

#### Contribution to the field

From a methodological perspective, among the main conclusions of this study is that while the aim of asynchronous email interview is not to replace traditional face-to-face interviews, it can be used as a qualitative research method with unique benefits. From a practical perspective, this study presents new insights by identifying travelling artists' roles and illuminated some aspects of the scope of the phenomenon of traveling artists in which voluntary artwork and tourism interact.

#### Research limitations

While this study reflected larger travel trends of a particular travel personality, those of traveling artists, there is still a great need for research on other travelling artists' destinations to determine whether the findings of this study can be generalized. Only when the findings of this study are corroborated by further observations, they will provide some tentative answers to the understanding of the complex phenomenon of travelling artists as they naturally occur.

**Keywords:** traveling artists' roles, murals, postmodern tourists, Lakkos, tourist experience, artistic recognition

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## Women and Airbnb: Insight from female hosts and guests

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#### Background

The sharing economy is emerging as a global phenomenon, which is growing rapidly in both scale and scope. Such as, in Europe alone the sharing economy has generated €28 billion in revenues in 2015, a figure forecasted to increase to €160 billion in the coming years (European Commission, 2016). Defined as "the peer-to-peer-based activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services, coordinated through community-based online services" (Hamari et al., 2015:1), the sharing economy represents a disruptive yet potentially transformative phenomenon with significant implications on economic systems. Within this context, the impacts of the sharing economy on the tourism industry have been particularly noticeable, with scholars recognising the transformative effects on hospitality and travel services (Guttentag, 2015). In particular, peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation has emerged as the most prominent example of the sharing economy, whereby people rent out for a short period of time available space within their property and/or the entire property through online platforms (Belk, 2014). Considering the numerous benefits that P2P accommodation offers to both hosts and guests, its growth is not surprising. On one hand, P2P accommodation allows property owners to gain additional income (Fang et al., 2016), thus improving their standard of living. Indeed, P2P accommodation has been hailed as a liberating landscape in which workers can enjoy flexibility (Schoenbaum, 2016). On the other hand, it extends the range of accommodation options for travelers, offering the opportunity for personal relationship development between hosts and guests (Tussyadiah and Zach, 2017). Even so, the precipitous growth of P2P accommodation has yielded several concerns over the potential impacts at the economic and social levels. Correspondingly, there is a burgeoning number of studies examining P2P accommodation benefits and effects among others (e.g. Guttentag, 2015; Tussyadiah and Pesonen, 2018). The majority of pertinent studies draw insights from the Airbnb context, which has been recognised as one of the world's most successful P2P accommodation network (Camilleri and Neuhofer, 2017). Since 2008, Airbnb has expanded to include more than 200 million members in over 191 countries (Airbnb, 2018), warranting its title as a global *tour de force* in the tourist fabric of numerous places (Ioannides et al., 2018).

Despite the increasing academic attention that Airbnb has attracted in recent years, the voice of women remains largely muted in extant literature. This omission is surprising considering that Airbnb presents great opportunities to women who have historically been discriminated in the traditional hospitality workplace (Farmaki, 2018). Considering that women make up more than half of the

workforce in tourism (Equality in Tourism, 2013) and are responsible for making nearly 80% of travel decisions (Bond, 2015), the examination of female Airbnb hosts' and guests' perspectives becomes imperative. Indeed, gender is likely to represent a salient attribute shaping the host-guest relationship in P2P accommodation as in such contexts the peer-to-peer transaction is frequently more intimate than in traditional hotel settings. This study addresses this gap in the literature and examines the views of female Airbnb hosts and guests on the benefits and risks of using Airbnb. Specifically, drawing from semi-structured interviews we sought to understand the motives of engaging in P2P accommodation as well as the ways in which female users negotiate inherent risks (either as hosts or guests).

#### **Methodological approach**

This study forms part of a larger semi-structured interview study with Airbnb hosts and guests aimed at exploring their motives, perceptions and behaviours. Here, we report findings from 12 hosts and 18 guests that were pertinent to the present purpose. Interviews were conducted via Skype between May and December 2018 with the sampling process being facilitated by the principal investigator's involvement in a relevant European Union COST Action, which allowed her access to female Airbnb hosts and guests across Europe. Purposive sampling was employed with the researchers considering the backgrounds and age of the informants to ensure that enough diversity is included (Ritchie et al., 2014) within the sample. Data were analysed thematically whereby with blocks of verbatim text being copied, re-organised and cross-referenced to allow the identification of thematic categories.

#### **Results**

Preliminary findings indicate that female hosts and guests are motivated to use Airbnb for various reasons spanning across both economic and social benefits. In the words of a host, *"It's not about the money. It's about getting to hear guests' stories...it's about the people you get to help"* [60, Ireland]. *"It is an inspiring way to make a living. I use the extra money to finance other projects"* said another host [53, Netherlands]. Similarly, a guest suggested that Airbnb presents *"a more cost-effective option, better than staying in a hostel where mostly young people go"* [38, Spain]. Within this context, users argued that they selected Airbnb due to the ease of use and perceived safety as it is the *"most well-known network"* [27, UK]. As a host [31, Germany] commented *"Airbnb is more personal, I can see reviews of guests, understand who they are and what the purpose of their visit is"*. As the analysis moved on, safety, trust and privacy issues were identified as key concerns to both female hosts and guests. While female guests appeared to have the flexibility to select a female host in an attempt to minimise perceived risk, female hosts were more restricted in their ability to select guests due to the platform's changing guidelines which limits hosts' ability to reject or cancel bookings. As a host [41, UK] started *"I am a single mother of two girls so I accept only women in my property but with Airbnb's anti-discrimination policy I can't do that anymore"*. Indeed, hosts repeatedly commented on the changing policies of Airbnb which favour a *"guest-first approach"*. As a host [43, UK] explained, *"I was sitting in the living room with my guest, we were chatting and suddenly he took the remote control and changed the TV channel. I thought...hang on a minute....this is my TV! Typical alpha male behaviour..."*. In this context, informants were asked to elaborate on the practices they undertake in mitigating risk and negotiating the host-guest relationship. Guests described various practices such as *"locking the door"*, *"reading the property descriptor to ensure the property is in a safe area"*, *"have emergency numbers on speed dial"* and *"avoiding too much contact with host...to establish boundaries"*. On a similar note, hosts said they use signs within the properties (i.e. no entry) to denote accessibility, explain property rule thoroughly to guests and lock their door to enhance the feeling of safety when co-habiting with guests. A recurrent theme that hosts mentioned though was the importance of reading the guest profile to *"get a sense of who they are"* [42, France], commenting with frustration that Airbnb's policies promoting inclusiveness are leaving hosts, particularly female hosts, *"exposed to increased safety and risk"*.

#### **Conclusions/field contribution**

Conclusively, as the preceding discussion illustrated, gender is an important aspect determining the host-guest relationship within P2P accommodation as well as prescribed roles and identities of hosts and guests. While gender stereotyping is equally evident in traditional accommodation settings,

within the context of Airbnb host-guest relations are largely exposed due to the lack of regulatory framework in P2P accommodation and the intimacy of the 'sharing' practice. Even though tactics are undertaken by female hosts and guests in mitigating risk, hosts in particular are left more vulnerable to potential risk given Airbnb's anti-discriminatory policies. As such, it is not surprising that female-only platforms (e.g. Overnight) are emerging targeting female travellers and hosts in an effort to promote safety and trust. Evidently, the role of gender in the P2P accommodation research context needs to be further examined. For example, researchers may look into the role of women in shaping decision-making for using P2P accommodation. In addition, the issue of power and how host-guest relations are negotiated between female and male users of Airbnb is worth investigating. Last, greater understanding is required on how both genders construct their identities in P2P accommodation where the role of hosts and guests is less distinct. We hope that the ideas presented in this study can provide researchers with an impetus to investigate these and other questions associated with gender in the P2P accommodation context.

**Keywords:** Airbnb, sharing economy, female hosts and guests, P2P accommodation

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## **Gendered bodies in tourism: Women as cultural heritage artefacts**

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#### Background

As in most countries of the world, tourism is a dynamic industry in South Africa. Aside from the nature based and marine tourism, the cultural heritage tourism is a major tourism niche area and drivers within the national economy.