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Chapter 4

**THROWING OUT A NET OVER BERLIN
VIA AIRBNB BOOKINGS:
EDUCATORS IN SEARCH
OF THE METROPOLE'S
CREATIVE POTENTIAL**

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ABSTRACT

The paper's first section presents the goal of the documented research: to connect the creative cities discourse with the development of innovative educational cultures, with a spotlight on the city of Berlin. One particular element of this research was to examine the social and cultural worlds which have been accessed through the booking platform Airbnb over a two-year time frame. The paper's second section indicates which methodology was used and how the data were collected: 27 city-wide randomly booked places were investigated, using cultural mapping,

case study, participant observation, unstructured interviewing, and listening. The results are reviewed in the third section in the form of short case descriptions. Section four discusses the findings: While a majority of hosts demonstrated diverse lifestyles and practiced openly communicative and productive economic patterns (which are connected in the literature with the creative class), a particular group also demonstrated limited financial resources and precariousness. In the paper's final section, the conclusion that the role of Airbnb in the context of urban change is more than ambivalent is discussed. This conclusion is provided despite the fact that Airbnb allows new communicative and economic forms. The Airbnb booking platform implies problematic effects on the social fabric of a city like Berlin. The paper concludes that schools should not only empower the younger generation with regard to their creative potential but that schools should also involve students in a critical analysis of urban change and challenge them to think about really sustainable forms of urban sharing.

Keywords: Airbnb, Berlin, commons, creative city, creative class, creative industries, cultural geography, cultural mapping, diversity, education, field research, gentrification, sharing economy, social justice, sustainable communities, urban change

1. GOAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Our transatlantic team of authors, who are engaged in teacher education, is connected through the goal of contributing their research to the building of lively, value-based, inclusive, participative, empowering, and sustainable communities and school cultures (Adams and Bell, 2016; Gannon et al., 2018; Martusewicz et al., 2015). Through this sharing, they also aim to implement and foster creative thinking and behaviors to prepare the younger generations to adapt and thrive in the rapidly changing social, economic, and cultural conditions of our societies. The growth of the creative economy has shaped the development of cities. With the rise of the creative city (Florida, 2002, 2005), the concept of creativity has taken on a new significance also for education in urban schools.

Although there already exists a large body of knowledge about the different facets of creativity (Kaufman et al., 2017), there is little

connection between education science and the growing interdisciplinary knowledge evolving currently around the concepts of the creative city and the creative class. What exists are interdisciplinary perspectives on creativity (Ambrose, 2017), cultural contexts in creativity research (Glaveanu, 2017), and practical guidance concerning the fostering of creativity in schools and classrooms (Beghetto et al., 2015).

The authors' interest is to examine this missing link between the different fields of study, with the firm intention that teachers, school principals, and administrative, educational leaders may be encouraged to access the potential which lies in the creative cities discourse. Such an examination also includes its problematic undercurrents, contradictions, and challenges (Florida, 2018; Kagan and Hahn, 2011; Pratt, 2010, 2011; Vivant, 2013) and explores the use of this knowledge for pedagogical and conceptual work in schools (e.g., Freeman, 2010; Rich and Tsitos, 2017; Siegel-Hawley et al., 2017).

The question of our research is: What can we, as educators, learn from the creative city and the creative class in the city? What is happening in the urban spheres where the creative class meets, works, and lives? And what becomes visible when we toss our net over one of these cities?

For practical reasons, we chose Berlin, which is one of these metropolises, and a place where various members of the creative class gather, as described by Florida (2002, 2005). Berlin, with an enormous, undamped afflux of new inhabitants who continuously move to the city, is not only well-known for its diverse cultural life (Bader and Scharenberg, 2013; Beachy, 2015; Lanz, 2013) but also its creative industries (Lange et al., 2008) and creative labs (Schmidt et al., 2014).

Although this research project broadly includes a series of different elements that are under study (e.g., innovative cultural and social projects), this paper narrowly examines the social and cultural worlds which have been accessed in the city of Berlin through the booking platform Airbnb.

2. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

On the one hand, the use of Airbnb bookings was an element of this study's methodology, affording us the ability to access the diverse quarters of Berlin, and the opportunity to explore them. On the other hand, the accessed lifeworlds of Airbnb hosts were also under study themselves. While one of the authors was collecting the data in the field, the responsibility of the other author was to analyze, interpret, and discuss the data and its implications for school development.

Meanwhile, the topic of the Airbnb world has accumulated a growing body of research, examining diverse questions around the booking behavior, motivations, and intentions of Airbnb users (Amaro et al., 2019; Liang et al., 2018). Additionally, research exists concerning the motivations of providers (Böcker and Meelen, 2017), the peer communication and relationship-building between hosts and guests (Moon et al., 2019; Sthapit and Jiménez-Barreto, 2018, 2019), the building of trust between guests on the one side and host and Airbnb on the other side (Ert et al., 2016; Tussyadiah and Park, 2018).

Other literature reflects the role of urban change, the rise of Airbnb, and urban accommodation sharing (Guttentag, 2015; Novy, 2018; Zvolska et al., 2019). In contrast to Berlin's Airbnb hosts themselves, the political boards and administration of the city no longer acknowledge Airbnb as a welcome driver. Airbnb is no longer considered a force that enhances the city's creative potential because there is a critical public debate about Berlin's housing shortage and the negative externalities of short term rentals. In particular, beliefs that such shared communities foster gentrification processes in Berlin as in other cities of that category (Gurran, 2018; Nieuwland and van Melik, 2020; Wachsmuth and Weisler, 2018).

The collected data represent thirty-three (33) randomly made bookings with Airbnb in Berlin throughout two years. The field-based author spent 148 nights in the city during that time frame. The single stays were between two and six nights long, with an average stay of 4 ½ nights. The booked price segment was from 40 to 55 Euros per night, including all fees

and taxes. The bookings were spread all over Berlin intentionally to get to know as many different places as possible.

In some cases, the field researcher had to look for quick booking options with automatic confirmation. Because such instances were rare, second bookings happened six times. So altogether, the researcher experienced 27 different places and hosts in connection with the 33 bookings. These repeated bookings allowed the researcher to explore several places more deeply.

At the beginning of all methodological considerations, cultural geography (Mitchell, 2000; Norton, 2006) and Benjamin's Arcades Project (2002) served as a source of inspiration. Then the researchers wove other methodological elements into the fabric of this study, like field research, including participant observation and unstructured interviews, which were embedded into flexible conversations. These methods included the taking of field notes and the writing of a field diary, taking photographs as a kind of visual diary (Burgess, 2000), and cultural mapping (Duxburry et al., 2015; Roberts, 2012). Reflection on the representations of the forms of communicative dialog and listening (Bennett et al., 2015) were applied to communication with the hosts. This consideration also included the appreciation for context and the building of authentic relationships. Finally, case study research (Flyvbjerg, 2011) played a crucial role, as each new booking is viewed as an individual case. The researcher revealed his project and goal directly at the beginning of the booking process and during communication on the Airbnb platform. Most hosts found his project interesting and wished to hear more about it.

3. RESULTS

Each new booking meant entering a distinctive lifeworld, each having a particular cosmos revealing its unique meaning. Thus, overall forms of categorization and reduction of the data have been avoided here. The authors preferred a condensed description and analysis of the case data, strictly looking at the possible creative potential which becomes visible in

every single case. However, practical challenges the field researcher experienced when living in the flats, how they have been entrusted to his field diary, as a documentation of personal reflections, or struggles, which goes beyond the documentation of field notes (Punch, 2012), have been left aside here.

- No. 1: In this case, a 35-year-old male host lived in a plain and unattended two-room-flat on a street that intersects with Kottbusser Tor. This part of Kreuzberg hosts many small unique workshops, stores, bars, and cafés, most certainly because the rents are still relatively low here. In the late evening, the researcher noted the smell of hashish rose from the bar downstairs, frequented by an in-crowd. And on some occasions, at three in the morning, somewhere in the five-story building, a party with Punk music started. The Kreuzberg host was involved somehow in the media and film industry. Born in Paris, as the son of a German-French couple, he took some time, directly after checking our field worker in, to talk to him. He was relaxed, smoked several cigarettes, listened to questions from his guest, and pondered about the character of the large European metropolis.
- No. 2: This female host, who was approximately 45 years of age, professionally let her flat with three rooms to Airbnb bookers, without herself and her husband living there. During some hours of the day, she offered massages in a studio next door. This host had negotiated an exception agreement with the authorities so that she could continue, even after Berlin's city government had issued a new law against letting complete flats such as those being let via Airbnb. This flat in Charlottenburg had a high degree of diversity of tenants worldwide, who provided the field researcher with great conversations. The rooms were equipped like hotel rooms, with large imprints of London or Paris, and together with all the international coming and going, had a vibrant, polyglot atmosphere. This host had activated the automatic booking confirmation option on Airbnb. A completely flexible check-in

option was provided through the availability of a small box with a key fixed at the wall, which could be opened with a code that the host would send the guest via Airbnb.

- No. 3: This male host, a 60-year-old cameraman, lived in a three-room flat in Charlottenburg, in one of the most upscale neighborhoods of Berlin. He had moved from West Germany to Berlin, and he told the researcher, over a beer in the evening, many stories from West Berlin under the conditions of the Cold War. The host, who lived as a single man in the flat, said that he would not be able to pay the rent without letting two of the rooms. One room was constantly rented to a young, dynamic real estate agent, who had been hired by a company to sell flats in new condominiums, and the other room was rented via Airbnb. The cameraman worked freelance, and during some months of the year, when he had no assignments, he collected unemployment compensations from the state. He loved to cultivate plants on his tiny balcony and to take his car and drive to some of the lakes in Berlin and swim there.
- No. 4: The staircase of this house, located in Schöneberg told stories of life from the 1920s. The two-room flat was designed in a modern style. The 36-year-old host introduced himself as a masseur, with his studio integrated into the flat. He had grown up not far away from the border to Poland and openly communicated that he practiced a gay lifestyle and offered massages to men. The field researcher was hosted in a small bedroom filled with a canopy bed with dark red silk curtains. From the start, a series of in-depth conversations were possible. The host was dealing with the emotional pains of a broken relationship with another man, with whom he had shared this apartment. After his partner had moved out, the host was no longer able to pay for the high rent alone. Thus, he started with Airbnb. The host and researcher even prepared lunch together and continued their conversation while eating. His hobby was to cruise the city on roller skates. He slept on a big sofa in the living room, where he had a massive screen of

perhaps 6 meters per 3 meters on the wall. Here he watched movies, and obviously, he preferred fantastic, futuristic fairy tales. At times he checked his social platform planetromeo.com account, and the researcher could see from the kitchen table, projected mainly at the wall, the pictures of men looking for dates. The researcher and the host even talked about the host's experiences with this kind of internet platform.

- No. 5: This time a gay male couple, who were in their 40s, served as hosts, also in Schöneberg. One of the men introduced himself as a diversity consultant with a focus on LGBTQ issues in school. He first had written an autobiographical book about his coming-out as a soccer player. The other man worked as a make-up artist with his own studio, also in the gay quarter. Their economic situation looked precarious given that they let their bedroom to paying guests and then slept on the sofa in the living-room. The researcher did not get the notion that they enjoyed receiving guests in their three-room flat. Their behavior towards the researcher was somewhat brittle and reserved.
- No. 6: The 58-year-old host lived in a 1 ½ room-flat in Schöneberg. He said he was a photographer and tourist guide with a Brazilian background. He slept in the corner of a larger room, which served as the living room, with an integrated kitchen, separated only by a shelf while the researcher dwelt in the single bedroom of that flat. This host openly communicated that he practiced a gay lifestyle and gave the researcher many insights into the gay life of Berlin.
- No. 7: This time the researcher's room was painted all in black unfurnished with a metal locker. He slept in a huge bed, made from iron, provided with a series of loops at all sides and ends. The black leather outfit and black leather boots of his host had a prominent place in the entrance area of the two-room flat in a simple building from the postwar period. This 26-year-old host lived in Schöneberg, directly between the gay bars and nightclubs. He came from a small town in Bavaria. On the first evening, he

offered the researcher a beer as a welcome drink to provide a relaxed atmosphere where his life's key themes could come to the surface. This young man studied event management, and with a frank and serene attitude, he communicated that he practiced a lifestyle in the gay male world that dealt with bondage and discipline, submission, and dominance.

- No. 8: This host had a West German background and was 48 years of age. He had studied biology but never had worked in that field, and now lived in Schöneberg, in the gay quarter, in a tenanted but plain building from the postwar time, in a three-room flat. He explained that he worked as an activist in Berlin's gay scene, and as a counselor for gay men, focusing on health issues. And he also made clear right at the beginning that he never returned to the flat before five o'clock in the morning. He shared that he spent a significant part of his life in the bars and nightclubs around Nollendorfplatz.
- No. 9: This 25-year-old host lived in the Southern part of Schöneberg. Originally from Italy, he worked as a pizza baker, renting his shady and plain one-room apartment on the ground floor, which lay to the backyard. While all kinds of cultural references were absent in this flat and the conversations never went beyond small talk, this young man's main asset was his naturally friendly manner and the physical vitality with which he lived his life. While the researcher was hosted in the main room of the flat, this young man slept in a shed of 1,80 m height, which once had been built into the bathroom. After lunch, when they had a break in the pizzeria, he often met his girlfriend.
- No. 10: This 53-year-old male host also lived in Schöneberg, near the old gasometer. After high school, he had come from West Germany to Berlin to study journalism and worked as a freelancer in that field. He recently had published an article about Osho, whose portrait also hung in the kitchen. This calm man introduced traditional German food in some of Berlin's inns to tourists during a specially booked tour. Life in his flat was easy going.

- No. 11: This 35-year-old male host lived in Neukölln in a three-room flat. He was the son of a Greek-German couple, and he said that he had worked as a bartender in earlier times. He also experimented with electronic music. It was unclear if he earned money with these activities. Occasionally his 4-year-old son lived in the flat, but at other times the somewhat hyperactive boy stayed with his mother. One night the mother and son stayed overnight. After they had left, a male friend stayed with the host. After an evening in the pubs with friends, the clanging of beer bottles could be heard on the staircase as the party continued inside the flat at three in the morning. On the ground floor was a famous Hipster bar with a shrill crowd meeting there. Below inside the basement was a private club where typical Berlin electro music played throughout the night until early morning. The sound continuously blasted into the courtyard.
- No. 12: The atmosphere of this site in Neukölln was quite Mediterranean. People with Turkish or Arabic backgrounds were sitting over a meal, coffee, or a water-pipe in the streets. The original female host, a young woman from Italy, was traveling in South America. Thus, a male friend of hers, also Italian, received our researcher and checked him in. The two had a long, in-depth conversation about the creative potential of Berlin. Finding it difficult to survive in Berlin, this 28-year-old young man was trying various engagements with music, which he found very competitive as there were so many creative people in the city. In the kitchen, the researcher had a witty conversation with a young woman from another German city. She had traveled for some years after finishing high school, thanks to the financial support of her father. Her mission was to learn outside of educational institutions. After a year in Sweden, she was now researching Berlin for projects where people put into practice their unique ideas.
- No. 13: This two-room flat in Wedding was shared with a doctoral student of history. The son of a female teacher, he explained that he had grown up in Berlin's South-West. As a boy, he swam in the

Schlachtensee. Now, perhaps 28-years-old, he researched the Third Reich. His room was packed with fantasy books, movies and computer games with themes of the Middle Ages and life on fantastic planets. The young man had taken a break, from his musical practice in a studio rented with other musicians, to register the field worker. He told the researcher his musical group also traveled through Germany to give concerts. Thus, he went traveling with friends. However, on the last night, they had an in-depth conversation about society, the world of science, growing up and living in Berlin.

- No. 14: This two-room flat was in Mitte, in the former East, in a plain building in the GDR style. The 36-year-old host came from northern Italy and introduced himself as an architect who now had turned to the business of taking photographs of architecture. He also worked as a photographer for Airbnb, taking professional pictures of the flats of new hosts, which they could upload into their account. The researcher's room was appointed with an inspiring collection of books about architecture and art history. The host and researcher had in-depth conversations about Berlin as a creative city, the life and work of the creative class in Berlin, about art and architecture.
- No. 15: This flat was located in the former East Berlin, near the Rosenthaler Platz. The building was from around 1920, and Alexanderplatz is a 15-minute walk from it. This area is a city quarter filled with many music clubs. The 54-year-old male host originally came from West Germany and had lived in Neukölln for decades. Having lived there during the time of the Berlin Wall, he had witnessed the most vibrant times in the old West Berlin, under the conditions of the Cold War. This host had started engineering studies, and he concurrently worked as a cameraman on some film projects to earn some money. The result was that he never finished his university studies. He then started to work as a craftsman, renovating flats, and he partly gained support from social welfare until Airbnb began to be an opportunity. This host had the mindset

of the 1968 generation, anarchistic, easy-going. He stored his tools for craftwork in the hall and in his bedroom. The living room, decorated in vintage style, contained a vast collection of discs from the '70s. The researcher had a series of in-depth conversations with the host about the social and cultural life in Berlin. Discussions included experiences during the '70s and '80s, changes encountered as a result of the fall of the Wall, and how life was currently. He often conjointly cooked with his guests. He said, "I don't need to travel because the world is coming to me."

- No. 16: This 33-year-old host lived alone in Mitte, in a strongly neglected three-room-flat along a small street directly behind Alexanderplatz, in the former East Berlin. The room was in a typical Plattenbau of the GDR. The host had an East German background, but his occupation was unclear. He only dressed up once and attended an event or meeting. During the other days, he slept until 1.00 p.m., he went to play baseball, or he cuddled with his two cats. There was no observation of cultural orientations beyond the bag with some sports equipment, in which the cats used to sprawl. Conversations between host and researcher started several times, but they never led to a vital dialogue.
- No. 17: Here the researcher lived in a shared apartment in Friedrichshain, just behind the Karl-Marx-Allee, where the GDR government used to have their bombastic parades and military reviews. Together he shared the space with six young people, mostly university students, two of whom had a young baby together. His host was a 23-year-old young woman enrolled in a social work program after leaving a teacher education program. This young lady now had let her room with selected vintage furniture to the researcher. For these days and nights, she shared the space of a girl from Ohio, with whom she lived in a same-sex relationship, meaning that they stayed in the same flat. These young people rotated the sharing of their rooms as a model that would bolster their finances. On some days, friends stayed overnight, so often, it was lively in the kitchen. Many in-depth

conversations were possible in that kitchen. This group of young people had a strong philosophy build around the concepts of social justice, sustainability, sharing, and celebrating diversity in relationships.

- No. 18: Also located in the former East Berlin area, this two-room flat was situated in Friedrichshain near the famous Berghain night club. The researcher was received and hosted by a 24-year-old young man of African background, who studied in a business program in South Germany and stayed in Berlin for an internship. The virtual tenant of the flat was a young man with an Asian background who had grown up in Denmark and now worked in Berlin in a computer firm. He created music during his leisure time. He was away traveling, and the researcher dwelled in his room between a string bass, an electric guitar, and huge loudspeakers.
- No. 19: This host, with a West German background, lived in a two-room flat in Köpenick. His West German family all were high school teachers, including his parents, grandparents, and even his ex-wife. He had gotten divorced and had left the teaching profession after acquiring his teaching licensure, at the age of 30. He then moved to Berlin and started again, with a new professional career, in game design, and enrolled in a bachelor's degree program. The researcher and host had many engaging conversations about the changing society, the role of digital worlds and media in the lives of today's youth, and the possible educative value and purpose of games in the future.
- No. 20: This host family also lived in Köpenick, but in a more rural neighborhood with small gardens around the free-standing houses. The researcher had a separate apartment under the roof of the house. One evening, he was invited to dinner and had the chance to talk briefly to his host family. The woman had come from Switzerland to work in Berlin and had stayed with her eight-year-old daughter. She had recently found a new partner with an East German background. Together the couple, who was in the late

30s, had bought the house. The man had a job in an internationally operating sales firm in Friedrichshain, which had begun as a small start-up. The business had grown to 60 employees, buying and re-selling products from Chinese firms. The company now ships products around the world, goods they have never seen nor touched.

- No. 21: This host was a 35-year-old female host of Czech background who lived in Pankow in a two and half-room flat and introduced herself as a freelancer in marketing and sales. She was frequently on the phone while she sat in the kitchen, surrounded by her two cats, negotiating meetings with other entrepreneurs in a co-working space at Potsdamer Platz. She indicated that they were currently involved in various marketing projects or that she was buying or re-selling horse saddles on eBay. She regularly let her two rooms to Airbnb guests, and during those times, she slept in a tiny chamber near the bathroom. In front of the windows, one could observe the airplanes which just had started at Tegel airport punctuated by the roaring thunder of the engines.
- No. 22: This retired 68-year-old host had been a chemist. He lived in Blankenburg, in a section that is to the northeast of the city center. He lived in a free-standing house with a garden, from which one could look out on an old farm building and a small old church. This man had an East German background, was divorced, had two adult children, and two grand-children who came for a visit every other day. He gave the fieldworker plenty of space and much practical support. For example, he provided the researcher with a bicycle, and in the evenings, he enjoyed talking to him about life, and society, over a bottle of beer.
- No. 23: This 62-year-old host was a highly educated female host who lived in a shady two-room flat that opened toward a backyard in Prenzlauer Berg and situated in the former East Berlin section. She worked as a secretary in the humanities division of a university. She had a West German background and was the daughter of an aristocratic and from a wealthy family, which had,

in connection with World War II, experienced tragic economic decline. Later she had married a pastor, and they had lived in a large city in the North. Unfortunately, the relationship broke up after a couple of years. Her husband lived with another woman, while this woman took care of her children alone. When the children became older, two moved to Berlin for study and work reasons, and she followed them. The flat contained not only a fine selection of antique furniture, paintings, lamps with shades, books, and posters from art exhibitions, but the walls were also adorned with a multitude of photographs from family life. The host and researcher had the chance to conduct some significant conversations about life and about living in Berlin.

- No. 24: This 39-year-old host of Hebrew-German-American background lived in Prenzlauer Berg. He introduced himself as a freelancer who worked in technology application development. “Escape the ordinary,” was his motto. He let one room of his plain and shady Prenzlauer Berg two-room flat. He had transformed it through placing within it extravagant furnishings. He incorporated some extraordinary ideas, like the start of classical music in the bathroom, as soon as the door was locked. Additionally, he placed, old Hebrew bibles with electrical seven-branched candelabra on a table glowing when one got back and entered the dark entrance hall in the evening. In the room, where the researcher dwelt, there was an ancient style bathtub on a pedestal, and an extensive collection of wigs in all colors and sizes, which guests could use when delving into Berlin’s nightlife, in case they would play a little bit with their identity. Some very inspiring and meaningful conversations were conducted in that flat about creative styles of living and working in Berlin.
- No. 25: This host of 25 years lived in a two-room flat in Prenzlauer Berg. He had a West German background and was now a university student of social work. He lived in a same-sex relationship with another young man, who occasionally arrived for a visit, or who stayed on weekends. The researcher cooked himself

and invited his young host after having booked the place for a second time, and vice versa. Conversations were significant and gave the researcher many insights about the perspectives of this young man, concerning his own life, the chosen professional path, and Berlin as Creative City. One topic also was that this young man had recently fathered a child to fulfill the wish of a lesbian couple to have a baby.

- No. 26: These male hosts lived in a two-room apartment in Prenzlauer Berg in a same-sex relationship. One of them, circa 36 years of age, had a Polish background and introduced himself as an entrepreneur who just had bought an old bus for marketing campaigns in the city. His start-up was new. The other one, perchance 32 years, came from Brazil. He had a doctoral degree in chemistry, and at present, was working as a teacher at a private high school. The field researcher and hosts had some in-depth conversations while having dinner together, or while going for a walk, about entrepreneurship, about biographies, about schools and universities, and the creative potential of Berlin.
- No. 27: This host of circa 36 years introduced himself as a taxi driver and lived in Prenzlauer Berg in a three-room flat. He lived as a single man, together with three children, but he had even more offspring. The other children occasionally visited, depending on the different mothers' schedule. He had grown up in a small town in Brandenburg, in the GDR. The building was from around 1920, with high windows and huge wooden double-wing doors inside the flat, and creaking timber planks on the floor. Outside the elevated subway trains, tightly clocked and rattling. Two stories deeper, under the balcony of the field researcher's room was a shrill Hipster bar, which was crowded until early morning. These people also drank and smoked outside the bar, while in the flat, the host had invited two women. These women appeared in black Punk style for a film night in the adjacent living room, which was designed like a cinema in the style of the 60s and where they sat until early morning, drinking wine, smoking, watching selected

movies, interrupting the presentation, and discussing the meaning of certain scenes.

4. DISCUSSION

The data analysis shows that bookings were made with hosts between 20-29 years (7, 9, 12, 13, 17, 18, 25), 30-39 years (1, 4, 11, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27), 40-49 years (2, 5, 8), 50-59 years (6, 10, 15), and 60-69 years (3, 22, 23). The majority of hosts had a West German background, even though 13 places were booked in the former West and 14 in the former East of Berlin. Still, there were only a minority of hosts that had East German backgrounds from the GDR (4, 16, 20, 22, 27). A larger group of hosts had a multicultural or migration background (1, 2, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21, 24, 26). Single women as hosts were rare (21, 23), also women in partnerships or shared apartments (2, 12, 17). All the other hosts were men; also gay men, considering that the presence of gay people is regarded as a relevant indicator of creative cities (Florida 2002, 2005). This status was clear when sexual orientation of male hosts was communicated to the field researcher. In cases no. 4, 6, 7, and 9, the researcher talked to a single gay man; in cases no. 5, 25, and 26, he talked to gay male couples, and in case no. 17 to a lesbian couple. Children entered the stage, such as grown-up children (22, 23), grand-children (22), one child who lived with her mother in a new relationship with another man (20). Also, there was one child that lived with both parents in a larger shared apartment (17), children who partly lived with their fathers, partly with their mothers, after the relationships had been discontinued (11, 27), and one child who had been fathered to fulfill the wish of a lesbian couple to have a baby (25). Jobs were found in a variety of creative industries (media, film, music, marketing, photography, event management, app development, computer technology etc.) (1, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 24), in the service sector (make-up artist, bartender, taxi driver, masseur, tourist guide, craftsman) (2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 27), in counseling, consulting, social work (5, 9, 17, 25), in education (23, 26), research (13),

journalism (26), or in business and sales (20, 21). A certain group of hosts demonstrated a particularly entrepreneurial spirit (14, 21, 24, 26). Only a minority of hosts seemed to be economically well-off (2, 20, 22), a larger group demonstrated economic precariousness (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 21, 23, 26, 27). In some cases, as far as the conversations could reveal such backgrounds, there had been an obvious break in the professional biography of hosts (5, 9, 15, 17, 19). Some hosts were university students (7, 17, 19, 25) or doctoral students (13). One third practiced a highly professional Airbnb concept (2, 10, 13, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26). Two-thirds of the hosts actively engaged themselves in a discourse about Berlin as a creative city (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27). A smaller group had given their flat a very particular design (4, 7, 23), one host had chosen an illustrative metropolitan theme which might be well connected with the creative cities discourse (2), and one had even made his flat itself a creative, intellectually stimulating laboratory (24).

CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper was to find out to what extent the lifestyles and professional activities of a randomly constituted sample of Airbnb hosts in Berlin were connected with the creative city and the creative class. A majority of hosts demonstrated openness, flexibility, and productivity in their communication style and how they were living and managing their individual lives, traits as they connect with creative behavior and the creative class in the literature. On the other hand, the collected data indicates that many life situations of the researched group were more or less precarious, and some hosts' communicative and economic assets for social and cultural participation seemed to be somewhat limited. So both sides of the creative cities discourse, the colorful and inspiring side, which embraces all kinds of lifestyles and new forms of working, and the problematic side, which connects with gentrification, rising rents, and

social fragmentation (Florida, 2018), are reflected in many of these 27 cases. Airbnb's role in these situations seems to be ambivalent.

On the one hand, the booking platform is a driver for new forms of communication, experience, and making money, even for people who own very little, except that they have an empty room to let. On the other hand, this platform contributes to unwanted urban change, even leading to the destruction of traditional neighborhoods. As educators, we must now create models that allow teachers and students to discuss these ambivalent developments and learn from them. Fostering the individual creative abilities of youth should go hand in hand with a critical analysis of urban change. One option might be to develop sustainable forms of sharing in our cities, as they are now explored and discussed under the concept of "commoning" such as can be observed in Berlin and other cities (e.g., Baldauf and Gruber, 2016; Bollier and Helfrich, 2012; Broecher and Painter, 2019; Kirwan et al., 2016; Kuhnert et al., 2018; Stavrides, 2016). Through these forms of collective production (e.g., housing or schooling projects, urban gardening, art projects, etc.) we would also move beyond the "platform capitalism" and the "commercialization of social relationships" as they are associated with Airbnb (ibid.). Schools may play a crucial role in this shift towards social justice, equality, and sustainability through experiential learning philosophies (e.g., Broecher, 2020) and empowering the young generation to participate in entrepreneurial and creative activities and look for potential spaces in urban change. It is for this reason that we have examined Berlin as a greenhouse, a laboratory where we can observe and study processes which might be of high relevance for the future development of our societies, including our schools.

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