

ABSTRACT

Overtourism is a term that has been widely promoted over the last years to refer to the phenomenon of an excessive number of tourists overwhelming a destination's capacity and resources, resulting in negative impacts on the environment, infrastructure, local communities, and visitor experiences. Peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation has grown exponentially over the past few years, revolutionizing the hospitality industry and revolutionizing the way people travel. The relationship between P2P accommodation and overtourism is a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors such as the increased availability of short-term rentals and their impact. This thesis explores this relationship using Airbnb as the reference P2P accommodation platform. It also covers the factors that drive tourists to use P2P accommodation platforms and if these factors can lead to an increase in overtourism in European cities.

The analysis was organized around two data sets, one related to the characteristics of P2P accommodation listings and the tourist density of bednights, and the other related to the characteristics of P2P accommodation listings and the tourist density of arrivals. In total, data regarding the Airbnb listings from 29 Europe cities was gathered for this study. The variables used to measure P2P accommodation were the price, location, variety, and perceived authenticity of listings. Quarterly data regarding the Airbnb listings was gathered on available Inside Airbnb data sets between the years 2021 and 2023 while most of the data for the years 2015 to 2021 was gathered using the Wayback Machine as older data sets were not accessible. The tourist density variable used to measure overtourism was created with quarterly bednights and arrivals data that was gathered on TourMIS.

This study employed a quantitative research design and a linear regression model to find whether there was a relationship between the selected variables using secondary data. Each variable was analyzed separately to test each hypothesis. The results showed that there was no statistical significance between P2P accommodation and overtourism, with all hypotheses rejected. While it was not the expected result, some conclusions can still be drawn from this study. This thesis aims at introducing further research on the relationship between P2P accommodation and overtourism using a wider range of variables and indicators to obtain more accurate results to analyze the selected variables using a multidimensional approach.