

Interview mit Adriana, Angestellte beim Mieterbund in einer Stadt in Kalifornien, persönlich, 24.04.2017

Interviewer: TF, Transkription: GS, Korrektur der Transkription: LS

Adriana: Is it working? Yeah? Okay. #00:00:03-7#

Thomas: Maybe say it again, I think it just started (laughter). #00:00:06-0#

Adriana: You have my approval to record me. #00:00:07-6#

Thomas: Thanks very much. ((And)) should I say anything more about the project or maybe afterwards? #00:00:16-2#

Adriana: Yeah, maybe afterwards. #00:00:18-0#

Thomas: Okay then, maybe you could just introduce yourself in a few words. #00:00:22-6#

Adriana: So I'm (*Adriana*), I work at the (*city in California*) tenants' union. #00:00:28-1#

Thomas: Yeah (laughter). And could you please describe briefly what the (*city in California*) tenants' union is about, its primary objectives and activities? #00:00:39-5#

Adriana: So we were formed in 1971 as a collective to help tenants advocate for rent control which passed year 1979. And we continue to have a clinic where people can come and learn how to deal with their landlord problems. Some of our counselors are lawyers. but not necessarily. And it's all free and we also, we don't take any city money or foundations, so we can be really independent, critical. #00:01:15-7#

Thomas: I guess you are funded by like// #00:01:17-8#

Adriana: Membership deals. #00:01:18-7#

Thomas: Membership deals, okay. And what are your major work areas as a member, you are a member of the steering committee? #00:01:27-3#

Adriana: I am. #00:01:28-4#

Thomas: For like two years and a half? #00:01:30-1#

Adriana: For the tenants' union? #00:01:31-3#

Thomas: Yes. #00:01:31-3#

Adriana: At steering committee, I work on elections both candidates and propositions a lot. And then I work, I specialize in Airbnb legislation through this board of supervisors. #00:01:48-7#

Thomas: Mhm, and how much of your work is related to Airbnb and short-term rental issues? #00:01:56-0#

Adriana: I'd say like 25%. #00:01:58-6#

Thomas: And the rest is? #00:02:00-2#

Adriana: Other policy and just administration stuff, yeah. #00:02:06-1#

Thomas: Okay and we've been talking about this briefly when we were walking at the coffee shop, but what do you think generally of the sharing economy? You said like the second tech boom, is it, does it have any potentials, what are the risks, needs for regulation or can you find something positive as well? #00:02:29-7#

Adriana: (laughter) Well// #00:02:31-0#

Thomas: Like not only concerned with Airbnb, but in general. #00:02:35-9#

Adriana: Yeah, well, I'm, at this point I'm very frustrated by how the corporation has handled being regulated, so I'm sort of mad at them (laughter). It's hard to see the potential for good in the way they treated the city. Initially, like I get it, like the tenants' union initially thought that this was something that tenants wanted to do, you know, to help pay with their higher rents and stuff. But it turned out it was more, it's really risky for tenants 'cause you can get evicted if your landlord doesn't approve. But it turns out, it's mostly owners and it's like the perfect platform if you wanna get around rent control. We have really strong rent control laws here. So it's a way to get rid of permanent tenants and still make money, so it's become a huge housing crisis. We estimate there's 10.000 units on Airbnb that could be// #00:03:37-8#

Thomas: Mhm, in (*city in California*)? #00:03:40-0#

Adriana: Yeah. That could be, you know, housing for permanent residents and this, it's always been illegal here until it was allowed which was about four years ago with some restrictions. But it's impossible to enforce against, so ... sorry, I'm losing my train of thought. #00:04:06-2#

Thomas: That's fine. Yeah, maybe we already (...) the core of the questions maybe. So we've been strongly engaged with, among other things, with the impact of Airbnb. And other short-term rental platforms, I don't know if it's ... a huge part of it, maybe Airbnb because other rental platforms are not that popular. #00:04:31-6#

Adriana: Right, it's the biggest, they say it's the biggest market. #00:04:35-1#

Thomas: And on the impact of, on the housing situation here, what is the current situation here? So maybe you could describe a bit more? #00:04:44-9#

Adriana: Well, it, I mean it's hard// #00:04:48-3#

Thomas: The development? #00:04:49-2#

Adriana: Sure, it's one of the things. So there's all these units that are taken off thanks to, off the market, thanks to Airbnb. And at the same time, there's a very popular argument that we need to build more housing and that's why housing is so expensive 'cause we've been underbuilding supposedly. So they wanna build luxury condos to solve that crisis but they are turning completely their back on all these Airbnb units, you know? So maybe you built 2.000 units a year of new housing but meanwhile we lost 10.000. So the math doesn't add up (laughter). #00:05:28-9#

Thomas: Okay. ... Mhmm. #00:05:32-6#

Adriana: And I think the thing with Airbnb is there is like a philosophical shift like – I, my parents were hippies, kind of nomads and we were traveling around and, you know,

((exist)) on the kindness of strangers, you know, putting us up for free, a lot like Couchsurfing was trying to do. And now it's, with Airbnb, like everything is monetized, you know? Your home, your visitors have to pay you and it, and I, I find this term "sharing economy" really offensive, you know? #00:06:09-0#

Thomas: Mhm. Yeah, maybe you could go more into detail because maybe you're much concerned with the housing question that is related to how Airbnb, this housing condition, but on a more general level on the monetizing of hospitality of home ... what do you think what is its impact on a more general level like how does it change the way people travel on the one side and people's relation to their own home or the monetization or capitalization of everything that been ((out)) of the market before maybe. #00:06:51-2#

Adriana: Right, I mean, like in the US we have a really, really strong believe in property rights over anything else. There is no like social housing system, so if you don't have housing it's like, it's your fault and, you know// #00:07:11-6#

Thomas: That's a different// #00:07:12-9#

Adriana: Yeah, so// #00:07:13-5#

Thomas: Approach. #00:07:14-8#

Adriana: And yet the same people will complain about you know homeless people on the streets and you are like, "Well, where are they supposed to go? They don't have homes." So, you know, I personally would like to get more towards a model where everybody has the right to a home and that, and I don't see how you, that with when you're monetizing everything and peoples' basic shelter needs are speculative and, I don't know, what else? (laughter) #00:07:49-0#

Thomas: Mhm, maybe you could, I mean, very general question, you said it maybe before, but your general attitude towards Airbnb services and business practices is not really supportive. But how would you characterize it in your own words? #00:08:10-8#

Adriana: Well, so we've been, the tenants' union, we've been fighting them for about four years now and they are really adamantly opposed against to be regulated. And like really common sense regulations – like I can't go rent a car without a driver's license, you know? Like it seems pretty basic. And even that kind of like, like any kind of step to show that you qualify, they just adamantly oppose. They seemed like they have sort of a libertarian streak at the top, you know. I don't so// #00:08:48-7#

Thomas: What, what does that mean? #00:08:49-9#

Adriana: Libertarian? #00:08:50-0#

Thomas: Libertarian. #00:08:51-9#

Adriana: Free market. #00:08:52-6#

Thomas: Ok. #00:08:53-2#

Adriana: Unregulated, yeah. Just it's offensive to be regulated (laughter). #00:08:57-4#

Thomas: Okay, like they're don't thinking// #00:09:01-6#

Adriana: Yeah, they are above the law. #00:09:04-0#

Thomas: Okay. #00:09:03-8#

Adriana: And so they just came into (*city in California*) and set up this illegal profiteering scheme and then, when the city tried to regulate it, they just fought it tooth to nail. They even tried to go above the city level, to the state level and like found people that they think are supportive to create laws that will regulate us here, you know? So I don't know we all got along pretty well before they showed up (laughter). #00:09:33-3#

Thomas: Okay. And I mean, there has been this law in 2014// #00:09:39-3#

Adriana: Mhm. #00:09:40-6#

Thomas: Ordinance 218, is that correct? #00:09:43-7#

Adriana: Hm. #00:09:44-2#

Thomas: At least I read it somewhere. And I mean they tried to stop that before, but how did it even, how did it work out that it was accepted? #00:09:57-1#

Adriana: How did it pass? Well, previous to that ordinance we had already a law in the books that you couldn't rent for less than 30 days. So while that law up here is regulating them, it was actually giving them permission to exist with some new, new things, like you [are] always supposed be able to rent your, the house that you live in, and not like extra homes, but it's just impossible to enforce because although the platform knows the detail of all of the people on its side, it won't share that data with the city. And so the city has to go one by one and do visits to homes and try to figure out what's going on. #00:10:45-4#

Thomas: Okay. #00:10:46-0#

Adriana: At tax pay. #00:10:46-6#

Thomas: It's very costly. #00:10:47-3#

Adriana: Yeah, and the tax payers are paying for that, you know, when the Airbnb could simply cooperate. #00:10:57-2#

Thomas: Has it been in any sense effective? The law? Or is it? #00:11:02-7#

Adriana: I, a little bit, sure. I mean, it put up – I liked the thing that you can only do your home that you actually live in. We passed a much better law last year which would enforce the platforms to check with the city whether someone was registered, you do have to be registered with the city and get permission, so you would have to check with the city to see if they're allowed and then put it, you could put it on your website. And Airbnb turned around and sued the city (laughter) that passed anonymously from a board, so now there's been this like a year and a half court battle. They don't have any legal standing, we're probably gonna win, but you know, that just shows how little they respect// #00:11:53-3#

Thomas: But it takes a lot of time to// #00:11:56-1#

Adriana: Mhm, and meanwhile the law is not implemented. #00:12:03-6#

Thomas: Mhm. Is it maybe also, you said it's very hard to enforce the law, but is it also like (*city in California*) is known as really liberal in many ways, maybe the city is not so strict in enforcing laws in general? (laughter) I don't know. #00:12:23-7#

Adriana: Yeah. I think it's a government (...) problem, you know? The ... they set up inadequate departments with people who make a lot of money, but don't have to really be accountable. #00:12:38-9#

Thomas: Mhm. ... And for this law, you had like this advocacy coalition? Is it the right word? #00:12:48-8#

Adriana: Mh. #00:12:49-4#

[a man is interrupting the interview] #00:12:55-2#

Adriana: The coalition? #00:12:55-3#

Thomas: Yeah, the (*name of the coalition*)? #00:12:56-8#

Adriana: (*Name of the coalition*). So the (*name of the coalition*)// #00:12:58-2#

Thomas: Is sort of interesting because there are actors that usually, maybe don't// #00:13:03-2#

Adriana: Get along? (laughter) #00:13:05-4#

Thomas: Get along (laughter) like the hotel lobby and// #00:13:07-8#

Adriana: Yeah, for sure, so we are big enemies, the (*city in California*) apartment association which is an association for landlords and// #00:13:17-3#

Thomas: Okay, mhm. #00:13:17-7#

Adriana: And we do tenants' rights and they don't like rent control (laughter). So we've, we've historically been at odds, but they are in a coalition with us and// #00:13:30-4#

Thomas: For a bigger evil. #00:13:31-4#

Adriana: Yeah and it's interesting. So their reasoning is that they don't like rent control, but since their members have to abide by it, they don't like people who cheat and it makes, you know, it hurts their profits when other people cheat. #00:13:48-5#

Thomas: Same ((pull up)). Although// #00:13:52-8#

Adriana: Yeah, and first the hotel owners were not involved, I don't know why, I guess they didn't think it was such a big deal, but, and the hotel union was always involved 'cause they have// #00:14:07-9#

Thomas: Hotel union is the union of the hotel workers? Like (...)? #00:14:11-3#

Adriana: Yeah, it's called (*name of a coalition against short-term rentals*) and they have two issues. They have the job loss but also their members are being evicted and having a housing crisis. So they've always been really good and then recently the hotel council joined, which is the owners and then just neighborhood groups, there's a lot of like people

that live in very residential neighborhoods that don't like strangers next door and parties, and yah. #00:14:40-2#

Thomas: They all have good reasons, but how did you get together then? #00:14:44-5#

Adriana: Mh, it came pretty quickly ... I don't know, there's like a long-term activist, named (*name of the activist*), who's been around since the 60s, who's kind of a hippie activist (laughter) and he sort of pulled us all together. He's been doing stuff for years on housing. #00:15:05-1#

Thomas: Mhm. ... Do you like, is it well connected with everybody and known and sort of (...). #00:15:12-1#

Adriana: Mhm, yah. #00:15:15-3#

Thomas: Okay and in which way did this, like the different actors affect the details of the legislation? I've read that it's like you need to register if you would to, like less than 30 days and you have to pay the hotel tax and you have to have an insurance, your primary residence, so you don't, I know a lot who do not pull this things and stuff and everything. And another things which are quite different and maybe the goals of the things are reflected in this// #00:15:51-8#

Adriana: Yeah, I think it was pretty easy// #00:15:54-4#

Thomas: The outcome? #00:15:54-6#

Adriana: To come to consensus. I think the strongest argument is the housing element and displacement and potential displacement. And then also the jobs for workers, the tax, there's two issues with that. None people, (exhaling) it's, we, no one is allowed to see whether people pay the tax or not, so Airbnb claims people are paying it, but we have no way of checking. And then the other issue is that while it sounds impressive that they bring in 3 million dollars or whatever, hotels are paying much higher tax 'cause they also pay commercial property tax on their buildings which residents don't. So the city makes far more money from hotels than it does from Airbnb hosts. #00:16:54-6#

Thomas: Okay. But you have to pay some tax when you book up for apartments in (*city in California*), so on the Airbnb side// #00:17:03-6#

Adriana: Mhm. Yeah for sure. #00:17:07-2#

Thomas: They somehow// #00:17:07-4#

Adriana: But it's self-reported. You can cheat, you know? (laughter) #00:17:11-1#

Thomas: And is there still exchange with the other actors that were part of this// #00:17:17-2#

Adriana: The coalition? #00:17:18-4#

Thomas: Yeah, or is it been, or has it been only temporal? #00:17:20-7#

Adriana: No, no, we meet, it's every three weeks. We're gonna have a hearing on Friday about how they are doing on enforcement, so we'll be there, giving public testimony. And

we're still trying to ... we, there's two more elements we want which we had passed at the board, but the major vetoed it. #00:17:44-8#

Thomas: Mhm. #00:17:45-5#

Adriana: So we still have a little bit more to fight. We want a cap on the number of days. Right now you can do it a year around if you claim that you are in the apartment, but no one can proof whether you are or not (laughter). #00:17:59-9#

Thomas: Okay. #00:18:01-0#

Adriana: So we wanna a hard cap of 60 days a year. #00:18:04-0#

Thomas: Mhm. #00:18:05-3#

Adriana: We think that's adequate, you know? And we want a private right of action which would allow housing non-profits such as us to sue when the city is not doing its job. #00:18:18-3#

Thomas: Okay. #00:18:20-1#

Adriana: So it would be actual enforcement. #00:18:22-7#

Thomas: Mhm. #00:18:22-9#

Adriana: Mhm. #00:18:24-5#

Thomas: More impact on the enforcement of the law. #00:18:26-4#

Adriana: Mhm. #00:18:28-0#

Thomas: Okay, and where do you see generally the city's responsibility and maybe also of the state, I don't know, how should they address Airbnb and short-term rental market, maybe what is distinctive for (*city in California*)? As Airbnb has (*an office here*) here and, I don't know, the major has been in favor, and other politicians, and Airbnb is spending a lot of money on lawyers and lobbying and stuff, so like one thing for other cities maybe – and what is special about (*city in California*), maybe? #00:19:05-6#

Adriana: Yah, I find it really strange that you can just come and set up a business that's illegal and then it's so hard to get rid of that business. I mean, Uber is doing the same thing with the taxi industry. It's completely illegal and, but the bureaucracy that deals with enforcement is just too slow to react. But at the same time, they could get, the city could get creative and could be a little more hard like just simply say, "You can't do business here unless are legal", you know? (laughter) Instead they just let them get away with illegal behavior and then like "Oh, what do we do?", you know? So. #00:19:58-5#

Thomas: So it's the lacking behind. But so they should be more creative? #00:20:02-7#

Adriana: Mhm. I mean there's other things you could, you can simply say, you know, Airbnb has a business license, like revoke their business license if they're not playing by the rules. Mhm. #00:20:19-2#

Thomas: Okay and maybe for other cities? I don't know, maybe not all the cities have such a housing crisis like here. I don't know. They don't have like the, Airbnb is not like paying taxes in Austria or Germany or whatever. #00:20:40-2#

Adriana: Mhm. Yeah, I mean I'm not opposed to Airbnb in every city. It's just the ones though where's housing crunches. Like I get it, if you wanna, you know, do it in Hawaii, it's all about tourism anyways, so it benefits the city. But when people who have to work here are feeling a housing crunch, then it needs to be regulated. #00:21:07-9#

Thomas: Mhm, okay. Have you ever used Airbnb yourself? #00:21:10-3#

Adriana: Mhm. (chuckles) I used it Mexico, in Mexico City, yeah. #00:21:14-6#

Thomas: And what was, how was the experience? What was your impression? #00:21:19-5#

Adriana: It was, it was okay. I actually ended up preferring hotels just 'cause I like, you know, that if you have a problem or question, there's someone to turn to or, you know, you can get a taxi easy, yeah (chuckles). #00:21:35-5#

Thomas: Mhm, but some hosts are so professional that they do a lot of service. #00:21:40-1#

Adriana: I find that a little intrusive, you know? Like I never enjoyed staying in a bed and breakfast, you know, where the host is there and they're fighting with their children and (laughter) it's like too intimate for my taste. But – and I don't think hotels are that much more expensive than Airbnb. Like there's all these cleaning fees with Airbnb, by the time you are done, you know, you can, and you can't get out of the fees, like you could be very clean and they still charge you. #00:22:10-1#

Thomas: That's sure. ... okay yeah, maybe how did Airbnb and I don't know if there were other rental, short-term rental providers, how did they react to the law? #00:22:32-3#

Adriana: Well, they sued the city (laughter). #00:22:35-9#

Thomas: I saw like, they have like some information about (*city in California*) that hosts need to register, blablabla, so they sort of give the information to their customers. #00:22:52-6#

Adriana: Right. And then they claim they are not responsible if people break the law. Right now they've been talking a lot about this thing called "one host, one listing". #00:23:02-8#

Thomas: Ah yah, mhm, I've heard of it. #00:23:05-2#

Adriana: Which is so fake. Like I can show you a printout of someone's fake profile and they used an actor, they used this guy, Bradley Cooper, who is an actor// #00:23:18-7#

Thomas: He's quite famous actually. #00:23:18-9#

Adriana: Yeah, as their photo! And they claimed to be that he was hosting. And it's like, clearly Airbnb is not, you know, checking whether these, so you just set up, you know, four or five fake accounts and they don't care. #00:23:33-0#

Thomas: They have also a verification process. You can like put your passport on it, and you just put another paper on in. I think, it works as well, so. #00:23:42-3#

Adriana: Mhm. #00:23:43-1#

Thomas: It's not so (laughter)// #00:23:44-5#

Adriana: And we've, we've had, we've found some violations where an owner evicts all the tenants and then creates fake leases with people who act like property managers, they don't actually live there, but they serve as the host and claim it's their home when it's not. #00:24:08-8#

Thomas: Okay. #00:24:09-9#

Adriana: So that's one, another way around the "one host, one listing". You get fake hosts. #00:24:16-8#

Thomas: So you do fake profiles and they// #00:24:20-1#

Adriana: Mhm or fake leases or you get your, you know, your wife is a host, you're a host, it's the same host, you know? #00:24:26-3#

Thomas: Mhm. Yah. I know there's some icons where you can see "helps hosting", for example. #00:24:33-4#

Adriana: Mhm. #00:24:35-4#

Thomas: And I was looking up for LA the other day and it was hard to find any listing which was like where people had one listing, so it was all like they had one in LA and one in New York, so sort of interesting. And how did Airbnb react to your efforts? Do you communicate with them? Have you ever been contacted by them or met anybody from Airbnb? #00:25:03-0#

Adriana: Yeah, initially they had some lobbyists that, we had formerly been part of city hall, so they were a little more approachable. They always, they just have a, like a script of talking points, if you try to criticize them. They just ignore what you're saying and say something else, you know, very politician. And now they hired like people that are really high up, you know, like president Clinton's former advisor is, works for them now. #00:25:34-4#

Thomas: I've read, I've read like you did like a paper on how it benefits the middle class, I think. Was it you? I don't know. Quite a famous guy who was in some administration of the US government. #00:25:50-8#

Adriana: Yeah, so, I mean, you can see they have like a direct line to the elite government of the US at this point, so they don't even bother to deal with us anymore. #00:26:02-1#

Thomas: So they don't even talk with you and// #00:26:04-3#

Adriana: Nah. #00:26:05-3#

Thomas: Don't react. #00:26:06-5#

Adriana: Nah, there's a lot of money, so they just give, like over 50.000 [dollars] to a potential governor, (*name of the potential governor*). #00:26:15-4#

[someone knocking on the door, interrupted interview] #00:26:24-4#

Thomas: And how did they react to your, the thing you did in their office with the balloons? #00:26:28-8#

Adriana: Mhm, they probably didn't like it. They didn't say anything. #00:26:33-1#

Thomas: They didn't pull you out?// #00:26:35-2#

Adriana: No, cause it's// #00:26:37-5#

Thomas: Called the cops, or? #00:26:38-0#

Adriana: It's a public thing, that area. It's a public structure, so they couldn't. #00:26:45-0#

Thomas: Inside the building or? #00:26:45-4#

Adriana: Mhm. #00:26:45-7#

Thomas: Yah? #00:26:46-1#

Adriana: Just the ground floor is public, not the offices. #00:26:48-4#

Thomas: Ahhh. Okay. #00:26:49-7#

Adriana: We got a lot of media for that. That was fun (laughter). #00:26:53-3#

Thomas: Yeah, I imagine. Okay but apart from that, they just don't react. #00:27:00-2#

Adriana: No. #00:26:59-8#

Thomas: Because Murray [Cox, initiator of Inside Airbnb] was saying something similarly like they never contacted him but comment his work, say it's all fake or something like that. #00:27:10-7#

Adriana: One of their talking points is that we're all paid by the hotel coalition, you know, hotel owner industry and even if we were, it's like "that's a bad thing?", like, "You are in direct competition, of course the hotel industry is gonna fight you", you know? #00:27:29-0#

Thomas: But somehow they seem very confident that nothing can happen to them. #00:27:32-0#

Adriana: Mhm (laughter). #00:27:33-4#

Thomas: It seems. Are you also involved in any other clubs or connected with people working on similar projects? Here and maybe another, yesterday you said before, when we were// #00:27:45-7#

Adriana: For, on the issue on short-term rental? #00:27:48-7#

Thomas: Yah. #00:27:49-7#

Adriana: Yeah I communicate a lot with Los Angeles, Portland, Santa Monica, New York. There's a strange thing in New York where (*name of a New York union*)// #00:28:05-6#

Thomas: (*Name of a New York union*)? #00:28:07-4#

Adriana: It's a union. #00:28:07-9#

Thomas: Okay. #00:28:08-3#

Adriana: Of like janitors and stuff. And they usually work in commercial buildings. #00:28:13-1#

Thomas: Mhm. #00:28:14-1#

Adriana: They went, but like (*name of the coalition*) is the labor union for real hotels, so there's kind of competition with each other. But (*name of a New York union*) secretly was gonna cut a deal with Airbnb that they would, they would be pro Airbnb if they allowed labor workers to clean houses. #00:28:41-9#

Thomas: Okay. #00:28:43-4#

Adriana: So in residential homes, and first of all I'm not sure that's [what] they're doing, it's probably the other unions' domain. But it was just gross 'cause they were providing political cover and the contract wasn't even ... ongoing. It was just like this publicity's stuff. So when we heard about that, we connected with all these housing groups in New York and we were like, "this is going on". And we just like did this giant public campaign to stop (*name of a New York union*) and embarrass them and they did back off, but (laughter) so is, it was a weird thing. #00:29:27-3#

Thomas: So you have some successes. #00:29:30-4#

Adriana: Mhm. There's a lot of power in coalitions. Like, I think that's how we win with Airbnb 'cause it's just one like extremely selfish looking company that's suing cities and ignoring everyone. And then when you get all these diverse groups coming together to say "no", then it's like you can't ignore it. #00:29:52-0#

Thomas: So you (...) some sort of coalition broader you want to fight back. #00:29:56-2#

Adriana: And also, you know, politicians react like who's gonna help them get elected? Is it just money or is it people knocking on doors and talking to their neighbors, you know? #00:30:07-6#

Thomas: Mhm. So it's a good thing to have democracy. (...). (laughter) #00:30:13-1#

Adriana: Yeah. If you don't have the money, you can do it with people power, you know? #00:30:16-3#

Thomas: Yeah. Okay. Maybe something which I was thinking now. Airbnb does a lot of like, they work on their community of hosts and they do meetings and stuff, too, because they, they live from lively neighborhoods and stuff. What is your approach to their actions? And not this legal stuff or lobbying but also on this more grounded level? I don't know how to say this. #00:30:50-2#

Adriana: Yeah, I've noticed a change ähm// #00:30:52-8#

Thomas: Which you could, meet, call lobbyists (...). #00:30:55-0#

Adriana: Right, they are like grassroots lobbyists, they're real people. And I've noticed a change, I think thanks to us, our message, we've drive a wedge between those legitimate hosts and the company. Like last week, I was part of this like panel discussion. I was the one tenant person and then it was like five Airbnb hosts who wanted to, you know, defend what they do. And we, we had a nice, polite discussion and it was clear that they all disliked Airbnb (laughter). They liked hosting, but they rejecting how Airbnb was like acting in public and they would like, they had stories of like, you know, guests messing up their home or insurance claims and Airbnb not doing anything and being unresponsive. So they're not well liked, which helps. And you hear those people a lot in city hall saying, "I just wish Airbnb would follow the laws, I follow the laws, you know, why won't they?" #00:32:03-8#

Thomas: Okay. So this might be one, another way to ... to get to some sort of regulation ((into some)). #00:32:17-2#

Adriana: Yeah, I think for other cities, like that was very useful. Once we had like the way to do it legitimately then all these people who registered and became legitimate turned on the illegitimate people, so you can separate and divide. #00:32:36-3#

Thomas: Mhm. ... Okay, when I was preparing for the interview, I came across the "anti-eviction map project". Tell me a little bit more about it? #00:32:48-8#

Adriana: So it's something I started with a friend about four years ago with volunteers who are, like to play with data (laughter). So we're sort of like the social justice arm of tech and we're (...) in the tenants' union, so. Yeah, it's just a collective of volunteers. #00:33:11-7#

Thomas: And it's an ongoing project? So you? #00:33:13-4#

Adriana: Mhm. We do other stuff on gentrification and like police violence and stuff. #00:33:21-2#

Thomas: Yeah, okay. It's like the short-term rental Airbnb stuff is one part of it, but it's also other parts. And how do you get access to Airbnb data? #00:33:32-5#

Adriana: Through Murray. #00:33:35-7#

Thomas: Yeah? #00:33:35-4#

Adriana: (laughter) #00:33:36-9#

Thomas: That's great (laughter). #00:33:37-7#

Adriana: I know he puts it up on his website, you can download it. #00:33:46-2#

Thomas: And maybe, in general, what is your approach to data? Is it important or in which way can it be useful? Providing facts or I don't know. #00:33:56-1#

Adriana: I think it was useful for us to show the scope of the problem. It was like once we got this data scrapes, you couldn't ignore. Like anecdotes are only so-so useful. So it's great for illustrating problems. #00:34:13-2#

Thomas: Mhm. Because Murray says it's, once you provide facts and data for debate. #00:34:20-5#

Adriana: I mean both sites are gonna manipulate and// #00:34:23-2#

Thomas: Because yeah, data is not so objective, you can do a lot of things with it, so (laughter), yeah. Okay. And I don't know, actually I'm interested in all this review stuff, do you know anything about? #00:34:41-6#

Adriana: Oh. #00:34:43-4#

Thomas: Did you use review data for any of your work? #00:34:47-8#

Adriana: Not data, but when I find someone who's violating the laws, I will use their reviews to prove it, you know, in court. #00:35:00-1#

Thomas: Mhm. Okay. #00:35:01-6#

Adriana: It shows. #00:35:02-4#

Thomas: So it might be material of proof to say that there has been somebody there and (...)// #00:35:09-3#

Adriana: I use it more for evidence. #00:35:10-4#

Thomas: Okay, evidence. Mhm. Might there be any other purposes? Ways you can make use of it? #00:35:16-7#

Adriana: I would think it would be if there, like bad hosts, you know, that is your only resource to making, helping them improve, you know. #00:35:27-0#

Thomas: Mhm. #00:35:27-3#

Adriana: Like there's all the scandals about people discriminating on race and, you know, hotels can't do that, but the only way you're gonna stop someone there is to do public campaign, you know, bad reviews. #00:35:42-8#

Thomas: Okay. Do you know anything about the review system? I don't know, you're tech affine? #00:35:49-9#

Adriana: No, I don't. #00:35:51-9#

Thomas: No? Okay. Maybe in general, because I'm also interested not only in Airbnb and review, but reviewing everything online has become sort of very popular. You can review doctors, I don't know, everything, what do you think about that? #00:36:13-9#

Adriana: (laughter) I don't know. #00:36:15-1#

Thomas: Are they relevant? And what might me some impact of that? #00:36:19-6#

Adriana: I think it's often unfair. Like that site Yelp, you know? Like people are just so mean. They only write when they are complaining, you know, and it's often complaining about things that have nothing to do, like with restaurants, they complain about service times and stuff. #00:36:39-5#

Thomas: Or the weather. #00:36:39-8#

Adriana: Right (laughter). Which isn't, is so, then the restaurant gets a bad review, so I mean, I do use it, but I always read it with a (...), you know? #00:36:50-2#

Thomas: Okay. Yeah and also that, I mean it's different with Airbnb, everything, all the reviews are so positive. #00:36:59-0#

Adriana: I know, right? #00:36:59-9#

Thomas: And so that's also one thing that's interesting for me how the context is// #00:37:04-6#

Adriana: Yeah, well you can review each other, too, so you have to be nice. #00:37:09-7#

Thomas: And you have to be nice and you, if you have a negative review, you won't be able to host anymore or be a guest anymore, so you need to have positive reviews to participate in that. With Yelp it's one, a different thing, also what you review and how the instruments are designed. Airbnb is a lot more successful if everything is positive. They sort of brainwash, ideology of everything is// #00:37:40-5#

Adriana: (laughter) No problems in the world. #00:37:42-2#

Thomas: Not purple, but what do you say? In German it's "rosa-rote Brille" like pink glasses? #00:37:48-0#

Adriana: Mhm, rose-colored glasses, yes. #00:37:51-3#

Thomas: Okay, yeah. #00:37:54-1#

Adriana: Okay. #00:37:55-4#

Thomas: Anything more you wanna say? Do you have some tips for me who might be interesting to talk to? #00:38:01-9#

Adriana: Hmm. #00:38:02-5#

Thomas: Or, you said something about Friday? #00:38:04-7#

Adriana: Friday? Yah. #00:38:05-8#

Thomas: Is it possible to go there? #00:38:07-3#

Adriana: Are you still here? #00:38:08-0#

Thomas: I will be there until Saturday or Sunday maybe. #00:38:11-5#

Adriana: Yeah, it's at city hall, room 250. I think it'll start around 11am. And it's a report from the enforcement department on how they're doing. #00:38:23-3#

Thomas: On 2? #00:38:23-8#

Adriana: 250 at// #00:38:24-9#

Thomas: 250. #00:38:25-4#

Adriana: City hall. #00:38:26-1#

Thomas: Okay. #00:38:28-4#

Adriana: Yeah. #00:38:31-5#

Thomas: Mhm. #00:38:31-4#

Adriana: I'll be there. #00:38:32-3#

Thomas: Okay and maybe other people who// #00:38:34-7#

Adriana: Yeah, I mean you could also interview, well, so our little, we hired like a coordinator guy. His name is (*name of the coordinator*). #00:38:44-6#

Thomas: (*Name of the coordinator*)? #00:38:45-5#

Adriana: Hm? #00:38:46-3#

Thomas: (*Name of the coordinator*)? #00:38:47-0#

Adriana: (*Name of the coordinator*). #00:38:50-2#

Thomas: Mh. And? #00:38:50-7#

Adriana: And he, (*name of the coordinator*)// #00:38:52-3#

Thomas: (*Name of the coordinator*)? #00:38:54-9#

Adriana: Yeah. #00:38:54-8#

Thomas: Okay. #00:38:55-3#

Adriana: And he, he's been helping a lot with other cities. #00:38:59-9#

Thomas: Mhm. #00:39:01-0#

Adriana: So he, he knows a lot of comprehensive// #00:39:04-4#

Thomas: Mhm. #00:39:04-5#

Adriana: Law stuff. #00:39:07-3#

Thomas: Okay. #00:39:08-7#

Adriana: He's real nice. #00:39:10-2#

Thomas: Mhm. And maybe some ((maybe)) of the data? #00:39:13-9#

Adriana: The data? Murray (laughter). #00:39:17-6#

Thomas: Yeah? #00:39:17-3#

Adriana: Yeah. I could, there's people at the hotel union that have impact data, but that's not really your thing, right? #00:39:26-9#

Thomas: Mhm. Well the anti-eviction maps project is also interesting. How you get the data? From Murray, you said? And then? #00:39:35-6#

Adriana: And we have a lot of tech workers in it. So people that feel guilty about working for Google who come (laughter) help us. #00:39:45-1#

Thomas: Do you have an idea where I can talk to Airbnb employees or former employees? #00:39:49-4#

Adriana: (moaning) Good question. #00:39:53-0#

Thomas: Because if I go there, they will not tell me anything and// #00:39:59-7#

Adriana: ... Yeah, I don't know. It was interesting with the// #00:40:04-1#

Thomas: I was googeling for ex-employees, if there was somebody like complaining, but (laughter) I couldn't really find. I mean, there's some people who do their own business now, like optimizing your Airbnb. Maybe they're not so popular, so maybe, they might be up for a few questions, even they would be careful what they say. #00:40:23-7#

Adriana: Yeah. #00:40:24-2#

Thomas: But// #00:40:24-8#

Adriana: I don't know anyone or they wouldn't admit it to me if they did work for Airbnb. We had an interesting like I, we don't know, it's such a mystery. But someone was like a hacker or something and there was this one bad host and when people would book his unit, it would get copied to us and I'd get an e-mail with the reservation. #00:40:47-6#

Thomas: Ah. #00:40:49-4#

Adriana: (laughter) I don't know who did it, but they were trying to help, it was crazy, so they hacked his email. #00:40:54-8#

Thomas: You don't know who? #00:40:56-0#

Adriana: No. It wasn't me. (laughter) #00:40:57-9#

Thomas: Okay. Okay. Okay because I, I will put it off, because// #00:41:05-2#