

NEW ACCOMMODATION MODELS IN CITY TOURISM: THE CASE OF AIRBNB IN MÁLAGA¹

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KEYWORDS: Airbnb, Málaga, spatial pattern, city tourism, sharing economy

ABSTRACT: Tourism is one of the fields where collaborative consumption has arrived with more intensity. By means of peer-to-peer (P2P) platforms, it has seen an awesome growth in recent years, especially in the accommodation and travel sectors, being Airbnb and Bla-Bla car paradigmatic examples of this trend. Particularly, Airbnb – which is an online service that connects hosts and travellers facilitating short-term rentals that range from shared rooms to entire apartments or homes– is used by millions of tourists and travellers worldwide. Although the emergence of Airbnb in the city tourism market has helped increase the number of tourists in most of the cases, it also poses some problems, like the gentrification in central and historic areas, the rising of tourist pressure, or some regulation and legal issues.

The city of Málaga, a tourist destination located in the Southern Spanish Mediterranean coast that receives annually more than 1 million tourists in hotels (with similar figures in non-hotel accommodation), has been no exception in the Airbnb expansion. The purpose of this research is to study the emergence of Airbnb in Málaga, analysing the economic features and the spatial pattern of its accommodation supply, and to compare it with the distribution of hotel accommodation supply. This study makes use of micro-data obtained from public Airbnb listings and from the official Andalusian Tourism Registry (*Registro de Turismo de Andalucía, RTA*), which is compiled by the Andalusian regional government. These micro-data are updated up to 2017 and geolocated in order to carry out the spatial analysis. Several statistical techniques and concentration measures are used in our study.

The main findings of this research reveal that Airbnb supply in the city of Málaga shows a very high rate of growth. As a consequence, more than 40% of the supply has

¹ This work was supported by the research project “*Desmontando la economía colaborativa: Hacia una nueva forma de comercialización de productos y servicios*” (DER2017-85616-R).

been used for the first time in the last year. Regarding the type of accommodation, in Málaga we found that more than 75% of the Airbnb accommodations are entire homes or apartments, while less than 1% are shared rooms, being the remaining private rooms. In addition, it is found that this platform is used by professionals in a significant part. Accordingly, hosts that rent several accommodations represent a substantial fraction of the total distribution of rooms or apartments.

The spatial pattern of the Airbnb supply is highly concentrated in the city centre. Using a spatial aggregation at census sections level, it is found that the historic city centre is the location of the vast majority of the Airbnb supply. A similar pattern is exhibited by the hotel supply, with only slight differences. Measures of tourist pressure like the number of Airbnb accommodations per inhabitant or the density of accommodations by ha are found to be similar to that in Barcelona.

Finally, we consider that the findings in this study can be very helpful in order to assist the development of new local regulations of this sector or to adapt traditional models of public regulation to include new platforms like Airbnb.