**ToSEE 2025**
8th International Scientific Conference
**Shaping the Future:** Digital Tourism and Sustainable Development
15-17 May, 2025 | Opatija, CROATIA

# Bicycle tourism and sharing

## More than just traveling low-budget? – User experience and motivation for hospitality sharing platforms



UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA
FACULTY OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT
OPATIJA, CROATIA

Prof. Dr. Jana Heimel
University of Applied Science Heilbronn, Germany
Faculty of International Business

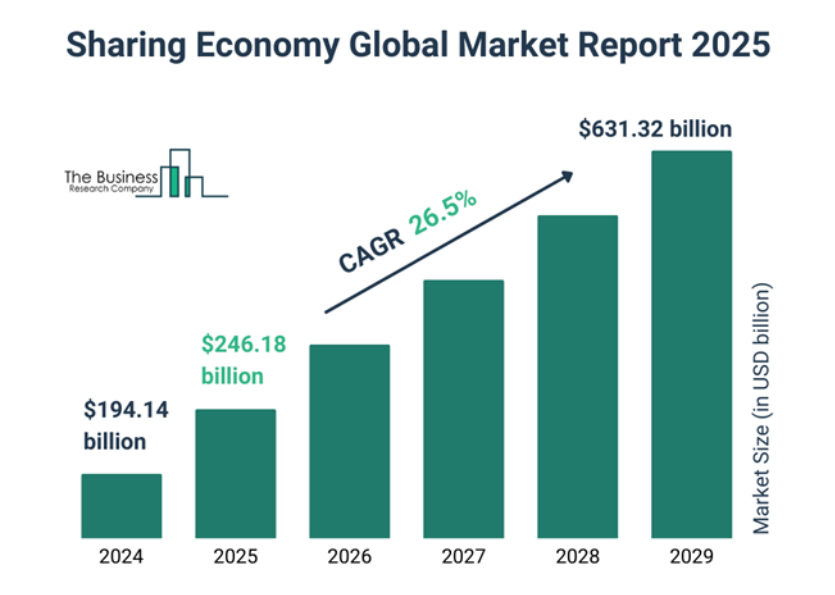
# AGENDA

- Introduction
- Research framework
- Selective results
- Conclusion & outlook
- Discussion

# INTRODUCTION

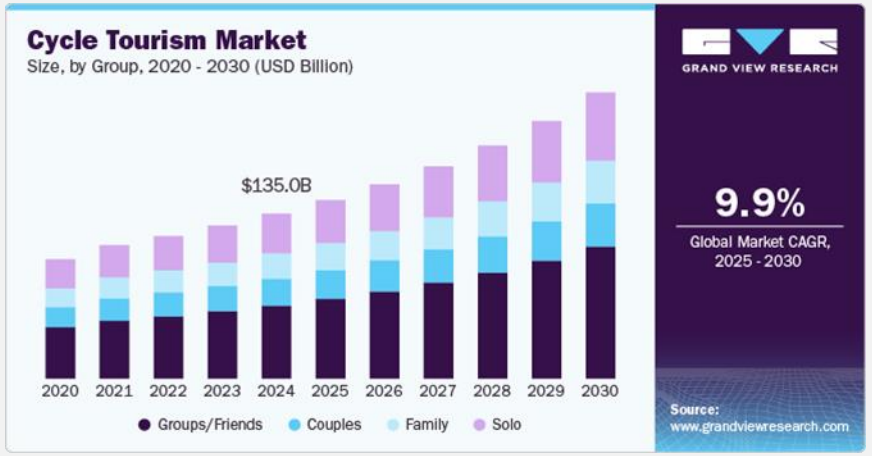
- Selected trends reflecting the relevance of doing research on sharing economy (SE) and bicycle tourism

## SE companies



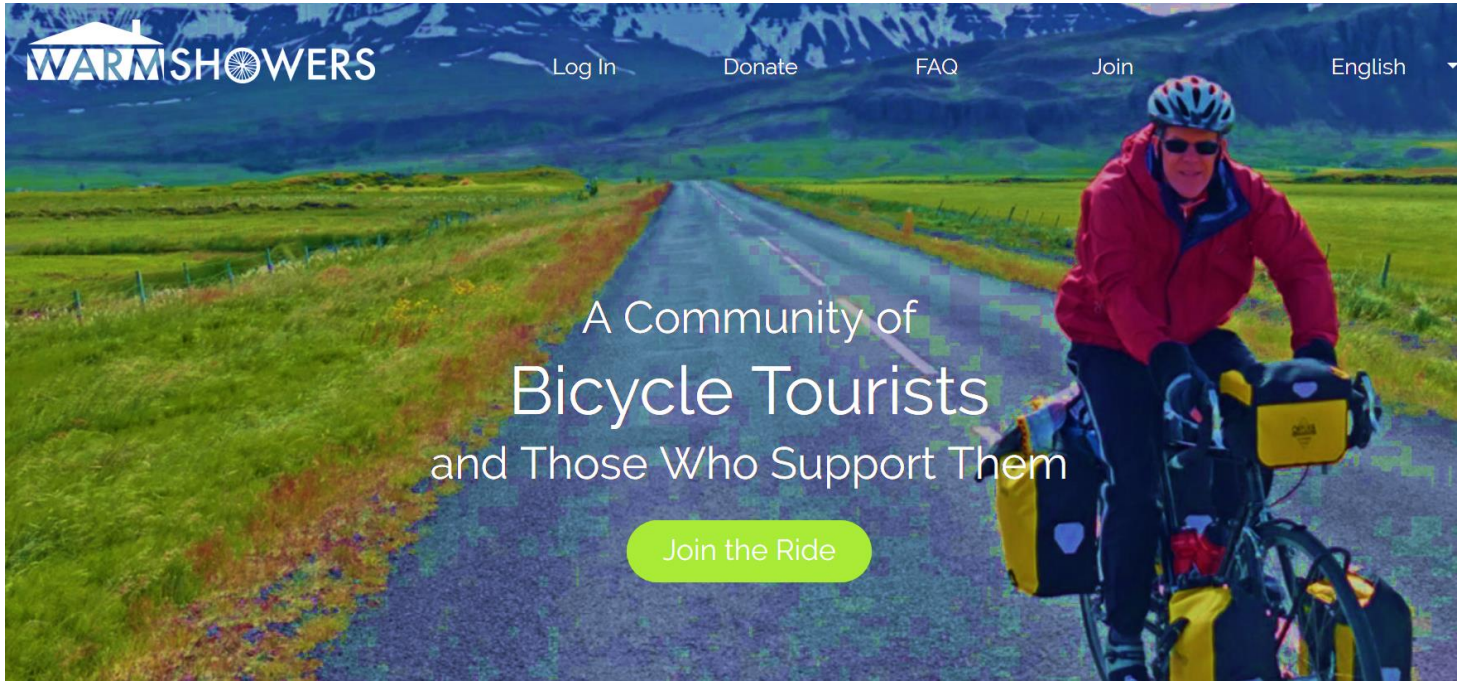

The Business Research Company. (2025). Sharing Economy Global Market Report 2025. In *The Business Research Company*. https://www.thebusinessresearchcompany.com/report/sharing-economy-global-market-report

## Cycling tourists




Grand View Research (2025): *Cycle Tourism Market Size, Share & Trends Analysis Report by group (Groups/Friends, couples, family, solo), by booking mode (Direct, Travel Agent, Marketplace Booking), by age group, by region, and segment Forecasts, 2025 - 2030*. (o. D.-b). https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/cycle-tourism-market-report

# WARMSHOWERS: C2C-PLATFORM FOR CYCLISTS



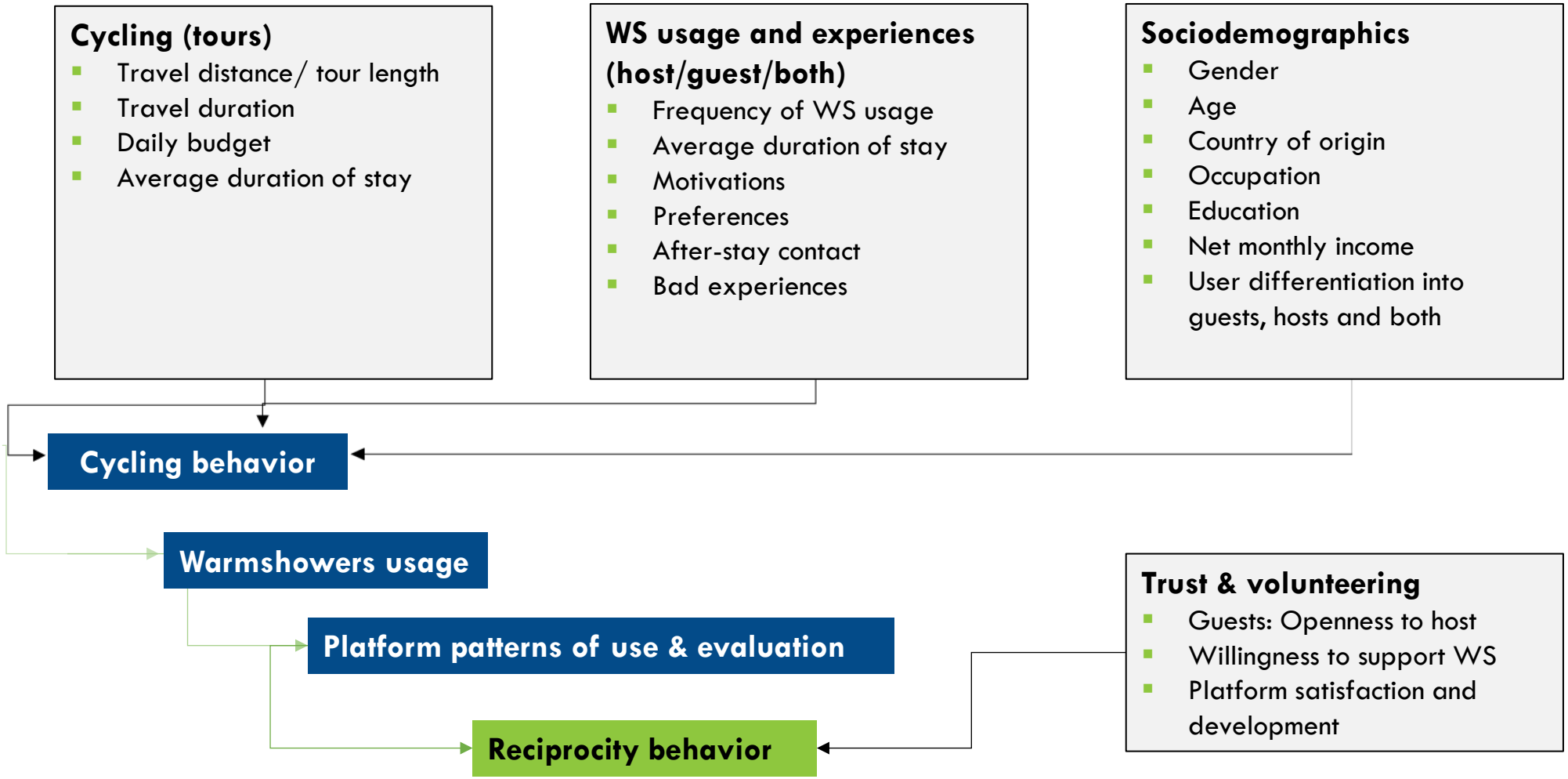

www.warmshowers.org

# OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT



- Shed light on the functioning of an interational NFP platform
  - Identify **drivers and determinants** of giving
  - and the evaluation system on **reciprocity behavior**
  - Determine characteristics and derive **profile types of C2C** cyclists
  - Assess the **user behavior** and identify potentials for improvement of the platform
  - Analyze the role of culture, trust, shared interests

# CONCEPTUAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORK




Source: Adopted from Liu, Nie and Li, 2016

# METHODOLOGY: EMPIRICAL STUDY

**Sample:** 11,181 (adj. 9,515)

**Sampling method:** Convenience

**Population:** members of Warmshowers (Cyclists, cycling tourists)

**Method:** Online survey

**Approach:** e-mail invitation via WS management board

**Incentive:** None!

**Research design:** confirmatory, mostly descriptive

**Analysis methods:** Descriptive (and causal analysis)

# ToSEE

# STUDY PARTICIPANTS: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS

- Mostly American & European, 2/3 Male, 2 Age Groups, highly educated & well-paid



# ToSEE

# MY BICYCLE TOUR FROM SALZBURG TO SPLIT

WARMSHOWERS

**67 (14)* days**

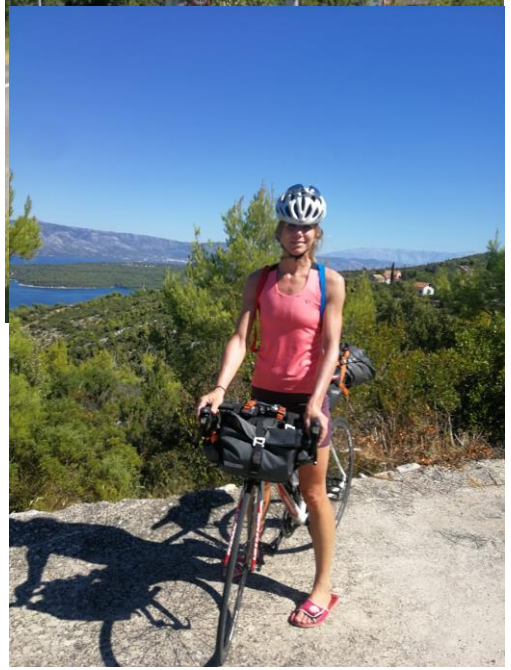
**2,688 (900)* km**

**38 (30)* €**









* median

# RESULT: MOTIVATIONS TO TRAVEL/HOST

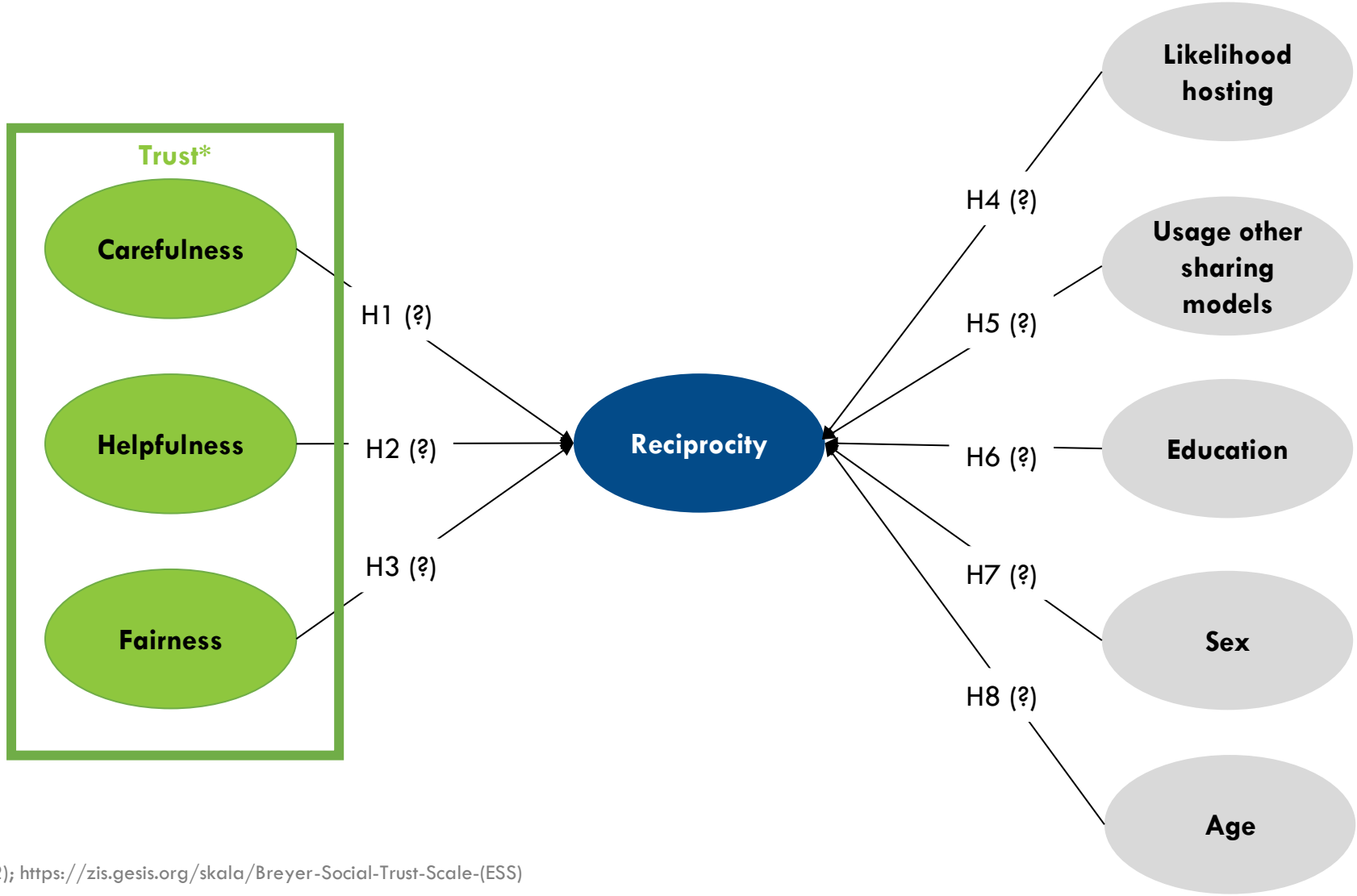
| | **Motivations to travel** (guest) (in %) | | **Motivations to host** (in %) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **To explore local culture** | **67** | **Just to help them** | **86** |
| 2 | To save money | 63 | To share their fantastic experiences | 68 |
| 3 | To make friends | 59 | To practice languages | 42 |
| 4 | To travel sustainably | 50 | To make friends | 33 |
| 5 | To get reliable info on destinations | 46 | To promote the use of bicycles | 21 |
| | Other | 17 | **Other** | **16** |

To give back for hospitality enjoyed

To reciprocate the hospitality I was shown. Haven't hosted any yet, though have offered

To pay it forward

# OUTLOOK: RECIPROCITY MODEL




*Breyer (2015); ESS (2012); https://zis.gesis.org/skala/Breyer-Social-Trust-Scale-(ESS)

# DISCUSSION



- Thank you for your attention!
- You are very welcome to ask questions
- Do you think, …?
  - About cycling tourism in general?
  - Does Warmshowers represent a SE organization?
  - What potential do you see in C2C tourism?
  - ….

# Thank you for your attention!

Please refer any questions to:

Prof. Dr. Jana Heimel
**Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences**
Faculty of International Business | Department of Tourism Management
Jana.Heimel@hs-heilbronn.de





# SELECTIVE LITERATURE (1/2)


- Carstensen, T. A. and Ebert, A. (2012), Cycling cultures in Northern Europe: from "Golden Age" to "Renaissance", in Cycling and Sustainability, John Parkin Ed., Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2012, pp. 23-58.
- Confederation of the European Bicycle Industry (2015), 2014 European Bicycle Industry & Market Profile.
- Deckop, J. R., Cirka, C. C., & Andersson, L. M. (2003), Doing unto others: The reciprocity of helping behavior in organizations. Journal o f Business Ethics, 47(2), pp. 101-113.
- EPRS (European Parliamentary Research Service) (2015), Cycling mobility in the EU.
- European Parliament. (2016). The Cost of Non-Europe in the Sharing Economy. Brussels: European Parliament, European Parliamentary Research Service.
- Gouldner, A. W. (1960), The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. American Sociological Review, 25(2), 161-178.
- Hamilton, J. B. (2002), Theorizing social support for African Americans with cancer. Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B. Sciences and Engineering, 62(8).
- Jeong, S. (2005), Sustainability o f worldwide connections by and for travel: Applying social capital in virtual travel community. Paper presented at the Third Global Summit on Peace Through Tourism-Education Forum, Pattaya, Thailand.
- Lauterbach, D., Truong, H., Shah, T., & Adamic, L. (2009), Surfing a web of trust: Reputation and reciprocity on Couchsurfing.com. Computational Science and Engineering,4, pp. 346-353.
- Lin, H.-E., Wang, M.-H. and Wu, M.-J. (2017), A study of Airbnb use behaviour in the sharing economy, in: The International Journal of Organizational Innovation Vol 10 Num 1, pp. 38-47.
- Liu, Y., Nie, L. and Li, L. (2016), Homogeneity, trust, and reciprocity: Three keys to the sustainable hospitalty exchange of couchsurfing, in: Tourism Analysis, Vol. 21, pp. 145—157.
- McGurn, James (1987), On Your Bicycle, John Murray, UK.
- Møller Munch, D. (2009), Cykelturismens økonomiske betydning - for Danmark 2008. Copenhagen, Denmark: Aktiv Danmark.
- Molz, J. G. (2012). Couchsurfing and network hospitality:It's not just about the furniture. Hospitality & Society, 1(3), pp. 215-225.

# SELECTIVE LITERATURE (2/2)


- Molz, J. G. (2013), Social networking technologies and the moral economy of alternative tourism: The case of Couchsurfing.org. Annals o f Tourism Research, 43(1), pp. 210-230.
- Mavondo, F. T., & Rodrigo, E. M. (2001), The effect of relationship dimensions on interpersonal and interorganizational commitment in organizations conducting business between Australia and China. Journal o f Business Research, 52(2), pp. 111-121.
- Pine II, B.J. and J.H. Gilmore (1997), 'How to profit from experience', Wall Street Journal, 4 August.
- Pine II, B.J. and J.H. Gilmore (1998), 'Welcome to the experience economy', Harvard Business Review, 76 (4), pp. 97–105.
- PolDep (Policy Department) (2012), THE EUROPEAN CYCLE ROUTE NETWORK EUROVELO, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2012/474569/PolDep-TRAN_ET(2012)474569_EN.pdf.
- Schulze, G. (1992), Die Erlebnisgesellschaft: Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart (The Experience Society: Cultural Sociology of the Present Time), Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag.
- The Economist (2011), "Bicycling; A way of life; Faster in town than going by car, bus, tube or on foot", http://www.economist.com/node/18584086, April 20, 2011.
- Tiffe, G.A. (2016), Wirtschaftsfaktor Radtourismus, Oedheim, 21.06.16.
- Vaughan, R., & Hawksworth, J. (2014). The sharing economy: how will it disrupt your business? Megatrends: the collisions.