (2000). *We The Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century* (Millennium Report of the Secretary-General). http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/We_The_Peoples.pdf. Retrieved: Feb. 24, 2014.

¹⁵ The Occupy Movement was a protest movement to raise awareness of the inequalities produced by large corporations and the global financial system. Citizens occupied key parks and squares generally in the financial districts of many major capital cities.

¹⁶ Anna Pollock: Presentation at 2013 Adventure Travel World Summit.

3.3 Tourism consumption in the context of a consumer culture

In today's consumer society, lifestyle and culture are defined by consumption (Miles, 1998). Naturally, that affects the nature of the travel sector, since most of the affluent western "tourism-generating societies are becoming characterized by [this] dominant consumer culture which influences all forms of consumption, including tourism" (Sharpley, 2002, p.307).

For the present study it is crucial to understand the forces underlying the consumption patterns of tourists, since they determine in how far tourists are "disposed towards consuming tourism [in] a manner that is appropriate to the destination" (ibid., 2002, p.316), thus allowing for a form of travel that generates higher net benefits for the hosts and the host destination (Pollock, 2012a).

While McKercher states that it would be "a mistake to assume that most tourists are anything more than consumers, whose primary goal is the consumption of a tourism experience" (McKercher, 1993 as cited in Sharpley, 2002), it has to be kept in mind that the tourism consumption is somewhat special due to the peculiarity of the tourism 'product'. Tourist services are intangible (cannot be tested), inseparable (produced and consumed at the same time), heterogeneous (variable in quality) and perishable (cannot be consumed later), and the purchase hence involves a higher level of risk than the consumption of traditional consumer goods. Another fundamental characteristic is that tourists have to travel to the destination in order to consume the product on site (ibid., 2002). Being involved in the creation of the tourist experience, the traveller becomes an integral part of the tourism production process: "the tourist utilizes the intermediate outputs (services) to generate the final output: intangible but highly valued experiences such as recreation, business, and social contacts" (Smith, 1994, p.10). According to Sharpley (2002), the tourist-consumer behaviour is a continual, cyclical and multidimensional process that occurs over the traveller's lifetime.

Despite the specific characteristics of consuming tourist-services, it is necessary to consider the cultural context and the social environment in which tourism consumption is embedded in order to comprehend it (Urry, 1990; Honkanen & Mustonen, 2008). The next section therefore outlines the push and pull factors that frame the (western) consumer society and points out how they relate to tourism.

The consumption of goods and services is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple determinants and diverse forces. Wilk suggests that it has to be approached through a set of different lenses, including individual choice theories, social theories and cultural theories that

conceptualize consumption as needs-driven behaviour, a group phenomenon generating a form of collective behaviour, and symbolic behaviour within a ‘consumer society’, respectively (ibid., 2002).

Similarly, Røpke (1999) emphasizes the complexity of the consumption issue, which necessitates the understanding of “not only economic forces, but also human motivations” (ibid., 1999, p.403). On the one hand, she depicts the neoclassic perception of consumption – where growing consumption is seen as a result of people’s demands – as simplified and apologetic. Environmentalists and cultural critics on the other hand, who blame the industry for seducing people into buying goods, underestimate in Røpke’s view the importance of consumption (ibid., 1999). She consequentially outlines three groups of explanations for consumption: 1) *historical and socio-technological* explanations relate to aspects of everyday life; 2) *socio-psychological* factors concern the influence of social relations on consumption; and 3) (*socio-*) *economic* aspects embrace the institutional set up of the economy.

The industrialization of the Global North¹⁷, **historically** enabled by the access to cheap fuels – coupled with the disregard of social and environmental production costs – as well as the appropriation of resources from the South, is considered as the original catalyst of the rapid growth of consumption. Tourism emerged as a continuation of the relative affluence of the Global North. While recently the process of globalisation – extending the reach of consumerism – has made the world smaller and ever more accessible, it was the development of the railway in the 19th century that led to a democratisation of travel (Urry, 1990). The spread of different transportation modes (road, sea, air) in the realm of tourism is what Røpke presents as **socio-technological** frameworks of consumption. These are systems of related commodities, infrastructure, social practices and institutions, which ‘lock-in’ the consumer. They can be seen as the cause of “creeping standards of living”, leading to “inconspicuous consumption” by turning wants into needs (Røpke, 1999, p.416). It is, hence, society that furnished its members with the means of travelling and thereby created the need to travel (Krippendorf, 1986a).

The **socio-psychological** approach further elaborates on the creation of demand by focusing on the human nature of *insatiable wants and needs*, which theorizes envy as a driving force behind demand (Røpke, 1999). This concept distinguishes between absolute needs (evolving in the individual sphere of each person independent from social relations) – and relative ones

¹⁷ In a political and socio-economic divide of the world’s nations into “North” and “South”, the North refers to the US, Canada, developed parts of Europe and East Asia.

(resulting from the wish to feel superior). The latter form the basis for theories like social emulation, positional goods, conspicuous consumption and competitive display.

Tourism consumption incorporates both aspects of the concept. On the one hand, focusing on hedonistic aspects of travel, the tourist is seen as being motivated by “ego-centric needs of escape and self-indulgence” (Sharpley, 2002, p.316) and striving to maximize pleasure by fulfilling personal needs of relaxation and fun. On the other hand, the consumption of tourist services is dependent on the social context (Urry, 1990). Travels constitute a visible part of the culture and thus serve as markers for discrimination and ritual adjuncts. The emergence of mass tourism – suddenly enabling everybody to reach the ‘social status’ of a traveller – entailed the distinction of taste between different places: *where* and *how* one travelled came to have considerable significance as a social classifier (ibid., 1990).

While consumption is seen as a way to demonstrate one’s position in the hierarchical society and the quality of life experienced by the individual, the ability of the consumer to call upon ethical capabilities should not be neglected. In this sense, Røpke points out that actions have to be ethically and morally justifiable for the individual. This (increasing) rationality is reflected in booming travel trends like eco- or geo-tourism and sustainable and responsible travel.

Consumption under a socio-psychological point of view is furthermore seen to play an important role in constructing and sustaining self-identity, adding to a process of *individualization*. This, again, provides a strong link to the realm of tourism. While there is no “simple equation” between travel and personality development, “self-identity is a useful concept for understanding [...] tourism consumption” (Desforges, 2000, p.942), since travelling constitutes an important part of people’s lives and “huge personal investments [are] placed in travel and related practices” (ibid., 2000, p.943).

Taking a step back from the individual and his or her embeddedness in social relations, the **economic** approach contemplates the influence of the economic system on consumption patterns. As a pull mechanism of consumption Røpke identifies the persistent productivity increase driven by *competition*. As a result, producers striving to stay competitive advertise their specialised, diversified or new products – selling consumerism itself. Credit facilities additionally support consumption by facilitating postponed payment.

While destinations try to attract tourists (and their enhanced spending power) through an ever increasing array of products – e.g. within the categories of sightseeing, gastronomy, culture and heritage, and outdoor recreation and adventure – tourism consumption is dependent on

the *work and spend* cycle: Rising incomes and the statutory right to leisure (in western societies) have led to increased trip duration and seasonal diversity over the last decades (Honkanen & Mustonen, 2008). However, the phenomenon of *relative prices and sectoral shifts*, comprised by falling prices of industrially producible goods compared to products and services that cannot be provided industrially (Røpke, 1999), led to a downside trend in quality and diversity in tourism products. To keep costs low and profits high, processes of homogenisation, standardisation and automation were implemented to reduce costly labour-intensive procedures, resulting in a rapid spread of chain establishments and self-service facilities (e.g. check-ins).

The section above emphasized the complexity of consumption in general, and the characteristics of tourism consumption in particular. In the context of the study at hand, this enables the researcher to analyse in detail which aspects of consumption are influenced by House Swapping, and what their role is in facilitating a more critical and sustainable form of tourism. Drawing the connection back to the abovementioned indications of a shifting consumer mindset, the next section will illustrate the characteristics of the ‘new consumer’.

3.4 The emergence of the conscious consumer (and a new tourist)

As mentioned before, there is a rising awareness of environmental, ethical and social issues among consumers, which influences their purchase behaviour. The emergence of a new consumer causes as well the rise of a 'new tourist', which facilitates and demands alternative forms of travel. In order to analyse the behaviour and practices displayed by house swappers in this context, this section illustrates the characteristics of the changing consumer behaviour in general - and the tourist consumption in particular.

Relying on a variety of research sources, change agent Pollock points to the emergence of a mindful consumer after the economic recession, who takes a “more considered, deliberate, cautious approach to consumption” (Pollock, n.d.a). According to research conducted by BBMG¹⁸, today’s savvy and values-driven purchasers are best described as “conscious consumers” (Bemporad & Baranowski, 2007). The findings of the studies¹⁹ show that

¹⁸ BBMG is a branding and integrated marketing agency, which sees the sustainability imperative as the perhaps “biggest economic opportunity of our time” (<http://bbmg.com/who/>, Retrieved Feb. 28, 2014).

¹⁹ The annual BBMG Conscious Consumer Report presents the results of a yearly study conducted by BBMG in conjunction with research partners Global Strategy Group and Bagatto. “Combining a national poll [...] with

conscious consumers strive to make informed decisions by evaluating the social and environmental impact of their purchase, move beyond convenience and reward enterprises for fair, responsible and sustainable practices (Bemporad & Baranowski, 2007). In short, as Bemporad (2009) puts it: “Conspicuous consumption is out. Consciousness is in” (ibid., 2009).

In the realm of tourism, changing consumer behaviour among travellers was predicted already decades ago. Observing indications for a fundamental change in society (as presented above), Krippendorf (1986b) envisioned a new understanding of leisure and travel – away from the wish to escape from everyday life fuelled by ego-centric motives – leading to a “better tourist who feels, thinks, takes part and shares responsibility” (ibid., 1986b, p.135). He pictured eight tourist ‘types’²⁰ that embrace a new consciousness towards a more ‘human’ form of tourism. Also Poon (1993) forecasted the emergence of ‘new’ tourists being “more experienced, more ‘green’, more flexible, more independent, more quality conscious and ‘harder to please’ than ever before” (ibid., 1993, p.10). Illustrating vacation as an extension of life, a way to affirm individuality, “Poon wrote of the declining importance of tourism consumption as status symbol for tourists and the corresponding shift in importance to the intrinsic qualities of holidays” (Bowen & Clarke, 2009, p.258). She furthermore depicted the spontaneous and unpredictable “hybrid” traveller, who no longer consumes along predictable lines (e.g. price categories).

Building on these early notions of flexibility, experience, independence and awareness, more recent studies confirm and further specify behavioural patterns of the “postfordist tourist” (Urry, 1995). The depictions of the new tourist, who seeks “quality experiences that educate, are different, are environmentally benign and that satisfy special interests” (Sharpley, 2002, p.304), seem to be well in line with the profile of the “new breed of traveler known as the ‘home exchanger’” (Forno & Garibaldi, 2013, p.1) presented in the case introduction (ch.1). To analyse in how far house swappers classify as new – conscious – tourists, the main characteristics will be outlined shortly.

Within the expanding trends of **Do-It-Yourself** (DIY) and non-institutionalized **Free Independent Travel** (FIT), the worldly, sophisticated and pro-active travellers create their own unique holiday. As “self-made travel agents”, they side-step the travel industry through consumer-to-consumer holiday planning (Bowen & Clarke, 2009). Arente and Kiiski (2006)

ethnographic interviews [...], the BBMG study explores consumer attitudes, behaviors, preferences and priorities against the backdrop of profound economic and social transformation” (Bemporad, 2009, April 23).

²⁰ Intelligent tourist, Critical consumer tourist, Modest and adaptable tourist, Considerate tourist, Tourist guided from within, Tourist who sets own travel limits, Creative experimenting tourist, Tourist ready to learn.

see herein a negative response to institutionalized tourism that portrays “one’s identity as rebel to the contemporary Western consumption patterns” (ibid., 2006, p.40).

The pursuit of non-conformist, meaningful experiences reflects as well the great value the new tourists assign to **authenticity** (Fiorello & Bo, 2012). Next to the quality of human contact and a more personalized service, it is the expression of authenticity in the local setting they are looking for. Consequently, they “use local guides, eat in local restaurants, source quality local produce, take small group cultural/environmental excursions, [are] sensitive to clean and pristine environments [and] have a heightened appreciation of cultural differences and sensitivities” (Thomson Future Holiday Forum, 2004, p.11, as cited in Bowen & Clarke, 2009).

This travel behaviour is what Fiorello and Bo (2012) describe as commitment to **responsible** and **respectful** travel. The tourists, who search for friendly social encounters and personal and social growth are more sensitive to values and cultural identities of the places visited and show sympathy **towards the local population** (ibid., 2012). What is more, the concern of the tourism impact leads to an increasing consciousness of **environmentally appropriate** tourism.

One crucial determinant of the new tourism behaviour is the development and spread of technology, which facilitates tourism as a “socio-technical practice” (Molz, 2012). Accordingly, the new tourists are ‘**connected** travellers’, who integrate mobile devices, internet and social media into their tourism practices (ibid., 2012). According to Molz, this results in a hybrid sociality – a “new form of sociability that revolves less around physically proximate communal relationships and more around geographically-dispersed, mediated and mobile social networks” (ibid., 2012, p.7). Examples are online hospitality networks like CouchSurfing, Airbnb and home exchange communities, which establish new possibilities for interacting with strangers and allow for a form of collaborative travelling. This new form of online sharing and interaction also shifts the decision-making process of the new tourist, who has at his disposal a numerousness of independent information sources (Bowen & Clarke, 2009).

Even though the depiction of the “new tourists” suggests that considerations on a more conscious form of travel are not necessary, it is a rather perfect image of tourist consumption that is painted here. In fact, Sharpley (2002) emphasizes that “the nature of the consumption of tourism is such that the satisfaction of personal needs, utilitarian or otherwise, dominates the tourist-consumer behaviour process, limiting the extent to which tourists will adapt their behaviour to the needs of the destination” (ibid., 2002, p.307). There is, indeed, the need to

establish a wider framework of conscious consumption to address this issue. Existing and targeted approaches to this end will be the focus of the next section.

3.5 Framing alternative consumption (and tourism)

As illustrated in chapter 3.3 and mentioned above, it is not just socio-psychological factors that determine the consumer behaviour, but as well socio-technological and (socio-) economic aspects of the wider system. In a (Western) consumer world, where environmental sustainability, social responsibility and ethical standards are ubiquitous buzz phrases, the question of how to achieve these ambitious goals arises. Two different approaches to frame alternative consumption patterns will be presented in the following with the aim of allowing a later correlation and critical assessment of the phenomenon of house swapping.

3.5.1 The Mainstream approach

In the mainstream approach (Seyfang, 2009) to changing consumer behaviour the consumer is seen as a political persona able to take rational and critical decisions, and goods are regarded as bearers of environmental, ethical and political concerns (Sassatelli, 2009). Building on the socio-psychological explanation of demand creation, (conscious) consumption represents a means to make sense, create and sustain self-identity, showcase values and define one's place in the hierarchy of society. According to Barnett, Cloke, Clarke and Malpass (2005), appropriate consumption behaviour – embracing e.g. issues of environmental sustainability, fair trade and human rights – is initiated once the governing contexts of consumption convey the moral responsibilities.

The application of this approach in the realm of tourism can be exemplified by the widespread 'codes of conduct' for travellers and lists on how to be a good tourist²¹, that suggest and remind the audience to i.a. read up on the destination, show respect for people and their culture, remember being a guest, spend consciously and walk or take public transport. These measures build on the idea of an information deficit (Seyfang, 2009), assuming that demand

²¹ See e.g. Uncornered Market: The Good Global Traveller – 17 Actions You Can Take; <http://uncorneredmarket.com/good-global-traveler/>, or Responsibletravel.com: Tips for Responsible Travel; <http://www.responsibletravel.com/copy/tips-for-responsible-travel>, Retrieved Apr. 24, 2014.

can be changed and consumer decisions influenced by providing better information (e.g. labelling or awareness campaigns).

The widely recognized ‘value-action gap’ phenomenon (see e.g. Blake, 1999) however draws attention towards the fact that altered knowledge patterns are no guarantee for behavioural changes, highlighting the difference between “what people claim to care about, and what they act on” (Seyfang, 2009, p.11). Contemplating tourism issues from this perspective, Sharpley (2002) questions prevalent sustainable development approaches that assume “that tourists will willingly adapt their behaviour as consumers in order to optimise the contribution of tourism to local development” (ibid., 2002, p.301). It is, in his opinion, the attraction of a particular holiday that brings about sustainable tourism consumption rather than a rational, knowledge-based consumption process influenced by environmental values.

Being locked in the prevailing patterns of consumption and trapped within the current lifestyle practices, the ‘new conscious consumers’ take barely “tokenistic actions”, and are “not inclined to question ‘sacrosanct’ behaviours” (Seyfang, 2009, p.1). What is more, the evolving consciousness is characterised by a ‘self-centered’ paradigm, reflecting a consumer who expects companies to positively impact society, but prioritizes personal and practical concerns like health, safety, price and quality (Bemporad & Baranowski, 2007). This tendency is even more dominant in the travel realm, as the following quote illustrates:

Travel is hard, and people on vacation [...] want to be pampered. Many visitors believe that part of the fun of traveling is leaving cares and concerns behind and enjoying those little extra luxuries that are not part of most people’s everyday lives. Thus, when on vacation we [...] are not always as conscious of our ecological responsibilities as we should be. (Tourism & More²²)

Failing to challenge the socio-technological regime, significant changes in consumption patterns are prevented in the mainstream approach. Hence, an attempt to counteract the basics of the fundamental system of provision – continued economic growth and expansion evoked by the pressures of competition and commerce, advertising and want-stimulation – is not made (Seyfang, 2009). Again, tourism is no exception. In his critical account of responsible tourism, Wheeler (1991) argues that the real problem – the globally growing, absolute number of tourists – is not addressed. Hence, problems like environmental destruction, cultural differences and social tensions that arose due to the sheer volume of tourism activities are left unattended (ibid., 1991).

²² <http://www.tourismandmore.com/tidbits/is-tourism-good-for-the-environment/>, Retrieved Apr. 15, 2014.

The critics who benchmark the mainstream approach as “limited in scope, flawed in design, and unjust in its objectives” (Seyfang, 2009, p.22) call for a structural change and system wide paradigm shift aiming at changing the social logic of consumerism, rather than just reducing consumption. An alternative approach that considers these demands will be discussed in the next section.

3.5.2 The New Economics approach

The New Economics approach questions the economic, cultural and social basis of today’s consumer society, promoting the ideas of ‘non-consumption’ and ‘non-market consumption’ (ibid., 2009). Instead of praising consumption as the purpose of economy and the guiding force able to put society on an ecologically and socially sustainable path, the runaway acquisition of commodities is conceptualized as a problem that needs to be confronted (Princen, Maniates & Conca, 2002).

Author and economist Jackson (2009) articulates the fundamental idea of the New Economics approach quite clearly in his book “Prosperity Without Growth” when he states that it is crucial to “redress the perverse incentives and damaging social logic that lock us into unproductive status competition” (ibid., 2009, p.12). He argues that it is essential to connect the economy to society and environment and establish new structures that enable people to flourish in a less materialistic way – in order to distance ourselves from the “story about us [...] being persuaded to spend money we don't have on things we don't need to create impressions that won't last on people we don't care about” (Jackson, TED Talk July 2010²³).

Efforts in the realm of tourism to address unlimited growth and to integrate activities into environment and society have mostly been implemented on a small scale. While a wide range of names – e.g. alternative, soft, green, sustainable, small-scale and appropriate tourism (Cooper & Ödizil, 1992) – promise a turn towards a new mindset of tourism development and consumption, they mostly promote the consumption of different tourism products instead of a *different consumption* of tourism. However, a clear example of the application of the New Economics approach is the restricted tourism in Bhutan aimed at protecting the unique environment and culture. Upon realizing that an “unrestricted flow of tourists can have

²³ Tim Jackson: An Economic Reality Check, TEDGlobal 2010.
http://www.ted.com/talks/tim_jackson_s_economic_reality_check#, Retrieved Mar 5, 2014.

negative impacts on Bhutan's pristine environment and its rich and unique culture” (Dorji, 2011, p.84), the government initiated a low-volume, high-yield tourism policy (Nyaupane & Timothy, 2010) to control the quantity and the type (and as such the quality) of the country’s tourism. According to Nyaupane and Timothy (2010), the policy – which embraces a daily minimum tariff per tourist, a required guided tour, certain spatial restrictions, and the general perception of inconvenience associated with the process of getting a visa – effectively curtails certain types of tourism. Hence, it is “successful in regulating the growth of the industry and maintaining the number of visitors at an acceptable level” (Dorji, 2001, p.102).

With the ambition to challenge the foundations of modern consumer society and the underlying maxim of growth, the New Economics approach focuses on a holistic consideration of the determinants for demand creation (as outlined in ch.3.3). Besides the paradigm shift towards a **broader understanding of wealth**, Seyfang (2009) introduces three other core assumptions that constitute the approach. Firstly, **new systems of exchange** (different from the current monetary system) need to be incorporated in social and environmental contexts and value what contributes to well-being, not just what is scarce. Secondly, a **richer conception of work** should account for the social economy (encompassing social capital, self-provisioning and non-market exchanges) and represent a step towards breaking the ‘work-and-spend’ cycle that locks people into a circle of ‘never-ending consumption’. Interesting to mention here in the context of the present study is Stebbins’ (2001) concept of *serious leisure*²⁴, which describes the “pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist [...] activity that captivates its participants with its complexity and many challenges” (ibid., 2001, p.54). Building on perseverance, it requires and fosters specific skills and knowledge and results in deeply satisfying experiences and a ‘full’ existence (ibid., 2001). Finally, the **integration of ethics into economic life** requires action on a governmental and corporate level through e.g. ethical investment and social auditing, as well as awareness and conscious behaviour of the private consumer as a participative citizen with the potential of political and collective action for the common good (Seyfang, 2009).

The idea to approach a consumption shift through a comprehensive analysis of influencing factors is as well reflected in the work of tourism scholars who argue that travel experiences and practices are utterly embedded in and dependent of the general consumption patterns of individuals. In this spirit, Sharpley (2002) points towards the need for a new social paradigm

²⁴ Not necessarily referring to the leisure activity of travel, the concept seems very promising with regard to the home exchange phenomenon and will consequently be applied to analyse how house swapping influences the tourism consumption (ch.5.2)

of sustainable lifestyles that can facilitate sustainable tourism consumption practices and would hence enable sustainable tourism development. Contemplating more the individual sphere, also Krippendorf (1986b) emphasizes how the circumstances of the everyday live affect the nature of travel:

...it depends on the everyday preparation rather than on the journey itself [...]. If we are happy and content with our everyday life, if we have satisfaction, space and the possibility of further development in our work and in our home, [...] then we have no need to travel [...] for escape and [...] can use holidays as genuine supplements and enhancements of our lives. (ibid., 1986b, p.135)

Eventually, tourism activities that grow out of a culture of respect, connection and understanding both on the part of developers and practitioners as well as travellers entail the possibility of new tourism structures that care for society, culture and environment. Concordantly, Pollock – who describes tourism as a human system, a network of relationships consisting of the three components place, host and guest (Fig. 1) – argues that “if guests and hosts change the lens through which they perceive their world, then the tourism model will change” (ibid., 2012a, p.2).

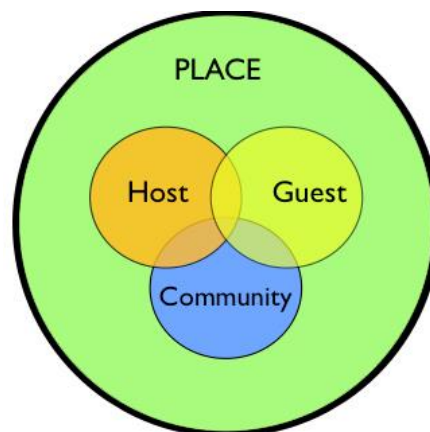


Fig. 1: The Tourism System (Pollock, 2012b, p.4)

Discussing tourism, its development and its consumption in the context of the emerging conscious consumer and the above presented approaches to frame alternative consumption leads to the realm of this study: the concept of conscious tourism.

3.6 Conscious Tourism

“Only if we travel consciously can we travel differently, travel better” (Krippendorf, 1986b, p.135). Formulated nearly 30 years ago by one of the founding fathers of the concept of sustainable tourism²⁵, today this statement seems more relevant than ever. But what does it mean to travel consciously? In order to assess in how far house swapping reflects and integrates conscious travel values, the following section will present the main ideas of tourism scholars on the concept of conscious tourism and outline current movements that strive towards making the idea implementable.

“Minimizing the impacts of tourism on the natural and cultural environments while maximizing its economic benefits has been a major topic in tourism studies over the past few decades” (Nyaupane & Timothy, 2010, p.969). While the negative social and ecological impacts that unlimited tourism growth can have are widely acknowledged (ibid., 2010), the above presented example of Bhutan demonstrated that there are ways to ensure the sustainability of the industry in the long run (Dorji, 2001) and create economic opportunities, as well as awareness and understanding of the country’s uniqueness. The case supports Wheeler’s argument that the industry should be careful, sensitive and sensibly managed in order to maintain its market appeal by preserving and enhancing the product it is selling (Wheeler, 1991). It furthermore exemplifies the importance of a more aware, educated form of tourism that is controlled, slow and absorbed in the host community (ibid., 1991).

Catering to a ‘new tourist’ (ch.3.4), contemporary tourism must embrace the responsibility mantra of economic profitability, environmental sustainability and social equity (Fiorello & Bo, 2012). Increasing importance in this connection is ascribed to the host community: by taking their choices and welfare into greater consideration, the created economic benefits have to be matched with the needs and values of the local population (ibid., 2012). Accordingly, the tourist behaviour should be appropriate to the setting in form of a “balanced, symbiotic relationship between tourists [...] and the developmental needs and objectives of the destination” (Sharpley, 2002, p.302).

In view of the challenges the contemporary tourism industry faces – new technology, more experienced consumers, global economic restructuring and environmental limits to growth – Poon points out that “winning does not mean just surviving: it means *leading* – it means

²⁵ Lane, B. (Apr. 07, 2003). Obituary: Jost Krippendorf – Pioneer of Sustainable Tourism. *The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2003/apr/07/guardianobituaries>, Retrieved May 02, 2014.

becoming a leader in a new and profoundly changed tourism industry” (Poon, 1993, p.3). With her concept of Conscious Travel, Pollock ties in with this. Envisioning the conscious host who embraces the new reality as the most important actor and the future leader of the new travel community, her vision is “for Conscious Travel to become a global learning community in which participants recognize their interdependence and help themselves and each other” (Pollock, 2012a, p.15). With a focus on people rather than a product, she pictures a movement, a state of mind and of being, that aims at creating a healthier, more profitable, more stable, socially just and environmentally sustainable tourism sector (ibid., 2012a). In line with Krippendorf’s observation that “the question is not about new travel, but about new people” (Krippendorf, 1986, p.133), Pollock develops the Conscious Travel concept around a human tourism system (Fig. 1). With the aim of the present research in mind, the main characteristics of the three core elements of this system – place, host and guest – under a more holistic, ecological paradigm as described by Pollock (2012a) will be outlined below in order to make the concept analysable within the context of house swapping.

Instead of being a commoditized product, under the new paradigm the uniqueness, beauty and personality of the **place** is valued, expressed and experienced. Resisting uniformity and mediocrity, the feeding, housing, transportation and entertainment of visitors is arranged in a way that respects and reflects the spirit of the setting. Locals are called upon to express what home means to them and to extend the invitation, leading to a greater engagement through more meaning, purpose and engagement. Visitors are encouraged to experience the essence of the place through all senses and from different perspectives (Pollock, 2012a). Pollock’s thoughts remind of the concept of slow tourism as described by Bowen and Clarke (2009), which focuses on quality time at a destination. By avoiding flights – taking trains, bike or walking instead – it allows for an unstructured, more flexible and thoughtful travel experience with time to respectfully discover and immerse oneself in the uniqueness of a place.

As mentioned above, the **host** takes a central role under the concept of Conscious Travel and is ascribed a broader responsibility than just extracting value from the guest. Next to creating wholesome experiences and collaborative communities of suppliers, conscious hosts safeguard the uniqueness and attractiveness of the place. They furthermore attract guests – but as well employees, suppliers and investors – whose values are in line with those of the host community (Pollock, 2012a). Similarly, Fiorello and Bo (2012) emphasize the host community as the most important element in a successful tourism offer (ibid., 2012). The authors analyse community-based ecotourism, where the community maintains significant

control of the tourism development and management through participation, collaboration and economic, psychological, social and political empowerment. This provides the basis for a reciprocal relationship between tourist and host (ibid., 2012).

The **guest**, finally, is not seen as an object or segment to be exploited, but is respected as a co-creator of value who is willing to pay the true cost of the service he or she receives (Pollock, 2012a). Encounters with the host are based on trust and dialogue. Krippendorf indicates the wider implications a (conscious) travel experience can have for the guest, when he asks if “holidays [...] spent away from home could become the basis for learning [...] for everyday life” (Krippendorf, 1986b, p.135).

Pollock’s ideas are based on the observation of a paradigm shift – in the context of (tourism) consumption outlined in ch.3.2-3.5 – which, as she argues, will first come to the fore in mature outbound markets like Europe and North America (Pollock, 2012a). She presents four fundamental assumptions that are being questioned and overturned in this process. Next to a turn towards a less materialistic worldview – that values connectivity and recognizes the need of a common purpose, as well as inspiring and empowering leadership from within in order to thrive – two assumptions are especially relevant for the present research. First, a mindset shift from competition towards collaboration represents a step towards ecological stability and resilience. Second, changing priorities of quality over quantity and experience over ‘stuff’ reflect and support the travellers’ wish to learn and grow, as well as their willingness to share. Where this paradigm shifts has led in the last decade in the realm of travel will be outlined in the next section, which presents the phenomenon of the sharing economy as the underlying mindset of house swapping.

3.7 The sharing economy

The above presented developments, concepts and approaches to changing consumer behaviour seem promising. Ideas however that call “into question [...] lifestyles, habits, aspirations and routines of individual citizens and households” (Seyfang, 2009, p.7) need to present an alternative narrative that creates confidence by picturing a compelling future vision (Confino, 2013). Instead of centring on avoidance, limitation and deprivation of affluence, this new narrative should praise the pleasures of consuming differently (Soper, 2009).

Representing such a new ‘seductive narrative’, a transformational change on a global scale through all societal layers is taking place and gaining speed: the rise of the sharing economy. This social and economic alternative promotes hedonistic benefits like saving money and time, becoming part of a community, creating meaningful relationships and having unforgettable experiences. It facilitates a new mode of consumption where sharing, exchanging, bartering and giving open the possibility to balance personal self-interest with the good of the larger community and the planet – without sacrificing personal freedoms or the individual lifestyle (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

Facilitating new forms of travelling, the collaborative consumption in the context of tourism reflects basic principles of conscious tourism (ch.3.6). Constituting the underlying mindset of house swapping, the main characteristics and underlying principles of the sharing economy in the travel realm will be presented in the following to allow for a well-founded analysis of the home exchange phenomenon.

3.7.1 Peer-to-peer travel as collaborative lifestyle

As mentioned earlier, the travel sector is the one most affected by the rapid growth of the sharing economy (Skift Inc, 2013²⁶), which promotes peer-to-peer (P2P) travel on a global scale: “...the collaborative economy is now rooted in each of the five key elements of the travel ecosystem: getting there, sleeping, eating, visiting, and the overall experience” (Gonzalo, 2013²⁷). Next to the by now well-known and established possibility of hospitality and accommodation exchange (e.g. CouchSurfing, Airbnb, HomeExchange), other forms of ‘collaborative travelling’ enable travellers to meet up with locals for guided tours (e.g. Vayable, GetYourGuide) or shared meals (EatWithMe, Cookening) and find like-minded people to organize group travels and shared experiences (e.g. globetrooper, Tripnco). On a bigger and bigger scale, the sharing economy changes the way people make their travel decision, influences the tourist practices and experiences and leads to new forms of travel consumption (Fig. 2).

²⁶ <http://de.slideshare.net/skift/report-7sharingeconomypromo-1>, p.3; Retrieved Apr. 24, 2014.

²⁷ Gonzalo, F. (2013). Collaborative Economy in Travel: The Big Disruptor. <http://de.slideshare.net/fgonzalo/3-collaborative-economy-in-travel>, Retrieved Apr. 04, 2014.

Collaborative consumption & tourism panorama



Fig. 2: The influence of the sharing economy on tourism industry (TripnCo, 2013, slide 10)

This travel trend reflects what Botsman and Rogers (2010) conceptualize as *collaborative lifestyle* – the sharing and exchange of intangible assets like time, space, skills or money between people with similar interest, generating social capital and connectivity (ibid., 2010). The development is based on a changing mindset, in line with the transformational changes displayed in the chapters above. As the authors of *What's Mine Is Yours: The Rise of the Collaborative Consumption* argue, the hyper-consumption of the 20th century was brought about by decades of manipulation and persuasion under the forces of advertisement, a ‘buy now, pay later’ credit card culture and a ‘just one more purchase to satisfaction’ attitude (ibid, 2010). The 21st century of collaborative consumption, in contrast, builds on the notions of reputation, community, access, sharing and giving-away (Fig. 3). A “post-crisis antidote to materialism and overconsumption” (The Economist, 2013), the sharing economy promotes a re-evaluation of prosperity and an alienation from the idea that private property is an imperative prerequisite of wealth (Linne, 2013). “Sharing is clean, crisp, urbane, postmodern; owning is dull, selfish, timid, backward” (Levine, 2009, n.p.).

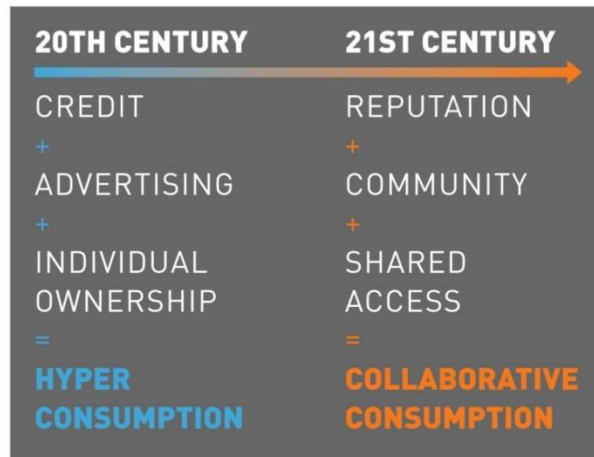


Fig. 3: Hyper vs. Collaborative Consumption (TripnCo, 2013, slide 9²⁸)

The collaborative lifestyle is not limited anymore only to the individual sphere, but is being embraced by mayors around the world to make their city more ‘shareable’²⁹ in order to “create jobs [...], address environmental issues, reduce unnecessary consumption and waste, and recover trust-based relationships between people” (Johnson, 2013³⁰). Naturally, the trend of ‘sharing cities’ also affects the travel realm, as P2P travel options – treated before like competitors and disruptors of the established industry and legal systems – are increasingly being embraced as desirable additions and extensions of the local offer. The city of Amsterdam for example decided on an open attitude towards the accommodation sharing network Airbnb, regarded as the leader in collaborative consumption (Geron, 2013):

A phenomenon like holiday rentals fits a city that values freedom of choice and connecting to the rest of the world. It also makes better use of the housing stock, can be a touristic economic stimulus, and apparently fills a need of today’s tourists. Because of this, apartments are not empty during absence and the city’s tourist offering is more diverse. It also fits the strong development of social media and the tourist preferences to “live like a local.” (Amsterdam, 2013³¹)

The technical foundations enabling an “unbounded marketplace for efficient peer-to-peer exchanges” (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p.xiii) are the internet and mobile devices, which

²⁸ <http://de.slideshare.net/ourield/tripn-co-itb-presentation-vf-public-17138645>; Retrieved Apr. 04, 2014.

²⁹ According to shareable.net, cities like Vancouver, Portland, Amsterdam or Melbourne are part of a ‘Sharing Cities Network’. <http://www.shareable.net/sharing-cities>, Retrieved, May 04, 2014.

³⁰ Johnson, C. (08 May 2013). Is Seoul the Next Great Sharing City?. <http://ourworld.unu.edu/en/is-seoul-the-next-great-sharing-city>, Retrieved May 4, 2014.

³¹ <http://www.collaborativeconsumption.com/2013/11/27/amsterdam-europes-first-shareable-city/>, Retrieved Mar. 10, 2014.

facilitate ubiquitous participation in the numerous networks and real-time coordination of transactions. They furthermore promote a process of disintermediation – cutting out the corporate middlemen – which allows for more transparency and participation on both sides of the transaction:

Fascinating is the specific marketplace of home-exchange: through the communication process potential exchangers – consciously or subconsciously - act both as buyers and sellers of the particular tourism practice. An appealing self-made marketing of the overall destination, (including overcoming seasonality issues), the location, the neighborhood and the house itself is often crucial to ‘wooing’ the partners. [...] In turn, ‘buying’ includes in-depth search and evaluation of the offers, potential partners, and risks involved. (Arente & Kiiski, 2005, p.78)

Even though the tourism product is created and negotiated by the consumers themselves, it is businesses which – as matchmakers and ambassadors – facilitate the peer economy on a big scale, often “taking a small cut in return” (The Economist, 2013, n.p.) in the form of membership fees or brokerage. Their major function is it to create a sense of intimacy by emphasizing commonality and shared context between the connecting and interacting members in order to create a heightened sense of togetherness and trust.

3.7.2 Facilitating principles

From a socio-economic point of view, house swapping represents an alternative – or informal – economy of hospitality that builds on and facilitates generosity and reciprocity among strangers (Molz, 2012). It is what Gold (2004) conceptualizes as a ‘non-market space’ – evolving and functioning around social capital³² instead of building on the economic logic of profitability. As such it reflects the ideas of the New Economics approach.

As indicated above, the crucial condition for the intermediation between (mostly) complete strangers to work is *trust*. As in other P2P networks, on home exchange sites a personal profile with detailed information and pictures forms the basis. Intensive communication via e-mail, phone and Skype before the actual swap serves to get to know the exchange partner and to build confidence. The option of (reciprocal) reviews enables the sharing of opinions and

³² Social capital comprises “social norms and networks that generate shared understandings, trust and reciprocity, [...] underpin[ning] co-operation and collective action for mutual benefits” (Soumyananda, 2007, p.2031).

experiences. Like this, in networks where members (or strangers) connect and interact first and foremost virtually, reputation becomes a capital on its own (Botsman, 2012³³) and allows for self-managed peer-policed systems.

Another crucial factor for sharing platforms to be self-sustaining and competitive is to reach a *critical mass* (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). This allows for satisfaction and convenience by providing enough choice and leads to peer influence (non-members overcome the psychological barrier around a new behaviour and copy it). In the travel realm, many P2P start-ups have enjoyed an enormous growth, so that “they now operate on such a scale that they are matching mainstream hotels and transportation companies in convenience, and usually beating them on price” (Skift Inc, 2013³⁴). House swapping market leader HomeExchange.com claims to have over 50.000 members in 150 countries (homeexchange.com).

Accommodation sharing market places would not exist without the unused potential – *idling capacity* – of spaces. Whether these are underused basements, rooms or extra beds that can be rented out or borrowed to travellers in need, or whole homes to swap, thereby replacing accommodation rental – with the aid of the internet the resources can be allocated where necessary.

³³ Rachel Botsman, TEDGlobal Talk 2012, http://www.ted.com/talks/rachel_botsman_the_currency_of_the_new_economy_is_trust#, Retrieved May 04, 2014.

³⁴ <http://de.slideshare.net/skift/report-7sharingeconomypromo-1>, p.3; Retrieved Apr. 24, 2014.

4 Research methodology

The research question – *How does House Swapping as a form of collaborative travel move tourist practices and experiences towards the idea of conscious tourism?* – begged for an empirical approach that would allow for a deep critical exploration of the phenomenon of home exchange as a contribution towards a more conscious form of travel. The reasons for, and the appropriateness of, choosing a qualitative research paradigm will be explained in this chapter.

In order to establish the conceptual interest and theoretical framework of the study, a literature review was conducted, assessing the background antecedents of wider thinking and the characteristics of conscious consumption.

Semi-structured interviews with travel experts and public visionaries contributed towards a deeper understanding of what characterizes conscious travel and provided the necessary background to make the concept analysable within the context of house swapping. Building on this, in-depth interviews with house swappers explored their experiences and reflections, travel decisions and practices, as well as values and attitudes. This shed light on how the home exchange process embraces conscious attitudes and actions.

In addition to the empirically gathered data, secondary data from different sources – in the form of member stories on home exchange sites and newspaper articles about the phenomenon – found their way into the study, complementing the insights gained from the empirical data collection.

Methodological considerations accompanied and shaped the process of information gathering, investigation and analysis resulting in an exploratory study of house swapping in the societal context of a shifting consumer mindset within the sharing economy.

The following chapter will make the deliberate methodological decisions of the researcher comprehensible by discussing research approach, methods, ethical considerations and limitations. In order to display the circumstances under which the project developed, the first section of the chapter will outline the researcher's values and position that form the background of the epistemological approach.

4.1 Researcher's values and position

Through my personal interest in the concept of Conscious Tourism I came across the work of Anna Pollock – tourism strategist and founder of *Conscious Travel*³⁵ – and the case of Ecuador's "Turismo Consciente"³⁶, which reflect a shift in (parts of the) society towards a more aware, broadly informed, sustainable and conscious lifestyle³⁷. Building on this, I saw my stay in Vancouver – starting with an internship at the regional DMO – as an opportunity to explore alternative travel trends of a by all means affluent tourist population: Canadians. A growing interest in the phenomenon of the sharing economy led me to House Swapping – an established way to travel on which research has emerged only on a limited scale. My work in a ski resort close to Vancouver – a house swapping "hot spot" – gave me the opportunity to connect with house swappers as possible interviewees.

During preliminary research, the possibility to interview travel 'experts' about conscious tourism in connection with the rising collaborative consumption presented itself naturally through personal connections of my supervisor and a fellow student.

4.2 Qualitative approach

Hitherto research on House Swapping and Conscious Tourism is scarce. Accordingly, an exploratory qualitative research approach was chosen in order to gather in-depth knowledge about both phenomena and enable the researcher to establish a correlation between them through the analysis of the collected material.

Underlying all methodological considerations is the ontological orientation of constructivism, which "essentially invites the researcher to consider the ways in which social reality is an ongoing accomplishment of social actors, rather than something external to them and that totally constraints them" (Bryman, 2012, p.34). Culture, as part of the social world and its categories, is not apprehended as an external reality, but is built up and constituted in and through interaction. Consequently, it is in a continuous state of construction and

³⁵ <http://conscious.travel/about-us/contact-founder/>, Retrieved Apr. 30, 2014.

³⁶ <http://www.amalavida.tv/novedades/turismo-consciente-concepto>, Retrieved Apr. 30, 2014.

³⁷ The grassroots organization *Collective Evolution* for example is an "alternative media, production company and community outlet" that creates content "to raise awareness towards how our world truly functions and encourages conscious change that moves beyond it" (<http://www.collective-evolution.com/>, Retrieved Apr. 30, 2014)

reconstruction (ibid., 2012). The ontological orientation of constructivism represents the researcher's perception that a travel culture (e.g. conscious travel) is constituted and shaped by travellers' actions and interactions, instead of being an independently existing entity that exerts control over tourist behaviour to varying degrees. The idea that social reality is a constantly shifting emergent property of the individual's creation implies that the findings of this study are linked directly to the individuals who participated in the empirical data collection and might differ if the methods are repeated with other participants.

The researcher's role under the ontological orientation of constructivism is reflected by the epistemological position of interpretivism. In contrast to the positivist model of natural sciences where knowledge creation is based exclusively on phenomena directly amenable to observation, the emphasis under the position of interpretivism is on the ways in which individuals interpret their social world. Being concerned with the interpretation of human action, it aims at *understanding* human behaviour – instead of laying the emphasis on the *explanation* of the same (Bryman, 2012). The link to the research at hand is clear, since the aim of the study is to *understand* the practices and actions embraced by home exchanges by exploring and analysing how participants interpret, and make sense of, their behaviour.

The research design builds on a holistic-inductive paradigm (Jennings, 2010), where knowledge and theory are derived from empirical investigations. While the research is still placed within the wider theoretical background of existing literature – shaping the primary data collection – an in-depth understanding and analysis of people's thoughts and views is pivotal.

The aim to explore the concept of conscious travel in more depth with regard to collaborative consumption, and the objective to shed light on house swappers' values, attitudes and practices distinguished in-depth semi-structured interviews as a viable option (within the given constraints of the study), which promised to fulfil the requirements dictated by the research question: to stimulate thoughtful considerations about contexts, cause and effect and underlying assumptions and values.

4.3 Semi-structured interviews

According to Bryman (2012), interviews are probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research. Firstly, even if the interviewing process, the transcription and the analysis of the interviews are time-consuming, they can easily be accommodated into the

researcher's personal schedule. Secondly, it is the flexibility of qualitative interviews that makes them attractive. While they are based on the interest in the interviewee's point of view and aim at getting rich and detailed answers, their relatively loose structure allows for follow up questions and reordering and –wording of questions, thus giving space to what interviewees see as relevant and important (ibid., 2012).

It was these characteristics of semi-structured qualitative interviews that were deemed most appropriate to achieve the aims of the present study. Furthermore, their relatively unstructured nature promised the “capacity to provide insights into how research participants view the world” without “pigeon-holing” people and their responses (ibid, 2012, p. 471).

As is typical with this type of interview, the researcher defined a set of questions and topics to be answered during the interview in the form of an interview guide (in more detail explained in the following sections and to be seen in the appendix). This pre-defined structure however was loose enough to allow for adaptations and thus the “discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the research team” (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008, p.291).

To ensure a relation to the wider theoretical background, as well as the specific concepts underlying the investigations, the interview guides were influenced by the theory presented in the literature review. Thus – even though the study has an inductive approach in general – the literature review represents a deductive element in the sense that the qualitative investigations are backed up by theory (Bryman, 2012).

The interview partners were divided into two groups (travel ‘experts’ and house swappers) and the process of the empirical data collection was accordingly split into two time blocks:

- 1) Interviews with travel experts (Daniel Noll and Audrey Scott from *Uncornered Market*³⁸ and Anna Pollock from *Conscious.Travel*³⁹) were conducted first. The collected data had direct influence on the preparation of the interview guides for the house swappers.
- 2) In a second step, three parties of house swappers (married couples in their 40ies to 60ies) were interviewed.

³⁸ <http://uncorneredmarket.com/>

³⁹ <http://conscious.travel/>

4.3.1 Interviews with experts

Interviews with experts are aimed at a specific group of people who are equipped with detailed and specialized knowledge – relevant for the interest of the research – that is not accessible to everyone (Liebold & Trinczek, 2009). Correspondingly, experts are professionals and specialists who hold a certain body of knowledge or expertise. Under the above presented constructivist orientation of this study, this means that “experts are persons whose construction of reality in specific areas of society proved as more assertive or generally accepted than that of other (lay-) persons” (Liebold & Trinczek, 2009, p.34; translation by author).

During the initial (literature) research of this study it became clear that work on the concept of conscious travel is limited and that the potential of the sharing economy to enable new forms of tourism has been largely neglected in academic research. To address this gap – and to strengthen the conceptual foundation for the analysis of the phenomenon of home exchange – interviews with travel experts (strategists, consultants and speakers) were chosen as a method. Apart from elaborating on the idea of conscious travel from different perspectives, these interviews aimed at establishing a link between this different form of travel and the evolving collaborative consumption in tourism (specifically house swapping).

The first interview was conducted with Daniel Noll and Audrey Scott, the husband-and-wife storytelling team behind *Uncornered Market*, who work as consultants, speakers, authors and bloggers around the maxim “travel wide, live deep”. Their thoughts on e.g. ‘citizen diplomacy’, ‘the good global traveller’ and ‘tourism as people's business’ promised to contribute conceptual depth to the research, and their expertise in storytelling around tourism marketing, branding and presentations was deemed enriching for a discussion on the key aspects of this study.

Having been connected through a fellow student, Dan and Audrey agreed to contribute to the research without hesitation and the interview was conducted on April 17th 2014 via Skype⁴⁰. It lasted about 45minutes and was transcribed afterwards⁴¹. Dan and Audrey took turns in answering the questions, complemented each other's answers without interrupting and spoke altogether a similar amount of time.

⁴⁰ A face-to-face meeting was not possible, since Dan and Audrey were in Berlin at that time, while the researcher was carrying out investigations in Vancouver.

⁴¹ The transcriptions can be found on the enclosed CD.

In order to facilitate a focused in-depth discussion, a rough interview guide was sent to the couple a few days before the interview date. This influenced the actual interview in the sense that several questions of the more detailed final question guide could be omitted as the answers were already integrated in the evolving conversation. The final question guide (see appendix 8.1.1) started with an ice-breaker question about the couple's travel philosophies – using the opportunity to introduce the idea of conscious travel. It went on to ask about collaborative consumption in tourism (in the form of accommodation sharing networks) and connected it to conscious travel. Directing the focus in the next step towards house swapping, the questions solicited reflections on Dan and Audrey's travel practices and addressed their ideas of 'the good global traveller', 'tourism as people's business' and 'citizen diplomacy' in this connection. In a concluding question, house swapping as the case of the present research was linked directly to the concept of conscious travel.

Being the founder of *Conscious.Travel*, an interview with visionary, change agent and tourism strategist Anna Pollock was deemed pivotal to the investigations of this study, as it provided a means to deepen the knowledge and understanding of the movement, community and learning program Anna envisions as conscious travel. What is more, it had been Anna's presentation on conscious travel to the ministry of tourism, Ecuador in September 2012 that inspired the research at hand. A discussion about her ideas on attracting, supporting and engaging the conscious traveller hence showed great promise for elaborating in depth on the concepts underlying (and inspiring) this study.

The connection to Anna Pollock was established through the supervisor of this study and she agreed instantly to share her ideas in a conversation. A Skype meeting⁴² was scheduled for March 21st 2014 and the interview lasted nearly 1 ½ hours. As with the first interview, a rough question guide was sent out before to give an idea about where the conversation was headed. During the interview, again several aspects were addressed within a first long answer, so that some questions of the final interview guide (see appendix 8.1.2) were restructured, adapted or even partly omitted.

The introducing question asked about Anna's motivation for the promotion of conscious travel. The next part built on this by asking about the nature of place, host and guest as the components of the human tourism system Anna conceptualizes. Before elaborating on the impacts of house swapping (facilitating non-monetary accommodation sharing and simultaneous exchanges) within the (conscious) travel realm, the potential of the collaborative

⁴² Again, a face-to-face meeting was not possible, since Anna was in the UK at the time of the data collection.

consumption to bring about a systematic change in the tourism system was addressed. The concluding section of the interview questioned directly potential and limitations of house swapping as a promoter of conscious travel and as a platform to create a community of conscious hosts.

4.3.2 Interviews with house swappers

With the aim of exploring if and how characteristics of the concept of conscious tourism are displayed in the values and practices entailed by the activity of home exchange, the empirical data collection through interviews with house swappers constituted an essential part of the research. As mentioned above, the researcher gained access to potential interview partners through her work at a ski area in West Vancouver. Considering all possibilities that presented themselves, purposive sampling was applied. With this sampling technique – the most commonly used form of non-probabilistic sampling – “participants are selected according to predetermined criteria relevant to a particular research objective” (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). These criteria included that the potential interview partners had participated a couple of times in a house swap, agreed to share their experiences in an interview setting and were available for a meeting in the Greater Vancouver area in the months of March or April. Additionally, importance was attached to the fact that the selected parties would have house swapping experiences to varying extents, as well as slightly differing demographics.

According to Guest et al. (2006), considerations of the sample size depend “on how you want to use your data and what you want to achieve from your analysis” (ibid., 2006, p.19): If – like it is the case in the present study – “the goal is to describe a shared perception, belief, or behaviour among a relatively homogeneous group” (ibid., 2006, p.19), a smaller number of interviews will lead to data saturation. Having this in mind, and considering the limitations of the study (see ch.4.6), three in-depth interviews including in total six individuals (since couples were interviewed) were deemed viable and adequate to achieve the research goal.

The interviews were conducted within one week at the end of April. In all three cases, the researcher was invited to the interviewees’ home, where the conversations took place in a relaxed and personal setting either in the living room or in the kitchen. The couples were interviewed jointly and the questions were non-directive, giving each person considerable freedom to answer in their own terms and time. The interviews lasted between 1h 10min and 1h 40min, were recorded and afterwards transcribed. Due to the varying settings that were

beyond the control of the researcher, the quality of the recordings differed greatly. Additionally, some answers were unintelligible (and as such could not be transcribed) when interview partners interrupted each other.

The guiding questions for the interviews with the house swappers were developed not just by building on the concepts explored and established in the literature review, but were influenced as well by the travel expert interviews. These were subjected to a preliminary analysis and the thereby gained insights shaped the interview guide for the home exchangers.

The questions of the interview guide (see appendix 8.1.3) were grouped into eight sections of varying size:

- 1) **Travel habits in general** aimed at establishing an understanding of the type of travel the interviewees prefer, as well as their expectations, spending decisions and tourist practices. Wherever the opportunity arose, the answers were linked to reflections on house swapping through follow-up questions, which provided deep insights into the extent to which home exchanges influence travel habits and practices.
- 2) In the section **Travel experiences – House Swapping** the interviewees were encouraged to display their experiences, reflect on differences with regard to other forms of travel and think about feelings involved in the process of accommodation sharing. This led to interesting elaborations on the phenomenon and established the focus for the following sections.
- 3) In **Characteristics/Process of House Swapping** the interviewees were asked about their approach to arrange a house swap, what they are looking for in potential exchange houses and possible problems they encounter.
- 4) The questions in the section **Human Dimension** elaborated on the relationships and encounters emerging from a house swap, emphasizing the hospitality factor. This ensured the collection of data with focus on the host-guest relationship, which – as an underlying principle of all tourism interactions – receives special attention under the concept of conscious travel.
- 5) – 7) The next three sections **Location**, **Conscious guest** and **Community of conscious hosts** related in a more direct way to attributes, themes and concepts of conscious travel established in the literature review and extracted from expert interviews and secondary data. Questions focused for example on how the location of the house influences the tourist experience, where people would travel with house swapping, if they still feel like a guests when staying in a home, and if and how they

perceive the ‘community of house swappers’. Furthermore, they were encouraged to think about the impact a home exchange can have on the local community.

- 8) In the last concluding section **Conscious Travel**, the interviewees were asked for whom house swapping is. This question aimed at uncovering thoughts of home exchangers about possible limitations of the accommodation exchange. Concluding the interview, the participants were confronted with the quote “Travel holds tremendous potential. For the traveler, it offers a path to experience, education and personal transformation⁴³” (taken from Dan and Audrey’s blog) and asked how they would connect it to house swapping. While eliciting mostly a repetition of parts of answer that had been given before, it enabled the interviewees to emphasize and summarize important thoughts or add general considerations that had not come up so far.

4.4 Ethical considerations

“Today, researchers in the Western world are required to follow ethical guidelines in the conduct of research” (Jennings, 2010, p.99). To make the ethical considerations of the present study explicit is the aim of this section.

The participation of all interviewees in the research at hand was purely voluntarily and the participants were informed about the research purpose and process. As the use of personal information raises the issue of trust, the researcher acknowledged the principle of confidentiality throughout the process of data collection, analysis and write up. This means that “the researcher can match names with responses but ensures that no one else will have access to them (Jennings, 2010, p.101). Furthermore, in an introductory e-mail (as well as at the beginning of each interview) participants were informed about the ethical guidelines the research was following:

- Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research and making yourself available for a meeting.
- Do you mind if I record our conversation in order to analyse it later?

⁴³ The quote is taken from the blog entry “The Good Global Traveler: 17 Actions You Can Take”, written by Audrey Scott, last updated on April 12th, 2014. <http://uncorneredmarket.com/good-global-traveler/>, Retrieved Mar. 18, 2014.

- I may quote you in my research, but you will remain anonymous⁴⁴. Is that okay for you?
- I am also happy to send you a summary of my research findings later if you are interested. Would you like to receive this?

To ensure the anonymity of the house swappers, their names were changed throughout the paper.

Another fact worth mentioning was the hospitality showed by the interviewees, when they invited me for tea to their place in order to conduct the interview. Since compensation in the form of money was beyond my means, a home-made cake served as a sign of gratitude.

4.5 Condensing the data

As mentioned before, each interview was transcribed right after the interview process (see enclosed CD). After this, a detailed and multiple review of the data (first and foremost transcriptions, and in a second step also secondary data) followed. This process was accompanied by colour highlighting and the use of comments to capture recurrent themes and connections between the documents.

On the basis of this, a thematic analysis of the data was conducted. This type of analysis embraces the identification of categories that relate to the research focus, building on codes identified in transcripts, notes and documents (Bryman, 2012).

What followed was a process of organizing these themes into a table in accordance with the three sub-research questions. Subsequently, quotes and interpretative comments were assigned, and correlating theory was added in a third column. This allowed for a conclusive development of the analysis and discussion chapter (ch.5).

4.6 Reflections and limitations

The need to work cost-effective and time-efficient – a common circumstance with graduate projects - influenced the methodological decisions of the study at hand. Firstly, it imposed a delimitation of the sample size. Secondly, it impeded a data collection process that extends

⁴⁴ The guidelines for the expert interviews varied a bit: „I may quote you in my research. Would you mind if I attributed quotes to you? Or would you like to remain anonymous?“

and adapts depending on the analysis and according to theoretical insights that are taking shape.

Furthermore, other reflections on the sampling process of the present study are deemed necessary. According to Lucas (2014), non-probability sampling prohibits *out-of-sample* generalization, as well as a generalization *within* the sample. Applied to the research at hand, that means that the application of the research results beyond the specific cases and circumstances of the interviewed parties to other house swappers or even different forms of collaborative travelling has to be taken with caution.

Lucas furthermore raises the issue of interviews being “interviewer/respondent co-productions”, implying that “respondents’ cognitive and affective access to information may depend upon the co-constructed context” (ibid., 2014, p.388). With the awareness that respondents’ answers are dependent on the specific interview situation, it is correct to assume that a replication of the study might lead to varying results.

5 Analysis and discussion

In the following, the findings of the present research – led by the question **How does house swapping as a form of collaborative travel move tourist practices and experiences towards the idea of conscious tourism?** – will be interpreted, and discussed in the context of the theoretical framework. They will furthermore be combined with insights gained through the analysis of secondary data in the form of member stories (see Table1 in the appendix, p.90).

The chapter is structured around the three sub-questions that guided the analytical process:

- 1) In how far do house swappers classify as “new conscious tourists”?
- 2) How does house swapping influence the tourism consumption?
- 3) How does house swapping affect the tourism system of place, host and guest?

The discussion of the third research question will be considerably shorter, since the conceptual background is more specific and overlaps in parts with the theory that underlies the first two questions. The main research question will then be taken up again in the conclusion by combining the insights of the three sub-questions⁴⁵.

The intention is to display a balanced view of the interviewees’ statements throughout the analysis, reflecting different experiences, attitudes and opinions. It has to be mentioned though that due to varying lengths and fluencies of the interviews some interviewees might be quoted more often or more comprehensively than others. This however does not suggest any form of valuation of the importance of the discourses.

5.1 House swappers – The ‘new tourists’?

Based on a changing consumer mindset in general, the literature review outlined the emergence of a ‘new tourist’ whose values, attitudes and practices seem to be strongly connected to a more conscious form of travel. Embracing the first sub-question – **In how far do house swappers classify as ‘new conscious tourists’?** – the following section draws a

⁴⁵ Please note that in order to avoid repetitive formulations, the terms ‘house swap’ and ‘home exchange’ – and correspondingly ‘house swapper’ and ‘home exchanger’ – will be used interchangeably throughout the chapter.

profile of the users of home exchange networks, and examines how their behaviour and practices reflect an alternative form of travel.

5.1.1 House swappers: A non-homogeneous group

Even though representing a small sample, the interviews with the house swappers revealed a *demographic diversity* as well as *differentiated travel values and habits*. While accommodation preferences (when not exchanging homes) range from independent hotels to pensions and B&Bs to camping (1a⁴⁶), the pursued types of experiences include e.g. culture, music, scenery and sightseeing (1b). When it comes to destination choice, all interviewees mentioned their interest in metropolises, but also a balance between urban elements and landscape was expressed (1c).

The findings confirm the ideas presented in earlier research papers, which depict “...home-exchangers as [...] a highly fragmented market [...], both demographically and psychographically diverse” (Arente & Kiiski, 2005, p.80).

There are however certain (when discussing the characteristics of the ‘new tourist’ even *crucial*) values and attitudes that seem to define the house swap community. These will be presented in the following.

5.1.2 Quality conscious: It’s not about a quick escape

House swappers like to present themselves as “well-travelled” (Jim), embodying the *experienced* new tourist envisioned by e.g. Poon (1993). As predicted by Krippendorff (1986b), travelling for them is *not a quick escape* towards a – to the greatest possible extent predictable – experience. All interviewees emphasized what as well in member stories is a prominent theme: the extensive research and preparation time (3a-c). “We normally plan well in advance. Usually a year in advance” (Jim). “We have to do research before in terms of where to go” (Lilly). “Oh my goodness, you cannot believe the number of faxes that we were going through!” (Lilly).

⁴⁶ The numbers in brackets refer to the table of the thematic analysis in the appendix (pp.92-102), where quotes from the interviews that support the argument in the text can be found. Example: ‘1a’ refers to p.92 ‘1) Inhomogeneous group’ → ‘a) Diverse accommodation preferences’. NOTE: Readers are not expected to jump back and forth while reading; the table is included so that readers can check the validity of the research findings against data extracts.

The efforts put into the preparation of a house swap – including the preparation of the house – suggests that the importance is not simply to leave, but that a holistic holiday experience in line with travel habits and preferences plays a significant role. This reflects Bowen and Clarke's (2009) idea of an increasing importance of the *intrinsic qualities* of the holiday.

5.1.3 A way of life: 'Alternative travellers' looking for special experiences

One of the interviewees regards house swapping as “a lifestyle. I think our appreciation for informal travelling takes us kind of into house swapping. In a way that, you know, we like to be local” (Chris). This perception illustrates the idea that the new tourist's vacation is an *extension of life* and a way to *affirm individuality* (Poon, 1993).

When asked how they would describe their general travel habits, the house swappers interviewed drew a picture of ‘alternative travellers’ who tend towards an informal type of travel, pursuing unusual experiences and casual encounters: “We like going to less usual places. We are not the sort of people who like to go and lie on the beach in Mexico or Hawaii” (Lilly). “I guess ‘informal’ is the best description. We don't go – or haven't in the past gone – on organized tours” (Chris). “...our basics are casual. And we don't go to pretentious places” (Chris).

While in line with Arente and Kiiski's (2005) finding that house swappers prefer the ‘traveller’ over the ‘tourist’ label, the interviewee's depictions seemed to stand in contrast to the first impressions displayed when asked for outstanding exchange experiences. The first recalls off the top of their heads highlighted swaps to spectacular, exceptional, luxury houses (4c) – not necessarily supporting the modest idea of casual travelling. However, in further explanations the priority of the actual place, encounters and connections that make up unique experiences (4d) came to the fore: “...the one in Barcelona was nice, because [...] the people [...] had this party for us, and we met all their friends. And then one of their friends would take us around and that was great” (Jim). “We had a stay in Florence that was outstanding, because we ended up staying in the upper floor of a defensive stone tower, that was built in 1146 and we had a view down into Florence and right down the Arno river watching the sun set with the silhouette under the Ponte Vecchio. And it was just such a spectacular place” (Dean). “The house in Kelowna had fantastic cherries. It was next to a cherry orchard. And every morning we'd go and steal some” (Jim).

The anecdotes remind of Sharpley's (2002) new tourist who seeks "quality experiences that educate, are different, [...] and that satisfy special interests" (ibid., 2002, p.304). They furthermore support Audrey's argument, that a more conscious form of travel fulfils the need of more special experiences:

...as more people are travelling, a lot of consumers want a different experience. They want something different from their neighbour, they want this connection or they want something special and so with conscious travel [...] there is an opportunity to show that it is a [...] different type of travel that brings back the [...] focus on [...] coming back with an experience that you gonna take with you and maybe tell your grandkids. (Audrey)

5.1.4 Adaptable: Don't commit yourself too much

Despite the intensive preparations, in the end a house swap is "a gamble" (Jim), expressed in member stories as the 'factor of uncertainty' – a fact which requires home exchangers to be adaptable and to moderate their expectations:

I think you have to be [...] flexible [...]... I think it would be a mistake to compare what you get with what... necessarily with what you have. I mean, we've been to places they were pretty modest. You know, we did one in Kelowna; it was a very simple, pretty basic house. [...] But you're on holiday, so... (Jim) [...] that doesn't matter. I didn't even put any expectations. We just, you know, want the environment, the accommodation and anything else is a bonus. (Lilly)

In their openness to different accommodation 'categories' (e.g. mansions vs. modest homes), house swappers resemble Poon's *hybrid* new tourist, who does not consume along a predictable line.

Extending the idea of hybridity, it seems that as well the blurring distinction between host and guest in the context of house swapping represents a confirmation of the concept. In the case of a hospitality exchange for example, house swappers are not just tourists while travelling, but as well at home: "And we took them to quite a few places around Vancouver" (Dean). "We were playing tourists for three days" (Lea). It results that it is this characteristic that makes house swappers a promising 'target group' for conscious travel:

I think any group of people that are engaged in the active travelling and hosting – so being guests and hosts at various times – is a wonderful community to infect with a better understanding of just the kind of travel we’re going to have to develop going forward. (Anna⁴⁷)

5.1.5 Authenticity, yes please!

As emerged prominently from the member stories, also several statements of the interviewees emphasize how house swappers value home exchanges as facilitators of less touristy experiences: “You get less of a tourist experience. [...] You get a much better experience than just being a tourist in a hotel” (Jim). “You see life [at the destination] from a different perspective” (Lilly). The importance house swappers attach to recommendations and interactions that support the learning process about the local lifestyle and allow for an immersion to a certain extent (7b) indicate a pursuit of *non-conformist, meaningful experiences*. In line with Fiorello and Bo (2012), this suggests the great value home exchangers – similar to the new tourists – assign to *authenticity*. The goal is to experience “the combination of what a place has to offer from a scenic point of view, but also what is the lifestyle [...], the personality, the culture. We like to get very close to...” (Chris) “...we like to be local and not be visiting in some high-end, clinical hotel, that really has no sense of being part of a [distinct country]” (Chris). It confirms what Anna Pollock formulated when reflecting on the relationship between the changing worldview and the collaborative consumption in tourism:

Why go and stay in a hotel where [...] what we get [...] isn’t an authentic encounter with a person wanting to share their home, their lives with you. So it’s the same search for a richer, more personal, more authentic type of experience. (Anna Pollock)

Of course, the home exchange companies are well aware of the aspirations of the ‘new tourist’ and use the idea of authenticity to promote membership: “HomeExchange.com makes it easy to plan and enjoy a home exchange vacation in almost any country, city or area of

⁴⁷ Please note that statements made by Anna Pollock during the interview are referenced with „Anna“, in line with the other interviews. Quotes taken from her published work however are referenced with „Pollock, year“ according to the reference style used throughout the paper.

interest and offers travelers a memorable, authentic ‘live like a local’ experience” (Jim Pickell, new COO of HomeExchange.com⁴⁸).

5.1.6 ‘Live like a local’ – Honest interest in the destination

The idea of living like a local – adopting the host’s lifestyle and getting a sense of the city from a local’s point of view by staying in ‘real’ neighbourhoods away from the tourist centres, meeting ‘everyday’ people and blending with the locals – is being stressed in nearly all member stories. In line with this, the interviewed house swappers expressed a strong interest in the local culture of their destination:

We are very much interested in the cultural side of it as well. We don’t want to just see the Roman ruins, but we want to see the cultural elements of it as well. And learn how people live there and what they do that’s different from here. You know, what’s different about their way of living even if it’s just eating. How do they do it differently than we do? (Dean)

One way to get a better appreciation of the sense of the place is observation: “We like sitting in squares, drinking coffee and just watching what goes on” (Dean). A recurring idea in the context of observing and participating in everyday interactions is the use of public transport (8c): “You also see people differently when you’re on busses. Riding busses you are riding with local people and meet people. You see how they deal with things” (Dean). That is a fact that also Dan and Audrey observed during their extensive travels: “...for example taking public transport [...] you’re travelling with real people on their way to work, you’re going with people travelling across the country to visit their family. And so you have [...] just normal everyday interactions” (Audrey).

Recommendations by the exchange partners – the locals – constitute another way to discover the essence of the destination:

Usually, the people you’re exchanging with [...] teach you things about their city, their culture, their history, their language. [...] And they tell you things that you might not figure out otherwise from a guidebook. So it makes it a somewhat different experience that way influenced by local people’s taste and ideas about the place other than the perception of the guidebook writers. (Dean)

⁴⁸ <https://www.homeexchange.com/en/press-releases/74/>, Retrieved Mar. 10, 2014.

The *sensitivity to values and cultural identities* of the visited places reflected in the above quotes suggests an honest and holistic interest in the destination, linked with *sympathy towards the local population* – an attitude attributed to the new tourist by Fiorello and Bo (2012). This finding is as well in line with the depiction of home exchangers by Arente and Kiiski (2005), who point out that while economic benefits (allowing for longer travels on a tighter budget) are motivation number one, house swappers value the rich experiences gained through an immersion into local culture and society, leading to unforgettable experiences and education.

5.1.7 Buying local and travel environmentally friendly?

A theme closely related to the idea of sympathy towards the local population is the one of spending decisions. When asked, all interviewees mentioned the attempt to buy local (9a), but just one couple expressed a deeper concern about and understanding of the effect their ‘tourist dollars’ have:

...there’s 2 sides [...]. You can benefit the local economy by bringing some money into it, or you can cause problems if you tend to inflate prices [...] by paying more for things than local people would. [...] So I tend to [...] try to work out what the local price is ought to be first and try to not to pay more than that. (Dean)

The other interviewees did not depict conscious spending as a crucial priority. Hence, their spending behaviour seems not as aware and thoughtful as depicted by Dan and Audrey (when talking about conscious and informed spending decisions):

...the fact how you can spend your money in certain ways. So that way your money stays local, or stays in the community as opposed to going back to the capital city, or going back to a different country. (Audrey)

Similarly, only one home exchange couple deliberately expressed their efforts to travel in an environmentally benign manner: “...we do fewer trips, but stay longer. And so we get more mileage out of the airfare... I mean if you cause all that pollution by flying to another continent, I think it makes more sense to stay there longer” (Dean). “We tend to take fewer trips than a lot of people, but take longer trips when we do. [...] The travel between destinations we tend to use buses and trains and occasionally rent cars. We don’t very often

fly between destinations” (Dean). Even if Forno and Garibaldi (2013) found in their study that “home swappers do not only prefer unconventional travel, but they also lean towards travel which is ‘intrinsically’ environmentally friendly” (ibid., 2013, p.16), Fiorello and Bo’s (2012) assumption that the new tourist is concerned about the tourism impact and prefers *environmentally appropriate* tourism per se was not affirmed by the present research. Also the analysis of member stories did not disclose a conscious attitude of house swappers towards the impact of their travels on the environment.

Before continuing with the next section, it has to be mentioned that the noble travel goals of authentic experiences and a deep understanding of the essence of the place is not the ‘rule’ for every house swap. If for example family visits are the main trigger for the exchange, convenience becomes the main motivation.

5.1.8 Human encounters: It’s all about people meeting people

Crucial for authenticity and uniqueness – pursued by a great part of home exchangers – is human contact, which shapes the experience and makes it special. A perfect premise for *friendly social encounters* – a goal of the new tourist (Fiorello & Bo, 2012) – is that “many people are fairly trusting” (Jim), emphasized as well in Forno and Garibaldi’s (2013) study: “One element that emerged as particularly significant among home swappers is their high level of trust — an important component when exchanging homes“ (ibid., 2013, p.16).

As already indicated in the case introduction, the empirical data confirmed that house swappers are “people who enjoy meeting other people and enjoy interacting with other people” (Dean). “...and everybody knows from our stories. I mean, we’re always talking about the people we meet” (Lea). Accordingly, they are looking for encounters:

You know, 2 nights here, 2 nights there [...], that’s all very well, but it doesn’t really give you what you’re given if you’re [...] mixing with the local populations. You get a much better appreciation of the people. And that’s important. Very important! (Chris)

Being mentioned repeatedly in the member stories, the appreciation of house swapping as a way to build relationships came up as well in the interviews: “...you build relationships. [...] even though most of the house swaps we’ve done have been simultaneous, [...] So we haven’t necessarily met the families at the time” (Chris).

However, the human encounters are not necessarily the driving force behind the participation on a house swap:

Well, I wouldn't say that that was a main trigger – making relationships with friends or people. It's the ability to be in a city for a longer period of time, conveniently, so you can get to know where you are, at a cheaper rate than if you were staying in a hotel. [...]. (Susan)

Eventually, staying longer in a destination increases the potential of friendly social encounters and promotes understanding – a circumstance that Dan and Audrey term *citizen diplomacy*:

The sharing economy [...] encourages people to stay longer. [...] It might encourage them actually to spend more time in a place, because they have more flexibility with their budget. So, and I think more time that people spend in a place, the more they hopefully understand, which [...] contributes to this idea of citizen diplomacy. (Dan)

The endeavour to pick up the local language, mentioned by one interviewee, can be interpreted as a supporting factor of the idea of house swappers as citizen diplomats: "...you need to figure out some language. I usually find if I'm in some place, you know, a couple of months I pick up a few hundred words from the local language" (Dean).

5.1.9 A sense for adventure: be flexible!

In order to have a successful house swap come about, "...you do need to be flexible" (Jim). "...you can't decide that you're going to Vienna from August 23rd to September... I mean you have to be flexible" (Jim). *Flexibility* – another characteristic of the new tourist (e.g. Poon, 1993) – was stressed as crucial by all interviewees (11a,b). If requirements in terms of destination choice and scheduling are too specific, the arrangements are complicated and agreements might not be made: "...that [New York] is a good example, because we wanted a very specific location at a very specific time. And it's difficult to do that" (Jim). "What you need to do with that [...], is [...] to be very flexible, because some people can only go in the season and some people have more flexibility. So we try to be very flexible in how we handle it and don't stick to just simultaneous exchanges" (Dean). In the case of a non-simultaneous swap, it is not only important to be open in terms of the own travel schedule, but as well with regard to leaving the house to the swap partners (11b).

Another factor which house swappers have to embrace open-mindedly is the ‘value’ of the exchange (11c): “...it doesn’t necessarily have to be equal. Very often we exchange for much smaller places at the other end, but that’s what people have. So that’s what you have to do” (Dean). “We do any kind of exchanges somebody can make work. And we don’t make it exactly the equal number of days: if they get a few more days we don’t worry about that” (Dean). “...if you try to make everything exactly equal, it makes it so much harder to work out a deal” (Dean).

Eventually, it all boils down to being “adventurous, flexible, open to new experiences, not worried... I mean a lot of people – or especially North Americans – it’s why they would choose a hotel chain or McDonald’s because it’s pretty predictable. Well, if that’s what your frame of reference is, then I don’t think that house swapping is for you. [...] you need to be open to just whatever it is” (Jim).

5.1.10 Being independent: House swappers as self-made travel agents

The interviews brought out clearly that house swappers appreciate the independence inherent to home exchanges (12a-f). Benefits mentioned at this juncture include for example more space, the possibility to carry on certain routines (especially breakfast), and the flexibility provided by having a car. “It’s really nice to have a house rather than a hotel, because you can spread out, you can have breakfast. You have more flexibility” (Jim). “We do like getting up in the morning, and having our coffee and then we kind of prepare our day [...] it’s our routine, it’s our ritual and house exchanges make it easier to do that” (Lea). Another factor mentioned as attractive in terms of independence is the possibility of flexible family visits without living off the relatives, while having the option to invite them over: “...that was my desire to find a place [...] where we could go for longer periods of time and not be living in [...] our family’s pocket” (Susan). “...one of the things that I [...] like [...] is get[ting] a house where we can have the family come and visit us [...]. So we were kind of upon neutral territory” (Susan).

Additionally, some interviewees indicated the option of a ‘host-free’ hospitality as appealing (12a): “House swap to me has an anonymity of you being on your own” (Susan). This supports Grit’s (2008) idea that a home disembodied by the host “empowers the guest to flee from the control of the host” and to escape “performative scripts and roles” (ibid., 2008, p.3).

The quotes confirm that house swappers – like the new tourist envisioned by Poon (1993) – value *independence* and flexibility over conspicuous travelling.

Their independent approach to organizing a holiday draws a picture of house swappers as *self-made travel agents* (Bowen & Clarke, 2009). Next to the aforementioned intensive research and preparation process, mutual recommendations and suggestions (13b) allow for *P2P holiday planning* (ibid., 2009).

Also the idea of using the exchange house as a base – touring from there and coming back to prepare for the next venture – strengthens the idea of independent, self-organized travelling: “We use it as a base. So, we’ll be there for a few days, then we’ll take off, come back to do our washing or change directions” (Lilly).

5.1.11 Solidarity and a “hybrid sociality”

Finally, as home exchanges are organized through online networks, Molz’ (2012) idea of *connected* new tourists comes to mind. However, connectivity was neither a recurring theme in the interviews, nor did it stand out in the member stories as an important characteristic. The reason for this might be that the generation of Baby Boomers – grown up before the introduction of social media – constitutes a big part of the global house swap community. Pursuing and enjoying real encounters and authentic experiences, once at the destination, home exchangers do not necessarily stay in contact with their partners: “...usually once we’ve settled in, we [...] don’t get back in touch with them” (Dean).

While accordingly the house swap travel experience as such does not seem to represent a “socio-technical practice” (Molz, 2012), the interviews suggested that there is a form of “*hybrid sociality*” (ibid., 2012) in which home exchangers are enlaced (14a-f). Not necessarily sensing a belonging towards a community as such, the interviewees still affirmed the existence of a geographically dispersed connection in form of “a state of mind, [...] and a perspective on it being acceptable amongst people. [...] I sense that there is some common values amongst people” (Dean). This reminds of the ‘home-exchange fraternity’ between likeminded travellers that Arente and Kiiski (2005) unveiled in their research. It is furthermore the similar – albeit not shared – experiences that, according to Anna Pollock, elicit a natural community: “...if you’ve swapped your house successfully, and I’ve swapped my house successfully we’ve got a lot in common. [...] So there would be a natural community of house swappers” (Anna).

The bonding that results from these commonalities is transferred as well to offline encounters: “There is always a connection! It’s amazing! [...] almost everybody. You just sit with them and it’s immediate and you just have a real conversation” (Lea).

Eventually, the idea of a hybrid sociality between home exchangers – based on online intermediation that allows for a connection between the participants, promoting a community feeling on a global scale – ties in with the findings of Arente and Kiiski (2005), who state that “home-exchangers experience a strong sense of solidarity regarding their particular interest [...] [which] creates a so called postmodern ‘tribe’ (‘community of affect’) where lifestyles are shared and feelings of understanding and companionship prevail” (Arente & Kiiski, 2005, p.71).

5.1.12 House swappers: New, but...

Despite their demographic diversity and differentiated travel values and habits, the house swappers interviewed were found to be experienced travellers who generally do not see a holiday as a quick escape, but value intrinsic qualities like authentic experiences, friendly social encounters and an immersion into the place. They prioritize flexibility and independence over ‘flawless’ services, and appreciate a casual travel mode. Adapting and moderating their expectations allows for “great experiences! We never had a bad experience anyway” (Jim).

I think for the right people it’s a better option [...] for all the reasons [...] ...whether it’s the potential connections, whether it’s the economics which are very real – especially for a family. I think it’s a better option, or more flexible option, or more interesting option to travel.
(Jim)

While these characteristics reflect the ‘new tourist’ as conceptualized by e.g. Krippendorf (1986b), Poon (1993), Bowen and Clarke (2009), and Fiorello and Bo (2012), a conscious environmentally benign travel behaviour and a concern about the travel impact per se could not be disclosed. This reminds of Sharpley (2002) who noted that the tourist-consumer behaviour process is dominated by the satisfaction of personal needs, which limits the extent to which the traveller will act in line with the needs of the destination (ibid., 2002). It is therefore important to assess in how far house swapping influences consumption determinants and provides a framework to conscious consumption. This is the aim of the next section.

5.2 House swapping framing alternative consumption

While the first part of the analysis established a profile of home exchangers and linked their values, attitudes and habits to the idea of the ‘new tourist’, the second part examines the potential of house swapping to frame alternative consumption. This sheds light on the role the phenomenon plays in facilitating a more critical and sustainable form of tourism. Considerations evolve around the second sub-question: **How does house swapping influence the tourism consumption?** First, the focus lies on the analysis of home exchanges in the context of Røpke’s (1999) three dimension of consumption (socio-psychological, economical, and socio-technological and historical), and subsequently the phenomenon is assessed with regard to the mainstream and new economics approach.

5.2.1 Emancipation, individualization and identity development

The first section of the analysis draws not just a profile of house swappers, but offers as well valuable information on the determinants of their tourism consumption from a socio-psychological point of view. The characteristics presented, which reflect an embodiment of the new tourist, suggest *emancipation* from the popular perception of a tourist (that often has a negative connotation). This supports Arente and Kiiski’s (2005) findings, which “indicate that the home-exchange phenomenon to some extent could be understood as an expression of emancipation from the traditional tourist image, and as such homeexchange plays a role in the identity construction of postmodern travelers” (Arente & Kiiski, 2005, p.III).

Constructing and sustaining identity was indeed pointed out in the literature review as one of the factors underlying consumption in general, with the concept of *self-identity* playing an important role especially in the context of tourism consumption (Desforges, 2000). While broadening one’s personality and opening the mind are often cited travel objectives when focusing on self-identity, the research on house swapping disclosed some ideas beyond that (1a-c⁴⁹).

First, the highly personal involvement and the intensive preparation process outlined above are rewarded with highly individualized travel arrangements and hence unique experiences: “There are no two that are the same” (Dean). Consequently, house swapping allows travellers

⁴⁹ Please check table 2 in the appendix (pp.103-112).

an utmost *individualization* of their trip by breaking out of formalized and institutionalized touristic offers. Secondly, home exchange experiences promote a reflection on the own lifestyle by providing the traveller with ‘means of comparison’:

I find it interesting. You just kind of go like “Okay, what are these people like?” [...] and you’re kind of a bit nosy in a way. [...] And then you can talk to them about it. For example, we met this couple afterwards for breakfast, and they found it fascinating, the books we had.
(Lea)

The idea of reflection on identity and lifestyle is again in line with Arente and Kiiski’s (2005) work, where they state that “it seems to be quite natural for people to be curious about the other’s private life. Investigating someone else’s privacy gives them material for analysing their own lifestyle and identity” (ibid., 2005, p.68). Based on these reflections, the research furthermore suggested the possibility of *identity development* through house swapping: “I think it holds the potential for personal transformation” (Lilly), “... but you need to be open to it” (Jim).

5.2.2 From egocentric to mutually considerate consumption

During the interviews, the house swappers clearly expressed the importance of a *mutually considerate and respectful* tourism consumption (3a-d). Whether it is about valuing the other’s property, accommodating preferences and wishes, or worrying about the exchange partner having a great holiday – the research showed that a house swap does not just concern the own holiday, but as well the partner’s one. “You know, you feel bad about ending up mixing things up for them. You want them to come home and feel like it hasn’t been changed. [...] Because it could [...] make an awkward feeling for them when they come home. So you can just settle in to a certain point” (Dean). “And [...] the kitchen I think you do kind of take a look around. Where are all these things, to remember to put them all back” (Lea). In the book about home exchange (Alford & Alford, 2013), the two ‘well-swapped’ authors describe how they were particularly worried about the untidy condition of the exchange home when their partners had to come back earlier than agreed:

Of course we were upset and a bit panicked; Hannah was stressed about getting back to the home before the family did so we could tidy up a bit – we had left the place a little ‘lived in’

as we thought we had another 2 weeks before the big tidy up needed to happen! (Alford & Alford, 2013, p.48)

Also a feeling of liability for the other's house and belongings was pointed out in the interviews: "We don't think it's great to drive somebody else's car in a city where you are unfamiliar with the place and the rules [...] if you kind of wreck somebody's car it should be a rental car" (Dean). The wish to make the exchange partner's stay pleasant was expressed through the habit of little welcome gestures: "We usually leave them a bottle of wine and cheese in the fridge" (Chris). "...we usually bring a small gift. Something from here. Things that a tourist of Vancouver would be interested in" (Dean).

This *interpersonal attention* seems to lead the focus away from egocentric needs of self-indulgence and escape – listed by Sharpley (2002) as a motivation for tourism consumption. Instead of solely aiming at maximizing pleasure by fulfilling personal needs, the human dimension (further explored in ch.5.3) plays an important role. Hence, house swapping is found to frame a respectful and morally justifiable consumption based on honest and mutually considerate interpersonal relations.

5.2.3 Economies: Longer trips and more diversity

Apart from the influence on tourism consumption from a socio-psychological point of view, the interviewees suggested that house swapping frames as well the economics that determine their travels. First and foremost, interviews and member stories alike emphasize the *economies* (4a-d) which include free accommodation, no car rental costs and fewer restaurant meals. "It's economically viable" (Lilly). "You can stay longer and it's cheaper" (Susan). "We couldn't afford to stay somewhere for three months [...] the bigger portion of every trip is a house exchange" (Lea). "...and it does help for off-season travelling" (Dean). House swapping clearly supports the tourism consumption trend outlined by Honkanen and Mustonen (2008) which comprises *increased trip duration* and a *heightened seasonal diversity*.

Going easy on the travel budget, house swapping does not just promote prolonged travels, but sparks as well a consideration of 'other' destinations: "...it gets you somewhere for a certain period of time, that you might not go to if you had to pay to stay there" (Susan).

5.2.4 Taking initiative: Mutual travel incentives

Next to the economic benefits inherent to a house swap, the empirical data points towards another factor that influences the traveller's destination choice (5a-e): "I'd say, every three to four weeks we get somebody wanting to exchange" (Jim). "...there are places that would motivate me if somebody contacted me" (Susan) "And then we decided 'Okay, we gonna go to Berlin. [...] [...] And then we put together a few countries and then we started looking. But that was purely because she contacted us first" (Lea). The quotes suggest that exchange requests can serve as '*travel incentives*' that awaken interest in a destination:

Almost everybody in Europe said they want to go to New York, and about half of those said they want to go to San Francisco, and about one in 15 said they want to go somewhere in Canada. But almost none of them ever mentioned Vancouver. So if you just sit and wait for it, you would never exchange with anybody. But instead we send them a message saying "Wouldn't you like to come to Vancouver? You could combine it with San Francisco or Portland or [...] skiing at Whistler or a trip to the Rockies [...]. Would you be interested in doing that?" And many people say "Oh, I just haven't thought about that." [...] So, we sort of cultivate their interest in it. (Dean, 1.398)

Since house swaps build on direct reciprocity, travellers with a specific destination in mind have to be *proactive* in order to find a partner in the desired place. This is, however, not equally easy for everyone, since general destination image and popularity, as well as location and amenities of the house play undoubtedly an important role in arranging a swap: "Vancouver sells itself" (Jim), the city "has a good image. [...] people are very aware of it" (Dean). "We don't have trouble selling the house. We've got a swimming pool" (Jim) "...half an hour to Vancouver, half an hour to the ski hill" (Lilly) "...so you know, it's pretty desirable" (Jim).

House swapping promotes the idea of 'advertising' the own home through appealing profiles (5e) and intriguing individual requests within a network where members morally 'compete' for the benefit of unlimited travel options. This adds an interpersonal dimension to the consumption determinant of advertising driven by perpetual competition as conceptualized by Røpke (1999). What is more, the time-consuming, yet satisfactory and rewarding, efforts undertaken to arrange a swap remind of Stebbins' (2001) concept of *serious leisure* – similarly pointed out (but not further explicated) by Arente and Kiiski (2005). House swappers embrace the often complex and challenging routines connected to a home exchange,

and establish particular knowledge, taste and social skills that are rewarded with satisfying experiences:

We pull out a map of each city that we want to go to and try to figure out which areas are for us in and then go through the listings of people's exchange offers according to the locations. We try to find ones that are first of all flexible enough on time, and secondly located close enough to the centre so that we can get around conveniently on foot. (Dean)

One thing we really enjoyed was staying in a small city on the coast of Croatia, where the guidebooks just said "Don't bother with that place [...]" But if we weren't doing a house exchange, we probably wouldn't have ended up staying there, [...] We would never have gotten the feel of it [...]. So the house exchange made quite a difference to that and we actually ended up staying longer than we planned there. (Dean)

Finally, 'interpersonal marketing' – combined with the earlier mentioned option of individualization (ch.5.2.1) and mutually considerate behaviour (ch.5.2.2) – leads to an increasing diversity and quality of the travel 'product', counteracting processes of homogenisation, standardisation and automation characteristic of the industrial tourism model.

5.2.5 Good will instead of credit agreements

According to Botsman and Rogers (2010), one crucial determinant of the consumer culture is the 'buy now, pay later' credit card culture. The present research however suggests that house swapping frames this purchase approach differently. On the one hand, the interviewees described flexibility and *perseverance* with regard to their destination choice, which counters the 'right here, right now' attitude that came to be characteristic of the affluent (Western) population:

...like in Andalusia [...] she requested, and we couldn't do it. And then a year later we called her, and [...] we kept begging her actually, because it looked like such an interesting house. And it came together a year, or I think two years later. (Jim)

What is more, owing or being owed a swap after a non-simultaneous exchange is nothing like a formal credit agreement where one side meticulously aims at receiving the exchange value:

“There have been a few people, you know, it has been five years and they haven’t come yet. [...] I don’t think everybody assumes that they are going to come” (Lea). “...we have credit with the people from New Zealand. [...] Maybe we’ll go, maybe we won’t. I don’t know. It’s just sort of feel the goodwill, which is pretty nice. [...] it isn’t such an expectation” (Lilly), “no contract” (Jim). The quotes point towards the fact that house swapping – by relying on trust and reciprocity instead of monetary exchange – enables the proliferation of *goodwill* and a dash of altruism. This idea is reinforced by the fact that home exchangers do not insist on making a swap exactly equal in terms of e.g. time or property size (explicated in ch.5.1.9 under the notion of flexibility).

5.2.6 Transcending the tourism infrastructure?

Traditional tourism consumption is determined by a socio-technological framework of related commodities, infrastructure, social practices and institutions (Røpke, 1999). While several of the ideas presented to this point suggest that a house swap holiday allows the participants to escape this framework in various aspects, the influence of home exchanges in this context shall be analysed in more detail in the following section.

With regard to the preparation and organization process of a home exchange, the depiction of house swappers as self-made travel agents who resort to P2P holiday planning (ch.5.1.10) points towards a process of *disintermediation*. Being a typical characteristic of collaborative consumption, in the tourism realm this allows for eliminating the dependence on conventional travel intermediaries – thereby facilitating new structures in the form of *Do-It-Yourself* (DIY) and *Free Independent Travel* (FIT). With the above described proactive attitude (ch.5.2.4), the interviewees confirmed Arente and Kiiski’s (2005) finding that “...potential exchangers – consciously or subconsciously – act both as buyers and sellers of the particular tourism practice” (ibid., 2005, p.78). The ‘host-free’ hospitality enabled through house swapping further supports the FIT option.

Considering the actual stay in somebody’s home, another point at which house swaps seem to transcend the traditional tourism system can be pointed out on the basis of the empirical data (7a-g). In contrast to most of the established – paid – lodging options, house swaps accommodate the participants in *residential* areas: “I mean, the casual living in somebody’s home and you’re gonna be living in a place like... it’s not downtown” (Susan). The impact

that the location of the accommodation has on the tourism consumption is illustrated by the following quotes (7b): “You go to the local coffee shop and you’re going to the supermarkets as locals would to get your supplies” (Lilly). “You get more of a connection than you were just a tourist staying for two or three days” (Jim). “Waking up, listening to different sounds depending on where you are” (Lea), “...meeting the neighbours, walking back and forth to the shopping area or the transit” (Dean). While these statements indicate the by house swap organizations prominently promoted notion ‘Live like a local’, the interviewees did not confirm that idea per se (7c): “...when you’re on vacation you’re on vacation. [...] A tourist is a tourist” (Jim). “...we never got to know the neighbours anywhere we were staying. [...] you’re there usually to tourist or to see people, so you’re not sitting around in the garden getting to know people” (Susan). “...if you don’t speak the language it’s difficult” (Lea), “You look different. I mean, they can tell you’re [...] from another country. And people know pretty fast whether you’re local or not because they are very discerning about those things” (Dean).

Contemplating the influence a stay in a residential area has on the tourism system, the travel experts interviewed pointed out how the impact of the tourism spending is affected (7d):

...it’s [...] very beneficial to many [...] communities because most hotels for example are concentrated in the downtown core serving a business community, whereas residences are all over the place. So people end up being spread out [...] and the spending that is associated with their presence benefits parts of a community which otherwise wouldn’t benefit from that. It’s supplemental income. (Anna)

Building on the concept of tourism money getting “distributed throughout the city, and to different neighbourhoods” (Dan), Audrey suggests that “...you’re spending more money locally in the community; you probably facilitate local restaurants and local grocery stores and things like that” (Audrey). The house swappers’ opinion about the idea of home exchanges supporting the ‘people’s businesses’ was, however, again dissenting: “...it’s not going to bring the big revenue [...] because they wouldn’t necessarily go out more often than we would” (Lilly). What is more, the interviewees explicitly emphasized their preference for a central location (7f), which mitigates the beneficial effects described by Anna, Audrey and Dan.

Eventually, the research clearly showed that house swapping does ‘bypass’ certain aspects that constitute the socio-technological framework of the traditional tourism system. Promoting disintermediation, it not just allows for DIY and FIT but enables as well unexpected travel

options. It furthermore sparks a different tourist experience that reflects aspects of the everyday life of a local, and even implicates the possibility of distributing the tourist spending. Finally, thinking about the issue of limited resources within a growing industry, Anna Pollock sees in the phenomenon an option to growth without new infrastructure (7g): “I think it has a very positive impact. We don’t have to build a new hotel and you can still grow tourism to a region. It’s just a different kind of tourism” (Anna). As such, house swapping can be seen as “highly complementary to the existing hotel stock” (Anna).

5.2.7 Democratisation of house swapping?

The interviews confirmed what most newspaper articles and house swap organisations bring to the fore: “It doesn’t need to be a house. A lot of people are exchanging apartments as well. And [...] it doesn’t necessarily have to be equal” (Dean). Indeed, also people who cannot afford a mansion can exchange their property successfully: “...the one in Kelowna was a very modest little place. [...] we wanted to go to Kelowna. So it was fine” (Jim). The empirical data however clearly suggests that not everyone has the same chance to participate in a house swap. In order to establish trust, common lifestyle attributes seem to be crucial (8a): “we describe [...] what Lilly does – she’s an occupational therapist, I’m an architect [...]. That [...] definitely makes a difference” (Jim). “When we saw that house in Spain, there was the fact that she was a novelist. I mean, that was kind of interesting. [...] I think you make a good point. I think whether we think about it or not, it does make a difference when we read what the people do” (Jim). Anna Pollock brings this search for *socio-economic commonalities* to the point:

In house swapping people tend to really gravitate to people somewhat like themselves. And [...] they want [...] the stuff they have at home. [...] so, it puts some developing countries at a slight disadvantage [...]. They may not feel, from a material point, a fair exchange. (Anna)

This idea is further substantiated by the following contemplation about an exchange in Cuzco (Peru) by one of the interviewed couples: “Cuzco would be fun!” (Jim), “Yeah, you might find a University professor. Or an ex-Canadian” (Lilly).

The ability to relate to a potential exchange partner culturally and socio-economically is not the only restricting factor of house swapping, as Arente and Kiiski (2005) found out in their study:

The country of the exchange home plays a big role in the supply and demand marketplace of the databases as well. [...] Russia is still not at all a safe place, which an ordinary foreign family would dare to choose as a home-exchange destination. (ibid., 2005, p.52)

The raised issue might be addressed through (positive) experience: “But now that you have been to Uganda, you would exchange if you knew what you were getting. I mean, just because it’s Uganda, it doesn’t mean you wouldn’t do it” (Jim). Nevertheless, house swapping is by and large restricted to ‘*conventional*’ *tourist destinations*, where living standards are on a ‘Western’ level.

The literature review pointed out that tourism emerged as continuation of the relative affluence of the Global North, and that the development of means of mass transportation led to a democratisation of travel in the Western world (Urry, 1990). The section above demonstrated that lifestyle attributes characteristic of the Western world – and related to a certain level of affluence – determine the successful participation in home exchange networks, and consequently impede a democratisation of this travel form on a global scale.

However, another factor that came up during the interviews has to be mentioned at this point: It is not just the preferences of the comparatively affluent house swappers that put big parts of the global population at a disadvantage, but as well the prevailing economic realities (8d):

One of the things we have to realize is that we are more affluent here than people in a lot of the countries we are trying to exchange. So, there are limitations on where they can go. [...] When we were in Croatia we really tried to encourage people to come here, but we realized that most of the time they just can’t afford it. (Dean)

Consequently, “it would be more difficult to do it in [...] more ‘exotic’ places, because people can’t afford [...] to travel like this very often” (Dean). Also different family structures were pointed out as a possible complication to exchanging the dwelling.

Eventually, it is of course as well a question of access to the virtual community, as Dan points out: “I think it remains to be seen whether this sharing economy – a digitally enabled economy – will broaden the benefits for people, particularly in developing economies, who may not necessarily have access to the internet” (Dan).

With the restrictions of house swapping illustrated above, the phenomenon seems to impede a travel approach taken by Dan and Audrey, which builds upon open, curious and unbiased destination choices:

...we set off with the idea of trying – not only for ourselves, but for the community we set up our blog for – to expose them to destinations and places around the world that they might not have thought about before, or were disregarded or perhaps even places that were – that we believed were misunderstood. (Dan)

5.2.8 A hedonistic alternative

The second part of the analysis pointed out that house swapping presents the options of emancipation from the traditional tourist image, individualization of the trip and identity development through the experience. It was furthermore found to expand the travel focus by adding interpersonal attention and mutual consideration. From an economic perspective, the phenomenon sparks longer and more diverse trips and establishes a framework for good will on which exchanges build. By acting both as ‘buyers’ and ‘sellers’, house swappers are utterly embedded in the development, marketing and consumption of the experience – embracing the trends of DIY and FIT that transcend the conventional tourism system through disintermediation. Even though the interviewees emphasized their preference for central accommodation, house swapping stimulates lodging in residential areas, which provides the opportunity of spreading the tourist money. However, the study found also that the intrinsic characteristics of house swapping – socio-economic restrictions and the popularity of ‘conventional’ tourist destinations – impede a democratisation of this travel form on a global scale.

In terms of framing alternative consumption, the findings of the study suggest that house swapping constitutes an *informal, alternative marketplace* that enables travelling, building on existing infrastructures and shifting the focus away from commercial transactions:

...it takes us a little bit further away from this totally commercial transaction focus that dominates tourism. In other words, it's saying that there's a room for a wider variety of ways of human beings extending hospitality to one another. (Anna)

It is indeed an open, decentralized, self-selecting community (instead of a centrally controlled, profit-oriented provider) that takes centre stage in the provision of the travel ‘product’. With the acceptance of trust and reciprocity as ‘currency’ of the system, the home exchange network seems to establish a structure that enables people to flourish in a less materialistic way as called for by Jackson (2009). Transcending the traditional tourism system and hence

promoting non-market consumption, it reflects the ideas of the New Economics approach (Seyfang, 2009).

What is more, house swapping seems to address the issues linked to the promotion of more responsible forms of tourism: “The problem with selling sustainable tourism [...] is that it sounds like [...] it’s not really that much fun. [...] it’s full of jargon, it’s full of circular definitions” (Dan), “instead of focusing on the experience first and why that experience is [...] unique” (Audrey). The shortcomings described by Dan and Audrey remind of the mainstream approach, which sees the consumer (the tourist) as an educated persona able to take rational and critical decisions. House swapping however takes a different approach. While it could certainly point out its do-gooder potential, intriguing experiences in form of member stories are the main focus. According to Audrey, this promotion as *hedonistic alternative* is indeed the most effective way: “the travellers [...], they go on vacation, they wanna have a really great time” (Audrey). “...we try to [...] focus on the experience first, about what was really special or unique and then go backwards about what was the process, what was the approach that allowed us to get it” (Audrey). “I think it’s possible to show how – again, this idea of awareness – how taking certain steps helps them have an even better time or an even different time” (Audrey).

Eventually, reflecting on the potential influence of house swapping in the global tourism market both Dan and Anna express doubts:

...tourism boards [...] are often funded by folks who have money in the private tourism industry, and those people usually do not have in their interest to promote things like Couchsurfing, house swapping, Airbnb, [...]. So I actually think [...] that the sharing economy is [...] somewhat [...] orthogonal to the traditional tourism, and tourism promotion industry. Just because of the nature of the way the dollars flow. (Dan)

In addition to this, Anna points out that house swapping is indeed a “particular niche market – not everybody wants to go and stay in somebody else’s home. [...] It’s not the same standard” (Anna). In her opinion, it is hence “not going to [...] be truly disruptive of the existing models” (Anna).

While house swapping cannot be the solution for the problems that shake the tourism system and appeals (so far) only to specific tourism market segments, it still represents an intriguing travel option that opposes mindless consumption in many ways.

One crucial factor for this is the option to step outside the business relation that defines encounters in commercial accommodation settings. Facilitating relationships, valuable information and unique experiences, the human system that underlies the house swap phenomenon will be examined in the last part of the analysis.

5.3 House swapping and the human tourism system

...when we interact in [...] hotel accommodation settings, [...] hospitality is expected because of the economic exchange. [...] And then there is that aspect of the sharing economy where there are no economic strings attached. And I think that's where the human dimension shines itself in its kind of purest form. [...] I'm gonna emerge from this experience [...] with a greater understanding, awareness, transformation [...]. That exposes the human dimension in ways that none of those other circumstances, I think, can. (Dan)

Anna Pollock (2012a) draws her concept of Conscious Travel around a human tourism system and describes how its components evolve under a holistic, ecological paradigm (ibid., 2012a). The last section of the analysis hence discusses in how far the human dimension of house swapping reflects the values and ideas of the new paradigm.

The elaborations are guided by the third research sub-question: **How does house swapping affect the tourism system of place, host and guest?**

5.3.1 The human dimension of house swapping

Both Anna, and Dan and Audrey see tourism as an activity that revolves around people meeting people (1a): "...when you look at the actual activity itself, [...] it's all about encounters that take place in a particular piece of geography" (Anna). Conscious travel is hence defined by two themes: "understanding. And [...] connection. [...] We go to these places, so we meet people, we connect with people and we understand the place. We understand the culture better, we understand the people better" (Dan). Dan sees the sharing economy, of which house swapping is an intrinsic part, as a facilitator of this form of travel: "One of the things in this [...] sharing economy – whether we're paying for something or not

– one of the benefits is an increased level of understanding, an increased level of connection, an increased level of awareness” (Dan).

By creating “an environment where the relationship can be established first” (Anna), house swapping embraces the people-focus based on *connection and understanding*, and hence “fits into the whole eco-system very well. Especially a conscious travel type” (Anna).

Similarly, both the interviews with house swappers and member stories disclose the importance of friendly encounters in a home exchange experience. Being illustrated as the value that makes it worth it, the secret to a successful exchange and the basis for authentic experiences, the human dimension finds a place in every house swap discourse. Whether it is shop assistants in small neighbourhood stores who are friendlier knowing that you will come back, the exchange partner’s mum who gives a ride to the hospital, or unexpected encounters with neighbours (1c⁵⁰) – home exchange experience live on *interpersonal relations*:

We were staying in Venice. [...] And we would take the kitchen chairs out and plug them on the side of the Canal and have our morning coffee there. [...] and then late afternoon we’d take the chairs back out and sit and have a glass of wine. [...] And [...] the people that were living in the area would stop and start to talk to us! And when we left, people popped out their heads of their apartments and said goodbye. [...] Yeah, it was nice. We kind of had gotten to know each other just by passing by all the time and saying hello, you know. We didn’t have enough language in common to say very much, but just enough to sort of be friendly to each other. (Dean)

Also the idea of actively pursuing encounters with the exchange partners, and positive anecdotes of spending time with them, came up in the interviews (1d): “We try to find opportunities [...] at the beginning or the end of the trip to have dinner or breakfast or [...] spend a day walking around [...] We try to find those kinds of opportunities if we can” (Dean).

In the following, the three aspects of the human tourism system as illustrated by Pollock (2012a) will be examined in the context of house swapping.

⁵⁰ Please check table 3 in the appendix (pp.113-121).

5.3.2 Place: Respect the home, appreciate the uniqueness

“The change in paradigm will be first expressed in a shift in focus away from a product that can be commoditized to a place that can be valued, celebrated, expressed, and experienced” (Pollock, 2012a, p.13). While in this quote ‘place’ stands for the intrinsic qualities of a tourist destination, in the context of house swapping the notion is more meaningful when applied to a smaller dimension: the exchanged house as the defining element of the home exchange experience.

What came out clearly both in the interviews and in the member stories is the *respect* house swappers have for the home of the exchange partner (2a): “...it does inspire a relationship of trust and respect for each other’s place” (Chris). The by Pollock expressed alienation from commoditized products plays thereby an important role: “...we are probably a lot more careful than we would be [...] – I’m sorry to say – in a hotel [...] Because [...] there’s [...] personal value attached (Jim). “...you think twice before putting the feet up on the couch” (Lilly). The quotes point out the difference between the reckless tourist who believes that ‘the guest is king’ and a more mindful, modest house swapper who appreciates, respects and treats the place as “somebody else’s house” (Jim). Even if the host is not present, the home reflects the everyday life routines of the host (Grit, 2008) and the house swapper accordingly usually feels and *acts like a guest*.

A crucial factor for this behaviour is the disintermediation characteristic of house swapping (5.2.6), through which the invitation is extended by the hosts themselves – normally accompanied by the expression of a ‘home feeling’ and personal recommendations. This adds to expressing the uniqueness and personality of the place: “it makes it a somewhat different experience that way influenced by local people’s taste and ideas about the place” (Dean).

This process is emphasized by Pollock (2012a) as leading to more engagement with the place, resulting in a stronger feeling of meaning and purpose (ibid., 2012a). This *engagement* was also expressed by one of the interviewees: “And we’ve had fantastic experiences. In Spain [...] the people we exchanged with [...] organized a dinner party for us. And then also the people who came to the dinner party [...] took us out. [...] So, you get a sense for the community” (Lilly).

Finally, the empirical data indicates that house swaps can facilitate the experience of “the distinct essence of a place [...] through all the senses, throughout the day” (Pollock, 2012a), as the story of one interviewee about the stay in a small city in Croatia affirms:

...it wasn't a touristy place. But people would come on tour busses during the middle of the day and [...] fill up the square in front of the church. And there were people everywhere with cameras [...]. And when you just come through there during the daytime [...] you would have thought that it was that typical touristy kind of town with all the tour busses coming and people going. It was quite different at both ends of the day and it was so much more enjoyable. [...] the house exchange made it possible to spend significantly more time than we otherwise would have. (Dean)

Also 'everyday activities' entailed by house swaps (like grocery shopping) lead to a more diverse destination picture:

... when you [...] shop for yourself and you go back to the same streets and the same squares multiple times, at different times at different days then you see things that happen in a different way. You know, the same square will be quite different in the morning than it is in the afternoon or in the evening. And from day to day it changes, too. So [...] you get a different picture of what the place is like. (Dean)

In addition to that, Audrey points out how staying in less touristy areas facilitates the understanding of the place: "...all the local services like the bakery and coffee shops [...] were just full of ordinary people. [...] it [had] that [...] pace or feel of "Okay, this is what life is like here, this is what ordinary people are doing" (Audrey).

The quotes suggest that house swaps contribute towards getting to know the spirit or the *essence of a setting*, which automatically counteracts processes of homogenization and standardisation viewed as harmful under Pollock's (2012a) alternative ecological model. The respectful discovery and immersion in the uniqueness of a place furthermore remind of Bowen and Clarke's concept of *slow tourism*, which focuses on quality time at the destination.

5.3.3 Hosts: Facilitate wholesome experience

The role of hosts during a house swap is interesting, since they are not present in the majority of cases. Nevertheless, the empirical data and member stories alike indicate that the house swappers aim at enabling their exchange partners a pleasant stay: "...the only thing you're worried about, you know, that something goes wrong with the house. Like there's a leak, or electrical problem. Because you don't want the person staying here to panic" (Jim). Efforts to

avoid problems for the guest include (extensive) indications and manuals for the house: “...we always leave instructions for everything” (Susan). What is more, a collection of pamphlets and brochures, as well as specific recommendations, are aimed at facilitating the exchange partner’s immersion into the local surroundings (4b,c): “...we’d leave them whatever material we thought would be helpful for their stay” (Chris). In line with Pollock’s (2012a) ideas, the host aspires to *create value* for the guest in form of a *wholesome experience* instead of extracting as much value from him as possible (ibid, 2012a). Supporting this, the interviewees furthermore stressed their efforts to receive their partners like guests (4a-d). Picking them up at the airport, giving them a little tour on the way home or inviting them for dinner the first night were all mentioned as means to welcome them: sometimes we pick them up at the airport and bring them to our house for dinner” (Lea). Even if the hosts are not present – as often the case in a home exchange – they aim at establishing an atmosphere of hospitality. By leaving the essentials for breakfast or dinner they want to enable a smooth arrival for the guest: “...they got here at 9 o’clock at night. So they were hungry. And you can’t go out at night. You don’t know where you are. So we kind of put together something” (Lea). Also the habit of having a friend or family member introduce the guests to the house (4c) promotes a feeling of being welcome (while at the same time providing the opportunity to ‘check on’ the unknown guests).

Ideas about the appropriate amount of effort are of course diverse:

It varies all over the maps. [...] In some places somebody just left a key in an office down on the main street around the corner [...]. Other places, people come and welcome you and show you everything and explain it. Some places, they’ve kind of stocked the place up for you [...]. One place we got to, it had one jar of tomato sauce, and one plastic container of spaghetti and that was it. (Dean)

However, house swappers seem to embody Anna’s concept of conscious hosts, who “...instead of being passive receivers [...] create this universal sense of caring” (Anna). By giving their guests personal recommendations, they facilitate the guests’ spending decisions and enable them to have unique experiences (6a). The interviewees indeed expressed a strong reliance on the information received from their house swap ‘hosts’. Considering Anna’s idea about the conscious hosts “having conversations with their guests, that would make them [...] become a little bit more aware of the need to behave in a conscious responsible way” (Anna), this fact suggests that the hosts take a *central role* in guiding the guest’s behaviour and spending decisions. In this connection, Forno and Garibaldi’s (2013) finding seems

promising: “Home exchangers are also concerned with their communities when they are not traveling. Nearly three out of five respondents [...] claim civic involvement at home” (ibid., 2013, p.18). This ties in perfectly with the explanations of Anna who hopes that the conscious hosts will be “modelling the whole approach in the way they present themselves and the way they are utterly involved in the issues in their community. It would just be a natural point of conversation and storytelling” (Anna).

5.3.4 Guests as co-creators and ambassadors

Similar to the house swap ‘hosts’ who are no passive receivers, the house swap ‘guests’ do not represent passive consumers either. Participating in an extensive communication and preparation process prior to each exchange, they rather qualify as “*co-creators of value*” (Pollock, 2012a, p.14). Striving for authentic experiences, immersion into the visited place and friendly encounters (ch.5.1), their stay in somebody’s home often leads to experiences that go beyond the actual exchange of properties: “...in Montserrat we were taken on a tour of the monastery by someone whose brother was in the monastery” (Jim) “...in Cairns the kids went to school with the children” (Lilly). These unexpected options present invaluable opportunities of education and understanding far from the conventional ‘tourist culture’.

What is more, house swaps provide the potential to create lasting connections and even friendship: “The guys from Vienna, they want to immigrate to Vancouver, so they came here every year. And they’d stay with us for a couple of days and we’d do different things. So, eventually I hope they are moving and we’ll see them a lot of times” (Lea). Naturally, not all exchange partners become friends (7b). Nevertheless, the considerable potential of honest bonding – and as such a personal linkage – through a house swap represents an important asset under a new holistic tourism model.

Another crucial factor in this sense is an honest information exchange, facilitated by a longer stay, which allows questioning one’s (potentially biased) perspective on things:

Once you get to know each other, then people will talk about other issues, for example environmental issues, or political issues, sort of cultural things, differences between people’s cultures and how social elements operate within their culture [...] So instead of whizzing through [...] and taking your very high-level image of it home, you actually get the chance to ask people “Well, what do you think? Am I seeing this properly or am I seeing this just through certain colored lenses, sort of a Canadian perspective on it...[...]” You get the chance

to ask people that once you've been staying in one place and got to know them a little bit.
(Dean)

Getting the chance of “looking at the world from a different angle” (Dean) reminds of Krippendorff's (1986b) image of conscious travel as the *learning basis* for everyday life. This is closely related to Dan and Audrey's idea of (conscious) tourists as *citizen diplomats*: “...the sharing economy supports [...] citizen diplomacy, because [...] you're engaging one on one, or you're engaging with ordinary local people, [...] you have these opportunities to talk and just interact with person-to-person” (Audrey).

On a more personal level related to the idea of getting a different perspective is the theme of ‘living the other life’ that came up in the interviews:

A highlight for me was our six weeks in Vienna. Because I was born in Vienna. [...] So, [...] having a house exchange there [...] gave me the opportunity to spend some time... and I kept thinking every day “This is what I could have lived like. I could have lived here all my life!” [...] that, for me, was amazing, to really live in the city that I was born in. A great opportunity that you couldn't get if you were just staying in a hotel. (Lea)

This supports the work of Arentz and Kiiski (2005), who find a “...likelihood of identity swap during the home-exchange [...] if they [the home exchangers] get a feeling that they live somebody else's life for a while” (ibid., 2005, p.74).

Finally, all interviewees expressed their willingness to spread the idea of house swapping: “We certainly recommend it!” (Lilly), “We're talking about it a lot. And I'm pretty sure there are some people who've done it on basis of our recommendation” (Jim). In this sense, house swappers seem to represent the “*enthusiastic ambassadors*” imagined by Pollock (2012a) – guests, who are energized by unique experiences and aim at ‘infecting’ others.

5.3.5 House swappers: Blurred distinction

As indicated before, the distinction between hosts and guests is rather blurry in the context of house swapping. Advertising property and homeland as attractive travel destination, extending the invitation to potential exchange partners and preparing the house in order to allow for a pleasant stay are unquestionably activities linked to a host. On the other hand, research about potential holiday destinations, the search for appealing accommodation

options, inquiries about availability and the expectation of an intriguing travel experience are characteristic of a guest. In the course of a house swap, the participants typically dedicate themselves to both sides, often simultaneously.

This point is supported by certain habits expressed by the interviewees, which embrace host and guest characteristics at the same time. The house swappers mentioned for example ‘little somethings’ that would serve as signs of welcome, or gratitude: “...when they arrive, we leave a bottle of wine for them” (Lilly). “We usually leave some flowers, a card and a little gift [when leaving]” (Lea).

Also reciprocity is a recurrent theme on both sides of the exchange. While this naturally comprises direct reciprocity to pay back efforts of the exchange partner to make the stay pleasurable (12a), the empirical data suggests that house swaps promote a reciprocity that extends beyond that:

...we did one in Australia, long time ago. [...] And our girls were quite young at the time. And then – fast forward – our younger daughter [...] and her boyfriend wanted to go to Australia. [...] And I said ‘Well, maybe the Smiths⁵¹...’ [...] Phoned them and said, you know, our daughter is going to be in Cairns. And they said ‘Oh fantastic. She has to stay with us!’ (Jim)

Whether offered to guests, or by hosts, the value of reciprocity is extended beyond the exchange, and can even be passed on: “...one couple in Italy said ‘We may not make it to Vancouver, but we have these friends that want to come.’ So they introduced us to the friends over dinner and we said ‘Sure, fine!’” (Dean). The quotes support the idea that house swaps are indeed defined by an intrinsic *reciprocal relationship*, stressed by Fiorello and Bo (2012) as crucial factor for conscious tourism.

Eventually, the blurring distinction between hosts and guests seems to result in a distinctive feature of house swapping: participants can assess and adapt their behaviour as both hosts and guests according to their expectation and direct experience of their partner’s endeavours. Adding to the altruistic stance pointed out earlier (ch.5.2.5), the possibility of *direct comparison* entails that house swappers are inspired to act as they would like their counterparts to do.

⁵¹ Name changed

6 Conclusion

House swapping is an intriguing phenomenon that changes tourism consumption by stepping out of the conventional infrastructure of commercial accommodation settings and paid travel intermediaries. Building on trust and reciprocity instead of monetary exchange, it allows for cost-efficient stays and hence facilitates longer or more frequent travels. While providing the opportunity for flexible and independent holidays by framing a ‘host-free’ hospitality, the time-consuming preparation process requires involvement and dedication in order to establish the right conditions for a smooth exchange.

The aim of the present study was it to investigate the potential and limitations of house swapping in the context of conscious travel – a notion and movement that takes an utmost interest in the impact of the tourism activity on the destination and consequently promotes considerate consumption. The research was guided by the question ‘How does house swapping as a form of collaborative travel move tourist practices and experiences towards the idea of conscious tourism?’

In a first step it was discussed in how far house swappers *embody the characteristics of the ‘new tourist’* – a traveller whose values, attitudes and practices build on the mindset of a conscious consumer and are hence connected to a more conscious form of travel. The analysis of interviews and member stories disclosed indeed striking similarities in terms of travel habits and expectations, which provides valuable insights with regard to the research question. Striving for authentic experiences through friendly encounters and a (mindful) immersion into the setting, house swappers follow the maxim of the conscious travel concept, which values wholesome experiences instead of quick escapes from everyday life at any price or quality. The preference of a casual travel mode, prioritising independence and flexibility over ‘flawless’ services, further supports this by allowing for informal and spontaneous encounters and unexpected opportunities that broaden perspective and understanding of the destination. What is more, adaptable and moderate expectations are a crucial prerequisite for a modest tourist behaviour, which in turn abates disrespectful and complacent behaviour.

While these facets of house swappers as ‘new tourists’ are promising in the context of more conscious forms of tourism, the research did not disclose house swappers as concerned about the (environmental) impact of their travels per se. Being more an individual trait than a

general mindset of the house swap community, intrinsically conscious travel behaviour is hence not an attribute inherent to house swappers.

Travelling, as a hedonistic undertaking, naturally comprises certain limitations with regard to promoting a less self-centred behaviour. It was therefore deemed important to assess in how far house swapping *influences consumption determinants* and thus *frames conscious consumption*. With regard to the main research question, the analysis disclosed two contrary ideas. On the one hand, house swapping was found to transcend the traditional tourism system through disintermediation, making the participants to self-made travel agents and accommodation providers around peer-to-peer consumption. Through this, house swappers are utterly embedded in the development, marketing and consumption of the experience, which leads to a higher engagement on both sides. Also the lodging in somebody's home was disclosed as supportive in terms of conscious travel: By resorting to the existing infrastructure, the costs for the host community to accommodate the traveller are minimized, since housing, feeding and local transportation are conform with the setting. Besides that, the accommodation in residential areas provides the opportunity of spreading the tourist money. On the other hand however, the study found that intrinsic characteristics of house swapping – socio-economic restrictions and the popularity of 'conventional' tourist destinations – positions the phenomenon as a travel alternative almost exclusively accessible to the affluent citizen of the Western world. Thus, the potential of house swapping in the context of conscious tourism has to be understood within these limits.

Being a crucial factor for considerate tourist behaviour, the *human system* that underlies the house swap phenomenon represented the third conceptual realm of the analysis. It was found that house swappers, by stepping outside the business relation that defines encounters in commercial accommodation settings, embrace mindful and considerate behaviour, attentive gestures and reciprocity as unspoken rules of the travel experience. Due to the fact that house swappers act as both host and guest during each exchange, the distinction between the traditional roles is blurred. This proves to be a crucial facilitator of conscious tourist practices, since the participants orientate their behaviour on how they would like somebody else to act in their place. On the part of the host, this entails an honest interest in facilitating a wholesome experience for the guest. The guests' behaviour on the other hand is characterized by a deep respect for the place as somebody's home, resulting in a modest and thankful attitude. What is more, the interviews disclosed a nearness of house swapping to the (intrinsically conscious) concept of slow tourism, since it facilitates engagement with the

place and promotes the appreciation of its uniqueness – allowing participants to experience the essence of the setting.

Eventually, it can be said that house swapping breaks away from the conventional (mass) tourism practices that were developed under the industrial model, and embraces instead the concept of non-market consumption that revolves around a human dimension. As a form of collaborative travel, the phenomenon establishes a framework for goodwill on which the exchanges build. Focussing in its promotion on intriguing travel experiences, house swapping also seems to represent a successful approach of embracing conscious travel practices as a ‘hedonistic alternative’.

In terms of knowledge, the findings contribute to a better understanding of the house swap phenomenon by illustrating how it frames the tourist consumption. While house swapping as a niche phenomenon will not be the solution for the problems that shake and endanger the tourism system globally, it definitely represents an intriguing travel option that opposes mindless consumption in many ways. Hence, the study also contributes to a comprehension of the importance of peer-to-peer travel consumption for conscious tourism. In terms of practice, this knowledge proves beneficial for destinations that aim at attracting and embracing more conscious forms of travel. The study results suggest that an open and supportive attitude towards collaborative forms of travel can positively influence the behaviour of hosts and guests alike. This is of special interest in connection to the growing trend of sharing cities. In the realm of marketing, the findings indicate that the promotion of conscious travel benefits from a focus on the unique experience, drawing the image of a ‘hedonistic alternative’. What is more, community guidelines as unspoken rules seem to be an effective means to support the human dimension of the tourism system, inciting an attitude of mutual consideration and respect.

While the research at hand contributed towards a broader understanding of house swapping, drawing a complete picture of the phenomenon was beyond the means of this study. Accordingly, further research can be suggested as follows: The elaborations around house swappers as new tourists could be supported and intensified through a comprehensive quantitative study on the house swap community, similar to the study by Forno and Garibaldi (2013). Interesting in this context would also be a thorough investigation of the home exchangers’ (conscious) behaviour outside a home exchange. In the context of the potential of the phenomenon to frame conscious consumption, research into the (economic) impacts of

this travel form on the local tourism industry, as well as non-tourism businesses would prove valuable. Finally, a comparative in-depth study of house swappers in different parts of the world, as well as an investigation of home exchanges into the developed world would broaden the perspective on the phenomenon as a conscious travel alternative.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Semi-structured interviews

8.1.1 Interview guide for Dan & Audrey (Uncornered Market)

My thesis is about House Swapping, which is part of the sharing economy. I would like to find out whether, and in what ways, House Swapping moves tourist practices and experiences towards the concept of conscious tourism. In the conversation with you, I would like to connect your thoughts on e.g. citizen diplomacy, the good global traveller and tourism as people's business to the evolving collaborative consumption in tourism and reflect on the world-making potential of tourism (in its probably new form).

Icebreaker

You have been travelling for a long time, committed to the idea of travelling “deep and off-beat, aiming to connect the world through people, food and adventure”.

1. Can you explain your commitment to alternative, more conscious forms of tourism (that break the production-consumption model of tourism)?
2. *Follow-up*: How do you incorporate conscious travel in your everyday practices as travellers?
3. *Follow-up*: Do you think it is/could be a “concept” / way to travel for everyone?

Collaborative Consumption

1. Do you have experience with hospitality exchange/accommodation sharing networks like Couchsurfing, Airbnb, House Swapping?
2. *Follow-up*: Does the spreading mindset of collaborative consumption fit your philosophy of a more conscious form of travel?

The following questions all refer to hospitality exchange/accommodation sharing networks – or, if applicable/familiar – first and foremost to **House Swapping**.

3. In which ways, you think, does accommodation sharing change tourist practices?

Follow-up: How would you connect this to your idea of a “good global traveller⁵²”?

4. Do accommodation sharing networks support or sidestep tourism ventures that are people’s business⁵³?

Follow-up: How does the idea of non-monetary exchange affect tourism processes in your opinion?

5. You wrote about the role of travellers as ambassadors for their country⁵⁴. How would you connect that to the practices around hospitality exchange networks?
6. Under which circumstances does house swapping promote more conscious travel (and this maybe beyond developed countries)?

8.1.2 Interview guide for Anna (Conscious Travel)

My thesis is about House Swapping, which is part of the sharing economy. I would like to find out whether, and in what ways, House Swapping moves tourist practices and experiences towards the concept of conscious tourism. In the conversation with you, I would like to explore your ideas on conscious travel in connection with the evolving collaborative consumption in tourism and reflect on the world-making potential of tourism (in its probably new form).

Icebreaker

1. What is your motivation for the promotion of conscious travel?

Concept of Conscious Tourism

2. Can you outline for me what conscious tourism is?

Follow-up: How do place, host and guest – the components of the human tourism system – look like and interact under the mindset of conscious tourism?

Connection to Sharing Economy

3. You state that the paradigm of material rationalism is increasingly being questioned and that this paves the way for a systematic change of the prevailing worldview – affecting as well the tourism system.

⁵² <http://www.uncorneredmarket.com/2012/04/good-global-traveler/>

⁵³ <http://www.uncorneredmarket.com/2012/11/tourism-the-peoples-business/>

⁵⁴ <http://www.uncorneredmarket.com/2009/02/travelers-as-diplomats/>

→ In how far would you consider the emerging collaborative consumption in tourism (in the form of accommodation sharing networks) as an answer to these changes?

House Swapping

4. House swapping – the case of my research – builds on direct reciprocity without any monetary exchange.
→ In which ways does non-monetary accommodating sharing (e.g. house swapping) affect the human tourism system of place, host and guest?
→ What about the phenomenon of simultaneous exchange (no host ‘on-site’)?
5. How would you connect your objective of “producing net benefit for the host community” to the concept of non-monetary hospitality exchange?

To sum up

6. What are the potential and limitations of house swapping as a promoter of conscious travel (and this maybe beyond developed countries)?
7. *Follow-up*: Can the “community of house swappers” form the base for a community of conscious hosts?

8.1.3 Interview guide for house swappers

My thesis is about House Swapping (HS) as a form of the evolving sharing economy. I want to explore how tourist practices and experiences change through HS. In the conversation with you I would like to talk about what you look for and value while travelling, your (different) experiences through House Swapping and how HS affects your travel habits & practices.

Travel habits - general

1. How would you describe your travel habits?
2. What are you looking for in a travel experience? / What is it that counts for you in a tourist experience?
→ How does HS contribute to that?
3. Could you describe a travel situation/moment/experience that disappointed you? Why did it disappoint you?
→ Did you have a similar experience with HS?

4. How do you choose where to go, buy, eat, spend your money when travelling? Do you make deliberate choices?
5. To what extent do you use rating sites like yelp or tripadvisor to let others know about your experiences?
→ Did you ever include some of the places you discovered through a HS stay?

Travel experiences – House Swapping

6. How did you start swapping houses?
7. How does a HS change/influence your travel experience?
8. Can you tell me about striking experiences – positive or negative – of your house swaps so far?
9. When you tell about your HS experience(s), how do people react?
Follow-up: How would you describe HS to someone who never heard about it?
Do you try to “convert” people to HS? Would you recommend HS? To whom?
10. How do you feel about other people staying in your home?
Follow-up: How does it feel staying in somebody else’s home?
11. Did aspects/experiences of your HS stay ever change/influence your everyday life at home?
12. HS promotes itself with the slogan “Live like a local”. What do you think about that?

Characteristics/Process of HS

13. How do you normally go about arranging a HS?
Follow-up: Does it take a lot of effort? Does it get easier with the time?
14. What do you look for in people’s descriptions? What “convinces” you?
Follow-up: How does your perfect HS deal look like?
Follow-up: How do you “promote” your house/lifestyle?
15. What kind of issues / challenges do you confront when arranging a HS? Did you ever have legal problems (insurance, rental agreements, taxes etc.)?

Human dimension

16. How would you describe the relationships and encounters emerging from a house swap?
Follow-up: How do the encounters on a HS holiday differ from other travel experiences?
17. How do you “receive” your guests? / How have you been “received”?

18. What (social) interactions did you have in the local area around your partner's house?
/ Did your stay result in bonding with neighbors/members of host's social circle?

Location

19. How does the location of the house affect your experience/practices?

Follow-up: Do you use local services or do you mostly go downtown/ to tourist attractions?

Follow-up: Do you feel that you travel to more unique places?

Conscious guest

20. In how far does the stay in somebody's home give you the feeling of being part of the destination?

Follow-up: In how far do you still act/feel like a guest in the house/destination?

21. You house swapped to more or less "traditional tourist destinations". Would you consider swapping to a more "exotic" destination? What challenges could arise?

Community of Conscious hosts

22. What characterizes the (global) HS community?

Follow-up: Were you ever surprised by how well you connect with a "stranger" through HS and by how much you have in common?

When you now think about your local community...

23. How do you present it to your (potential) exchange partners?

Follow-up: In how far do you include your local community in recommendations (in comparison to the main tourist attractions)?

24. In how far does HS affect the local community (and vice versa)?

Conscious Travel

25. For whom is HS?

...and I would like to end with a quote. Two travel experts said: "Travel holds tremendous potential. For the traveler, it offers a path to experience, education and personal transformation."⁵⁵

26. In how far do you connect this to HS?

⁵⁵ Dan & Audrey: <http://uncorneredmarket.com/good-global-traveler/>, Retrieved Mar 20, 2014.

8.2 Analysis of member stories

Similar to the interviews, member stories found on homeexchange.com⁵⁶ and in the home exchange book by Alford and Alford (2013) were analysed thematically. The extracted themes and ideas are summarized in the table below.

Themes	Ideas expressed	Quotes
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole new experiences travelling • Best time ever • Best way to travel and see the world • Never a bad experience • Expectations exceeded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There’s no better way to see the world.” • “Once we discovered home exchange we have not wanted to go back to traditional vacations.” • “We will exchange our home for the rest of our lives.”
Intangible benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded option for travel • Places which wouldn’t have been destination if they hadn’t been proposed • Exciting vacation choice, adventure (receive e-mail with offer and say “Okay!”) • Enjoying planning the vacation → like a hobby • Thrill of anticipation; factor of uncertainty • Learning experiences for children: “our kids learned about adapting to any situation, and they have met interesting people and witnessed different lifestyles.” (Dominic & Julie) 	
Economical benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amazing places for free (better accommodation & bigger and better cars) • Economical (e.g. cooking at home, less luggage) • No accommodation costs, no rental car expense, paying fewer restaurant meals, no coins for Laundromat • → spend money on other things; travel even more • Safe money, BUT... → money saved is a bonus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Better vacations for a fraction of the cost.” • “Saving money is great but the experience itself is a lot more rewarding.”
Other benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pack lighter • House cleaner than it has ever been • Someone to take care of house (plants, mail, garden, pool, pets, etc.) • Option to travel with family (& easily accommodate everyone) • Being independent while visiting family 	
Authentic experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travelling = experience of different lifestyles • Life like a local • → sense of the city from a local’s point of view • Adopting the host’s lifestyle • Stay in ‘real’ neighborhoods, living with the ‘natives’ • Blend in with locals; be part of city/ village • Meet ‘everyday’ people (not just tourists) • Small adventures, events and little moments that will be remembered • All exchanges different • Places we would have never visited if we would have travelled ‘the normal way’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We really enjoy ‘living as a local’ in a different country: shopping and cooking as locals do, hanging out in their favorite bars and cafes.” • “...discovering different cultures and people, far away from tourist centers.” • “Never feel like a tourist.”
Advantages of house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation that has a home feeling to it (“home away from home”) • Comforts of home (space, living room, laundry, toys for kids etc.) • → Makes family travelling easier • Home = bigger than hotel • Remarkable houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Feeling at home for a while, anywhere in the world.”

⁵⁶ <https://www.homeexchange.com/en/member-stories/>, Retrieved May 15, 2014.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected 'pleasures' (e.g. home theatre; fresh eggs from chicken; having a chef, cleaner & gardener) 	
Relationships / Encounters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long communication before exchange • Arrange ways to meet partners • Receive valuable information / help from exchange partners → unique experience • Local travel tips & recommendations → help discover more about the place • Stay in touch, make friends • Contact with relative/friends of exchange partners (e.g. time with exchange partner's kids) • Meet wonderful people 	
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community based on trust & good will • Attempt to reciprocate • ...passing on "credit" to family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "...you are going to find like-minded people on there who are willing to give up their houses to travel."
Values / gestures that make it worth it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosts gone out of their way to make stay pleasant • Taking excellent care of the house, like it was your own • Respect for the home • Small welcome or thank you presents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We have also been continuously overwhelmed by the effort people put in to make you feel welcome." • "A big worry for me before doing our first exchange was that we might damage their house."
Secrets to successful exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough conversations to cover all aspects of the swap • → Be clear on arrangements & expectations (dates, key exchange, cleanliness standards, car arrangements, insurance details, etc.) • Make sure partners have similar values around home (e.g. size, furnishing, cleanliness) → avoid disappointment • Be proactive about arranging swap BUT it loses value if it becomes too formal • Leave house clean & organized • Documenting home, Most precise instructions • Document local attractions • Keeping in touch during exchange • Introduction to the closest neighbours, Neighbours coming over 	
Minor issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of planning to do! • Dishonest during communication process (e.g. holding back; 'overselling' the house) • Minor car troubles • Some broken things (accidents happen, especially with kids) • Somebody has to postpone or come home earlier • Exchange partners not treating house with care & due respect, but... • → The good far outweighs anything negative 	

Table 1: Table of the thematic analysis of member stories of house swappers

8.3 Quote tables

8.3.1 Table1: Thematic analysis for first sub-question “House swappers – The ‘new tourists’?”

Themes / Interpretation of empirical & secondary data	Quotes	Theory
1. Inhomogeneous group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Diverse accommodation preferences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent hotels - Pensions & B&B (meet other travellers) - Rarely hotels; sometimes with friends - Prefer anonymity of a hotel over shared experience of B&B - Camping with kids - Camper van b) Diverse preference for type of experience (culture, music, scenery, sightseeing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature - Classical music / opera 	<p>LILLY: It's usually hotels. But not the big well-known brands. (Lilly, 1.24) JIM: We like to find something that's interesting, something a little bit different. (Jim, 1.26)</p> <p>DEAN: One of the things that we like about pensions and B&Bs is that we often meet other travellers and get the chance to talk to them and hear their experiences. When we go to house exchanges, we don't meet the travellers, but we meet local people. (Dean, 1.13)</p> <p>DEAN: ...a mix of house exchanges and often pensions and B&B. We rarely stay in hotels. We sometimes stay with friends as well. (Dean, 1.12)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...neither one of us is very keen on B&B... having the people there when you're there doesn't appeal to me. I'd rather be in a... I like the anonymity of a hotel in that case. House swap to me has an anonymity of you being on your own. (Susan, 1.245)</p> <p>SUSAN: With our kids we've always done lots of camping. (Susan, 1.10)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...in Northern France we were not staying in big cities, we took our kids camping [...] we went down to France and we camped along the Normandy [...]. So yeah, always camping. Used to be camping. (Susan, 1.20)</p> <p>CHRIS: ...we have a camper van now and have done 1 or 2 trips in that as well. Fairly [long?] trips. One across east to Ottawa and back. And we did the 4 corners tour. (Chris, 1.27)</p> <p>JIM: ...it's a wide variety. We like nature [...]. So like either scenic, or [...] fauna and flora. So that's interesting to us. We are also very keen classical music / opera goers, so we look for that sort of experience. (Jim, 1.28)</p>	<p>As found by Grit (2008), Arente & Kiiski (2005) and Forno & Garibaldi (2013)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural Experience - Combination of scenery & lifestyle, personality, culture of place - Sightseeing, skiing, specific events - NOT sitting on the beach c) diverse destination choices (metropolises vs. less urban places) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cities (Europe) - Trekking & hiking - Balance of landscape & urban elements - Mix of metropolises & smaller places - Big cities 	<p>LILLY: ...alternative cultural experience like going to Turkey or Europe... (Lilly, 1.31)</p> <p>CHRIS: The combination of what a place has to offer from a scenic point of view, but also what is the lifestyle [...], the personality, the culture. We like to get very close to... (Chris, 1.37)</p> <p>SUSAN: Sightseeing. And with the kids... it was kids-oriented sightseeing. And skiing... we did once a huge trip to France. And Australia... we went to the Olympics. That's why we went to Australia. (Susan, 1.13)</p> <p>JIM: The one thing we're not interested in is just sitting on the beach. (Jim, 1.32)</p> <p>LEA: We do cities. We like city travelling. And Dean is a mountaineer. So he likes to do trekking and hiking. But when we travel together we tend to do more city travelling. And Europe... (Lea, 1.22)</p> <p>DEAN: ...we enjoy the landscapes, too. We enjoy scenic countryside as well. So we try to balance out some of both. [...] I think we have a balance between those things, of enjoying the landscape – meaning what you experience by being outside of the city – and enjoying the urban elements of the cities themselves. (Dean, 1.24)</p> <p>DEAN: When we were in Turkey last year, we've been in Turkey for 8 weeks, but we were only in Istanbul for one. So the other 7 in more smaller places. And sometimes, [that is?] sometimes in quite small places. (Dean, 1.24)</p> <p>SUSAN: Usually in cities. Big cities. (Susan, 1.20)</p>	
2. Experienced	JIM: Well-travelled. We travelled a lot. (Jim, 1.6)	'New tourist' = experienced (e.g. Poon, 1993)
3. Extensive research and preparation process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Research before the trip (on destination) → importance is not to just simply leave, but the <i>intrinsic quality</i> of holiday plays important role b) Preparations efforts of HS 	<p>JIM: We normally plan well in advance. Usually a year in advance. [...] Because, you know, the flights... you wanna get that in order. [...] So, normally we've decided a year in advance we want to go to Australia, [...] and then you start to look. And, as I say, with Vancouver it's very easy. (Jim, 1.324)</p> <p>LILLY: Most people aren't ready to commit so far ahead. (Lilly, 1.325)</p> <p>LILLY: We have to do research before in terms of where to go. (Lilly, 1.108)</p> <p>JIM: Yeah, I usually use books. For a vacation, I'll get, you know, the eyewitnesses... are my favorite kind. (Jim, 1.110)</p> <p>DEAN: We're varying the guide books according to countries because the coverage is very different from country to country. (Dean, 1.152)</p> <p>LEA: They all know how much work it is. Because they hear me talk about how much work it is to organize it (Lea, 1.227)</p>	<p>Krippendorf (1986b): New understanding of travel away from the wish to escape from everyday life fuelled by ego-centric motives – leading to a “better tourist who feels, thinks, takes part and shares responsibility” (Krippendorf, 1986b, p.135)</p> <p>Shift in importance to the intrinsic qualities of holidays (Bowen & Clarke, 2009)</p>

<p>c) Prepare the house</p> <p>d) Despite research & preparation efforts: it's a gamble</p>	<p>LILLY: Oh my goodness, you cannot believe the number of faxes that we were going through! (Lilly, 1.50)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...the house is as clean as when we are here or when we are having company or when my family comes. (Susan, 1.280)</p> <p>JIM: clean up, get the manual... update the manual, lock away the valuables. (Jim, 1.256)</p> <p>JIM: But it's a gamble... (Jim, 1.40)</p>	
<p>4. Special interests – The 'alternative traveller'</p> <p>a) HS = Lifestyle; Lifestyle → HS</p> <p>b) 'Alternative travellers'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less usual places - Informal, casual travelling - No pretentious places - Casual → fascinating encounters & interesting experiences <p>c) <-> 'Achievement' of getting an exceptional house</p> <p>d) HOWEVER, eventually: priority of place over practicalities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spectacular place - Places otherwise not considered 	<p>CHRIS: ...it's a lifestyle. I think our appreciation for informal travelling takes us kind of into house swapping. In a way that, you know, we like to be local and not be visiting in some high-end, clinical hotel, that really has no sense of being part of a [distinct country?] (Chris, 1.242)</p> <p>LILLY: We like going to less usual places. We are not the sort of people who like to go and lie on the beach in Mexico or Hawaii. (Lilly, 1.7)</p> <p>JIM: We go to unusual, or less usual sort of places. (Jim, 1.18)</p> <p>JIM: ...we've been to Macchu Pichu, Galapagos (Jim, 1.20)</p> <p>LILLY: Haida Gwaii (Lilly, 1.21)</p> <p>CHRIS: I guess "informal" is the best description. We don't go – or haven't in the past gone – on organized tours. We tend to [...] stay casual. And as cheap as possible. (Chris, 1.4)</p> <p>CHRIS: Even though we've been travelling for specific events – i.e. the Olympics or races – we've done our sightseeing in the form of getting around by train, bus and... you know, we don't generally get into organized tours or cruises. (Chris, 1.17)</p> <p>CHRIS: ...for us, our basics are casual. And we don't go to pretentious places. And [...] our experiences that we had from our casual modus, you know, we've met up with some fascinating people. And we've had some very interesting and always good experiences. (Chris, 1.33)</p> <p>JIM: ...the one in Austria was an amazing house. It was just spectacular. With a fantastic view. We weren't expecting that. (Jim, 1.149)</p> <p>DEAN: We had a stay in Florence that was outstanding, because we ended up staying in the upper floor of a defensive stone tower, that was built in 1146 and we had a view down into Florence and right down the Arno river watching the sun set with the silhouette under the Ponte Vecchio. And it was just such a spectacular place. It was really incredible. We had some funny sort of things that happened along with it because of this old building and all the people that lived in the various extensions of this building. But it was a very wonderful place. So that was a real highlight. (Dean, 1.206)</p> <p>JIM: ...Italy [...] was interesting, because I really wanted to go to Venice and we couldn't get one in Venice. But we found one in Padua, which is really close. So that was actually nice (Jim, 1.161)</p>	<p>For the new tourist, vacation serves as an extension of life, a way to affirm individuality (Poon, 1993).</p> <p>'New tourist' seeks "quality experiences that educate, are different, are environmentally benign and that satisfy special interests" (Sharpley, 2002, p.304)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connection with people - Meet interesting people - Unique experience <p>e) Conscious travel fulfills need of more special experiences</p>	<p>JIM: ...the one in Barcelona was nice, because [...] the people [...] had this party for us, and we met all their friends. And then one of their friends would take us around and that was great. (Jim, 1.149)</p> <p>JIM: the most recent one was a really interesting house. I mean she is an interesting woman. She is a novelist. And we saw her recently. She came here, and we got together with her. (Jim, 1.157)</p> <p>LILLY: And through her, we heard about that event with the huge paella. [...] we would have probably never known about this. (Lilly, 1.159)</p> <p>JIM: A lot of what we saw, a lot of what we did we wouldn't have found out without her. (Jim, 1.160)</p> <p>JIM: The house in Kelowna had fantastic cherries. It was next to a cherry orchard. And every morning we'd go and steal some. (Jim, 1.320)</p> <p>AUDREY: ...as more people are travelling, a lot of consumers want a different experience. They want something different from their neighbor, they want this connection or they want something special and so with conscious travel [...] there is an opportunity to show that it is a [...] different type of travel that brings back the [...] focus on [...] coming back with an experience that you gonna take with you and maybe tell your grandkids (Audrey, 1.114)</p>	
<p>5. Adaptable: flexible expectations</p> <p>a) Adaptable / realistic expectations</p> <p>b) Tolerant about inconveniences</p>	<p>JIM: I think you have to be [...] flexible [...]... I think it would be a mistake to compare what you get with what... necessarily with what you have. I mean, we've been to places they were pretty modest. You know, we did one in Kelowna; it was a very simple, pretty basic house. One in Italy was very small. But you're on holiday, so... We know people who've been very disappointed, because, you know, I don't know, the house was old or [?]. That's more of a philosophical thing. (Jim, 1.65)</p> <p>LILLY: ...sometimes we haven't had that community feel, people inviting us around. But that doesn't matter. I didn't even put any expectations. We just, you know, want the environment, the accommodation and anything else is a bonus. (Lilly, 1.72)</p> <p>CHRIS: And it didn't spoil, it certainly didn't spoil. We were a bit cozier in the apartment than we had expected, but... (Chris, 1.103)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...every day we had to get in the car and drive half an hour and then go home at the end of the day. But honestly, in reality if we had been on the bus staying in a hotel it would have taken that long for sure. (Susan, 1.156)</p> <p>SUSAN: The Paris place was not very clean. Either place has been not very clean. But, you know, it's a little bit a cultural thing, too, sometimes. (Susan, 1.262)</p> <p>SUSAN: I mean, we camp, so a little bit of more house dust than we would have is not going to kill me for a week or two. (Susan, 1.268)</p>	<p>'New tourists' = Hybrid travellers (Poon, 1993)</p>
<p>6. Blurring distinctions between host & guest</p> <p>a) Not just tourists while travelling, but as well at home</p>	<p>DEAN: And we took them to quite a few places around Vancouver. (Dean, 1.585)</p> <p>LEA: We were playing tourists for 3 days. And she said "No, you don't have to!" but it was fine. I mean, if we were working, obviously no. (Lea, 1.586)</p>	<p>'New tourists' = Hybrid travellers (Poon, 1993)</p>

→ perfect target group for conscious travel	ANNA: I think any group of people that are engaged in the active travelling and hosting – so being guests and hosts at various times – is a wonderful community to infect with a better understanding of just the kind of travel we’re going to have to develop going forward. (Anna, 1.406)	
7. Pursuing authenticity a) Appreciate contribution of HS towards a ‘less touristy’ experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HS: Different perspective - HS: Less touristy b) Value recommendations that enable learning process & integration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations & interaction → learn way of living - Exchange partners indicate best guidebook - Learn how to shop c) Experience lifestyle, personality & culture of place d) HS: option to be local	LILLY: You see life from a different perspective. (Lilly, 1.35) JIM: You get less of a tourist experience. (Jim, 1.36) JIM: You get a much better experience than just being a tourist in a hotel. But it’s a gamble... (Jim, 1.40) DEAN: When you shop in a local market, or people tell you which shops to go to, then you’re learning how they shop, and who they interact with. (Dean, 1.33) DEAN: We try to figure out which [guidebook] one seems to be on target for the country. And sometimes it’s the local exchangers that know those things and can help to do that. (Dean, 1.155) LEA: And as well how you purchase things. Our very first time in a grocery store I remember, we filled our baskets and went to the check-out and the woman was very upset because we didn’t bag it and put on the stickers and weigh it ourselves, because we don’t do that here. [...] And we had no idea [...] And luckily the cashier was very friendly and sort of went “Okay!”. And she got someone to take us back and showed us what to do. But she did it, you know, showed us and told us. And that was a little embarrassing because we absolutely had no concept of “Oh, we have to do this ourselves?”. So that was interesting. So we learned. (Lea, 1.37) CHRIS: The combination of what a place has to offer from a scenic point of view, but also what is the lifestyle [...], the personality, the culture. We like to get very close to... (Chris, 1.37) SUSAN: We want to stay longer than just driving through if we can. (Susan, 1.39) CHRIS: ...we like to be local and not be visiting in some high-end, clinical hotel, that really has no sense of being part of a [distinct country?] (Chris, 1.242) ANNA: Why go and stay in a hotel where [...] what we get [...] isn’t an authentic encounter with a person wanting to share their home, their lives with you. So it’s the same search for a richer, more personal, more authentic type of experience. (Anna, 1.166)	Pursuit of non-conformist, meaningful experiences reflects the great value the new tourists assign to authenticity (Fiorello & Bo, 2012)
8. Honest interest in destination a) Learn about way of living	DEAN: We are very much interested in the cultural side of it as well. We don’t want to just see the Roman ruins, but we want to see the cultural elements of it as well. And learn how people live there	Sympathy towards local population: sensitive to values and cultural identities of the places (Fiorello and Bo, 2012)

<p>b) Be attentive to differences → Observing</p> <p>c) Everyday interactions by using public transport</p> <p>d) Take recommendations to learn more & integrate themselves better: → Different experience influenced by local people's taste & ideas</p> <p>e) Noble values of HSers - not just to save money</p> <p>f) ...but money incentive number one → (Western) traveller doesn't need sharing economy in developing countries</p>	<p>and what they do that's different from here. You know, what's different about their way of living even if it's just eating. How do they do it differently than we do? (Dean, 1.27)</p> <p>LEA: ...I love being away in European cities where they have squares and all these things that we don't have, and public transit, pedestrian zones and that's really important to live like that and that's why I always wanna go away. (Lea, 1.361)</p> <p>DEAN: We like sitting in squares, drinking coffee and just watching what goes on. (Dean, 1.86)</p> <p>DEAN: You also see people differently when you're on busses. Riding busses you are riding with local people and meet people. You see how they deal with things. Like if you're hanging around a bus depot somewhere in Eastern Turkey you can see how people interact with each other and how life is like there. [...] It's just different from being in an airport. (Dean, 1.103)</p> <p>AUDREY: ...for example taking public transport – which also was good for our budget – but at the same time [...] you're travelling with real people on their way to work, you're going with people travelling across the country to visit their family. And so you have [...] just normal everyday interactions. (Audrey, 1.48)</p> <p>DEAN: Usually, the people you're exchanging with, you will meet them or at least have conversations with them in advance of your arranged exchange dates. And you get to know them, and they teach you things about their city, their culture, their history, their language. All those things are often very helpful for your experience in a place when you get there. You experience it somewhat more like local people do by shopping and cooking for yourself and going to the places they recommend to shop and to buy the things you need. And they tell you things that you might not figure out otherwise from a guidebook. So it makes it a somewhat different experience that way influenced by local people's taste and ideas about the place other than the perception of the guidebook writers. (Dean, 1.15)</p> <p>DEAN: So by and large that people that do this are relatively open-minded, and so they are interested in other cultures, what's going on in other countries, other peoples' way of living... they are all interested in these kinds of things. It's not just people doing it to save money. (Dean, 1.346)</p> <p>DAN: I think it plays itself out differently [...] throughout Europe, than it does in, say, Southeast Asia. [...] [In Southeast Asia,] I could probably stay rather inexpensively at a locally run guesthouse [...]. The money is going to stay locally, there's going to be a couple of great places to eat nearby, the whole thing is totally self-contained. So, I don't really need the aspect, any of the aspects of the sharing economy from that standpoint. Whereas, I think there is more of an economic need or interest that spurs the sharing economy in developed countries (Dan, 1.273)</p>	
<p>9. Buying local, travelling environmentally friendly?</p> <p>a) Spending decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based on recommendations & experience (sense for what is right) - Buying local when possible 	<p>DEAN: ...partially the advice that people give you, and partially just exploring around the town, or the neighborhood and figuring out what is like the right place to shop. And it varies an awful lot from city to city. [...] we wouldn't spend it at McDonald's, Starbucks, Tim Hortons, [...] if there's a choice of finding something from a local shop, we buy it from a local shop. (Dean, 1.139)</p>	<p>The 'new tourist' is concerned about the tourism impact and prefers environmentally appropriate tourism (Fiorello & Bo, 2012).</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cheap & local - Be aware of effects tourist dollars have on destination <p>b) Environmentally appropriate travels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fewer, longer trips - Travel between destinations: bus & train, rarely car; try to avoid plane - ...get mileage out of airfare 	<p>SUSAN: Whatever is cheaper. In Europe we know all the cheap stores, because we have lived in Denmark, so we know Netto, and Asda in England... and locally! I mean, obviously, locally. (Susan, 1.105)</p> <p>DEAN: ...there's 2 sides [...]. You can benefit the local economy by bringing some money into it, or you can cause problems if you tend to inflate prices of things by paying more for things than local people would. So it's important for instance if you're in market situations to work out what is the normal price for something and not paying more than that. Because if tourists come in, and because of our dollars and relative wealth are willing to pay whatever price the guys asks, then the overall price in that market is going to rise to reflect the tourists activity. And then this makes it somewhat unreachable and more expensive for local people. So it can be a disbenefit [...] So I tend to [...] try to work out what the local price is ought to be first and try to not to pay more than that. (Dean, 1.702)</p> <p>DEAN: We tend to take fewer trips than a lot of people, but take longer trips when we do. [...] The travel between destinations we tend to use buses and trains and occasionally rent cars. We don't very often fly between destinations. (Dean, 1.11)</p> <p>DEAN: ...if we're outside of the cities, then sometimes we're on busses and sometimes we rent a car. (Dean, 1.322)</p> <p>DEAN: It's been about an average of every 15 months we'd go somewhere and we'd try to stay for 2 or 3 months. So we do fewer trips, but stay longer. And so we get more mileage out of the airfare... I mean if you cause all that pollution by flying to another continent, I think it makes more sense to stay there longer. And when we're there, we try to avoid using more flights internally. There's the odd time when you can't really do anything else because things are just too far apart. But if we can we tend to take busses, and trains, and occasionally a car. (Dean, 1.100)</p>	
<p>10. Human dimension</p> <p>a) Facilitating characteristic of HSers: trusting</p> <p>b) HSers enjoy meeting other people & interact</p> <p>c) HSers look for encounters</p> <p>d) HS: building relationships</p>	<p>JIM: Many people are fairly trusting. (Jim, 1.203)</p> <p>DEAN: I think it is people who enjoy meeting other people and enjoy interacting with other people, they are the ones that enjoy these things more. (Dean, 1.230)</p> <p>LEA: ...and everybody knows from our stories. I mean, we're always talking about the people we meet. (Lean, 1.229)</p> <p>DEAN: One of the things that we like about pensions and B&Bs is that we often meet other travellers and get the chance to talk to them and hear their experiences. When we go to house exchanges, we don't meet the travellers, but we meet local people. (Dean, 1.13)</p> <p>CHRIS: You know, 2 nights here, 2 nights there [...], that's all very well, but it doesn't really give you what you're given if you're [...] mixing with the local populations. You get a much better appreciation of the people. And that's important. Very important! (Chris, 1.40)</p> <p>CHRIS: ...you build relationships. [...] even though most of the HS we've done have been simultaneous, you know, we've been away and they've come here. So we haven't necessarily met the</p>	<p>The 'new tourist' searches for friendly social encounters and personal and social growth (Fiorello & Bo, 2012)</p>

<p>e) However: Driving force = stay longer, not relationships</p> <p>f) Citizen diplomacy</p> <p>g) Aiming at picking up local language</p>	<p>families at the time. (Chris, 1. 45)</p> <p>SUSAN: Well, I wouldn't say that that was a main trigger – making relationships with friends or people – it's the ability to be in a city for a longer period of time, conveniently, so you can get to know where you are, at a cheaper rate than if you were staying in a hotel. Because you might be then tempted to stay only 2 or 3 days [...]. That would be the driving force, to be able to spend more time in the destination. Not the relationships with people. (Susan, 1.51)</p> <p>DAN: The sharing economy [...] encourages people to stay longer. [...] It might encourage them actually to spend more time in a place, because they have more flexibility with their budget. So, and I think more time that people spend in a place, the more they hopefully understand, which [...] contributes to this idea of citizen diplomacy (Dan, 1.243)</p> <p>DEAN: We try to figure out which one seems to be on target for the country. [...] Some are also better at giving you coaching on language – because you need to figure out some language. I usually find if I'm in some place, you know, a couple of months I pick up a few hundred words from the local language. (Dean, 1.155)</p>	
<p>11. Be flexible & adventurous!</p> <p>a) Flexibility with regard to destination choice & schedule</p> <p>→ difficulties if requirements are too specific</p>	<p>LILLY: But I remember in Austria... we hadn't contemplated going to Austria. But that home was so gorgeous... (Lilly, 1.59)</p> <p>JIM: And [...] that's why I say you've got to be flexible, because we'd decided we want to go to Europe. But [...] Austria, [...] we hadn't even thought about it. And then we got the email and it was "Oh yeah, okay! That looks good!" (Jim, 1.60)</p> <p>JIM: It's not a big effort, but as I said at the beginning: you do need to be flexible. Because some people will say "yeah, you know, your house and the vacation do look really good", but then maybe their timing doesn't work. (Jim, 1.339)</p> <p>JIM: But it's a gamble, [...] you can't decide that you're going to Vienna from August 23rd to September... I mean you have to be flexible. (Jim, 1.42)</p> <p>DEAN: What you need to do with that though, is also to be very flexible, because some people can only go in the season and some people have more flexibility. So we try to be very flexible in how we handle it and don't stick to just simultaneous exchanges. (Dean, 1.180)</p> <p>LEA: I even want to go to Hawaii, but I keep thinking "Who wants to come to Vancouver in November?" That's when I want to go to Hawaii. So it's got to be a non-simultaneous swap. (Lea, 1.658)</p> <p>LEA: ...that doesn't happen very often that it is a simultaneous swap. (Lea, 1.318)</p> <p>DEAN: We couldn't come that year, because our daughter was getting married. (Dean, 1.391)</p> <p>LEA: So we said "If you could be flexible when we come to your place, sure, you can come to our place!" And she said "Sure!" (Lea, 1.392)</p> <p>LILLY: I guess New York, just difficulties finding an exchange. (Lilly, 1.417)</p> <p>JIM: ...and that is a good example, because we wanted a very specific location at a very specific time.</p>	<p>The new tourist is more flexible (e.g. Poon, 1993).</p>

<p>b) Leaving home to exchange partners</p> <p>c) Flexibility in terms of value - ...don't be finicky about receiving equal "value"</p> <p>d) Open & adventurous</p>	<p>And it's difficult to do that. (Jim, 1.421)</p> <p>LEA: ...they have a 7-months old kid. So it's interesting, because they said "Well, we won't be able to come for a couple of years. Is that okay?" So that's what the situation is going to be. So we have to talk to them and say "Sure, we are flexible. Just give us, you know, a few months' notice if you wanna come!" (Lea, 1.618)</p> <p>DEAN: We do any kind of exchanges somebody can make work. And we don't make it exactly the equal number of days: if they get a few more days we don't worry about that. Just make it work somehow. (Dean, 1.182)</p> <p>DEAN: ...it doesn't necessarily have to be equal. Very often we exchange for much smaller places at the other end, but that's what people have. So that's what you have to do. (Dean, 1.278)</p> <p>DEAN: ...we don't try to make it exactly equal, it's just, you know, you have to find some way to make it work whatever way you can. Because if you try to make everything exactly equal, it makes it so much harder to work out a deal. (Dean, 1.186)</p> <p>JIM: I think you need to be adventurous, flexible, open to new experiences, not worried... I mean a lot of people – or especially North Americans – it's why they would choose a hotel chain or McDonald's because it's pretty predictable. Well, if that's what your frame of reference is, then I don't think that house swapping is for you. [...] you need to be open to just whatever it is. (Jim, 1.567)</p>	
<p>12. Look for independence / appreciate independence of HS</p> <p>a) 'Hostless' hospitality - No contact during swap → 'anonymity'</p> <p>b) Space</p> <p>c) Carrying on routines: breakfast!</p>	<p>DEAN: ...usually once we've settled in, we usually don't get back in touch with them. (Dean, 1.132)</p> <p>SUSAN: House swap to me has an anonymity of you being on your own. (Susan, 1.246)</p> <p>LILLY: ...you've got space (Lilly, 1.139)</p> <p>JIM: It's really nice to have a house rather than a hotel, because you can spread out, you can have breakfast. you have more flexibility (Jim, 1.74)</p> <p>LILLY: ...that's really nice not having to [?] for breakfast. Not having to go out for breakfast. (Lilly, 1.313)</p> <p>DEAN: That's an issue in some countries where they don't really do breakfast. [...] So then you try to figure out how to do that. And there's an advantage of doing a home exchange where you can make your own. You can go out and shop and make your own even if it's not part of the culture. (Dean, 1.50)</p> <p>LEA: We do like getting up in the morning, and having our coffee and then we kind of prepare our day for the rest of the day. Yeah, it's our routine, it's our ritual and house exchanges make it easier to do that. I mean, you can sit on the deck of someone's house and have your routine! ...for the morning! And it starts your day off. For us anyway it is an important part. (Lea, 1.74)</p>	<p>The new tourist is more independent (e.g. Poon, 1993).</p>

<p>d) Family visits: flexible & independent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ...without living off them - Possibility to invite family - ...and entertain them - Family meeting upon neutral territory <p>e) Advantage of having a car</p> <p>f) Solution if plans change</p>	<p>LEA: ...we do find, especially for breakfast, we do want our breakfast in the morning. And we actually brought coffee with us, and cereal for our first couple of mornings. So that, you know, when you get off the plane the next day you've got your coffee and your cereal, and then we can go shopping. (Lea, 1.56)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...at least we had some place to go home, and some time to take breakfast together just the 2 of us. And then we'd go and see them when we wanted to. So that was good. (Susan, 1.192)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...that was my desire to find a place in Europe and also in Ottawa – part of our family is in Ottawa – where we could go for longer periods of time and not be living in other people's – our family's – pocket. Because that gets very stressful. (Susan, 1.144)</p> <p>CHRIS: ...we would be joined by my son who lives in England and his wife and it was a whole family experience. (Chris, 1.64)</p> <p>SUSAN: We like to be in the city where our family is, like we have here and have them come over. [...] And us being able to entertain them. And taking people out eating is of course expensive. So this way it could be better. (Susan, 1.189)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...one of the things that I [...] like [...] is get[ting] a house where we can have the family come and visit us [...]. So we were kind of upon neutral territory [...] I'm not in their place, and they are not in my place where we're meeting. And we're having a holiday together. (Susan, 1.73)</p> <p>JIM: And you have a car. [...] Because we've typically swapped cars as well. (Jim, 1.140)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...usually the car comes with it. Depending on where you are (Susan, 1.158)</p> <p>LEA: ...the Viennese guys, we shared the house for 2 or 3 days [...] and it ended up being 3 nights, because I was in a car accident, so I said "Oh, I have to stay here a bit longer guys, sorry!" So that was nice. (Lea, 1.573)</p>	
<p>13. Self-made travel agents</p> <p>a) Research before trip (s. above)</p> <p>b) Mutual recommendations allow for P2P travel planning</p> <p>c) House as a base (not necessarily the focus of the holiday)</p>	<p>JIM: We usually ask the people we're exchanging with for their recommendations. And people are very good. Most people do, like we do, a very detailed user manual. So most people will have that and we'll get recommendations (Jim, 1.85) (2)</p> <p>DEAN: ...local people give you advise on things. You know, if you wanna know which bus company to take, ask the person you're swapping with and they'll tell you which to use. (Dean, 1.117) (2)</p> <p>LILLY: We use it as a base. So, we'll be there for a few days, then we'll take off, come back to do our washing or change directions (Lilly, 1.77)</p> <p>JIM: We did that in Costa Rica. We stayed in San Jose. And San Jose is not a great place. But it was very central. So we, you know, we'd [?] a few days, come back. So all our stuff was sort of there. So it was really convenient. (Jim, 1.79)</p>	<p>The new tourists embrace Do-It-Yourself & Free Independent Travel (Arente & Kiiski, 2005) and side-step as "self-made travel agents" the travel industry through consumer-to-consumer holiday planning (Bowen & Clarke, 2009).</p>

<p>14. Feeling of belonging to (online) community</p> <p>a) Online</p> <p>b) State of mind → common values</p> <p>c) Bonding, ‘brotherhood’ (certain values in common)</p> <p>d) Natural community through similar (not shared) experience</p> <p>e) ...transferring values to offline world</p> <p>f) “Natural selection” in community</p>	<p>SUSAN: ...only on the internet. (Susan, 1.364)</p> <p>DEAN: Not a community so much as sort of a state of mind, [...] and a perspective on it being acceptable amongst people. And [...] the open-mindedness of people that tend to do it. [...] I don’t sense any sort of strong interlinking of people in a community. But I sense that there is some common values amongst people. (Dean, 1.676)</p> <p>LILLY: Like a bonding? The brotherhood. (Lilly, 1.571)</p> <p>JIM: The secret handshake.</p> <p>LILLY: I don’t know. I think there is a connection.</p> <p>JIM: Yeah, a little bit. I don’t know if you can generalize it. (Jim, 1.574)</p> <p>LEA: And we couldn’t have had that kind of discussion with someone if it hadn’t been through the house exchange. Because there was already a connection, and we just went instantly into like “Hi, we kind of know you already!” (Lea, 1.742)</p> <p>ANNA: ...if you’ve swapped your house successfully, and I’ve swapped my house successfully we’ve got a lot in common. [...] You’ve been to another house and you’ve done it. So, when I’m looking for another party to swap houses with, that would be the place I look first. So there would be a natural community of HSers. (Anna, 1.384)</p> <p>LEA: There is always a connection! It’s amazing! [...] almost everybody. You just sit with them and it’s immediate and you just have a real conversation. (Lea, 1.754)</p> <p>DEAN: I think people are self-selecting that way. Because people that aren’t open-minded and curious about other peoples’ way of living don’t want to do it. I think they self-select themselves out of this process. (Dean, 1.352)</p>	<p>The new tourists are ‘connected travellers’, who integrate mobile devices, internet and social media into their tourism practices (Molz, 2012)</p> <p>New tourists are enlaced by hybrid sociality – a “new form of sociability that revolves less around physically proximate communal relationships and more around geographically-dispersed, mediated and mobile social networks” (Molz, 2012, p.7).</p> <p>‘postmodern tribe’ (Arente & Kiiski); hybrid sociality (Molz)</p> <p>→ connection to human system!</p>
<p>15. Conclusion</p> <p>a) Great experiences</p> <p>b) Better option to travel</p>	<p>JIM: But we’ve had great experiences! We never had a bad experience anyway (Jim, 1.43)</p> <p>JIM: I think for the right people it’s a better option [...]... for all the reasons [...]... whether it’s the potential connections, whether it’s the economics which are very real – especially for a family. I think it’s a better option, or more flexible option, or more interesting option to travel... (Jim, 1.580)</p>	

8.3.2 Table2: Thematic analysis for second sub-question “House swapping framing alternative consumption”

Analysis of empirical & secondary data	Quotes	Theory
Socio-psychological		
1. Emancipation / Construction of self-identity		Consumption under a socio-psychological point of view is furthermore seen to play an important role in constructing and sustaining self-identity, adding to a process of <i>individualization</i> (Röpke, 1999).
a) Individualized travel consumption	DEAN: There are no two that are the same. (Dean, 1.600)	
b) Reflect on own lifestyle	LEA: I find it interesting. You just kind of go like “Okay, what are these people like?” (Lea, 1.258) DEAN: And they do things differently. LEA: Yeah, and you’re kind of a bit nosy in a way. You look at their books and you think “Okay, this is what they read.” And we had a comment, one of our guests said “You have interesting books on your bookshelves!” So people do [...] learn about you through what you’ve got in your home. And then you can talk to them about it. For example, we met this couple afterwards for breakfast, and they found it fascinating, the books we had. (Lea, 1.260)	...“self-identity is a useful concept for understanding [...] tourism consumption” (Desforges, 2000, p.942), since travelling constitutes an important part of people’s lives and “huge personal investments [are] placed in travel and related practices” (ibid., 2000, p.943).
c) Potential for personal transformation	LILLY: And I think it holds the potential for personal transformation (Lilly, 1.593) JIM: ... but you need to be open to it. (Jim, 1.594)	
2. Social context		The consumption of tourist services is dependent on the social context (Urry, 1990). Travels serve as markers for discrimination & social classifier by defining the ‘social status’ of the traveller (ibid., 1990). “...declining importance of tourism consumption as status symbol for tourists and the corresponding shift in importance to the intrinsic qualities of holidays” (Bowen & Clarke, 2009, p.258)
a) Very personal decision	ANNA: ...when they rent out their entire house, I think that takes quite a lot of trust. To have a complete stranger come into your home and just be comfortable. (Anna, 1.274) JIM: They don’t believe it. (Jim, 1.208)	
b) Reactions from others	SUSAN: ...they think it’s cool. None of them has done it. But they think it’s interesting. They often say “Oh, you’re brave!” And that’s about it. (Susan, 1.291) DEAN: Most people think it’s a great idea. But there’s only half of them that ever intent to do it. And then there’s another group of people that are horrified and think “My god, how could you let somebody stay in your house and... (Dean, 1.219)	
c) Elite levels on home exchange sites	JIM: ...some of the websites have sort of like [...] (Jim, 1.225) LILLY: ...silver level, gold level... (Lilly, 1.226) JIM: ...lovehomeswap had sort of like an elite level. [...] I suppose they look at the houses (Jim, 1.227)	
3. Mutual consideration: respect & understanding		Röpke (1999): actions have to be ethically and morally justifiable for the individual
a) Respect for the property	JIM: I think you just try to be respectful. (Jim, 1.288)	Sharpley (2002): “the nature of the consumption of tourism is such that the satisfaction of personal needs,

<p>b) Leave everything where it is → don't cause inconvenience</p>	<p>CHRIS: ...we feel respectful for what the house is and we comport ourselves like we were here. And leave everything reasonably clean [...] and familiarize with the appliances and such. (Chris, 1.220)</p> <p>LILLY: ...respectful. You don't think too much about it. Leave it in the state that we found it. (Lilly, 1.289)</p> <p>DEAN: You can't really move things around, and you don't want to move the furniture around or that kind of thing, because you probably forget where it was. You know, you feel bad about ending up mixing things up for them. You want them to come home and feel like it hasn't been changed. You settle in to a certain degree, but you can't really change anything around you. Because it could become... make an awkward feeling for them when they come home. So you can just settle in to a certain point. (Dean, 1.627)</p> <p>LEA: And, you know, the kitchen I think you do kind of take a look around. Where are all these things, to remember to put them all back. (Lea, 1.633)</p> <p>DEAN: In the kitchen you have to move stuff around. Just because you are making things. And you are making different things. But then you do want to remember where it came from. (Dean, 1.635)</p> <p>HANNAH & CHRIS: ...the home exchange family were coming home early. Of course we were upset and a bit panicked; Hannah was stressed about getting back to the home before the family did so we could tidy up a bit- we had left the place a little 'lived in' as we thought we had another 2 weeks before the big tidy up needed to happen! (Alford & Alford, 2013, p.48)</p> <p>SUSAN: It's easy. I mean the houses that we've been in have not been mansions. I would not feel comfortable in a place that was high-end. I wouldn't... and none of the places we've done has been high-end. (Susan, 1.198)</p>	<p>utilitarian or otherwise, dominates the tourist-consumer behaviour process, limiting the extent to which tourists will adapt their behaviour to the needs of the destination" (ibid., 2002, p.307).</p> <p>...away from the wish to escape from everyday life fuelled by ego-centric motives – leading to a "better tourist who feels, thinks, takes part and shares responsibility" (Krippendorf, 1986b, p.135)</p> <p>...the tourist is seen as being motivated by "ego-centric needs of escape and self-indulgence" (Sharpley, 2002, p.316) and striving to maximize pleasure by fulfilling personal needs of relaxation and fun.</p>
<p>c) Feeling of liability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ...in a car exchange 	<p>DEAN: ...there is just a lot of liability with them, you know, when you're driving somebody else's car in another city where you are not familiar. And it's [...] not relaxing, [...] we don't think it's great to drive somebody else's car in a city where you are unfamiliar with the place and the rules and things. It's better if you're going to get a car, if you kind of wreck somebody's car it should be a rental car. (Dean, 1.307)</p> <p>DEAN: And you don't need it for most parts. Transit is usually so good! So you don't need a car. It's more about liability than an asset. (Dean, 1.315)</p>	
<p>d) Feeling of responsibility for partner's holiday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't want to disrupt if personal plans change - Leave instructions to facilitate smooth stay - Welcoming gestures 	<p>HANNAH & CHRIS: We felt bad about chasing them out of their home but they insisted that their reasons for returning were personal and nothing to do with our home, and the last thing they wanted to do was disrupt our vacation. (Alford & Alford, 2013, p.48)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...everything is not always exactly like you know it. And I asked her for the instructions – because we always leave instructions for everything. (Susan, 1.205)</p> <p>CHRIS: ...document the appliances. You know, how to use stuff and the dos and don'ts and that's about it. [...] and the washer and the dryer, we leave notes [...]. And we clean and empty cupboard spaces for them to put their clothes and stuff. (Chris, 1.271)</p> <p>CHRIS: We usually leave them a bottle of wine and cheese in the fridge. You don't need to leave lots of</p>	

	<p>food. We tell them that they can use whatever dry foods are there, as long as they – if they use it all, replace it, you know. (Chris, 1.273)</p> <p>DEAN: ...you're supposed to leave some stuff, sort of basic stuff for dinner and breakfast. But, you know, people interpret that differently. So, you just have to be flexible. And realize that everybody's cultural interpretation of things like breakfast is really quite different. (Dean, 1.520)</p> <p>DEAN: ...we usually bring a small gift. Something from here. Things that a tourist of Vancouver would be interested in and trying to bring those with us. (Dean, 1.554)</p>	
Economic		
<p>4. Economics</p> <p>a) Economies</p> <p>b) Longer stays</p> <p>c) Off-season travelling</p> <p>d) → destinations not considered before</p>	<p>LILLY: It's economically viable. (Lilly, 1.53)</p> <p>JIM: For a family with kids it's a big economic incentive, you know. It's a huge difference. (Jim, 1.51)</p> <p>SUSAN: But they want to be here for free, which is the whole point. For me too! (Susan, 1.286)</p> <p>SUSAN: You can stay longer and it's cheaper. (Susan, 1.44)</p> <p>LEA: We couldn't afford to stay somewhere for 3 months if we didn't have... We don't always have for the whole time house exchanges, but the bigger portion of every trip is a house exchange. (Lea, 1.178)</p> <p>DEAN: ...it allows us to stay longer and it does help for off-season travelling. What you need to do with that though, is also to be very flexible, because some people can only go in the season and some people have more flexibility. (Dean, 1.180)</p> <p>SUSAN: ... it gets you somewhere for a certain period of time, that you might not go to if you had to pay to stay there (Susan, 1.421)</p>	<p>Rising incomes and the statutory right to leisure (in western societies) have led to increased trip duration and seasonal diversity over the last decades (Honkanen & Mustonen, 2008)</p> <p>(Røpke (1999): Work & spend cycle)</p>
<p>5. Mutual travel incentives</p> <p>a) Receiving exchange requests</p> <p>b) Awake interest</p>	<p>JIM: I'd say, every 3-4 weeks we get somebody wanting to exchange. (Jim, 1.55)</p> <p>JIM: We've gotten way more offers than we were looking for. (Jim, 1.243)</p> <p>SUSAN: That's why I don't take my name off. Just because if something really interesting came along, I would be really motivated to do it. Especially as I am going to be more and more retired. (Susan, 1.297)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...there are places that would motivate me if somebody contacted me. (Susan, 1.306)</p> <p>LEA: And then we decided "Okay, we gonna go to Berlin. What else are we gonna do?" [...] And then we put together a few countries and then we started looking. But that was purely because she contacted us first. (Lea, 1.393)</p> <p>DEAN: ...you have to sort of... you know, people don't necessarily have an idea about what's here and whether they might want to come to Vancouver for instance. Almost everybody in Europe said they want to</p>	<p>Competition: advertising & ever increasing array of products (Røpke, 1999)</p> <p>Stebbins' (2001) concept of <i>serious leisure</i>: "pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist [...] activity that captivates its participants with its complexity and many challenges" (ibid., 2001, p.54). ...requires and fosters specific skills and knowledge and results in deeply satisfying experiences and a 'full' existence (ibid., 2001).</p>

c) Take initiative	<p>go to New York, and about half of those said they want to go to San Francisco, and about one in 15 said they want to go somewhere in Canada. But almost none of them ever mentioned Vancouver. So if you just [sit and wait] for it, you would never exchange with anybody. But instead we send them a message saying “Wouldn’t you like to come to Vancouver? You could combine it with San Francisco or Portland or whatever or skiing at Whistler or a trip to the Rockies or whatever. Would you be interested in doing that?” And many people say “Oh, I just haven’t thought about that.” And so you get people coming by saying “Yeah, I would like to do that. I talked to somebody who was there last year and it sounds like a good idea!” So, we sort of cultivate their interest in it. If you took people literally at what they say on the webpage, then you’d never get any exchange. (Dean, 1.398)</p>	
d) BUT dependent on popularity of destination, location & amenities of house	<p>JIM: We are proud of being in Vancouver. But Vancouver sells itself. So, that’s not like you have to go through a lot of trouble to explain (Jim, 1.473)</p> <p>JIM: So, normally we’ve decided a year in advance we want to go to Australia, [...] and then you start to look. And, as I say, with Vancouver it’s very easy. (Jim, 1.324)</p> <p>DEAN: Vancouver has a good image. First of all people are very aware of it. [...] So you don’t have to convince them that Vancouver is a nice place, but you sort of have to tell them what’s here and what you do. Like you can go to Long Beach on Vancouver Island, and you can go to Victoria. And you can go to Whistler, or the Rockies or the interior if you’re interested in wine – there’s good wine growing in the interior and people wouldn’t know that. Or going to Seattle, it’s only 1 ½ hours, or Portland a 6 hours’ drive. (Dean, 1.408)</p> <p>JIM: we don’t have trouble selling the house. We’ve got a swimming pool,...(Jim, 1.391)</p> <p>LILLY: ...half an hour to Vancouver, half an hour to the ski hill, [...]...</p> <p>JIM: ...so you know, it’s pretty desirable.</p> <p>JIM: ...people usually wanna know the location relative to downtown, what amenities are around (Jim, 1.390).</p>	
e) Appealing blurbs	<p>JIM: ...we are talking about 25min to downtown, [...] the TransCanada trail is right here. And it’s incredibly quiet, as you see (Jim, 1.474)</p> <p>LEA: In our blurb we write a few things, like you know, we’re half an hour from 3 different mountains, we’re an hour from the border, Vancouver Island... (Lea, 1.413)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...we’re centrally located, we’re on a bus route. And you write a little blurb on the site, and you just tell them how far you are from downtown by the bus and which is the bus route... (Susan, 1.170)</p> <p>DEAN: ...and we know that a lot of people are interested in either hiking or skiing or something; in nature... it’s very easy from our house to get to these mountains – by bus or by car – and so we point that out. And it’s the same time to go there as it is to go downtown. And the things like Stanley Park, and the Aquarium – the things that people commonly like to go to when coming to Vancouver. Just give them a list of those things. (Dean, 1.415)</p> <p>SUSAN: Family-oriented. You know, we don’t worry about it too much. We don’t have anything in here that’s [...]. (Susan, 1.170)</p> <p>LEA: ...people who are looking for Vancouver, and specifically North Van – I get why they wanna come to</p>	

<p>f) ...→ “Serious Leisure”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenging / complex routines request & foster specific tastes, knowledge & skills - ...lead to satisfying experiences 	<p>North Van. It is the outdoors. And our house is a typical North American wooden-framed big old house. It's not European kind. So it's different-looking, I guess. And they notice it! I mean, I'm quite amazed by how many people are coming to us... (Lea, 1.295)</p> <p>DEAN: It is very green here and you can see all the peaks from here when the sun does come out. (Dean, 1.298)</p> <p>DEAN: We pull out a map of each city that we want to go to and try to figure out which areas are [for us in?] and then go through the listings of people's exchange offers according to the locations. We try to find ones that are first of all flexible enough on time, and secondly located close enough to the center so that we can get around conveniently on foot. (Dean, 1.378)</p> <p>JIM: ...normally when we've decided what we want we've done a deal. There was only once where we had real problems. We wanted to go to New York, and it was just the timing, [...] that was the only time we had a problem. (Jim, 1.336)</p> <p>LEA: But we initiate it. It did happen the other way around once. Those were the Berliners. (Lea, 1.381)</p> <p>DEAN: Also for Innsbruck. (Dean, 1.382)</p> <p>DEAN: One thing we really enjoyed was staying in a small city on the coast of Croatia, where the guidebooks just said “Don't bother with that place [...] But if we weren't doing a house exchange, we probably wouldn't have ended up staying there, [...] the house exchange made it possible to spend significantly more time than we otherwise would have. [...] We would never have gotten the feel of it that way. So the house exchange made quite a difference to that and we actually ended up staying longer than we planned there. (Dean, 1.497)</p>	
<p>6. No credit-card mentality</p> <p>a) Patience (not ‘right here, right now’ attitude)</p> <p>b) Owing</p> <p>c) ...not everybody comes</p> <p>d) Having credit</p> <p>→ No contract!</p>	<p>JIM: ...like in Andalusia – that one in Spain – she requested, and we couldn't do it. And then a year later we called her, and I think we kept begging her actually, because it looked like such an interesting house. And it came together a year, or I think 2 years later. (Jim, 1.343)</p> <p>JIM: We owe a few people. Because the last few we've done have been non-simultaneous. (Jim, 1.361)</p> <p>DEAN: And for people that haven't taken it yet, we know, again, we need to try and remain flexible to find some way to make it work for them when they do decide to come. (Dean, 1.188)</p> <p>LEA: There have been a few people, you know, it has been 5 years and they haven't come yet. [...] I mean, if we ever sell the house, I guess we need to email and say “Okay, if you guys wanna come, this is your opportunity.” But I don't think everybody assumes that they are going to come. (Lea, 1.190)</p> <p>LILLY: ...we have credit with the people from New Zealand. We've been somewhere else when they came and lived at our place. Maybe we'll go, maybe we won't. I don't know. It's just sort of feel the goodwill, which is pretty nice. [...] it isn't such an expectation. (Lilly, 1.364)</p> <p>JIM: No contract. (Jim, 1.370)</p>	<p>‘Buy now, pay later’ credit card culture (Botsman and Rogers, 2010)</p>
<p>Socio-technological</p>		
<p>7. Escaping the traditional tourism framework</p>		<p>Systems of related commodities, infrastructure, social</p>

<p>a) Stay in more residential areas</p> <p>b) 'Live like a local'</p> <p>c) <->...still tourist</p> <p>d) Not just spending in DT / business area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourist spending being spread → supplemental income - Supports tourism as people's business <p>e) <->...no big effect on / revenue for community</p>	<p>SUSAN: I mean, the casual living in somebody's home and you're gonna be living in a place like... it's not downtown. (Susan, 1.315)</p> <p>LILLY: You go to the local coffee shop and you're going to the supermarkets as locals would to get your supplies. So you are, to some degree. (Lilly, 1.309)</p> <p>JIM: You get more of a connection than you were just a tourist staying for 2 or 3 days. Because, if I gonna do a home exchange, it's not for 2 or 3 days. You know, the shortest we've ever done is a week. Usually 2. (Jim, 1.507)</p> <p>DEAN: You experience it somewhat more like local people do by shopping and cooking for yourself and going to the places they recommend to shop and to buy the things you need. (Dean, 1.17)</p> <p>LEA & DEAN: Quite a lot! (1.622)</p> <p>LEA: Waking up, listening to different sounds depending on where you are...</p> <p>DEAN: ...meeting the neighbors, walking back and forth to the shopping area or the transit. (Dean, 1.624)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...you see, our places haven't been that exotic. [...] not much different from us, so... you can pretty much live like we would live here, but shop locally or shop within the district, take the busses within the district, so... Yeah, I mean, you do. But then you do that in a hotel, too. You wouldn't be buying your food... but else, sure! (Susan, 1.311)</p> <p>JIM: ...when you're on vacation you're on vacation. [...] A tourist is a tourist. (Jim, 1.308)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...we never got to know the neighbors anywhere we were staying. [...] you're there usually to tourist or to see people, so you're not sitting around in the garden getting to know people. (Susan, 1.316)</p> <p>LEA: Well, if you don't speak the language it's difficult. (Lea, 1.712)</p> <p>DEAN: You look different. I mean, they can tell you're [...] from another country. And people know pretty fast whether you're local or not because they are very discerning about those things. (Dean, 1.713)</p> <p>ANNA: ...it's [...] very beneficial to many [...] communities because most hotels for example are concentrated in the downtown core serving a business community, whereas residences are all over the place. So people end up being spread out [...] and the spending that is associated with their presence benefits parts of a community which otherwise wouldn't benefit from that. It's supplemental income. (Anna, 1.171)</p> <p>DAN: there is also the idea that the [...] tourism money gets spread perhaps a little bit broader. Because [...] instead of that being concentrated in the downtown area or perhaps the tourist center, it gets distributed throughout the city, and to different neighborhoods (Dan, 1.239)</p> <p>AUDREY: ...you're spending more money locally in the community, you probably facilitate local restaurants and local grocery stores and things like that. (Audrey, 1.256)</p> <p>LILLY: I don't think it does (Lilly, 1.580)</p> <p>LILLY: ...it's not going to bring the big revenue [...] because they wouldn't necessarily go out more often than we would. (Lilly, 1.582)</p> <p>JIM: I think location is the number 1 priority. (Jim, 1.372)</p>	<p>practices and institutions, which 'lock-in' the consumer (Røpke, 1999)</p> <p>Do-It-Yourself & Free Independent Travel → self-made travel agents, P2P holiday planning (Bowen & Clarke, 2009)</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ...invitations to people, but can't afford travel - ...hard for people to afford to travel at all - Social structures that restrict it - ...restriction of income, work flexibility & language <p>e) In developing countries: Affluent people who own unit</p> <p>f) → HS does NOT facilitate open, curious & unbiased in destination choice</p>	<p>Tadzhikistan, Pakistan, China... [...] people who we've gotten to know there, I've always told them that they are welcome to come here. We have room for people to stay with us for some period of time. But people just can't afford to do that. You know, it's not a practical possibility. (Dean, 1.660)</p> <p>LEA: We have that comment from people "Oh my god, Vancouver is so expensive!" And it is! (Lea, 1.441)</p> <p>DEAN: So it's much more difficult for people to come here. Really, I think, it tends to reduce the tourism here. Because people can't afford, especially with families, to take their kids to all these things! [...] So all these things are very expensive for people who don't have the same kind of income. And that's a lot of people. (Dean, 1.444)</p> <p>DEAN: I think it would be more difficult to do it in what you call more 'exotic' places, because people can't afford, they don't have the latitude to travel like this very often. (Dean, 1.546)</p> <p>DEAN: ...in many other countries people have extended families in their home, so it's not so easy for you to exchange the whole dwelling. [...] because there is so many other people living in it, that it is not really considerate to all those people to have somebody else come and stay there. So just the family structures are different. (Dean, 1.669)</p> <p>DEAN: It tends to work with what we call the 'nuclear family', you know, that just has adults and some kids. The extended family will be more difficult. Although we've talked to people who have their parents attached. And that can work. (Dean, 1.673)</p> <p>DEAN: Maybe the older people aren't able to travel there. Maybe younger people have higher incomes and are more likely to being able to travel. And also they maybe have learned more languages and have more flexibility to travel. (Dean, 1.684)</p> <p>AUDREY: ...when we looked at airbnb in the more developing countries like in India [...] it seemed like the properties there were more high-end. You know, it was kind of more high-end and polished. (Audrey, 1.288)</p> <p>LEA: There is places like Thailand, I've seen on the site, where other people own units somewhere in a resort. [...] (Lea, 1.655)</p> <p>DEAN: But I don't really want to go to resorts. (Dean, 1.656)</p> <p>DAN: ...we set off with the idea of trying – not only for ourselves, but for the community we set up our blog for – to expose them to destinations and places around the world that they might not have thought about before, or were disregarded or perhaps even places that were – that we believed were misunderstood. (Dan, 1.28)</p>	
Mainstream vs. New Economics approach		
<p>9. HS = hedonistic alternative</p> <p>a) Alternative, informal marketplace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enables travelling - Away from focus on commercial transactions 	<p>ANNA: ...enables me to go somewhere that I wouldn't otherwise be able to necessarily afford. [...] you could argue that HS will enable some people to travel that wouldn't otherwise be able to. (Anna, 1.315)</p> <p>ANNA: ...it takes us a little bit further away from this totally commercial transaction focus that dominates tourism. In other words, it's saying that there's a room for a wider variety of ways of human beings extending hospitality to one another. And that has implications for things and the activities that the guests</p>	<p>New Economics approach promotes non-consumption & non-market consumption (Seyfang, 2009)</p> <p>Need to establish new structures that enable people to flourish in a less materialistic way (Jackson, 2009)</p> <p>Mainstream approach: Tourist = political persona able to take rational and critical decisions → Information deficit</p>

	can participate in or the hosts can provide. (Anna, 1.447)	
b) Addresses issues of promotion of more responsible forms of tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem of jargon & circular definitions - How to promote conscious travel? → focus on experience 	<p>DAN: The problem with selling sustainable tourism [...] is that it sounds like it's something that's good for you, but it's not really that much fun. And so it's full of jargon, it's full of circular definitions. (Dan, 1.129)</p> <p>AUDREY: ...sustainable tourism organizations,[...] a lot of them [...] use a lot of jargon in trying to explain what they do, instead of focusing on the experience first and why that experience is different [...], why that experience is unique (Audrey, 1.112)</p> <p>AUDREY: ...one of the things that we try to do – with our website, with our writing and also with our photographs and how we share things – is to try and focus on the experience first, about what was really special or unique and then go backwards about what was the process, what was the approach that allowed us to get it. (Audrey, 1.109)</p> <p>AUDREY: ...how does it affect your travel experience. [...]the travellers [...], they go on vacation, they wanna have a really great time, but I think it's possible to show how – again, this idea of awareness – how taking certain steps helps them have an even better time or an even different time. (Audrey, 1.136)</p>	approach
c) Limited potential with regard to global tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing economy orthogonal to traditional tourism (promotion) industry - Not disruptive due to limitations 	<p>DAN: The reality of the funding of tourism boards... they are often funded by folks who have money in the private tourism industry, and those people usually do not have in their interest to promote things like CS, HS, airbnb, any one of the elements of the sharing economy. So I actually think [...] that the sharing economy is actually somewhat – at least at the moment because of regulations – [...] orthogonal to the traditional tourism, and tourism promotion industry. Just because of the nature of the way the dollars flow. (Dan, 1.326)</p> <p>ANNA: ...house swapping [...] gets quite problematic, because you've got to have 2 consenting parties who need to want to swap on the basis of knowing each other, and trusting each other. And willing to [...] swap at the same time. And that's more complicated altogether. So it's not going to [...] be truly disruptive of the existing models. (Anna, 1.224)</p> <p>ANNA: ...it's [...] a particular niche market – not everybody wants to go and stay in somebody else's home. [...] It's not the same standard. (Anna, 1.192)</p>	
d) Stepping outside of a business relation	<p>DEAN: But to some degree that is possible once you get to know somebody to some degree, which you don't do when you're just a tourist staying for 1 or 2 days in a hotel or some kind of accommodation where it's a business relationship between you and the person who is taking care of you, you know. They don't want to talk with you about that, because they are afraid that this will interfere with their business matters. Whereas in an exchange you step outside of that. (Dean, 1.748)</p>	

8.3.3 Table3: Thematic analysis for third sub-question “House swapping and the human tourism system”

<u>Analysis of empirical & secondary data</u>	<u>Quotes</u>	<u>Theory</u>
Human Dimension		
1. Tourism: People focus a) Tourism = people meeting people - ...people focus b) Key words of conscious travel: understanding & connection - Sharing economy... - HS: first relationship, then swap - HS fits well in this eco-system c) HS examples - Building relationships → understanding & tolerance - Friendly encounters - Getting together with (interested) neighbours	<p>ANNA: ...when you look at the actual activity itself, [...] it's all about people meeting people! [...] it's all about encounters that take place in a particular piece of geography. (Anna, 1.116)</p> <p>AUDREY: The focus that became pretty clear from the beginning when we started travelling, was that the focus was people focused. And then [...] that started to make us realize “Oh well, there's different ways of travel, different styles of travel that allow us to connect with local people” (Audrey, 1.46)</p> <p>DAN: ...understanding. And another sort of key word is connection. [...] We go to these places, so we meet people, we connect with people and we understand the place. We understand the culture better, we understand the people better. (Dan, 1.52)</p> <p>DAN: One of the things in this whole sort of sharing economy – whether we're paying for something or not – one of the benefits is an increased level of understanding, an increased level of connection, an increased level of awareness. (Dan, 1.54)</p> <p>ANNA: ...it's about creating an environment where the relationship can be established first. And then the swapping takes place. (Anna, 1.274)</p> <p>ANNA: I think it fits into the whole eco-system very well. Especially a conscious travel type. (Anna, 1.463)</p> <p>DEAN: It helps building a relationship, which is a positive thing. I think that is one of the things that helps when people are more understanding with each other, they are less likely to be upset if somebody breaks a wine glass or something. (Dean, 1.614)</p> <p>DEAN: We were staying in Venice. [...] And we would take the kitchen chairs out and plug them on the side of the Canal and have our morning coffee there. We'd go around the corner to the bakery and get a croissant and sit and have our croissant and coffee in the morning and then late afternoon we'd take the chairs back out and sit and have a glass of wine. And the sun set right down on the canal, so it's kind of a nice place to sit. And people would be walking by and start to talk to us. You know, the people that where living in the area would stop and start to talk to us! And when we left, people popped out their heads of their apartments and said goodbye. They had so gotten used to us sitting out there in that canal kind of thing. Yeah, it was nice. We kind of had gotten to know each other just by passing by all the time and saying hello, you know. We didn't have enough language in common to say very much, but just enough to sort of be friendly to each other you know. (Dean, 1.488)</p> <p>DEAN: It's quite interesting to see how neighbors react to you when you are staying in somebody's place. We found many neighbors to get very friendly and interested in talking to us or having coffee with us or whatever. They find it interesting as well to meet you and ask you about where you came from and those things, and where else you're going. And we end up sharing experiences with them as well, which is kind of nice. Which is something that doesn't happen in a hotel. It does happen in B&Bs, but not in hotels. (Dean, 1.269)</p>	Human system of tourism

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shop assistant friendlier - Being part of a community → help when in need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o ride to the hospital o personal doctor (no charge) o ride across the border <p>d) Spending time with partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intent to meet in person - Spend time together 	<p>DEAN: ...we've ended up talking to neighbors in a number of places because they just expressed interest in hearing what we have to say about our city Vancouver and, you know, just talking about life (Dean, 1.481)</p> <p>LEA: The last time the Innsbruck guys were going to meet with them. [...] When we had talked to them on Skype that day they said that they were going to meet our neighbors. [...] The Slovenian guys met with our neighbors across the lane. They had coffee I think one day. (Lea, 1.477)</p> <p>DEAN: When you are doing a house exchange you tend to go back and shop in the same places. Then you have to go back and say "Hi, it's me again. Remember? The guy that screwed up all those things!" But they get to know you, and then they get more helpful. Because they know you're coming back. So it's usually smaller shops in a local neighborhood kind of area. Because that's where you're staying. (Dean, 1.45)</p> <p>LILLY: ...when the Australians came to stay at our place, he fell on our stairs and then Jim's mum downstairs actually took him to the hospital. So, you know, having a community is helpful for those sorts of things. (Lilly, 1.437)</p> <p>LILLY: ...in Spain I broke my toe. I ran against the bathroom door. And we went to their doctor and he didn't charge us. (Lilly, 1.440)</p> <p>DEAN: ...for instance the Slovenian couple that came had to use our car. Our car is a Volvo Station Wagon and he was scared of it because it was so big. He thought that was the hugest car he'd ever seen, so he was afraid to drive it. So he got my son to drive him to Bellingham [...] across the border. (Dean, 1.545)</p> <p>DEAN: We try to find opportunities sort of at the beginning or the end of the trip to have dinner or breakfast or something, spend a day walking around [...] We try to find those kinds of opportunities if we can. (Dean, 1.129)</p> <p>DEAN: ...the boat tour in Berlin, we did that with our hosts in Berlin before they'd go on the plane to Sicily. You know, they were going to Sicily, but they spent the first day with us and we got a whole day of talking with them and then they left. (Dean, 1.130)</p> <p>LEA: The guys in Vienna were there, because we stayed in his sister's apartment. So they were there the whole time in their own place. And we actually got together with them 3 or 4 times socially while we were in Vienna for a month. And if there were any questions, you know, they were there! We certainly could have asked them. (Lea, 1.133)</p> <p>LEA: One couple, the Viennese guys, we shared the house for 2 or 3 days. [...] I would make breakfast, and then we would take off for the day and spend it together... (Lea, 1.572)</p>	
<p>Place</p>		
<p>2. Respect for each other's place</p> <p>a) Trust & respect for each other's place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ...more than in commercial accommodation) - Personal value attached 	<p>CHRIS: ... it does inspire a relationship of trust and respect for each other's place, you know. And I think it's a positive experience. (Chris, 1.55)</p> <p>JIM: ...we are probably a lot more careful than we would be in a – I'm sorry to say – in a hotel, or in a time-share or something. And you can tell when you go to a hotel or time-share, I mean people that don't pay much respect. [...] Because they know there's no personal value attached (Jim, 1.293)</p> <p>LILLY: ...you think twice before putting the feet up on the couch. (Lilly, 1.515)</p>	<p>Touristic activities respect & reflect spirit of setting</p>

	AUDREY: ...all the local services like the bakery and coffee shops and all the stuff were just full of ordinary people. [...] it [had] that [...] pace or feel of “Okay, this is what life is like here, this is what ordinary people are doing (Audrey, 1.211)	
Host		
<p>4. Enable pleasant stay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eager to make an exchange happen / help out - Want the other party to have a good stay <p>a) Prepare instructions / manual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Somebody to contact in case of question / emergency <p>b) Pamphlets & brochures</p> <p>c) Specific (individual) recommendations</p>	<p>LEA: [The]Berlin people contacted us and we said “No, we’re not interested. We’d just come back from our trip. But when you find an exchange, call us, because we will be here and we’d love to meet you, have coffee.” And so she emailed back, saying “I haven’t been able to find a house exchange, we’ve already bought our tickets. [...] So I’ll be booking an apartment and maybe we can get together.” And my girlfriend was here and I told her that and she said “Well, you know, do you want to do it as an exchange? Because you can have my apartment when I’m away.” So we could stay at her place. And I said “Well, yeah, okay!” So I emailed her back and said “Okay, I think you can have our place. But we have no idea when we’re coming to Berlin.” (Lea, 1.383)</p> <p>JIM: ...the only thing you’re worried about, you know, that something goes wrong with the house. Like there’s a leak, or electrical problem. Because, you know, you don’t want the person staying here to panic (Jim, 1.270)</p> <p>JIM: ...more recently we sent the user manual in advance. So they see... ‘cause...[...] we’ve gone into quite a bit of trouble. It’s now 6, 7, 8 pages long, and it describes the house, and the TV, [...] etc. So, I think people see the effort that you put in... (Jim, 1.463)</p> <p>SUSAN: ... we always leave instructions for everything. (Susan, 1.205)</p> <p>DEAN: Our kids, they can always phone them and ask them a question. (Dean, 1.545)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...people always leave pamphlets and brochures, like we’d leave Grouse Mountain and Cypress. (Susan, 1.116)</p> <p>SUSAN: I think we wouldn’t do anything for Vancouver. Like... we assume that people come here and go and do whatever they are interested in Vancouver and find that out, but locally right around here we always had brochures. (Susan, 1.135)</p> <p>CHRIS: ...we’d leave them whatever material we thought would be helpful for their stay. (Chris, 1.125)</p> <p>DEAN: And then when you talk to them then you can get a sense of what they are actually interested in. So if you tell them some of the things that they are interested in then you can think of other things that might be helpful to them. (Dean, 1.427)</p> <p>SUSAN: They usually know what they want, [...] So usually you know why they come here, so you can tell what they need to know. (Susan, 1.119)</p>	Creates wholesome experience & collaborative community
<p>5. Receiving guests</p> <p>a) Receive them personally if possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pick them up at the airport personally - Give them a tour on the way home → orientation 	<p>LEA: We’ve had the whole range, from our children arriving with the keys when the people come and then they do the introduction of the house to us picking people up at the airport. (Lea, 1.462)</p> <p>DEAN: And we usually give them a little bit of a tour on the way in from the airport. We drive them up to Queen Elizabeth Park, and you can see most of the city from there and see the different mountains and give them an orientation of the city, so they get a feel for where things are and where they are going to be staying relative to other things. So we’ll do that on the way home and drive through Stanley Park and cross Lion’s Gate Bridge when we come home. This is not the quickest route, but it gives them some orientation</p>	Creates wholesome experience & collaborative community

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite them for dinner - ...by friends <p>b) Make them feel welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leave something for breakfast - ...or dinner <p>c) Have someone walk them through</p> <p>d) It varies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - just key in an office to pick up or welcomed & shown around by someone - place stocked up or just a pack of spaghetti & tomato sauce - Fruit dish & invitation to Prosecco <p>e) → HSers NO passive receivers</p>	<p>again and it's... and then we make them dinner usually, if we're here. If we're not, as Lea says, then our kids show them the house. (Dean, 1.466)</p> <p>DEAN: ...if we're here we'll invite them for dinner the first night. You know, they come and we'll make them dinner. (Dean, 1.464) LEA: Yeah, sometimes we pick them up at the airport and bring them to our house for dinner. (Lea, 1.465)</p> <p>LEA: ...they picked us up from the airport, she made us dinner, and then the couple stayed next door for 1 night and then they left. (Lea, 1.483)</p> <p>JIM: ...when people come here, we've had friends of us who used to live across the road who would have them around for dinner. (Jim, 1.481)</p> <p>LEA: What we usually do is we'd leave just enough food for breakfast, so you don't have to go out. So you have bread, eggs, milk, coffee, a cereal for breakfast (Lea, 1.564)</p> <p>LEA: ...that were the Argentinian guys. And they got here at 9 o'clock at night. So they were hungry. And you can't go out at night. You don't know where you are. So we kind of put together something. A frozen quiche or something... (Lea, 1.566)</p> <p>SUSAN: ...we knew that they would be arriving with kids, so I went to the grocery store and bought some frozen pizza. Also, you don't know what people's food preferences are. (Susan, 1.276)</p> <p>LILLY: And usually we have a friend or family member... (Lilly, 1.456) JIM: ...walk them through. (Jim, 1.457)</p> <p>LEA: I think there has always been one of our kids to make sure that they get the right information. (Lea, 1.471)</p> <p>LEA: ... our kids have always oriented them to the house. (Lea, 1.541)</p> <p>DEAN: It varies all over the maps. It's totally different. In some places somebody just left a key in an office down on the main street around the corner at some place [...]. Other places, people come and welcome you and show you everything and explain it. Some places, they've kind of stocked the place up for you a bit. One place we got to, it had one jar of tomato sauce, and one plastic container of spaghetti and that was it. (Dean, 1.515) LEA: And a nice bottle of wine! It was in Argentina. (Lea, 1.519)</p> <p>LEA: The guys in Venice, she had a fruit dish, I remember, and then she invited us back to her place – because that was her daughter's apartment – and then she offered us some prosecco. So that was nice. Everybody just does it a little different. (Lea, 1.569)</p> <p>ANNA: instead of being passive receivers [...] create this universal sense of caring (Anna, 1.423)</p>	
<p>6. Guests are as conscious as hosts</p> <p>a) Get personal recommendations → invaluable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate spending decisions 	<p>LEA: I think that's the best thing about HS: the information you get from people. It's just invaluable! (Lea, 1.122)</p> <p>JIM: We usually ask the people we're exchanging with for their recommendations. And people are very good. Most people do, like we do, a very detailed user manual. So most people will have that and we'll get recommendations (Jim, 1.85) (2)</p>	<p>Safeguard uniqueness & attractiveness of place</p> <p>Creates wholesome experience & collaborative community</p> <p>Central role → responsibility</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommend cheap & local places - Discover unique places / events / experiences - → avoid little inconveniences <p>b) On location no research (e.g. through tripadvisor) necessary</p> <p>c) Learning within the (host) community</p> <p>d) → Community of conscious hosts</p> <p>Forno & Garibaldi: social involvement when not travelling</p> <p>Hosts model conscious approach</p> <p>Hosts being community leaders & change agents</p>	<p>SUSAN: ...they always leave recommendations. And they, you know, tell you where the cheap places are, and where the local things are. (Susan, 1.113)</p> <p>LILLY: And through her, we heard about that event with the huge paella. [...] we would have probably never known about this. (Lilly, 1.159)</p> <p>JIM: A lot of what we saw, a lot of what we did we wouldn't have found out without her. (Jim, 1.160)</p> <p>DEAN: ...local people give you advise on things. You know, if you wanna know which bus company to take, ask the person you're swapping with and they'll tell you which to use. (Dean, 1.117) (2)</p> <p>LILLY: ...but in terms of the home exchanges. I don't think that we have used it [tripadvisor] that much. (Lilly, 1.106)</p> <p>JIM: No, we didn't use it. (Jim, 1.107)</p> <p>LILLY: And we haven't really had to, because the recommendations had been there. So we haven't had to do a lot of research. (Lilly, 1.108)</p> <p>LILLY: ...that's one of the things, when somebody's new and they haven't thought about doing it they'll come to your house and they'll see (Lilly, 1.4619)</p> <p>LEA: But these were also new house exchangers. They were a young couple who've only done it once, we were the second. So, you know, they had asked for some suggestions, so we actually left them a few suggestions to help with the next one. (Lea, 1.538)</p> <p>ANNA: The idea specifically around conscious travel was to work community by community and create a group of people that [...] were prepared to make this big shift in thinking and take some responsibility for what's happening in their own neighborhood, their own community. And part of that responsibility becoming a conscious host would be obviously having conversations with their guests, that would make them – their guests – become a little bit more aware of the need to behave in a conscious responsible way. (Anna, 1.390)</p> <p>Home exchangers are also concerned with their communities when they are not traveling. Nearly three out of five respondents (59.1%) claim civic involvement at home. (Forno & Garibaldi, p.18)</p> <p>ANNA: Let's face it: most people want to enjoy themselves. I don't want to have people get the impression that these conscious hosts will be lecturing their guests [...]. what I'm hoping is that they are going to be modeling the whole approach in the way they present themselves and the way they are utterly involved in the issues in their community. It would just be a natural point of conversation and storytelling. They would just get the average guy to think... (Anna, 1.409)</p> <p>ANNA: The most fundamental shift [...] I'd love to see is for people who have been involved in the tourism and hospitality traditionally [...] being the leaders in their community, with a direct vested commercial interest in insuring that the water is clean, and the waste is taken care of and the local park is looked after, or that there's funds raised to [...] help conserve species. (Anna, 1.416)</p>	
<p>Guest</p>		
<p>7. Experiences beyond the exchange</p> <p>a) During the stay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Few - Kids going to school 	<p>JIM: When we've gone there, it's been very few experiences that would go beyond the exchange (Jim, 1.482)</p> <p>LILLY: Well, in Cairns the kids went to school with the children. (Lilly, 1.485)</p>	<p>Creates wholesome experience & collaborative community</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tour through the monastery - Paella event - Getting together with neighbours <p>b) After the stay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting up later → friends - Making friends & lasting connections - ...but don't stay in touch / friends with everyone - Not necessarily meet exchange partners 	<p>JIM: And then in Montserrat we were taken on a tour of the monastery by someone whose brother was in the monastery, so that was neat. (Jim, 1.488)</p> <p>LILLY: And in the swap in Spain we had the paella... and we had a lesson the day before, and that were those people... our teacher told us the ceremony thing. (Lilly, 1.492)</p> <p>LEA: ...the couple stayed next door for 1 night and then they left. So of course the guys knew we were there. And so they, the next morning, or 2 mornings after – we were sitting on the deck having breakfast – and he pokes his head out and said hi! I mean because you're right there, you could hear each other. And I think they invited us over for a glass of wine. (Lea, 1.484)</p> <p>LEA: The guys from Vienna, they want to immigrate to Vancouver, so they came here every year. And they'd stay with us for a couple of days and we'd do different things. So, eventually I hope they are moving and we'll see them a lot of times. (Lea, 1.343)</p> <p>DEAN: We had exchanged with him 4 years earlier. But when we got back we got together with him and when they come to Vancouver they come and stay with us, too. And it's not an exchange per se. (Dean, 1.334)</p> <p>LEA: No, they are just friends of ours now. (Lea, 1.336)</p> <p>DEAN: ...half the people we have exchanged with we keep in touch with. And it's sort of a loose sort of connection depending on what they are doing. If they are coming back here, we would be happy to accommodate them again, or we exchange information or we just keep in touch to see how they are doing. Or maybe one of their kids will decide to come here and so then they can come. So... it depends, it's different with everybody. (Dean, 1.338)</p> <p>JIM: We kept in touch with some. I mean, not a lot. I think it's... I don't think you can predict. (Jim, 1.443)</p> <p>LILLY: ...you're not friends. But it's a connection. But I don't need to send a Christmas card every year. (Lilly, 1.445)</p> <p>SUSAN: Yeah, not close. But we're still in touch with all of them, except with one. [...] I mean, the possibilities were there, but unfortunately for us we couldn't do a lot of... One time we met the people, but the other times we didn't meet them. Two we didn't meet till later. (Susan, 1.48)</p>	
<p>8. Different perspective...</p> <p>a) Deeper conversations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ...due to bonding - ...once you get to know people 	<p>LEA: ...just the kind of people that you end up meeting... for example Turkey [...] we asked this one woman and she said "No, I can't. I can only do it in the summer. I have a 15-year old." And summer didn't work for us. But she said "When you come to Istanbul, call me! I'll invite you to breakfast. [...]" And then she gave us some other information. So [...] we kept in touch with her. And then we did meet her. And we had an amazing discussion with her, like on politics, all around the Taksim square stuff – we were there at that time. [...] And, you know, that kind of experience you can't get just by hanging out in a hotel. And I think it's the people who are involved in house exchanges want to go a little deeper, are willing to share more, talk politics (Lea, 1.738)</p> <p>DEAN: Once you get to know each other, then people will talk about other issues, for example environmental issues, or political issues, sort of cultural things, differences between people's cultures and how social elements operate within their culture and people will start talking about these things after they've gotten to know you to some degree. It's also helpful to ask people if you have observed something about their city, like I've mentioned Berlin not being all that friendly when you ask somebody. "This is my observation, what do you think?" Have I observed this correctly, or I might have seen it differently than local people see it, you know. Then you get some feedback from people. So instead like whizzing through doing Italy in 7 days and taken your very high-level image of it home, you actually get the chance to ask people "Well, what do you think? Am I seeing this properly or am I seeing this just through certain colored lenses, sort of a Canadian perspective on it...[...]" You get the chance to ask people that once you've</p>	<p>Encounters based on trust & dialogue</p> <p>Holiday = basis for learning for everyday life</p> <p>Co-creator of value</p> <p>Respectfully discover & immerse</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Supports citizen diplomacy <p>b) Living the “other” live</p>	<p>been staying in one place and got to know them a little bit. (Dean, 1.729)</p> <p>DEAN: And the perspectives people have on the world. You know, they have a different perspective, looking at the world from a different angle. And you see some of that. (Dean, 1.123)</p> <p>AUDREY: ...the sharing economy supports [...] citizen diplomacy, because when you’re participating in the sharing economy you’re engaging one on one, or you’re engaging with ordinary local people, [...] you have these opportunities to talk and just interact with person-to-person. (Audrey, 1.173)</p> <p>LEA: A highlight for me was our 6 weeks in Vienna. Because I was born in Vienna. [...] So, [...] having a house exchange there was really cool, because it just gave me the opportunity to spend some time... and I kept thinking every day “This is what I could have lived like. I could have lived here all my life!” [...] And I went back to the neighborhood where my grandfather was born, and my dad. And I met an old woman who still remembers my father. [...] So that, for me, was amazing, to really live in the city that I was born in. A great opportunity that you couldn’t get if you were just staying in a hotel. (Lea, 1.211)</p>	
<p>9. Spreading the idea...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Influence other people through sharing stories b) Recommendation c) Effect on local community 	<p>DEAN: We talk to other people here in Vancouver about the idea and the experience, so we may influence the thinking of other Vancouver people that have listened to us talk about that experience possibly. (Dean, 1.693)</p> <p>LILLY: We certainly recommend it! (Lilly, 1.218)</p> <p>JIM: We’re talking about it a lot. And I’m pretty sure there are some people who’ve done it on basis of our recommendation. (Jim, 1.219)</p> <p>DEAN: We say to people that are reluctant about this “Well, would you leave your home to your kids to take care of? If you would, then you’re actually better off to do an exchange.” [...] people put it into perspective that way. They are going “Ah, well yeah, okay!” (Dean, 1.645)</p> <p>DEAN: I’m not sure whether we have influenced the community of people in other countries, except maybe the neighbors of the people we’ve exchanged with. Where we had positive experiences with the neighbors, maybe they’ve become more comfortable with the idea, or more interested in the idea of coming here. Maybe just more interested in travel in general. (Dean, 1.698)</p>	<p>Enthusiastic ambassadors (due to unique experience) (Pollock)</p>
House swappers: Hosts & Guests		
<p>10. Distinction between host & guest (community) start to blur</p>	<p>ANNA: ...what I like about it is that this distinction between host and guest [...] starts to get very porous, very loose. [...] in HS I’m no longer the host. I basically made my... physical infrastructure available to the guest, but I am now going and living in their place. So all of these distinctions between hosts and tourists and host communities start to blur a bit. (Anna, 1.340)</p>	
<p>11. Little somethings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little welcome present Little present at the end of the stay 	<p>LILLY: And also when they arrive, we leave a bottle of wine for them (Lilly, 1.465)</p> <p>LEA: We usually leave some flowers, a card and a little gift. (Lea, 1.550)</p> <p>DEAN: Or a bottle of wine or something. Depending on whether they are going to be coming soon or not. I mean, the flowers will be dead if they’ll be back a week from now. (Dean, 1.551)</p>	
<p>12. Reciprocity</p>		<p>→ reciprocal relationship (Fiorello & Bo, 2012)</p>

<p>a) Pay back efforts</p>	<p>LEA: We have done hospitality as well. [...] a couple [...] contacted us last year and said “Look, we’re coming from a house exchange in Germany – they were from New Zealand – and they were coming from Germany to Vancouver, and their flight to New Zealand was only every 3 days, so they asked if we could host them for 3 days. And then they would take the next flight, and this would be an opportunity to see Vancouver. So we said “Sure!” So that was our first time that we’ve actually done a hospitality. And it was great. I mean, I went all [over the top]. I did cook, every day. And she said “Look, you know you don’t have to do that! I’m not expecting that!” But I did. And it was okay. I mean, I wouldn’t have done it if I didn’t want to. And they were great. It was 3 nights. And they took us out one day. So we cooked and they took us out. (Lea, 1.578)</p>	
<p>b) ‘Extending’ reciprocity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ...friends or family members coming instead - Family members welcomed independent of actual exchange 	<p>DEAN: ...one couple in Italy said “We may not make it to Vancouver, but we have these friends that want to come. So they introduced us to the friends over dinner and we said “Sure, fine!” [...] or, somebody else said maybe her daughter wants to come instead of the couple. (Dean, 1.195)</p> <p>LEA: And in Croatia, that’s what’s going to happen. It’s going to be the daughter that will come. (Lea, 1.199)</p> <p>DEAN: Or maybe one of their kids will decide to come here and so then they can come. (Dean, 1.340)</p> <p>JIM: Now, here is an interesting one: we did one in Australia, long time ago. In Cairns. And that is a funny story, because... we really enjoyed it. It was a beautiful. It was a house that he had built himself – he is an engineer. A really interesting house [?]. And our girls were quite young at the time. And then – fast forward – our younger daughter was doing her... like your semester abroad. And she was in Melbourne. And she and her boyfriend wanted to go to Australia. (Jim, 1.166)</p> <p>LILLY: ...on a student income. (Lilly, 1.170)</p> <p>JIM: Yeah, and they said they wanted to go to Cairns. And I said “Well, maybe the Smiths – we remembered their name, and Lilly happened to have the phone and still the phone number was right. Phoned them and said, you know, our daughter is going to be in Cairns. And they said “Oh fantastic. She has to stay with us! So again, you would never have that experience otherwise. (Jim, 1.171)</p>	