UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

MASTER'S THESIS

AN ANALYSIS OF MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR AIRBNB HOSTS IN SLOVENIA

Ljubljana, February 2020 MAJA KAMBIČ

AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

The undersigned Maja Kambič, a student at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics, (hereafter: FELU), author of this written final work of studies with the title Analysis of motivational factors for Airbnb hosts in Slovenia, prepared under supervision of doc. Tamara Pavasović Trošt, PhD

D E C L A R E

1. this written final work of studies to be based on the results of my own research;
2. the printed form of this written final work of studies to be identical to its electronic form;
3. the text of this written final work of studies to be language-edited and technically in adherence with the FELU's Technical Guidelines for Written Works, which means that I cited and / or quoted works and opinions of other authors in this written final work of studies in accordance with the FELU's Technical Guidelines for Written Works;
4. to be aware of the fact that plagiarism (in written or graphical form) is a criminal offence and can be prosecuted in accordance with the Criminal Code of the Republic of Slovenia;
5. to be aware of the consequences a proven plagiarism charge based on the this written final work could have for my status at the FELU in accordance with the relevant FELU Rules;
6. to have obtained all the necessary permits to use the data and works of other authors which are (in written or graphical form) referred to in this written final work of studies and to have clearly marked them;
7. to have acted in accordance with ethical principles during the preparation of this written final work of studies and to have, where necessary, obtained permission of the Ethics Committee;
8. my consent to use the electronic form of this written final work of studies for the detection of content similarity with other written works, using similarity detection software that is connected with the FELU Study Information System;
9. to transfer to the University of Ljubljana free of charge, non-exclusively, geographically and time-wise unlimited the right of saving this written final work of studies in the electronic form, the right of its reproduction, as well as the right of making this written final work of studies available to the public on the World Wide Web via the Repository of the University of Ljubljana;
10. my consent to publication of my personal data that are included in this written final work of studies and in this declaration, when this written final work of studies is published.

Ljubljana, ________________________ Author's signature: ________________________

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF APPENDICES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJPES – Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services
B2B – Business-To-Business
CEO – Chief Executive Officer
CPO – Chief Procurement Officer
CTO – Chief Technology Officer
eWOM – Electronic Word-Of-Mouth
FURS - Financial Administration of the Republic of Slovenia
ICTs – Information and Communication Technologies
P2P – Peer-To-Peer
PRS – Poslovni Register Slovenije or Slovenian Business Register
S.P. – Samostojni podjetnik
SURS – Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia
STO – Slovenian Tourist Board
VRBO – Vacation Rental By Owner

INTRODUCTION

The sharing economy is becoming one of the fastest growing business trends in history (Miller, 2019). With increased popularity in recent years and with a prediction for the trend to continue, the sharing economy is projected to grow massively from $15 billion in 2014 to $335 billion in 2025 (Statista, 2019). Many of the companies in the sharing economy are private companies, therefore it is hard to know the actual size of the sharing economy. According to Miller (2019), investors have invested more than $23 billion in venture capital funding since 2010. The massive impact of the sharing economy can be seen in the two major players in the market, Airbnb and Uber. Airbnb at $31 billion and Uber at $72 billion have a combined $103 billion market cap, which would rank them as the 38th wealthiest country worldwide (Miller, 2019). Airbnb offers affordable accommodation for travellers to explore new cultures and see places they have never been to before. Among the most important information sources that influence purchases and decision-making in the tourism industry are interpersonal influence and digital word-of-mouth or electronic word-of-mouth (hereinafter eWOM) (Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008). In addition to the rising importance of digital word-of-mouth, technology has brought other novelties to the tourism industry, namely peer-to-peer platforms, where individuals can share unused inventory via a fee-based service, otherwise known as the sharing economy (Zervas, Proserpio & Byers, 2017).

The sharing economy is described as an economic system where services or different assets are shared between private individuals, via the internet, for free or for a certain fee (English Oxford Dictionaries, no date). According to Kenton (2019): "The sharing economy is an economic model often defined as a **peer-to-peer** (hereinafter **P2P**) based activity of acquiring, providing or sharing access to goods and services that are facilitated by a community based on-line platform". Different communities have shared the use of assets for thousands of years, but the arrival of the internet has simplified and accelerated the process for asset owners and asset seekers to find each other. The sharing economy can also be referred to as collaborative consumption, shareconomy, collaborative economy or peer economy (Kenton, 2019). In the last few years, the sharing economy has evolved and now also includes **business-to-business** activity (hereinafter **B2B**).

According to Kenton (2019), this has created a variety of platforms that have joined the sharing economy:

- Co-working platforms, where companies provide shared open workplaces in major cities around the world,

- Peer-to-peer lending platforms, where companies allow individuals to lend money to others at cheaper rates,
- Fashion platforms, where individuals sell or rent their clothes,
- Freelancing platforms, where freelance workers can offer and get different freelance work that might previously have been restricted to specific types of workers.

Individuals can share cars, bicycles, apartments or clothing when they don't need them. One of the reasons for the expansion of the sharing economy was the environmental aspect and climate change. This change led many people to realise that some things are only used once or twice a year and can be shared for a fee with people who do not own these things. One example are cars that are not used that regularly, especially in highly polluted areas and those with good public transport links. Uber is an example of a successful company relying on the sharing economy that provides transport to users in big cities at affordable rates, with the use of a mobile application. There are many other companies that currently perform extremely well in the sharing economy. The expectations are for the sharing economy to grow from $14 billion in 2014 to a forecasted $335 billion by 2025, also incorporated with predicted growth of Uber and Airbnb (Statista, 2019).

The thesis will focus on Airbnb as part of the new wave of companies that build their profit while not owning any assets. Airbnb was founded in 2008, when two roommates living in San Francisco decided to rent a space in their apartment to guests, in order to earn some additional money to cover their rental costs (Aydin, 2019). This was the initial idea for the now worldwide-known company that now offers a marketplace of over 6 million unique places to stay, in more than 100,000 cities in 191 countries (Airbnb, no date-a). They also offer experiences in the form of more than 10,000 different activities across 1,000 markets around the world. In other words, Airbnb is an internet platform where users can share or search for unique spaces. According to Crunchbase (no date), Airbnb has annual revenues of $2.8 billion revenues per year and its main competitors are: HomeAway, TripAdvisor and Hotels.com. The three co-founders are also part of the group of successful billionaires coming out of unicorn companies. Unicorn or startup companies are companies that are valued at more than $1 billion and they have created twenty-five members of the 2016 Forbes Billionaire list (Vinton, 2016). These co-founders are: Chief Executive Officer (hereinafter CEO) Brian Chesky, Chief Procurement Officer (hereinafter CPO) Joe Gebbia and Chief Technology Officer (hereinafter CTO) Nathan Blecharczyk, each worth $3.3 billion, while joining the list of billionaires in March 2015 with a net worth of $1.9 billion each. Airbnb has been a unicorn company since July 2011, with valuation at $1.3 billion (Vinton, 2016). The current worldwide value of Airbnb is $38 billion (Property Management, 2019), an increase from its $31 billion valuation in March 2017 at the last round of funding (Trefis, 2018). The number of listings increased from 3.5 million at the end of 2016 and 4.2 million at the end of 2017 to more than 6 million global Airbnb listings in 2019 (Airbnb, no date-a). Airbnb also reported 80 million arrivals in 2016, up from 40 million arrivals in 2015 (Airbnb Citizen, 2016) and to date it has had more than 500 million stays since launching in 2008 (Airbnb, no date-b). There are over 650,000 hosts worldwide and the countries with the most Airbnb listings are: United States - 660,000 listings, France - 485,000 listings, Italy - 340,000 listings, Spain - 245,000 listings and United Kingdom - 175,000 listings (Property Management, 2019).

The arrival of Airbnb has also brought negative effects that have affected the accommodation market and there has been criticism related to social issues that have arisen in the last few years. With the arrival of social platforms, online users do not only share their information about their products, but also personal information about themselves. This leads to various kinds of discrimination based on race, gender, age and other aspects. In New York City research was carried out among Airbnb hosts and results were that non-black hosts charge on average 12% more than black hosts for the same type of properties (Edelman & Luca, 2014). Another issue with peer-to-peer sharing is alienation that users have from one another. According to Eckhardt and Bardhi (2015), the companies now are more in the access economy rather that the sharing economy, due to the lack of interest in interaction and communication between users. The interest lies more in the value of the service and the ownership of products, rather than being part of a larger economy. This is also the case with Airbnb, where users prefer to use the platform to rent entire places in expensive cities and tend not to choose the option to share the space with the owners (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2015). In many major cities the neighbourhoods started to change their structure and the gentrification process started to affect local residents. House prices started rising and homeowners are pushing out current tenants to offer short-term rentals instead of keeping their existing flats for rental to long-term tenants. Some cities have started implementing restrictions to stop these changes and to keep residents in these areas (Bernardi, 2018).

Like all tourist destinations, Slovenia has felt the impact of Airbnb as well. In Slovenia, tourism has been slowly growing over the last few years. According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter SURS, 2018), in 2017 we recorded more than 4.9 million tourists (15% more than in 2016) who created more than 12.6 million overnight stays (13% more than in 2016). This was the highest number of tourist visits in Slovenia’s history. Tourists from foreign countries contributed to 8.6 million overnight stays (17% more than in 2016), compared to domestic tourists at 4 million overnight stays (5% more than in 2016). The trend keeps continuing, with 2018 breaking records again, for a record fifth year in a row (SURS, 2018). In 2018, Slovenia counted 5.9 million tourist arrivals (up 8% on 2017) and 15.6 million overnights stays (up 10% on 2017). The increase in 2018 was due to a rise in the number of foreign tourists from 8.6 million in 2017 to 11 million in 2018. According to the Slovenian Tourist Board (hereinafter STO), domestic tourists created approximately the same number of stays with 4.5 million overnight stays (STO, no date). Looking into each type of accommodation, the growth in hotels was 3.2% annually over the period from 2010 to 2016, compared to 14.9% growth in the private rooms, apartments and houses sector across the same period (Knežević Cvelbar & Dolnicar, 2017). These figures also rose due to the arrival of Airbnb in Slovenia. According to Knežević Cvelbar and Dolnicar (2017), it is hard to predict how many private beds are traded on peer-to-peer platforms and the exact number is unknown, as companies such as Airbnb do not share this data with the public. There are estimates that in 2016 Airbnb hosted approximately 6000 beds in Slovenia and this was associated with a total number of 157,000 overnight stays in the same year. In 2016, the locations with the most Airbnb listings were Ljubljana with 44%, Bled 15% and Piran, which accounted for 11% of total listings across Slovenia (Knežević Cvelbar & Dolnicar, 2017). According to the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, in 2018 there were 3200 Airbnb hosts in Slovenia, where 208,000 tourist visits were recorded, of which 51% of stays were in the capital city Ljubljana (Korošec, 2018). Another author reported that the number of hosts rose from 2912 in 2017 to 3354 in 2018, with 72% growth in one year (Pušnik, 2018).

The situation with Airbnb in Slovenia has been complex due to several factors. The first is the complicated regulations that are required to be complied with in order to start offering your apartment or room on Airbnb or other platforms. Hosts frequently do not know what exactly the correct procedure is and many have been renting out their property without the correct registration and without paying any taxes. This has led to rise of the grey economy and illegal renting. On the other hand, real estate rental prices in the main tourist destinations started to rise. According to sources, the price of two-bedroom apartments in Ljubljana went up from EUR 500–550 per month in 2017 to EUR 750–900 in the space of just one year (Pušnik, 2018). The government had to react and resolve the problem of illegal business activities. Regulations were formed and clear guidelines were given to govern how Airbnb hosts can rent properties legally. The Financial Administration of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter FURS) also started to tighten control in 2017, by controlling the renting of accommodation facilities to tourists. They were looking at two aspects; firstly, illegally working by renting out properties where the facilities are not properly registered and secondly, for illegally advertising on the Airbnb and Booking.com platforms while not being registered accordingly (Rabuza, 2017). The government issued penalties for illegal work and illegal advertising and the number of new registered hosts rose in response. According to FURS, we currently have 28,018 registered persons in the Slovenia who rent out real estate for tourism purposes in the country (Pušnik, 2018).

As is clear above, there is much uncertainty regarding Airbnb in Slovenia, largely due to a lack of publicly available data and research on the topic. In addition, there is even less research looking at the problem from the perspective of the hosts and homeowners. This thesis aims to broaden our understanding of Airbnb in Slovenia, by looking at the phenomenon from the perspective of homeowners who decide to host their properties on platforms such as Airbnb or Booking.com in Slovenia.

The main **purpose** of this master's thesis is to understand the motivations and challenges of Airbnb hosts or homeowners in Slovenia: that is, to understand why they decided to go into this business and how their decisions were made as they advance through the process. It will help us understand the market for Airbnb from the point of view of hosts and homeowners.

Therefore, the **goals** of the thesis are:

- to understand the reasons behind the decision to start hosting on Airbnb and other platforms different guests and other travellers,
- to analyse the obstacles that Slovenian homeowners face when they start hosting their properties on Airbnb and other platforms,
- to understand the perceived benefits of renting homes through Airbnb, and the main trends in the Slovenian market,
- to understand which other platforms homeowners are using in addition to Airbnb, and their evaluation of the different benefits and challenges of each.

Research questions

Based on the above-defined purpose and goals, this master's thesis will attempt to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What are the personal reasons that influence homeowners to start hosting the property on Airbnb or other platforms?

RQ2. What are the possible obstacles and challenges that face homeowners when starting to host their property on Airbnb or other platforms?

RQ3. Did the experience of hosting guests on Airbnb or other platforms fulfill the expectations of homeowners, and do they wish to continue this business for many years to come?

RQ4. How do homeowners evaluate the differences between hosting their homes on Airbnb and on other platforms?

RQ5. What are the trends in the ways in which Slovenian homeowners rent out property on Airbnb (apartment purchased specifically to rent out on Airbnb; sharing own apartment; etc.)?

The **methodology** in this thesis will be based on two types of data: primary and secondary. Firstly, secondary sources will be used to compile a literature review on the topic using scientific articles and papers. This will help obtain the theoretical framework and main concept definitions. The secondary data will be used in the first two chapters of the master's thesis. Firstly, the concept of the sharing economy will be explained and secondly, the case of the company Airbnb will be presented with the existing sources available.

The second part of the thesis, and the main part of my work, will focus on primary data collection of qualitative data. The primary data will be obtained with in-depth semi-structured interviews with Airbnb hosts, actual homeowners in Slovenia. I conducted 10 interviews. The sample has nine male and one female respondents, aged between 29 and 74 years old. The interviews examined which obstacles hosts and homeowners face and how they initially go about becoming a host. On the basis of the received responses, all the answers were analysed in depth using thematic analysis to understand the behaviours of homeowners (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield & Terry, 2019).

In the first chapter, I describe the sharing economy: this part will include the theoretical background based on existing academic data. This chapter explains how the Airbnb platform works and the company's role in the sharing economy. The second chapter highlights the market trends in tourism in Slovenia. The current tax and legislative regulations are presented in detail. The third chapter describes the research structure and methodology of the thesis, including the structure of the sample. Analysis of empirical research and detailed results collected through personal qualitative interviews are presented in the fourth chapter, where I also reflect on the practical and theoretical implications of the research. In the last part of the thesis, I give some suggestions for future research and point out limitations of the thesis. This is followed by a brief conclusion.

1 SHARING ECONOMY

The sharing economy has evolved with the introduction of the internet, even though, in a way, sharing had already been present for many years (Belk, 2014). Access to the internet gives everyone the opportunity to reach the large amount of content available online. In the past, sharing was mainly characterised by the exchange of goods between families, relatives or close by neighbours nowadays, with the use of online platforms, this has progressed to sharing with complete strangers.

1.1 Presentation and definition of the sharing economy

The sharing economy is a new type of economic model that is helping people to share things rather than own them. It is a growing trend in capitalism and started to grow extremely rapidly with the help of Information and Communication Technologies (hereinafter ICTs). Social networking systems and easier connection between peers, together with openness to sharing are also key contributing factors to the existence of the sharing economy. The main concept behind the collaborative economy or sharing economy is to get value from the unused potential in various services or goods that are unused by the owners themselves. To facilitate this, many new platforms have come into existence with the help of ICTs, as companies can leverage the sharing economy to start new business models (Roh, 2016).

The sharing economy is defined by the English Oxford Dictionaries (no date) as an economic system where different services or assets are shared between individuals. They can be shared either for a fee or for free, but they are usually shared online with the help of the internet (English Oxford Dictionaries, no date). There are many names for the sharing economy, among them shareconomy, collaborative economy, collaborative consumption or peer economy (Kenton, 2019). As the activity of sharing happens between individuals, it is defined as P2P activity. According to Kenton (2019), the activities have now also evolved on the B2B market. Newly created platforms in the B2B market have joined the sharing economy, namely: co-working platforms, peer-to-peer landing platforms, fashion platforms and freelancing platforms (Kenton, 2019).

The definition of the sharing economy can also be extended to refer to the access economy. Eckhardt and Bardhi (2015) support the idea that when sharing happens with a company as an intermediary between unknown individuals, it is not sharing at all. Individuals pay money to lease or have access to someone's else service, possession or goods just for a specific time frame and this is in an economic exchange. An example of the research Eckhardt and Bardhi (2015) conducted is Zipcar; as the users do not know each other when renting a car, they feel the same as travellers do when booking a hotel room. The feeling is that someone else is using the service, or car in this particular case, therefore the consumers rely on Zipcar to act as an intermediary and policymaker. The main appeal for individuals who are looking for something lies in the lower costs and the convenience, and not the social relationship with other consumers or companies (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2015).

According to Martucci (no date), there are the following examples of the sharing economy:

- *Peer-to-peer lending;* platforms that help individuals borrow or lend money with the help of the platform as the intermediary (examples: Lending Club, Prosper)

- *Crowdfunding;* platforms that connect individuals who need funding and individuals who can provide it, platforms to start project funding (examples: Kickstarter, Indiegogo)
- *Apartment/House renting and Couchsurfing;* platforms that connect homeowners with free space and individuals who are travelling and need a place to stay (examples: Airbnb, Vacation Rental by Owner (hereinafter VRBO)
- *Ridesharing and Carsharing;* renting cars for a certain period of time, or sharing a ride from point A to point B instead of using public transport (examples: Uber, Zipcar)
- *Coworking;* renting office space with other co-workers, sharing the office rent and utilities, very common for freelancers and other small-business professionals (examples: Wework, Coworker)
- *Reselling and Trading;* selling products you don't need anymore, or buying new or used goods without any direct contact with the sellers/buyers (examples: eBay, Craigslist)
- *Knowledge and Talent-Sharing;* platforms to share your skills and knowledge in order to get a new day job for a certain period of time (examples: TaskRabbit, UpWork)
- *Niche services;* specific niche services such as bike renting when you travel, or finding a place for your pet to stay while you are travelling (examples: Spinlister, Rover)

According to Owyang (2014), the sharing economy is also called the collaborative economy. The collaborative economy gives people an opportunity to get what they desire or need from each other in the most efficient way. In Figure 1 below, the collaborative economy is presented as a honeycomb structure that represents resilience and enables sharing and access between individuals. This creates a common group that shares and grows resources and makes the collaborative economy stronger. As shown in Figure 1, the structure of the collaborative economy honeycomb sets the market into six different sectors: Money, Goods, Food, Services, Transportation and Space.

According to Owyang (2014), there are three key market forces in the collaborative economy:

- Societal drivers: desire to connect, sustainable mindset, population increase
- Economic drivers: financial climate, untapped idle resources, startups heavily funded
- Technology enablers: Internet of Everything, mobile technologies, social networks

Figure 1: Collaborative economy honeycomb

Source: Owyang (2014).

1.2 Different forms of the sharing economy in business

Many different sharing-based businesses have emerged over the past few years. The underlying feature common to all these models is the sharing economy of collaborative consumption between users, where organisations offer resources and technology to match users (Botsman & Rogers, 2011).

Munoz and Cohen (2017) researched different papers on the sharing economy and concluded that there are seven distinct dimensions of sharing business models:

1. Platforms for collaboration
2. Under-utilised resources
3. Peer-to-peer interactions
4. Collaborative governance
5. Mission-driven
6. Alternative funding
7. Technology reliance

The first characteristic is *Platforms for collaboration,* as almost all manifestations of sharing economy activity starts on online platforms. The platforms themselves are different, as they have unique information regarding the users, sellers or buyers, and the company that is the facilitator. In case of Airbnb, the network users have to be active, as they need to have their own profile with some personal details, and they need to keep writing reviews about guests or hosts, on the other side. With the help of the platforms, other members then have a better idea of what kind of properties they are booking for themselves (Munoz & Cohen, 2017; Reinhold & Dolnicar, 2017b).

Under-utilised resources are the second characteristic and an important one for the sharing economy. The element of the ability, to utilise resources when they are not in full use and just standing idle is the key point of this characteristic. Owners can reduce the cost of owning something by renting out the excess capacity (Reinhold & Dolnicar, 2017b). This can be seen in the case of Zipcar, a global car-sharing provider that offers cars around cities to different users who need them at a specific time of the day. Zipcar is the intermediary that purchases and owns different types of cars that can be hired and shared between users to ensure the optimum use of each car (Munoz & Cohen, 2017). Reinhold and Dolnicar (2017b) argue that the sole purpose of someone owning something is not to make money out of it. The example of a family buying a car for their own transport purposes when they need it and making it available to rent out on a platform like Sharoo illustrates the concept of the sharing economy. Some authors also highlight as an example of the sharing economy the case when a person only buys car or a property for the purpose of having it available for sharing and not for their own use. Naturally, this creates problems and challenges for policymakers, who want to encourage additional earning for individuals but do not necessarily wish to support large investors solely for financial purposes (Reinhold & Dolnicar, 2017b).

The third characteristic of the sharing economy is peer-to-peer interactions and sharing. Sharing should happen between equal members, among peers that assume the roles of buyers and sellers. Institutional corporations should not be involved, because then we no longer have equal parts. In the case of Airbnb, tourists and homeowners create the normal exchange because the exchange happens on the peer-to-peer level. In the case of a company like Zipcar, the owner of the cars is Zipcar (a corporation), but the members themselves are sharing the vehicles through a membership programme. In many cases, companies allow sharing between equal people, as well allowing professional investors to participate too (Munoz & Cohen, 2017; Reinhold & Dolnicar, 2017b).

In the next characteristic, buyers and sellers shape the decision-making processes and develop policies and structures for the overall business model together (Munoz & Cohen, 2017). This fourth characteristic is collaborative governance. In many cases, this is not allowed in the sharing economy. Initially, some companies permitted more input from their active members and looked to receive any kind of contributions for community benefits. Most peer-to-peer accommodation networks do not allow any collaborative governance (Reinhold & Dolnicar, 2017b).

The fifth characteristic is that the main driver of exchanges and business in the sharing economy is mission. Entrepreneurs behind the development of sharing companies are looking for something extra to bring to their members. A company like Kickstarter, which is a crowdfunding platform, is an example of a company that has a higher mission. The emphasis is not only on making a profit, but also mainly on creating additional value (Munoz & Cohen, 2017). According to Karlsson and Dolnicar (2016), in the case of peer-to-peer accommodation networks, members do not look only for profit, but also want to use unused resources and meet new, interesting people in their own home.

The sixth characteristic is the use of alternative funding. This alternative funding is present only in some companies that are active players in the sharing economy. Examples of these are crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter, Indiegogo, and Crowdcube as the earliest and one of the most successful to appear on the market. Crowdfunding platforms depend on peer-to-peer transactions and they offer financial help to some new sharing economy startups (Munoz & Cohen, 2017).

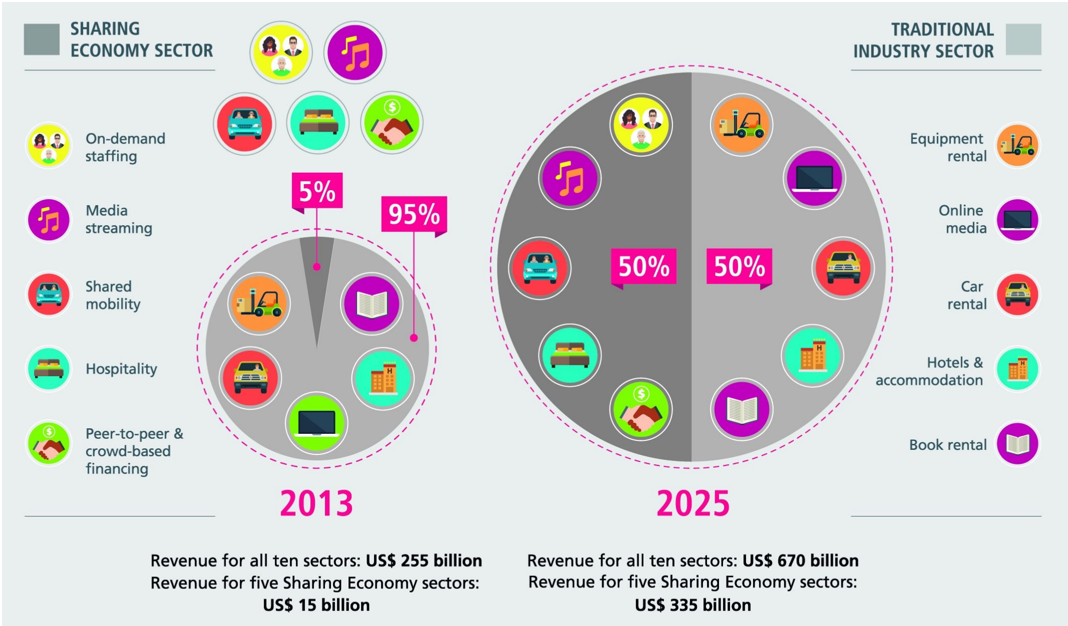
The seventh and final characteristic is the reliance on technology in the sharing economy. Technology is one of the most critical elements of sharing economy business models. According to Belk (2014), the role of technology creates a primary connection between peers on sharing platforms. The capacity to deal with a large number of people creates a space that is interesting to buyers and sellers. Companies do not only use technology for their platforms, but also use big data, location services and other specific technologies (Munoz & Cohen, 2017; Reinhold & Dolnicar, 2017b). The online platforms allow information about underutilised resources to be shared, among users with increased speed and flexibility among users (Kathan, Matzler & Veider, 2016).

1.3 Value of sharing economy companies

The sharing economy has grown massively over the last couple of years. Overall digital development, interest among different business sectors and increased popularity suggests that the trend is not going to stop in the coming years. The sharing economy is projected to experience huge growth from $15 billion back in 2014 to $335 billion in 2025 (Statista, 2019).

Figure 2 shows the projected revenue opportunities of the sharing economy sector and the traditional rental sector, respectively, across 10 sectors, at a total of USD 255 billion in 2013 and USD 670 billion in 2025, according to PwC reports (Robinson, 2019). The five sharing economy sectors are: On-demand Staffing, Media Streaming, Shared Mobility, Hospitality and Peer-to-Peer & Crowd-Based Financing. On the other hand, the traditional industry sectors are: Equipment Rental, Online Media, Car Rental, Hotels & Accommodation, and Book Rental.

Figure 2: Illustrative revenue potential across five traditional and five sharing economy sectors



Source: Robinson (2019).

In the case of Airbnb, the value has increased from a USD 1.3 billion valuation in 2011 (Vinton, 2016), to a value of USD 38 billion as the current worldwide valuation of the company (Property Management, 2019). The value increased from a USD 31 billion valuation in March 2017 at the last round of funding (Trefis, 2018).

1.4 The sharing economy and real estate

Since the period of transformation coincided with the arrival of the sharing economy, there were developments in many forms and in many industries. The real estate and tourism markets were also affected, starting with short- and long-distance transportation and ranging all the way to the rental of properties around the world (Sdino & Magoni, 2018). These services were usually in the hands of professionals, but this subsequently moved to private individuals. This traditional economic sector has seen a strong impact and fast development with regard to growth due to the sharing economy. The main change happened in the short-term housing rental sector, followed by the conventional long-term market sector. The short-term rental market is characterised by new types of contracts, in particular short and very short-term contracts and immediate access of demand and supply via the online platforms (Sdino & Magoni, 2018). We connect the sharing economy and the real estate market with platforms like Airbnb and Couchsurfing. There are many other existing platforms, such as Vrbo, HomeAway, Wimdu and others. The focus of this thesis will be on Airbnb as the leading company on the market.

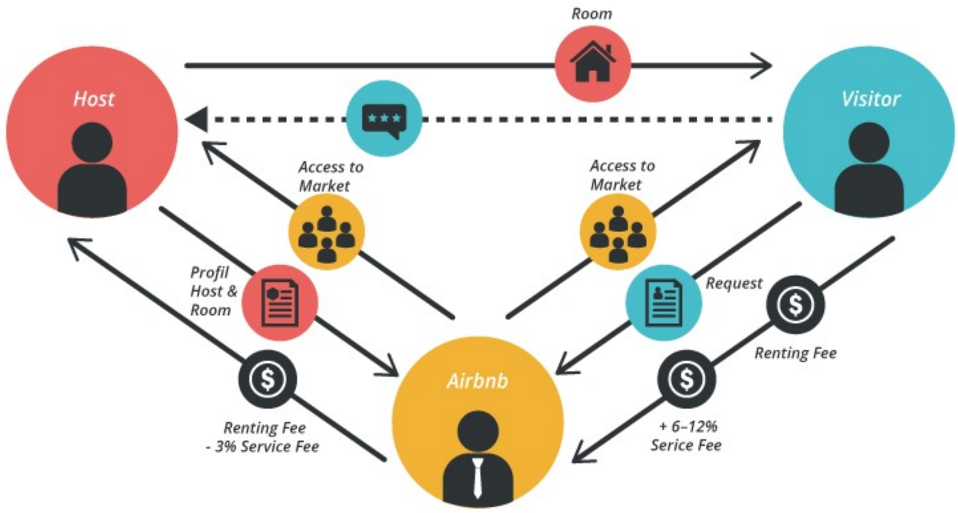
With arrival of Airbnb, the real estate market has changed considerably and a completely new market has opened up for some of real-estate companies. They saw opportunity in short-term lettings such as Airbnb and Booking.com and they offer services to cover the whole process. Rental management services are those that manage lettings on behalf of the owner. This could include finding furniture and organising the interior design of the property, speaking to guests, and handing out keys, all the way to setting prices on digital platforms and cleaning the property. The real estate rental company outsources some of the work, such as cleaning and handing out the keys, to other companies that work in this field and then collects a percentage of the total rental income per property for each night when the property is booked. With the arrival of the short-term rental market, many owners of properties in holiday destinations or in cities where they don't permanently live decided to take advantage of this service and receive a comprehensive service provided by a real estate company or a company that deals with such services for a fixed monthly fee. In Ljubljana, the real estate company Inalbea d.o.o offers a variety of packages, encompassing everything from advisory services, and creating an Airbnb profile and getting all the documentation ready for clients, to meeting the guests with the keys, or a full service with 24/7 assistance for their clients (Inalbea d.o.o., no date).

Another impact the sharing economy has had on real estate is that many real estate developers have started to build properties solely for short-term renting. Although this contributes to the overall number of properties on the market, local renters are looking instead for long-term rentals. This leads to less availability of properties in many cities and increased prices. According to Barron, Kung and Proserpio (2019), when Airbnb listings in a city increase, rental prices also increase. The results were that for every 1% increase in Airbnb listing in Boston, there was a 0.018% rise in rental rates and a 0.026% increase in house prices, and with a 44% increase in Airbnb listings per year, this would have a significant effect on rental and house prices.

1.5 Rental platform: AIRBNB

Airbnb was founded in 2008 by two roommates who decided to share their spare space in their apartment in San Francisco. From this small initial idea, the company has grown into a worldwide-recognised company and one of the leaders among sharing economy businesses. The co-founders of Airbnb are CEO Brian Chesky, CPO Joe Gebbia and CTO Nathan Blecharczyk. Figure 3 presents the Airbnb business model that shows the relationship and connection between the visitor, the host and Airbnb as the intermediary.

Figure 3: Airbnb business model



Source: Business Model Toolbox (no date).

Airbnb is a leading company in the peer-to-peer accommodation market. According to different authors, Airbnb's success in the peer-to-peer market is based on the intention to build trust between strangers. Companies operating in this sector try to incorporate strategies to minimise fear among users and create platforms that can be trusted. In the case of Airbnb, previous studies have looked at the impact of three main factors. The first factor is the review scoring and reputation factor (Tadelis, 2016); the second factor is profile photographs of hosts and the trust in personal photographs and descriptions (Ert, Fleischer & Magen, 2016); and the third is the quality of each property in terms of certification designated by the "Superhost" badge (Gunter, 2018). As Airbnb's operating system and business model is very dynamic, it is constantly changing and in the last few years, the company has introduced many different features to address the issue of trust.

Ert and Fleischer (2019) discuss the following three changes that have considerably improved Airbnb's effectiveness, and increased trust among the platform's users:

- In 2014, Airbnb improved their reviews system by not allowing the guests and hosts to see each other's reviews before submitting their own; with this, the average review score was reduced and the company managed to reduce the inherent bias in review scores (Ert & Fleischer, 2019)
- Airbnb excluded the photographs of hosts from the main search screen in order to avoid discrimination and to reduce the impact of subjective impression formation. With this change they may have eliminated the influence on the listing price (Ert & Fleischer, 2019)
- Airbnb increased objectivity by introducing the "Superhost" badge certification system to signal a certain level of quality on the market and evaluate all listing by

well-known criteria. The authors researched the influenced of the Superhost badge in four major European cities and found that Superhosts realised a 4–9% higher price due to their status (Ert & Fleischer, 2019).

The peer-to-peer accommodation market has seen growth over the last decade, primarily due to the two leading companies, Airbnb and HomeAway.

Since 2008, Airbnb has grown to offer more than six million listings, with more than 650,000 hosts in 191 countries. According to Ert and Fleischer (2019), Airbnb's main message and emphasis is on making connections between people by sharing their homes. On the other hand, since its establishment in 2006, two years earlier than Airbnb, HomeAway has over one million listings in 190 countries worldwide (Ert & Fleischer, 2019). With HomeAway the main focus is on the quality of the listings and their properties are seen to be offering something more for less. The differences in the approaches can be seen in the terminology, as Airbnb refers to 'hosts' and 'guests', while HomeAway refers to 'owners' and 'travelers' (Ert & Fleischer, 2019).

In February 2018, Airbnb introduced a new certification badge called "**Airbnb Plus**". Airbnb Plus is a selection of only the highest-quality homes, with great attention to detail, and includes only hosts with the best reviews (Airbnb, no date-c). The new certification is only awarded after an in-person quality inspection done by Airbnb in order to ensure all apartments score 100 points on all criteria on the checklist and to create standardisation across all listings with this badge. Initially launched in 13 markets around the world, by June 2019 Airbnb Plus had properties available in over 300 markets (Airbnb, 2019).

The main attributes of Airbnb Plus certified listings are (Airbnb, no date-c):

- thoughtful design with a one-of-a-kind feeling and a standard set of amenities;
- exceptional hosts with ratings higher than 4.8, attention to detail and a homely feeling
- reliable hassle-free check-in with hosts available to meet you, or property equipped with a lockbox and instructions
- premium support of the Airbnb Plus customer support team, offering great service and a fast response to meet guests' every need

With new trust indicators, Airbnb is only expected to change the platform even further in the coming years (Ert & Fleischer, 2019). The process to achieve certification by Airbnb staff is similar to the process of granting classical star ratings to hotels. All these factors indicate that the accommodation market is a still fiercely competitive and continuously changing environment (Ert & Fleischer, 2019).

In June 2019, Airbnb also introduced an innovative new approach to luxury travel by introducing "**Airbnb Luxe**" (Airbnb, 2019). This new service provides access to luxury, unique and outstandingly spectacular properties with the inclusion of trip designers to ensure bespoke experiences and services to their guests. This feature is built on the experience Airbnb gained from the acquisition of Luxury Retreats in 2017. The launch of Airbnb Luxe included more than 2,000 carefully selected homes around the world, all passing the strict evaluation of more than 300 criteria, including both functionality and design of each property. Selection is based on special attributes, such as the location and surroundings of each property, as well as the services provided. Airbnb states that luxury travellers are looking for high-end accommodation and outstanding experiences in authentic local environments. When guests select this service, Airbnb provides them an outstanding experience with extraordinary homes and five-star everything. The new Airbnb Luxe also provides 24/7 access to trip designers, an easy booking and check-in process, organisation of variuos activities and arrangement of services including a personal chef, on-site masseuse, childcare or a pre-stocked fridge.

According to Airbnb (2019), the launch of the new sector helps to meet the demands of the 60% increase in Airbnb bookings in 2018 that were worth more than $1,000/night. The market has opened doors to spectacular places in cities like Los Angeles and London and will add properties in 12 more cities, such as Milan, Paris and Austin in 2019 (Airbnb, 2019).

With introduction of Airbnb Plus and Airbnb Luxe, Airbnb now covers travellers at every price point in the travel industry and has added the luxury category to its portfolio (Airbnb, 2019).

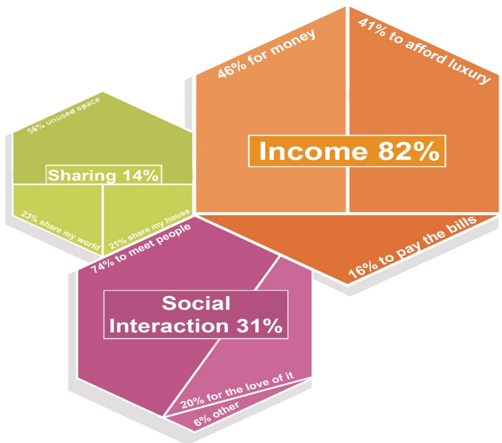
1.5.1 Motivations for hosting through Airbnb

Most authors carried out a literature review on Airbnb hosts by focusing on two different aspects. The first aspect explores the influence of host profiles and reviews on the website, with a few main focuses: rental price, racial discrimination, and satisfaction (Cheng & Zhang, 2019). The second area for research explores the psychological aspects, from a different angle to examine what it is like to be an Airbnb host. Ikkala and Lampinen conducted interviews in Finland with Airbnb hosts (2015), and the results showed the financial and social reasons that motivate hosts to offer rooms on Airbnb and exchange hospitality services for money. The starting motivation was money, but later on, the social factors were important, too. In fact, some hosts who were not involved in hosting because of the social aspect, started to enjoy this part as well. Another study found that the financial exchange via Airbnb plays a positive role in the relationship between hosts and guests relationship (Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016). The presence of a third-party intermediary, such as Airbnb, provides security to hosts in the online peer-to-peer hospitality exchange system. The fact that the transaction is handled on the website and behind the scenes before the guest actually arrives, improves social interaction and makes the situation less strange or awkward. Airbnb also provides security to hosts against fraud, because the company keeps all the details of guests' bank accounts, and should any problems arise, they can give support as they have all the details and everything is traceable at their end (Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016).

Similarly, an online survey 244 different hosts in Australia showed that the three most important motivational factors for becoming Airbnb hosts are: income, social interaction and sharing (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016). In Figure 4, the factors are shown in percentages.

Income as the main motivator for hosts in Australia was divided into three main sub-categories. The sub-category to "Pay the bills" included mainly reasons such as paying bills, covering basic needs, and trying to get through the month. The second sub-category "For money" included general responses like money, cash, income or economic help that could not fit into the other two categories. The final sub-category "To afford luxury" compromised motivations that did not include covering basic needs and expenses, but more to afford something extra, something usually unaffordable, and to make extra money for the nicer things in life (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016).

Figure 4: Hosts' reasons for offering accommodation in Australia



Source: Karlsson and Dolnicar (2016).

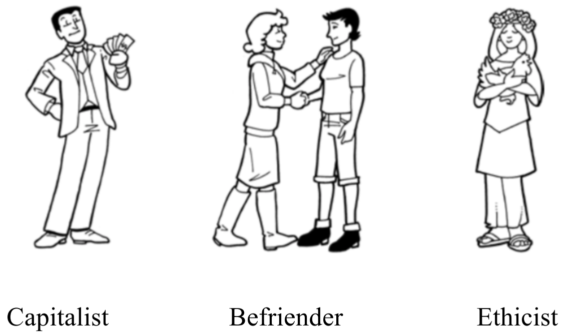
The second motivational factor among Airbnb hosts in Australia was **Social interaction**. Here, the sub-categories were more homogeneous and interconnected. The first sub-category "To meet people" dominated the whole category and included reasons such as an interest in interaction, meeting new people, and meeting fun and interesting people. The second sub-category "For the love of it" was more about a genuine passion to meet people, showing real excitement for connecting with people and being hospitable in their own homes. The last category "Other" was related to reasons that described a desire to not live alone but to have company and to meet people of different nationalities for some period of time (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016).

The third motivational factor was **Sharing**. The first sub-category was “Unused space” where hosts stated that they have extra space, such as an unused bedroom, or the property is generally empty. On the other hand, the sub-category “Sharing my world” was about explaining the desire to share the world hosts lives in, rather than just available unused space. Some hosts mentioned a desire to share the beautiful world they live in. The last sub-category was “Sharing my house” as the smallest category in sharing. Hosts here gave answers such as “Share my resources” or “Share my space with other travellers” (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016).

Types of Peer-to-Peer Airbnb Hosts

Investigation into types of peer-to-peer hosts shows that hosts can fit into three main types. Hosts can be Capitalists, Befrienders and Ethicists (Hardy & Dolnicar, 2017b). Pure Capitalists are looking to receive the maximum return on investment, have high profit and use the platforms only as distribution channels. They do not intend to socialise with the guests and are not attached to their spaces. On the other hand, pure Befrienders are looking to socialise with guests and make new friends, and like to meet new people. Money is important for them, but they are more interested in the interaction with guests by giving them various recommendations. The last type is the pure Ethicist who wants to live an ethical lifestyle. Their main goal is to achieve sustainability throughout life and it is important to them to utilise the space they have. They like to be active members of peer-to-peer accommodation networks (Hardy & Dolnicar, 2017b). The pure types are hard to find, as hosts are mainly a mixture of all of these types. Another study by Hardy and Dolnicar among Airbnb hosts forums in Tanzania was very interesting, because it clearly showed a love-hate relationship between existing hosts on the Airbnb platform (Hardy & Dolnicar, 2017a). Figure 5 shows the different types of hosts.

Figure 5: Pure host types: Capitalist, Befriender and Ethicist



Source: Hardy and Dolnicar (2017b).

1.5.2 Positive aspects of Airbnb

The presence of Airbnb and other similar holiday rental providers has brought many new positive effects to the tourism industry from the perspective of travellers. The new sharing economy has also increased the overall quality of the accommodation experience. Travellers are now able to find many unique places to stay all around the world, in places where local people live, and gives them the opportunity to experience their style of living. Previously, you could only choose between standardised hotel providers in the most touristic areas of big cities, and now you can explore less known neighbourhoods or see places that were previously closed to tourists.

Airbnb (2015) claims that the company provides a platform where strangers can see a city like locals, and hosts can become ambassadors and share their home. The platform also provides tools and manages payments to ensure trust and empower users around the world. The benefits of home sharing include various environmental and social impacts. The economic benefits of home sharing have a positive impact on three categories (Airbnb, 2015):

- Consumers and the tourism industry
- Neighbourhoods and local businesses
- Residents and households

According to Airbnb, the company attracts new visitors who stay longer than traditional travellers, and 35% of Airbnb guests claim that without Airbnb they would not travel or they would travel for a shorter period of time. Internal company reports also show that guests stay 2.1-times longer and spend 1.8-times more than usual visitors (Airbnb, 2015). The positive impacts of the platform are also enjoyed by local businesses, as the changes also influence where guests stay and how they travel. According to the platform, 74% of Airbnb listings are outside the major city centres and away from traditional locations where hotels are based (Airbnb, 2015). This develops other neighbourhoods around the city and creates greater economic distribution around the outer area of cities. In addition, 42% of the Airbnb guests spend their time in the neighbourhood where their accommodation is based. These neighbourhoods get more business from the guests and they see an impact on local communities, which also helps the local residents. Finally, there is an impact on hosts themselves in terms of hosts' well-being. Airbnb reports show that over 80% of hosts share the home where they live, of which 52% can be classed as low-to-medium income households (Airbnb, 2015; Bernardi, 2018). For 48% of hosts, the money they receive from hosting helps cover regular domestic expenses or rent. In some cases, the income helped hosts start new business opportunities or helped them stay in the property (Airbnb, 2015).

Airbnb also helps travel become greener, within the overall sharing economy, when it supports the sharing of properties among travellers. Statistics show that 52% of European consumers are involved in the collaborative economy because they know it is beneficial for the environment (Airbnb, 2017). Another 72% of travellers claim to choose their accommodation via Airbnb due its importance in terms of the environmental benefits. Airbnb hired the Cleantech Group to analyse the consumption of water among travellers. The study showed that overall Airbnb guests use less water and less energy, and emit less greenhouse gases than travellers staying in hotels. Just in 2016 alone, Airbnb guests had energy savings of up to 566,000 homes and had lower water usage equal to 9000 Olympic-sized swimming pools by choosing an Airbnb stay over a stay in a conventional hotel (Airbnb, 2017).

1.5.3 Criticism and challenges of Airbnb

The arrival of Airbnb also created some challenges and attracted criticism in the market. The first of the challenges is the open access of the internet and the amount of shared information that we currently have online. When hosts reveal details about their homes, create profiles and receive reviews, they expose their personal information on the internet and this information can be seen by other people. In the case of Airbnb, guests can use this information in a normal way but in some cases, it is used in a negative way. Social issues and, in particular **discrimination** based on race, gender, age and sexual orientation have become more present. Edelman and Luca (2014) carried out research based on race among hosts in New York City among different listings on Airbnb. Results showed that non-black hosts charge on average more than 12% higher prices for similar listings than black hosts in the same area. Similarly, research in the San Francisco area on Airbnb showed that on average Asian and Hispanic hosts charge 8–10% lower prices than white hosts for similar types of properties (Kakar, Voelz, Wu & Franco, 2018).

Among the various users of different platforms, there is **alienation** between peer-to-peer users in the sharing economy. Many companies, not just Airbnb, but also Uber and Zipcar, to mention some of the bigger ones, describe themselves as companies in the sharing economy, but they are actually more part of the access economy rather than the sharing economy. These companies offer consumers very convenient services at a low cost without the financial or emotional worries of ownership. Usually, sharing happens between friends, close family or local communities. When we have companies acting as an intermediary between consumers who do not know each other, it is no longer really sharing. Eckhardt and Bardhi (2015) confirm that we are seeing the access economy, with a lack of interest between users and a lack of any interaction and communication. The case of Airbnb supports the theory that consumers prefer to rent whole places and just possess the property for certain period of time, rather than sharing an existing apartment or house with a total stranger. They do not feel as connected to the community as they could, and they just see the convenience in getting cost-effective access without any of the conventional obligations associated with the process of ownership or sharing (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2015). Instead of buying or owing things, consumers pay for the experience or for temporarily accessing certain goods (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012).

Furthermore, the structure of neighbourhoods in many major cities around the world started to change, and the **gentrification** process is affecting local residents. Due to the arrival of platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com, many apartments started to appear as short-term lets and not long-term lets as they used to be. The demand for the apartments started to rise, and consequently, house prices started to rise, too. This makes it very difficult for middle-class families to buy properties in the central residential areas of major cities around the world, and they are forced to move outside the city centres. This is not only difficult for the residents, but also for the structure of the neighbourhoods and municipalities, as the tourists are invading the most precious and historically important parts of the cities (Bernardi, 2018). Some cities have started to implement restrictions to limit the gentrification mechanisms. According to Henley (2019), 10 European cities have demanded help from the EU in the battle with holiday rental websites, as they are experiencing "explosive growth" and think that global short-stay letting should be discussed by the European Commissioners. The cities are: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Bordeaux, Brussels, Krakow, Munich, Paris, Valencia and Vienna (Henley, 2019). After many years of strong growth, Airbnb currently has 18,000 listings in Amsterdam and Barcelona, 22,000 in Berlin and around 60,000 in Paris. The cities have already started with actions; for example in Paris all apartments need to be correctly registered, otherwise the landlords can be fined. Amsterdam only allows holiday lets for one month in 12, and in Barcelona all new short-term rentals are suspended (Henley, 2019). EU promotion of e-commerce and the sharing economy is not favouring city authorities as they feel that the EU is standing behind big companies, instead of offering help to residents and local communities.

Regulators are also concerned with the **illegality** of home sharing in certain countries and major cities, in particular with the loss of business taxes, income taxes and tourist taxes, and the issue of undeclared income. This is something that Airbnb is working on with some local authorities, by collecting tourist taxes on their behalf in Zug (Switzerland) and Amsterdam (Netherlands) in order to help resolve the situation (Reinhold & Dolnicar, 2017a). The current real estate rental sector is under pressure with the presence of Airbnb and other short-term holiday rental companies and it perceives everything as unfair competition. The main concern is that many landlords do not pay taxes, do not comply with regulations and even offer properties at lower prices. This is creating market turbulence and the hotel industry is unhappy with the current state in many major cities.

The changes in the neighbourhoods also reduce the **quality of life for local residents**. Some residents are of the opinion that the arrival of tourists makes it more difficult, to find a free parking space, or that areas where there are multiple-dwelling buildings are less safe because of the presence of tourists. The noise levels are also an issue for some; they feel that local people would respect the rules, whereas foreigners, when they are on holidays, would create additional noise for the residents (Sheppard & Udell, 2016; Williams, 2016).

1.6 Other holiday rental platforms

Airbnb is not the only player in the sharing economy. It is the most well-known, but research finds that there are other similar companies that offer the same types of accommodation. According to Nims (2018), the alternatives to Airbnb are:

- HomeAway
- Vrbo
- Couchsurfing International, Inc.
- Booking.com Apartments
- Flipkey from TripAdvisor
- TripAdvisor Rentals
- TurnKey Vacation Rentals
- Wimdu
- Home Exchange
- Innclusive

In my thesis, only the most important ones will be presented in more detail below.

1.6.1 HomeAway and Vrbo

HomeAway was founded in 2005 and raised $505 million before it went public in 2011 (Lardinois, 2015). In 2015, the Expedia Group bought HomeAway for $3.9 billion (Lardinois, 2015). Expedia helped HomeAway to upgrade and improve the technological aspects of the company. According to Expedia reports, HomeAway now operates in 190 countries and has 1.7 million listings in total (Bautista, 2018). The major difference with the acquisition was for HomeAway to move from conventional vacation rentals in traditional resorts to homes in cities around the world. Expedia also acquired two smaller companies Pillow and ApartmentJet to help their HomeAway brand and steal some more of the market away from Airbnb (Bautista, 2018). The company is available in any destination and can offer accommodation for any occasion or budget. In the same way as with Airbnb, guests need to create a profile in order to book or message host with questions (Nims, 2018).

Vrbo stands for Vacation Rental by Owner. The company was established in 1995 (Expedia Group, no date). Vrbo is a part of the HomeAway family, as HomeAway acquired Vrbo and another website VacationRentals.com in 2006. Since 2016, the company consists of 12 different websites that offer rentals (Lodgify, no date). They offer more than 1 million homes in over 190 countries. Vrbo joined the Expedia Group as a part of the HomeAway family in 2015 (Expedia Group, no date). According to the Expedia Group (no date), the company introduced some new ways of travelling together with matching homeowners, on the one side, and friends and families looking for new places to stay, on the other. The website offers owners and property managers the tools to create amazing experiences and has established a global community of travellers and homeowners. Vrbo offers the booking of cabins, condos, beach houses and every kind of space in between (Vrbo, no date). In 2019, the Expedia Group confirmed Vrbo as the primary alternative accommodation brand and will lead the Vrbo brand into all new markets (Vrbo, 2019). The decision came after Vrbo consistently performed better as a search term than the HomeAway brand in the US. Expedia also believes that Vrbo is a lifestyle brand that is easier to remember and is more interesting. The Expedia Group will invest into the Vrbo company and is slowly introducing the brand to all new markets and rebranding some existing country-specific sites to Vrbo (Vrbo, 2019).

The main differences between Airbnb and Vrbo (HomeAway) are:

- Initially, the companies used different business models, as Airbnb works on a "pay per booking" system and does not require anything in advance, and Vrbo, on the other hand, had subscription fees which the host paid in order to have their properties listed online. This was recently changed and Vrbo now offers same model as Airbnb (MacLaine, 2018).
- Airbnb has a great guest review system, which allows hosts to get information about prospective guests, while Vrbo, on the other hand, does not have this option, and it is sometimes difficult for hosts to know who is staying in their home (MacLaine, 2018).
- Vrbo only lists full properties, full apartments or full houses, while on Airbnb you can list only a single room or available space in your property and some shared spaces (MacLaine, 2018).
- Airbnb charges guests a service fee ranging between 5% and 15%, depending on the length of stay and the guest's country of residence. Vrbo, on the other hand, does not charge guest fees (Tripping, no date).

Airbnb is increasingly becoming more like its main competitor HomeAway, in particular by following their lead in highlighting the listings (properties) rather than its service providers (hosts). With the new evolution, Airbnb is also moving in the direction of the hotel accommodation market, which also emphasises the product instead of the service providers (Ert & Fleischer, 2019).

1.6.2 Couchsurfing

Couchsurfing was founded in 2004. The four co-founders of the company are Casey Fenton, Daniel Hoffer, Sebastian Le Tuan and Leonardo Bassani de Silveira (Couchsurfing International, Inc., no date-a). The idea started as a small passion project among students in Iceland. Group of students in Iceland received emails inviting them to share their home with strangers, or as Couchsurfing puts it "friends you haven't met yet" (Couchsurfing International, Inc., no date-a).

According to Couchsurfing International, Inc. (no date-b), the core values of the company are: (1) share your life; (2) create connection; (3) offer kindness; (4) stay curious and (5) leave it better than you found it.

In network hospitality, users connect with each other to exchange their accommodation on the platforms. Couchsurfing and Airbnb are currently the best-known examples of platforms that deal with network hospitality (Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016). By renting accommodation to strangers they perform the same activities, but they are extremely different. On one side, Couchsurfing encourages free and non-monetary hospitality in the network, with reciprocity among the actors in the market. On the opposite side, Airbnb allows and encourages monetary activities with short-term rentals in the peer-to-peer hospitality market (Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016). A study that looked at non-monetary network hospitality, such as Couchsurfing, that showed that because there was no money exchange, the hosts and guests were bound to intense social interaction as an obligation (Molz, 2014). According to Ikkala and Lampinen (2015), monetary transactions in the case of Airbnb help reduce the hosts' obligations to socialise and bring a much better experience for both guests and hosts in network hospitality.

There are a few factors that help reduce uncertainty for hosts and help improve interaction between guests and hosts. Firstly, the hosts like to rely on platforms such as Airbnb to assure the financial transaction. Secondly, with this binding negotiation exchange as the initial form of interaction, the hosts feel less uncertainty and feel they can focus more on the quality and flexibility of what they offer and on easier facilitation of social exchange and overall interaction with guests (Ikkala & Lampinen, 2015). Lampinen and Cheshire (2016) confirm two forms of assurance for hosts. Firstly, the Airbnb platform acts as an agent to facilitate core financial transactions and no party needs to talk about the exchange of money when they meet, which makes the first meeting less awkward. Secondly, the Airbnb platform acts as a record-keeping authority, a kind of broker, that does not get involved in any other aspect of interactions unless bigger problems appear between hosts and guests (Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016). The Airbnb platform itself does not issue any instructions to the hosts, and they are completely flexible to choose the length of stays, the number of guests, or the amount of social interaction between the hosts and guests.

According to Nims (2018), the Couchsurfing phenomenon is still an extremely popular option for renting among students and young adults. Couchsurfing is a global community of 14 million people across 200,000 cities (Couchsurfing International, Inc., no date-a). They also provide a variety of information about upcoming events in different cities and facilitate opportunities for travellers to meet.

1.6.3 Booking.com Apartments

Booking.com was founded in 1996 in Amsterdam as a small Dutch startup (Booking.com, no date-a). Booking.com is part of Booking Holdings Inc,, the leader in online travel and related services (Booking Holdings, no date-b). The company comprises six primary brands: Booking.com, Priceline, Kayak, Agoda, Rentalcars.com and OpenTable (Booking Holding, no date-b). The main mission of the company is to help people experience the world. According to Booking Holdings (no date-a), the Booking.com brand is "*The global technology leader in connecting travelers with the widest choice of incredible places to stay"*.

They offer travellers a large selection of unique and incredible places to stay, including apartments, family run B&Bs, vacation homes, 5-star luxury resorts, hotels, tree houses and even igloos (Booking Holdings, no date-a). The key features of Booking.com include (Booking Holdings, no date-a):

- 29,006,607 listings, including 6,231,754 listings of homes, apartments and other places to stay (Booking.com, no date-a);
- websites and mobile apps in 43 languages (Booking Holdings, no date-a);
- more than 147,000 destinations in 229 countries and territories worldwide (Booking Holdings, no date-a);
- the company is based in Amsterdam, Netherlands (Booking.com, no date-a);
- supported by 200+ offices in 70 countries (Booking Holdings, no date-a);
- 1.5 million room nights booked every 24 hours;
- guests do not pay any booking or administration fees, reservations are all made instantly, and the brand can accommodate any leisure or business travellers (Booking.com, no date-a).

According to Booking.com (Booking.com, no date-c), the company offers millions of homes, not only hotels. On the website, they claim to offer 797,365 apartments, 21,336 resorts, 396,617 villas, 13,266 cabins, 124,638 cottages, 9,799 glamping sites, 34,696 serviced apartments, 396,617 vacation homes, 143,429 guest houses, 27,522 hostels, 16,011 motels, 252,904 B&Bs, 2,475 ryokans, 1,275 riads, 7,025 resort villages, 185,820 homestays, 8,443 campgrounds, 16,558 country houses, 12,337 farm stays, 1,915 boats, 2,815 luxury tents, 725,200 self-catering accommodations and 314 tiny houses.

2 MARKET TRENDS IN TOURISM IN SLOVENIA

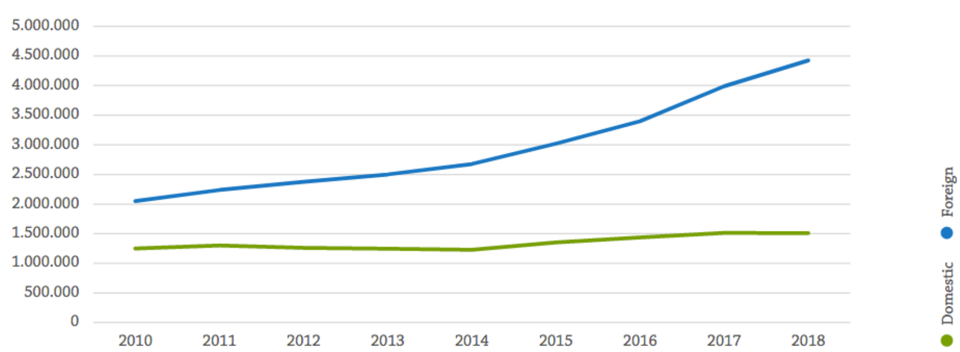
This chapter highlights the market trends in tourism in Slovenia, in particular the specific changes in the structure and number of tourist arrivals and tourist stays in Slovenia over time. Furthermore, the current tax and legislative regulations are presented in detail in this chapter.

2.1 Changes in the structure and number of tourists in Slovenia over time

Tourism in Slovenia has been seeing constant growth over the past 10 years. According to STO (STO, no date), 2018 was a record-breaking year in terms of tourism growth in Slovenia. Tourist arrivals went from 4.9 million in 2017 to 5.9 million in 2018 and showed growth of 8%, that created more than 15.7 million tourist stays up from 12.6 million stays in 2017 (Prijatelj, 2019). This was a growth of 10% compared to 2017. The increase was due to foreign tourists, who generated 11.2 million stays, compared to 8.6 million in 2017, with a growth of 15% compared to 2017 (Prijatelj, 2019). In contrast, in 2017 foreign tourists created on average 4,084 more overnight stays in 2018. Domestic tourists generated the same numbers with 4.5 million stays in both years (Prijatelj, 2019).

Figure 6 shows tourist arrivals between 2010 and 2018 for foreign and domestic tourists. Foreign arrivals rose from 2 million in 2010 to 4.5 million in 2018.

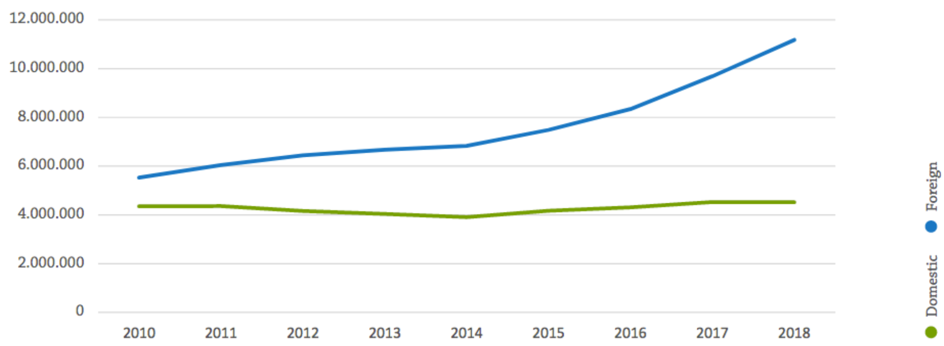
Figure 6: Tourist arrivals between 2010 and 2018



Source: STO (2019).

Figure 7 below shows a comparison of tourist stays between 2010 and 2018 for domestic and foreign tourists. The increase was only in foreign tourists, from under 6 million in 2010 to more than 11 million in 2018.

Figure 7: Tourist stays between 2010 and 2018



Source: STO (2019).

Foreign tourists generate over 70% of total overnight stays, and the increase has been constant since 2010. In 2010, they generated 56% of total overnight stays and this increased to 64% in 2015, to 68% in 2016 and stood at 71% of total overnight stays in 2018 (Prijatelj, 2019). The key markets that represent foreign guests in Slovenia are Germany (12% or almost 1.4 million overnight stays), Italy (12%), Austria (9%), and the Netherlands and Croatia (each with 5%). The key markets all showed growth compared to 2017 with the Netherlands (22% more), Germany (17% more) and Croatia (16% more) as the top three growth markets (Prijatelj, 2019). From non-European countries, the United States generated the most overnight stays at 3% of total overnight stays, which was an increase of 24% compared to 2017. Furthermore, the next countries from the non-European geographical areas were: Asian countries, Israel, the Republic of Korea and China (Prijatelj, 2019).

2.2 Type of accommodation chosen by tourists in Slovenia

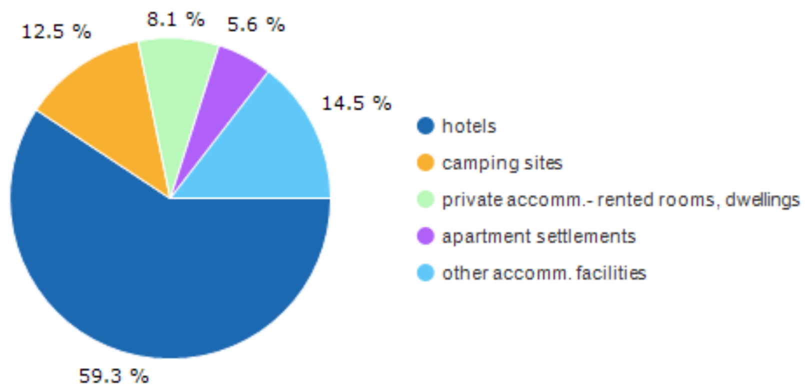
For purpose of this thesis, we need to understand the growth of tourism accommodation in Slovenia. Tourism accommodation can be divided into three key groups (Prijatelj & Oblak Flander, 2019):

- hotels and similar establishments,
- camping sites and
- other accommodation establishments:
  - apartment complexes
  - tourist farms with accommodation
  - youth hostels

- private rooms, apartments and houses
- mountain lodges and cabins
- holiday homes
- other temporary accommodation establishments
- temporary accommodation in marinas

Looking at each type of accommodation, the growth in hotels was 3.2% annually over the period from 2010 to 2016, compared to 14.9% growth in the private rooms, apartments and houses sector across the same period (Kneževič Cvelbar & Dolnicar, 2017). Figures also rose due to the arrival of Airbnb and other platforms in Slovenia. In 2016, tourists had more than 45,000 rooms or apartments available with more than 130,000 beds across Slovenia. These units were available across different accommodations units, 39% in hotels and similar establishments, 19% in camping sites and 42% in other accommodation establishments (Prijatelj & Vovko, 2017). In 2016, over 6.6 million overnight stays were in hotels, representing 59% of total overnight stays in that year. Camping sites generated 1.3 million stays and 13% of total overnight stays, private rooms, apartments and houses generated 8% of all overnight stays, and apartment and holiday resorts contributed 6% to the total amount in 2016 (Prijatelj & Vovko, 2017). Figure 8 shows overnight stays of tourists by types of accommodation facilities in Slovenia in 2016.

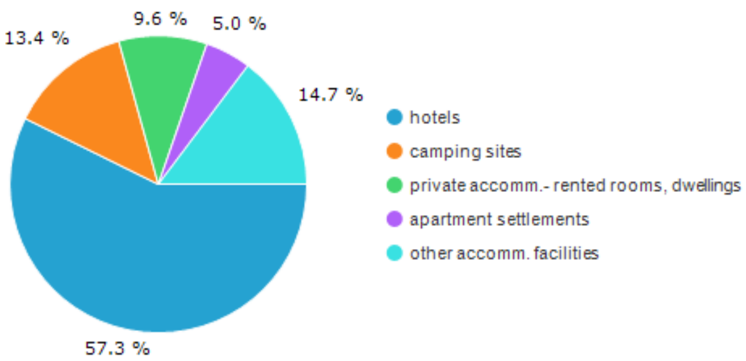
Figure 8: Overnight stays of tourists by types of accommodation facilities in Slovenia in 2016



Source: SURS (2017).

In 2017, there were 46,000 rooms or apartments available with more than 135,000 beds available across Slovenia. In 2016, 39% of these units were in hotels and similar establishments, 19% in camping sites and 42% in other accommodation establishments (Sabljić, 2018). In 2017, over 7.2 million (57%; up from 6.6 million in 2016) overnight stays were in hotels (2% down from 2016). Camping sites generated 1.7 million overnight stays (13%; the same as 2016); private rooms, apartments and houses generated 10% (2% more than in 2016) of all overnight stays; and apartment and holiday resorts contributed 5% (1% less than in 2016) of the total amount of overnight stays in 2017 (Sabljić, 2018). Figure 9 shows overnight stays of tourists by types of accommodation facilities in Slovenia in 2017.

Figure 9: Overnight stays of tourists by types of accommodation facilities in Slovenia in 2017



Source: SURS (2018).

According to Prijatelj and Zupančič (2019), hotels are still generating the highest number of overnight stays in 2019, with figures in July 2019 at 830,000, but the number is decreasing compared to July 2018. Private rooms, apartments and houses came second and camping sites came third, with both categories recording growth compared to July 2018.

2.3 Location of tourists in Slovenia

To understand tourism in Slovenia, it is also important to see how SURS classifies different municipalities across the country. Municipalities are categorised according to the statistical criteria used in each of the following groups (Prijatelj & Oblak Flander, 2019):

- *health resorts municipalities* (municipalities that have health resorts that meet the required standards to join the public health network of Slovenia)
- *mountain municipalities* (municipalities predominantly in the Alpine area, Julian Alps, Kamnik-Savinja Alps, Karavanke or the Pohorje region)
- *coastal municipalities* (all municipalities along the coast of Slovenia)
- *the capital of Slovenia, Ljubljana*
- *city municipalities*
- *other municipalities* - these are all remaining municipalities that cannot be classified in any other group

In 2018, the most popular destinations for tourists were mainly in seven main municipalities, which created more than 50% of overnight stays. The most stays were in municipalities of Ljubljana (14%), Piran (12%) and Bled (7%). These cities were followed by Kranjska Gora, Brežice, Bohinj and Moravske toplice (Prijatelj, 2019). Mountain municipalities were the most popular in 2018, with 29% of all overnight stays, an increase of 14% compared to 2017. Health resorts municipalities showed growth of 22% (the same as the previous year), coastal municipalities showed growth of 7% with 19% of total overnight stays, and Ljubljana generated 14% of total stays with 22% more overnight stays than in 2017 (Prijatelj, 2019).

2.4 Tourist stays in peer-to-peer platforms in Slovenia

It is very difficult to obtain information about the exact number of hosts on peer-to-peer platforms. In 2016, estimates were that in Slovenia we had approximately 6000 beds, that generated around 157,000 overnight stays (Knežević Cvelbar & Dolnicar, 2017). The most Airbnb listings in 2016 were in Ljubljana at 44%, followed by Bled at 15% and Piran at 11% of the total listings in Slovenia (Knežević Cvelbar & Dolnicar, 2017). According to Močnik (2019), 1100 active Airbnb hosts were in Ljubljana in 2017 and 19% of visitors to Ljubljana booked their accommodation via Airbnb.

Močnik (2019) states that Ljubljana Tourism also confirmed that some properties are rented out on the market only during certain periods of the year. The highest numbers of hosts are in the summer months, December and at the time of the main business events. The accommodation in this period is well appreciated, as there is not sufficient capacity only from hotels and existing accommodation.

According to Booking.com, the top cities in Slovenia for apartments are Ljubljana, Portorož and Bled (Booking.com, no date-b). The cities with the number of available apartments on the Booking.com platform (Booking.com, no date-b) are listed below:

1. Ljubljana (capacity: 593 apartments)
2. Portorož (capacity: 175 apartments)
3. Bled (capacity: 282 apartments)
4. Kranjska Gora (capacity: 200 apartments)
5. Piran (capacity: 186 apartments)
6. Maribor (capacity: 69 apartments)
7. Koper (capacity: 117 apartments)
8. Moravske Toplice (capacity: 53 apartments)
9. Izola (capacity: 132 apartments)
10. Rogaška Slatina (capacity: 30 apartments)

2.5 Tax and legislative regulations of short-term renting in Slovenia

Many authors claim that the government should work harder in order to resolve the issues with illegal renting on Airbnb and other platforms. Currently, the process to legally rent out property to tourists for short-term periods is established in Slovenia, but it does include many administrative steps and complex bureaucracy that some hosts do not want to undertake. Therefore, for Airbnb hosts in Slovenia, there were initially many issues relating to illegal renting of properties on the black market. The platform was mainly planned for owners to rent spaces or their properties only occasionally when they were on holiday or when properties were empty, but this turned into a situation where some people owned multiple properties only for the purpose of renting them throughout the whole year. Over a period of time, these trends have influenced the real estate market; prices started to rise enormously in big cities and local people ran out of options to find any available properties to rent. The trend also became an issue for the hotel industry, as Airbnb and other platforms suddenly became unfair competition to other traditional travel industry players such as hotels, hostels and apartments resorts.

Since the launch of this platform in Slovenia, the legislation has become clearer. In Slovenia, there are only a couple of ways to legally register and rent out properties on these platforms, and a small number of conditions that must be satisfied before starting and that govern who can rent out properties.

The first step to become a host is to create an Airbnb profile, register on the website and register your property in the Airbnb listings. In Slovenia, the activity of renting rooms, apartment or houses on short-term lets to guests belongs under the Catering Act (ZGos). According to this Act, the income is treated as income from activities and not as income from letting the properties. The Catering Act defines the minimum technical conditions, categorisation, consent of neighbours in multiple-dwelling buildings, and keeping a guest book and charging tourist tax.

Properties can be rented out as establishment of a landlord - natural person if (Leskovar, 2018; AJPES, no date; eVEM, no date):

- they are a real estate owners or tenants,
- they perform the rental activity for an occasional period, or not more than five months in a calendar year (150 days),
- they offer a maximum of 15 beds,
- are registered in the Slovenian Business Register with Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (hereinafter AJPES) as “landlord (sobodajalec) – natural person”.

Landlords can rent their properties and offer guest accommodation in their own or a leased apartment, house or holiday cottage.

The other option is to rent out properties as a sole trader, being self-employed (in Slovenian called Samostojni Podjetnik (hereinafter s.p.) or through a limited liability company (in Slovenian called a d.o.o.) and register correctly on AJPES under the classification of activities (SKD) under 55.203: renting private rooms to guests. This is often a solution for hosts in Slovenia as it allows annual operations and affordable annual tax solutions.

Renting out rooms on Airbnb and other platforms requires certain steps to be precisely followed or performed before commencing the activity (Leskovar, 2018; eVEM, no date; Saop d.o.o., 2017):

- entry into the Slovenian Business Register (hereinafter PRS) with the application for the registration of the landlord's information document to register your landlord activity and regulation of your status at any of AJPES branch;
- entry into the Tax Register at FURS, after being registered in the Slovenian Business Register;
- the landlord must register the accommodation (this include guest rooms and other accommodation facilities) in the Register of Accommodation Facilities at any AJPES branch;
- the landlord must have proof of ownership or disposal for the leased property: an extract from the land register or sale, lease or rental contract can be used as proof;
- a copy of the occupancy permit for the residential purpose of the property;
- registration of tourist activities in a property;
- consent must be obtained for the activity from 75% of the owners in multi-dwelling building and consent of the all of owners of all individual parts whose walls or ceilings border the rental unit;
- at the beginning of the activity the landlord must inform the manager of the whole multi-dwelling building about the short-term renting activity;
- all necessary general conditions regarding the safety of all installations in the property and the fire schedules are fulfilled;
- the property meets the minimum technical requirements, and the conditions prescribed by the Catering Act;
- the property must be categorised according to its equipment in accordance with the Rules on the categorisation of accommodation establishments. The owners can independently rate their own properties up to three stars, while higher ratings of four or more stars need to be determined by an external valuator;
- when registering for business activity, the sole trader must arrange compulsory social securities covering four different compulsory insurances: pension and disability insurance, health insurance, parental protection insurance and unemployment insurance.

After registration into the Slovenian Business Registry, a landlord or sole trader that rents properties to tourists needs to follow some additional steps (Leskovar, 2018; eVEM, no date; Saop d.o.o., 2017):

- report into the eTourism system data about guests' check-in and check-out times and about overnight stays, no later than 12 hours after arrival time. The eTourism platform collects all information and keeps record of guests, monitors the calculation and payment of tourist tax and is used as the base for statistical purposes. The eTourism system has been in place since 1/12/2017 and replaces the previous system of reporting arrivals to the Police, passing data to Tourist Offices in municipalities for tourist tax calculation, and submitting statistics to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.
- submit to the tax authorities a calculation of estimated income from self-employment, based on which the amount of income and other taxes is calculated. Accounts can be recorded in two ways, first by actual revenue and actual expenses, or by standardised expenses of 20% of total income and 80% of revenue with the latter taxed at 4% if the total income does not exceed a limit of EUR 50,000.
- a sole trader will also have to join the VAT system if his or her total turnover exceeds EUR 50,000 in a 12-month period. If turnover does not exceed the limit of EUR 50,000, a sole trader still needs to request a special VAT number from FURS. This is because platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com are based outside of Slovenia and their services and fees attract a monthly commission of 22% that must be paid through the eDavki platform.
- sole traders must give each group of guests an invoice when they arrive at the property.

After all the above prerequisites, the apartment also needs to be well designed, well equipped with furniture and facilities, and cleaned after each stay and prepared for the arrival of new guests. Another important factor is meeting the guests on each arrival day, if the property does not offer the possibility of self-check in.

Due to the constant pressure of the hotel industry and other players in the tourist rental market, FURS started to implement inspection checks on Airbnb hosts, in order to catch offenders without the required registration and hosts who do not pay any taxes on the activity or fail to pay tourist taxes to municipalities. FURS has hired staff who check illegal work and the illegal advertising of properties on different platforms. According to Gole (2017), in 2016 FURS issued around EUR 300,000 of fines for illegal advertising and illegal work. FURS checked illegal work 2813 times in 2015, 2355 times in 2016, and 1050 times from Jan–May in 2017. Fines were issued totalling EUR 424,682 in 2015 and EUR 297,093 in 2016 (Gole, 2017). As a result of hosts wishing to avoid fines and a desire to start doing everything according to the legislation, FURS noticed an increased number of registrations of hosts. According to Libnik (2019), the number of landlords (tax payers) who submitted their revenues increased from 1959 in 2016, to 2431 in 2017, and 3158 in 2018. They created income of more than EUR 38,917,172 and therefore EUR 1,382,333 of tax was paid in 2018, compared to EUR 667,388 tax in 2016.

In the following chapter of the master's thesis, the results of in-depth interviews with hosts will be presented in detail. This will help create the base to answer the research questions in the following chapter.

3 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design and objectives

The purpose of the qualitative research is to understand the motivational factors that influence Slovenian homeowners before they start hosting on Airbnb and other platforms. There is also analysis of the obstacles they face during the process when they start hosting and the challenges they have along the way. In an Australian study, the main motivational factors among hosts were income, social interactions and sharing (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016). An interesting aspect of the thesis is gaining an insight into Airbnb through the eyes of hosts, rather than the guests or users of Airbnb. The presence of Airbnb in Slovenia is evident, as many new hosts are appearing on the market each year and, therefore, causing problems to existing players on the tourism market.

The goal is to understand the reasons behind the decision-making of Airbnb hosts in Slovenia, to see if their reason for hosting is income as most important factor, as in Australia (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016). My thesis also aims to see what kind of obstacles there are currently in Slovenia for hosts and what kind of experience they have with hosting guests in their properties. Are there positive or negative experiences among hosts, and what other platforms are they currently using besides Airbnb? If the hosts use additional platforms, the qualitative research will show the evaluation of each of the platforms and the benefits of each of them to the hosts. Because the number of hosts is increasing year by year, the thesis analyses the opinions of hosts who started hosting a few years ago, who have seen how the market has changed through the years.

3.2 Methodology

The master's thesis has two parts, and uses two types of data. The first part uses secondary data and the second part uses primary data. Before the start of the in-depth qualitative interviews, the secondary sources were utilised to conduct a literature review of the domestic and foreign research available in online databases, including different scientific articles, academic journals, literature and statistical data. Secondary data was used in the two preceding chapters, where the existing findings on the sharing economy as a whole and on the case of Airbnb were presented in chapter one and findings on market trends in tourism in Slovenia were presented in chapter two.

Primary data was used for the empirical part of the thesis and was collected through qualitative research. The in-depth interviews were conducted among 10 Airbnb homeowners/hosts in Slovenia to show the in-depth qualitative research on the topic. The interviews were conducted in person across Slovenia between October and November 2019. The interviewees were all Slovenians, therefore the interviews were gathered in the Slovenian language and then translated into English. The target was to interview different people who had been hosts in the past or currently host on Airbnb or any other platforms with at least one listed property located anywhere in Slovenia. I did not want to focus only on Ljubljana, because the presence of Airbnb is also seen in other parts of the country.

3.2.1 Interview questions

The interview had two parts. The first part was for statistical purposes, to understand the demographic characteristics of the sample, where the following variables were measured: gender, age, level of education, current employment type, location of the property and number of properties advertised on the Airbnb platform. In the first part, the respondents also described the type of listing they have and whether they have a house, apartment or something else. If they wanted to, they also shared whether they have Superhost status or are standard hosts on the platform. This seemed important in the findings as the results showed that the experience of Superhosts was different to standard hosts in some aspects. The second part of the interview included comprised 17 different qualitative questions, which were grouped into seven different themes. The themes were:

- motivation for hosting;
- hosting process;
- hosting style;
- Airbnb & other platforms;
- Airbnb hosts vs Airbnb guests;
- income from hosting;
- hosting expectations, reality and future plans.

3.2.2 Data collection

Primary data was collected with in-depth interviews that were performed between 17 October and 13 November 2019. The interviews were made in person in different locations of Slovenia, namely in Ljubljana, Piran, Bled and Bohinj.

Table 1 below represents the sample of the thesis, including the following details for each of the 10 hosts I interviewed: age, city where they host, year hosting started and the number of years they have been hosts.

Table 1: Structure of the statistical sample according to age of the host, city of hosting, year of starting and the number of years hosting

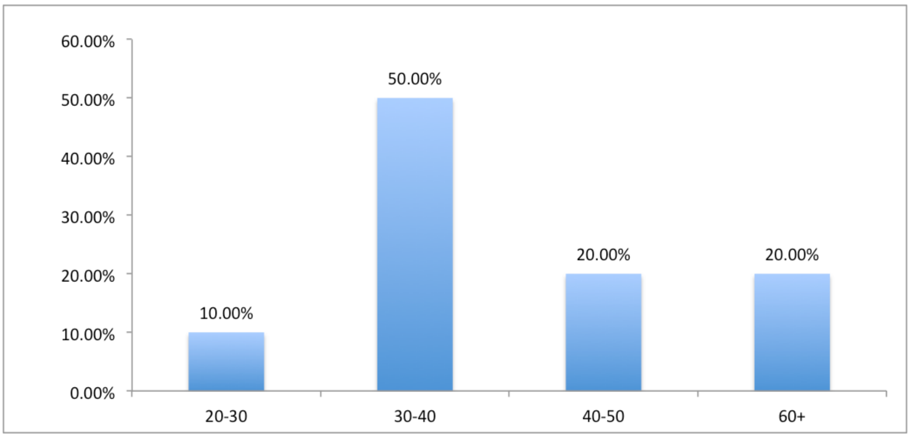
HOST NR.	HOST AGE	CITY OF HOSTING	YEAR OF START	NUMBER OF YEARS HOSTING
1	74	Bled	2015	5
2	43	Bohinj	2018	2
3	62	Ljubljana	2014	6
4	39	Ljubljana	2014	6
5	29	Ljubljana	2018	2
6	37	Ljubljana	2015	5
7	34	Ljubljana	2019	1
8	39	Ljubljana	2017	3
9	48	Piran, Ljubljana, Senožeče	2014	6
10	31	Ljubljana	2016	4

Source: Own work.

3.2.3 Sample description

Figure 10 shows the composition of the statistical sample by age group. The largest share was in the age group between 30 and 40 years old with 50%, followed by 20% with age between 40 and 50 years old and above 60 years old. The 20–30 year-old age group was represented by 10%. Of the 10 respondents, nine were male and one female.

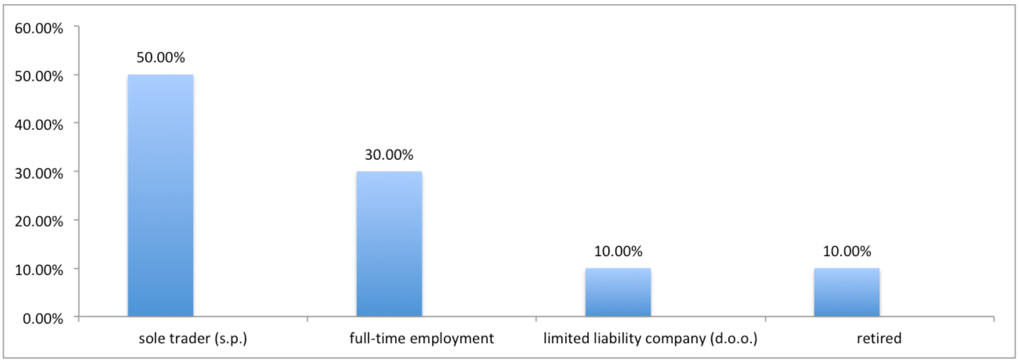
Figure 10: Structure of the statistical sample according to age group in %



Source: Own work.

In the demographic characteristics I also wanted to understand the current employment type and Figure 11 shows that 50% of respondents are sole traders or self-employed (s.p.), 30% are in full-time employment and 10% either have a limited liability company (d.o.o.) or are retired.

Figure 11: Structure of the statistical sample according to type of employment in %

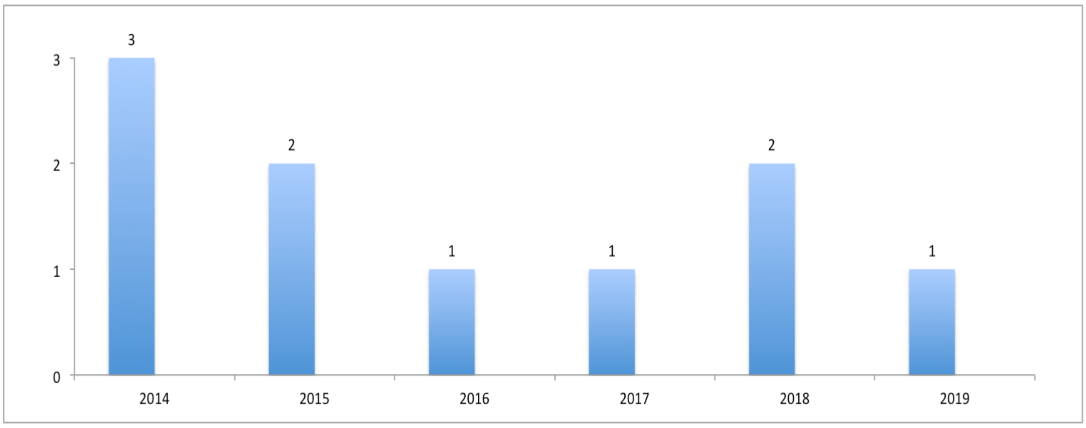


Source: Own work.

In the case of the 30% that are in full-time employment, all have registered as afternoon sole trader or afternoon self-employment for this purpose. The retired respondent is registered as a landlord – natural person for renting property out for five months of the year.

The length of time the respondents have been renting their properties on Airbnb and other platforms was also important information to gather in first part of the interview. The respondents have different profiles; for example, three started renting in 2014 and one only started at the beginning of 2019. In Figure 12 below, the structure of the statistical sample is shown according to the year of starting.

Figure 12: Structure of the statistical sample according to year of starting in %



Source: Own work.

In the statistical sample all the respondents have at least one property listing on their Airbnb profile, with two respondents who have more than one property with one renting out three properties and the other renting out six properties. It is interesting that both respondents with multiple properties started renting out back in 2014.

Table 2 below shows the year when hosting started and the type of property that each host has. All 10 hosts renting out the entire place, with exception of host number 5, who started by sharing only a room for six months and then continued by renting out the entire apartment.

In the table below, I have also listed the type of property with the location of the listing for each of the hosts who were interviewed. Of a total of 17 listings, 14 are hosting apartments (82%) and three are hosting houses (18%).

In Table 2, the status of each host is shown in the last column. In total, eight hosts hold the Superhost badge on the Airbnb platform (80%) and two hosts have standard host status (20%). Host number 9 said in the interview that their Superhost status had been given 14 times in a row.

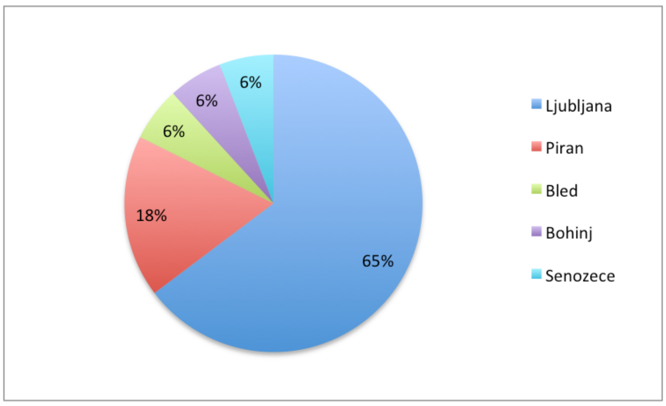
Table 2: Structure of the statistical sample according to year of start, number of listings, type of place, type of property, location of listing and host status

HOST NR.	YEAR OF START	NR. OF LISTING	TYPE OF PLACE	TYPE OF PROPERTY	LOCATION OF LISTING	HOST STATUS
1	2015	1	entire place	apartment	Bled	Superhost
2	2018	1	entire place	house	Bohinj	Superhost
3	2014	3	entire place entire place entire place	apartment apartment apartment	Ljubljana Ljubljana Ljubljana	Standard host
4	2014	1	entire place	apartment	Ljubljana	Superhost
5	2018	1	6 m private room / then entire place	apartment	Ljubljana	Superhost
6	2015	1	entire place	house	Ljubljana	Superhost
7	2019	1	entire place	apartment	Ljubljana	Superhost
8	2017	1	entire place	apartment	Ljubljana	Standard host
9	2014	6	entire place entire place entire place entire place entire place entire place	apartment apartment apartment apartment apartment house	Piran Piran Piran Ljubljana Ljubljana Senožeče	Superhost
10	2016	1	entire place	apartment	Ljubljana	Superhost

Source: Own work.

The details for the location of each listing are found in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13: Locations of listed properties among hosts in %



Source: Own work.

The Figure 13 shows that the majority of properties are located in Ljubljana with 11 properties (65%), Piran follows with three properties (18%) and Bled, Bohinj and Senožeče have one listing each (6%).

3.2.4 Data analysis methods

The data were transcribed and then analysed using thematic analysis (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield & Terry, 2019). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a type of method for analysing, identifying and presenting different patterns within qualitative data. The method is widely used in the analysis of qualitative research. After the thematic analysis, selected quotes were then translated into English and included in the results below.

4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter focuses on the presentation of the results from the qualitative empirical research. All the outcomes will be presented from the 10 in-depth interviews that were conducted with Airbnb hosts or homeowners across Slovenia.

4.1 Motivational factors for hosting

The first questions in the interviews were about the personal motivational factors to start hosting and why the host decided to start hosting on platforms like Airbnb or Booking.com. The respondents were given options, such as income, socialising, reputation, caring for the environment, and other factors. All interviewees openly expressed their initial motivation for starting to host their property on Airbnb or other platforms. Most of the hosts mentioned that economic reasons and income were the main motivational factors at the beginning. Out of the 10 interviewees, six cited income as the first answer. One of them added an additional motivational factor:

"My main reasons were twofold: firstly, the income and secondly, an even more important reason for me, that the house is in use. Previously, the house was practically abandoned, but now it is alive."

Another host gave a similar answer, saying that there was empty accommodation and he came across Airbnb and started hosting the empty space. Another host expressed the same reason, but in his case, he started by only renting out the spare room, as he was never home and he did not want to have people in the apartment on a permanent basis. After six months, this then turned into the renting out of the entire space on the platform, as his situation changed and he moved into his girlfriend's apartment.

On the other hand, two hosts expressed their motivational factor to be socialising and looking for new challenges, which was described by one as follows:

"Looking for something new, new challenges, new experiences, meeting foreign people, learn how to organise everything, and maybe, consequently somewhere in the end, earning money too."

The explanation of one interviewee who mentioned another aspect of hosting and the importance of location was also interesting. He decided to replace long-term tenants and to offer short-term rental of his apartment through platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com as he explains:

"The decision to start hosting came about because the apartment is very close to the centre, and there is a demand for apartments in the strict city centre, and because of the location itself, I assumed that I could earn more by the renting the flat out to tourists rather than letting to tenants out for a longer period…"

It was interesting that only one out of the 10 interviewees bought the property as an investment and with the intention to rent it out. All others respondents confirmed they owned their property before they started to offer it for rental.

The host who bought an apartment for investment described his main motivational reason: *"I started because I wanted flexibility. I had bought the apartment and I have a brother in America and we decided to have space for him when he comes home from America – and the rest of the time we can rent it out via the Airbnb platform…"*

Among the aspect related to motivation it was also important to understand whether any of the interviewees have family members or friends who are already in this business. Eight hosts stated that they do not have family members in this business, and two hosts said that they have family in this business. The first host confirmed that family members started renting after he did, and the second host described a very similar situation, as below:

"Yes, I do have family members in this business, but they do not have much experience yet and they started after me. They rent out their house in Croatia, on the island of Zlarin, when they are not in the accommodation themselves, but so far they haven't rented it out much..."

In terms of friends and their experience with hosting on Airbnb, three interviewees said that they have friends who also host on Airbnb.

In the second question, I wanted to understand whether renting property through a platform is their only and main job, or the hosts are employed full-time and doing this only as something additional to their main job. Seven hosts are renting out in addition to another job they perform, and three hosts are fully involved only with their properties on the Airbnb platform. Of the seven hosts who are doing Airbnb alongside their other job (either full-time employment in an office or another job as a sole trader), they stated that they started with Airbnb as something additional to their main income and then property rental became almost the more profitable side of their business. The statements some of the interviewees are below:

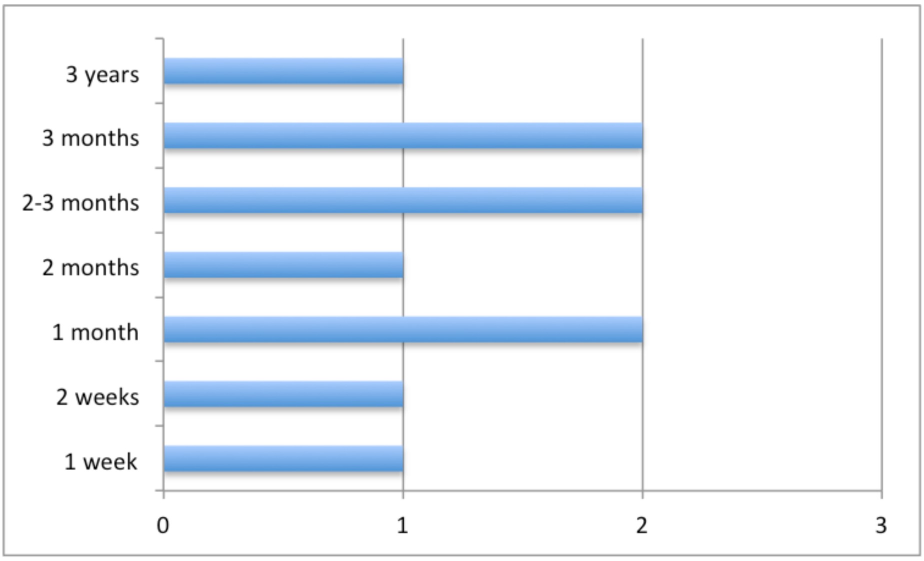
"Airbnb is my additional occupation, but right now, it has become my main business, because financially it is the most profitable side of my work..."

"The business is changing based on the season; some months Airbnb is my most important occupation, but on the other hand, in the winter months I need something else besides this..."

4.2 The hosting process

With question number 3, I wanted to see how much time has passed from the actual idea to rent out to tourists to the launching of the profile and first guest. The answers were very different, from one week for one host to three years for another host. The most common answer was any time between two and thre months, with five hosts fitting into this time frame. Figure 14 below shows the answers for each of the interviewees.

Figure 14: Time passed between the idea to host and profile creation and first guest



Source: Own work.

In terms of registration and the documentation process for the hosts, the answers among hosts were very two-sided. On the one hand, all the hosts who started renting earlier in 2014 and all the way up to 2017 mentioned obstacles they faced, the challenges that come with a lack of experience, and lack of a concrete legal structure for this business in Slovenia. They felt alone in this and had to make many phone calls and visit many institutions to get concrete advice on the topic. One of the hosts explained:

"Nobody helped us. We were the first to do it, nobody had any experience and you could not get an answer about what was right and what was not. If we had not had all the knowledge and if we had not information together correctly, we would not have had courage to start this business..."

Similarly, another host who also started in 2014 said: *"Of course, there were a lot of obstacles and challenges. All the laws were the same back then; the difference was that nobody knew how to deal with them and how it to register correctly…"*

Another host, who started in 2017, used similar words about challenges, but in 2017 there was information available. He stated: *"Even in the country itself, it was not clearly set down what was necessary and what was not. I attended some seminars on this topic, where I got information on what needed to be done and how to satisfy the legal requirements, as well as what is required just for registration and what is important for each of the platforms (Airbnb, Booking.com,..) and how to use each of them to work in your benefit…"*

On the other hand, all the hosts who started in 2018 or 2019 said that the process was very user-friendly and that it was no problem to perform the whole registration process. One of the hosts said: "*Nobody helped me; I searched all by myself on the internet and the registration and documentation was straightforward. At the end, when you have all the information, it takes two hours to register everything and you just need to go through the steps…"*

All of them confirmed that the process to register on Airbnb and create a listing was very straightforward. Only one mentioned an issue he had when he forgot to close availability on a certain night and therefore, he got booked anyway, which then required five days of communication with the Airbnb team before the case was closed and he did not need to pay a penalty.

The host who lists a property in Bohinj and lives in Ljubljana also stated that the main challenge at the start for him was the whole logistics process, as he had to coordinate the guests' arrival time with the cleaner, and took some time himself to always drive there to meet the guests for check-in.

4.3 Hosting style

In question number 5, I wanted to analyse the length of renting per year. Nine interviewees reported that they rent out their property all year round. Only one said that he rents only for five months a year, for two reasons:

"I do not host for all year round, due to the lack of tourists and because I want the apartment to be vacant, so that I am free of work and that I am not stressed or burdened all year long…"

In the ways in which hosts organise their workload, I wanted to know whether they work on the whole process themselves or have some help from family or other sources. This means everything from changing the prices and correspondence with guests, to cleaning the property, meeting the guests for check-in, keeping all the paperwork up to date, and issuing invoices. In general, the answer was that the hosts do most of the work themselves, except for the following examples.

Two interviewees said that they have cleaners, and one host said that he got help with cleaning once or twice a year, otherwise he worked alone. On the other hand, one host works with his son, and in another case, the host works with his sister. Another host said that he performs all aspects of the process himself and only has his mother help with the laundry.

Two hosts stated that they occasionally need help with the cleaning and welcoming guests, due to their workload with the other job they do, but they never hire a cleaner. In their specific cases, family members or their partner jump in to help. One host answered: *"90% of the time I am working alone, while the other 10% of time I get help from somebody during the holidays, so the apartment is always ready for guests…"*

4.4 Airbnb compared to other platforms

In my thesis I wanted to understand whether hosts rent their properties on only one platform (Airbnb) or also use other platforms such as Booking.com, HomeAway, Vrbo, etc. Interestingly, of all the interviewees advertising on the Airbnb platform, four hosts advertise only on the Airbnb platform and six hosts also have their property listed on Booking.com. No other platforms are used by the hosts for their advertising. In general, hosts trust the Airbnb platform the most, except one host who prefers the Booking.com platform.

In terms of the number of guest arrivals across the year, 70% of the hosts have more guests coming from the Airbnb platform and only 30% of hosts receive more guests from the Booking.com platform each year. Of that 70%, 40% of hosts list their property only on the Airbnb platform, meaning that out of the 60% who use both platforms, 50% get more guests from Airbnb and 50% get more guests from Booking.com.

In his interview, the host who has more guests via Booking.com stated that he still preferred Airbnb. This host's opinion was that the number of guests depends on the location and this has more influence on the number of guests than either of the two platforms. The host stated: *"I use Airbnb and Booking.com, I trust the Airbnb platform more. I have more guests via Booking.com platform, probably because of the location, because I get a lot business guests and transit guests, and many guests who come through the Airbnb platform are looking for a more central location in the city, which I do not have...but every year, due to my Superhost status, more and more guests come via the Airbnb platform."*

Another host was very disappointed with the Booking.com platform and is more satisfied with Airbnb, stating: *"Currently, I only use Airbnb and Booking.com. I trust Airbnb the most at 90%, and it gives me 90% of all my guests.*"

From the interview I also wanted to find out why hosts trust one platform more than the other, what the differences are between them for the hosts and what challenges and benefits each platform brings. The hosts' answers were similar in favour of the Airbnb platform, as they seem to prefer this platform to the Booking.com platform, even though this brings them more guests in some cases. Some of their statements are provided below:

"The positive difference for the host in favour of Airbnb is that I can definitely check out the guest earlier. In my opinion, this is the most significant advantage over Booking.com… One other positive thing is that the Airbnb platform pays immediately compared to Booking.com, where payments arrive 3–4 times a month or once a month".

Another host had a similar opinion about the advantages of Airbnb:

"The advantage with Airbnb is that I can check out the guest a little, in the sense that I can see who they are, what they do, and discreetly ask them a few questions beforehand if it is a new profile, whereas in the case of Booking.com, you just get a reservation, not knowing at all what you are getting…"

One host also mentioned the review system and comparison between the two platforms, and benefits for hosts on Airbnb platform:

"I am more satisfied with Airbnb, because of the possibility to check the guest, because the host can also rate the guest himself, and with that in mind the guests feel obliged to follow the house rules. This is impossible through the Booking.com

platform, as the guest has slightly less impetus to follow certain conditions in the property."

This was also mentioned by another respondent: *"The differences are huge, especially in terms of communication with guests. With Airbnb, everything is more personal, the platform gives you more control over your profile, the evaluation is two sided (between host and guest), and as a result the attitude towards the property itself is unimaginably better from guests who come via the Airbnb platform"*.

There were also mentions of the prices and commissions in the answers as well. One host from Ljubljana had an opinion on the higher prices via Booking.com: *"Generally speaking, prices on the Booking.com platform can be set higher, but Booking.com itself charges a higher commission than the Airbnb portal.*" Another host added: *"The advantages are that you receive the money immediately, and Airbnb has lower commission at 3% versus 15% at Booking.com."*

The host with the most properties criticised Booking.com and described the real value of Airbnb among hosts in Slovenia. Regarding the challenges and differences for hosts, he stated: *"There are a lot of differences for the hosts. I am much more satisfied with Airbnb and very dissatisfied with Booking.com, and if it were not filling any remaining availability that I am not able to fill with Airbnb, I would never use it at all, because it is a horrible organisation. Specifically, hosts are unfriendly, including in terms of resolving issues; at Airbnb they are family-friendly and flexible, while Booking.com is strictly official, tight-lipped and exploitative in some ways, very one-sided and the guests are incomparably different, too…"*

4.5 The relationship between Airbnb hosts and Airbnb guests

The hosts have different approaches towards guests and some of them seek interaction and socialise with their guests, while on the other hand, some do not want to make any contact. I wanted to understand how the 10 interviewees see this relationship with their guest. Overall, five hosts only interact at the time of check-in and don't want any further interaction; three hosts are keen to interact with the guests; one host wants to socialise more but does not have time; and one host does not want any interaction with guests at all.

One host described a strong interest in making a connection with their guests: *"Personal interaction is the basic motto of doing this business at all. If you don't know how to communicate and socialise, then you can't do this business. I definitely want to interact with my guests."*

Additionally, two other hosts stated that they are interested in communicating with guests, but it must start from the guests' side. Their opinion was:

"The interaction with the guests is at their request. We interact with the guests in most cases, because according to the reviews we have received, guests expect this. Above all, we give them "local tips". We do not impose on guests and our interaction is only on their initiative..."

"I am interested in connecting with guests, if they show me their interest first. I give the guests the freedom to stay in my apartment and I spend some time with them at check-in, where I explain the house rules and special features of the apartment – and mention the attractions of Ljubljana and offer suggestions for the duration of their stay. I am available almost 24 hours a day during a guest's stay with us…"

Five out of the 10 hosts I interviewed said that they do not want interaction, but they understand the importance of meeting the guests. The reviews are always better when guests are met in person, and some hosts understand that this is an important aspect of business. Their routine is to meet the guests for check-in and they do not want any interaction after that. Their statements were similar, with slight differences about the meaning of meeting their guests:

"I do not socialise with guests. I tell everyone where the restaurants are, where the main sights are, what the main places to see are. I try to be relaxed with my guests, so that everything is friendlier. I have a more open attitude. From this perspective, I get back the feedback that I'm super friendly, super nice, communicate well, that I'm always quick with to respond."

"I don't want to interact with my guests. I meet them and welcome them to the house, because there are so many things I need to explain at check-in. On the day of their arrival I talk to them for 15 minutes."

"My personal intention is not to make contacts, but the personal approach to this is important to me in terms of guest experience. This means that my guests get it with me and me with them. I want and expect something similar when I go somewhere abroad. I explain something about location, attractions, where it's good to eat, ... I also have a key-safe, but I prefer to meet guests for check-in myself, because the personal touch is much better and reviews are better when I accept my guests in person."

"I always meet with the guests for check-in, I welcome them into my property, but I don't socialise with them."

"I have no interest in contact with my guests. I welcome them, explain where things are and answer if they ask anything. I always meet them for check-in in person."

One host showed no interest in spending time with his guests, but understands that socialising with guests would bring many positives. Due to lack of time at the moment, however, he is not making any additional contact than meeting the guest for check-in. This host said about the relationship with guests: *"So far I haven't had a great desire to be too attached to the guests themselves. This maybe is a bad habit of mine, because if I were less restricted in terms of time, I would be able to have more of a connection with the guests. I might perhaps go for a drink or a small meal with them, to get to know them better and by doing so create more contacts and make some new friends in different countries around the world.*"

In the case of the host who first started renting out only a private room, the situation has changed a lot for him. From initially socialising with guests a lot in the apartment, he now no longer wants any communication when renting out the entire apartment. His explanation confirmed this behaviour: "*When I lived in the apartment, I socialised with my guests a lot, and I loved it: guests also left the room in a better condition when I socialised with them. Now, when I rent out the whole apartment, I have no interest in socialising with my guests. I never meet the guests; they get the keys from a bar nearby and they leave the keys in an agreed location."*

In a follow up question, I asked if the experience with the guests was positive and if any forms of friendship, business contact or anything else were formed. All the interviewees had had positive experiences with guests, while only one guest mentioned two problems he had encountered since starting back in 2014. The positive experience was confirmed by one of the hosts who explained that guests are checked before confirmation of their reservation: *"Very positive experience with everyone, even the Israelis. So far, we have not had any negative experiences, mainly due to checking guests before confirming their reservation, because we don't take everyone."*

Another host started talking about the profile of his guests, which he believes has contributed to him having only positive experiences with hosting via Airbnb: *"I have had a positive experience in the sense that practically nothing has been damaged. Mainly because of the higher price, because of all the factors, I get such well-behaved families, a slightly higher class of guests. I mostly have families."*

Among all the hosts, six have managed to develop friendships and are either in touch with some of their guests or guests are returning to their apartment and further developing their relationship. A host based in Ljubljana spoke about this: *"In principle, I have had very positive experiences with all the guests; I have managed to make quite a few contacts, including one friendship with a family who return every other month for their son's medical treatment in Ljubljana and always stay in our apartment. I have also received quite a few invitations from other hosts to stay in their accommodation when I visit their country."*

Other hosts did not specify how many friendships had been formed and in what respect; one host stated: *"There are some friendships; we are in touch with some of them, especially those who came to the private rooms."*

Of the 10 interviewees, one host even managed to form such strong relationships that he went on to visit five of his guests in their home countries. He said: *"I made some friendships and I even went to visit five of my guests, all the way to Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria and Romania."*

Hosts had minimal negative experiences; only two hosts had problems with a specific type of guests. Generally, some hosts experienced problems with cleanliness or communication with guests; other than those, two hosts reported problems that arose with the supply of electricity or hot water, but this was all quickly resolved and alternative accommodation was offered to guests, if needed. One of the senior hosts I interviewed said that problems only occur when guests do not read the listing and want something that the property does not have. This older host believes that all problems can be resolved with experience and authority, stating: *"The experience is only negative when the guests do not read our listing on the website, but come and expect something that has not been mentioned in the listing. I have always been able to solve the problems due to my age, authority and experience. But my son, for example, who is much younger, has no experience and cannot handle some them."*

One of the hosts who gets more guests via Booking.com experienced some issues that were not solely his fault, but more due to the strange behaviour of his guests. His answer to this question gave some new insights into the type of guests: *"There have been some minor negative experiences. There was one case where the guests were very demanding; given the price they had paid for the accommodation, they wanted significantly more things that were not in the apartment (extra dishes, extra things, asked for a lot of help) ... we did what they wanted, and added all the extra things, but still the guests were not satisfied and gave a very poor review. We also had a guest who had a negative experience with the town itself because he was robbed and then he automatically connected everything to our accommodation and gave us a very poor review as well. Obviously, I was not responsible for what happened to him, and I was very sorry that this had happened to one of our guests. Another time I had a guest from Brazil who was very unfriendly and ruined my living room furniture but didn't want to admit the damage and, in the end, paid nothing for it."*

Another host had experience of minor harassment by his guest: *"One lady was harassing me, after she left my apartment; she came back to Slovenia once and waited for me in front of the block. It was a little strange. When I drove home past the block, I saw her standing at the entrance and of course, I avoided her. The whole experience was awful for me, and for the first time I felt terrible."*

To also get a full picture of the hosts' experience of Airbnb from the guest side, in question number 12 I also asked all of the interviewees if they knew of Airbnb before and if they had stayed anywhere through Airbnb before they became a host themselves. All 10 confirmed that they knew Airbnb before, but not all of them had stayed with them before starting their business. One host started using the platform for his own accommodation needs once he had started renting out his own property on the platform, and one had not travelled with Airbnb as yet, but did wish to do so in the near future. Eight hosts did use the Airbnb platform for their own accommodation requirements and most of their experiences as a guest were positive.

One host pointed out an important part of the process to be fully satisfied with your experience on the platform. He said: *"I have rented accommodation through the Airbnb platform many times and have been very satisfied as a guest. However, you need to be prepared to read the entire listing and pre-exclude accommodation where there might be any problems. Reading other guests' reviews is always a great guide for deciding which accommodation to choose."*

With this in mind, two hosts were surprised when they arrived at the accommodation they had booked via Airbnb. The first one had booked what appeared to be a beautiful room, but he didn't know that the room was in a container. The second host was unhappy that he was staying in the basement, even though it was not stated in the listing that the property was in the basement. He only stayed there for one night and apartment was very clean and everything was nice, so he was still happy with the stay overall.

4.6 Income from hosting

The hosts were asked to express their satisfaction with the earnings they receive from renting out their apartment or house via Airbnb or other platforms. I also asked them about the proportion of income that comes from this business, namely whether it is equal to their salary, if they are employed, or just supplements their regular salary. Some were open to sharing this information, but others only commented on their satisfaction with the earnings.

In general, all the hosts are happy with the income; for some it is their only source of income and they are satisfied with the amount they earn. One host commented: *"I am genuinely pleased with the earnings, and it is greater than if I worked as a designer in a company."*

Another host rents out his property for only five months a year and the earnings are a great addition to his pension. He said: *"Yes, I am happy with the earnings. It supplements my pension. I use this money to spend two months on Gran Canaria in the winter. I share the money with my son, as we do everything together."*

Hosts mentioned the fluctuations in earnings between months and how seasonal this business is. One host who is in full-time employment commented that he had had great two months in July and August this year, and that the earnings were great. The earnings were higher in than his regular job, as described by host: *"In the two months of July and August, I made more money than I did in my regular job. Looking at the average earnings for the whole year, the earnings represent up to 50% of my annual salary."*

The host from Ljubljana is also in full-time employment and his earnings are on average around EUR 700–800 per month, which he is pleased with. This is addition to his usual salary and it varies each month. He did not specify what percentage these earnings contribute to his overall annual income. Assuming that this is not close to his regular salary, he is happy to continue and have these additional earnings. Similarly, the host who started only renting out a private room only had earnings in addition to his salary and the rental income was not even close to the amount of his salary. His earnings from renting a private room were less than when renting out the whole apartment. He stated: *"When I rented out the private room, I got around EUR 350–400 per month, mainly only for covering expenses. When I rent out the whole apartment for three people, the best month is August, with earnings around EUR 1150–1200."*

Another host described a similar share of earnings, and mentioned how earnings could be better and the effect of seasonality on the rental income. He compared the earnings from renting his property to what he can earn from salaried employment. He said: *"I am partly satisfied with the income; I think it would be possible to earn more; the income equates to a regular salary from employment. Of course, the salary varies from month to month; in some cases, the earnings are less than the regular salary I receive in my profession, and there are also 3–4 months where the earnings are much higher than the regular salary from my day job. Fifty per cent of my annual income derives from renting on Airbnb and Booking.com."*

Another host offered a very similar opinion, but in this case, at the end of the year the total income from renting out the property came to 70% of total income.

Another host I interviewed gave quite different answers. This host did not want to talk about numbers and percentages. He answered that working only with Airbnb and Booking.com is not enough for the host, but it is not the numbers that are important, but more to do with the way of thinking about properties. This host is firm in his belief that: *"It is not the income that is important; it is important to change your mindset. In other words, the real estate or the fixed assets that you own have to bring you some kind of income. When we started, we had the space and we needed the money."*

4.7 Hosting expectations, reality and future plans

Besides the income, the hosts agreed that they had gained some other experience and benefits. A few mentioned that their English had improved due to using it regularly when speaking to their guests; their social skills had also improved, and they had been exposed to multiple life experiences. By meeting different people, from different cultures, they had learned about various characteristics of each culture. Some hosts had also learnt more about being organised, and being hard working and punctual on a day-to-day basis. One host mentioned how it is difficult to be on your own and how much work is invested in the whole process, if you want to do it well. He said about the work: *"I have had many positive experiences in terms of working, as it takes a lot of effort to do everything on your own and you have to have a slightly different approach, and you need to make a big effort, because in a regular job, the salary comes automatically and you do what you do. In this business, you have to really try, try to invest some more and find ideas to attract guests, so that they want to come back to your apartment as often as possible."*

For some, hosting is also about learning a little more about Slovenia, Ljubljana and other places around the world. For the host from Ljubljana, Airbnb offers the freedom and possibility to travel around the world and visit many new places.

On the other hand, two hosts mentioned that they had learnt a lot about bureaucracy in Slovenia in the past few years. The situation is very one-sided and everyone needs to find his or her own way to be successful. One host offered the opinion: *"I learned about bureaucracy, I learned how to function a little bit more in the country, how this is all a one-way thing for us, and you have to take care of yourself completely because no one else will."*

The overall hosting experience did satisfy all the hosts and meet their expectations. They wish to continue hosting their properties in the future. Only one host mentioned that he is thinking of stopping hosting in near future, due to the amount of work he has, and also due to the lack of apartments on the real estate market. He feels he can get some great tenants for a longer period of time. He expressed his opinion: *"Now, I am thinking of renting out the apartment permanently for a while, because there are no expenses and less work. On the other hand, there is a lack of apartments on the market and rents are high right now. This would be more profitable for me at the moment."*

The platform itself works well and is easy to use, but in relation to questions about satisfaction with the platform, one of the hosts suggested that the platform could be enhanced and some additional features could be added to the options for hosts. He believes this could improve some details: *"The platform could be a little more* *detailed in terms of fixing certain discounts and pricing, and setting availabilities for when the property can be booked and when not."*

The main obstacles that could affect hosts' decisions to perform the same activity in the future are the new upcoming legislation and bureaucracy. New legislation has been proposed that would require 100% consent (up from 75%) of all owners in multi-dwelling buildings. The new laws are unpredictable and one host was concerned about the requirements to have equal taxation with standard long-term renting in Slovenia. He expressed his concern: *"If the law was to take 25% of taxes just like with standard long-term renting, then it wouldn't pay at all, because that's a big deal since it takes almost two or three months of your total income for the year."*

Another host also revealed concerns about reduced occupancy across the whole year, due to the saturated short-term lettings market.

The hosts were asked follow-up questions about whether they would change anything if they were to start all over again. Seven interviewees would not change anything, as they are happy to have Superhost status; they are satisfied with the earnings and everything is going as they planned. Three hosts had some ideas for things that could have been done differently at the beginning, but unfortunately, there is no way back now. The first of these three hosts suggested hosts should unite more on the local level. He stated: *"I would be united locally. We are now paying almost 18.5% (Booking.com) and 3% (Airbnb) in fees to platforms. I would unite locally through the municipality of Ljubljana."*

The second host would deal with bureaucracy from the start, rather than resolving issues as they came along. He would also outsource some parts of the process more from the start, too. Lastly, the third host would do things differently in terms of putting more focus on the Airbnb platform, such as more concentrating more on filling out every detail of the profile and would consequently generate more guests from the Airbnb platform rather than Booking.com.

Sharing information about hosting with their friends or family was another of the questions in this part of the questionnaire. Hosts made both positive and negative comments about giving advice to their families and friends who want to go into this business. Each of them suggested something specific and interesting from their point of view. Three hosts said that the business is not for everyone; it requires a lot of work; a few things should not bother you with this business; and that the work is very demanding to do alongside a full-time job.

One host suggested that it was a good idea to really connect with guests, speak with them more, and try to make them feel at home. Regarding this suggestion he said: *"I would ask them whether they are interested in renting and whether they want to have* *constant interaction with the guests. If they do want to they should interact more with the guests, and connect with them more, so that the guests feel more at home and are more at ease.*"

One host who is interested in interior design believes that the presentation of the property is an extremely important factor that someone who is thinking of starting to offer a short-term rental property should be aware of. He suggests that the investments made inside the apartment and the overall look and feel of the apartment affects the sales performance. His recommendations are: *"I suggest that they renovate and decorate the apartment as nicely as possible. If you want a low-class apartment and you spend EUR 10,000 that is fine, but if it is possible, it is smarter to invest EUR 30,000. First, you will get more clients and you can set a much higher price. It is important that the apartment is nice, very clean, designed in such a way that it is easier to clean and air."*

It is no surprise that the host who has property in Bohinj and lives in Ljubljana would mention to friends and family the importance of logistics, and how important it is to plan everything, to have everything on hand in order for things to work well with the property. Interestingly, the host who is based nearby in Bled would suggest to friends to start advertising only on the Airbnb platform. Only if they lack guests, should they then add listing on Booking.com, too. Some guests in Bled come from certain regions via Airbnb and others from specific countries via Booking.com. He argues that the platforms have different geographical origins of guests: *"In my experience, Booking.com is more Eastern Europe and Airbnb is more Western Europe. That's how it is in Bled. The world is through Airbnb."*

The final interview question was about the saturation of the market and differences through the years of hosting. Eight out of the 10 interviewees believe that the market is oversaturated and only one thinks the market is not saturated. One of the interviewees only mentioned the differences in prices in certain months and how prices can increase by 30% during summer months, instead of commenting on the saturation of the market.

Both hosts from mountain municipalities of Slovenia, the host from Bohinj and the host from Bled all commented on the increase in the number of hosts. The host in Bled stated that even though the number of listings has increased, his occupancy level has not dropped since the year he started. He stated that:

"Every year in Bled there are more beds and more of these offers. In 2019, there were more tourist beds than inhabitants of Bled itself. This goes up by about 20% per year, with increased advertising of listings on both Airbnb and Booking.com. As we have Superhost status, we take care of our guests, and we always have full occupancy, so there has been no change for us so far."

Similarly, the host in Bohinj is seeing the same market trends: *"I see that the competition is always fiercer. When I started to rent there were 250 properties in Bohinj, now there are more than 400. The market is opening up. Just as an example: my photographer got a licence and will build apartments. My cleaner is also going to build an apartment in her family house."*

One experienced host from Ljubljana confirmed that the situation in the capital is the same. He started back in 2014 and has seen all the changes in the market structure over the years. He argues that some hosts still work illegally, which contributes to the grey economy and the dumping of prices. The laws are in places, but the checks are not performed properly and frequently enough. He expressed his concerns:

"I was the 3rd host in Piran and the 30th host in Ljubljana when I started, and now there are over 300 or 400 hosts in Piran and thousands of hosts in Ljubljana. The market is oversaturated and I would absolutely change that to enforce the laws and to regulate the market. Those of us who do things properly do not have the chance to earn normally, and some are dumping the prices and it is completely destroying the market for all of us."

Another host from Ljubljana also mentioned oversaturation of the market, but believes that location is still the key to high occupancy. He believes: *"The market is oversaturated, but not locally oversaturated. If you have a good location, you can always be full throughout the year. A good location is the city centre or along the highway ring-road around Ljubljana."*

Property location was also important for two other hosts. One added that the number of high-rated reviews and parking spaces helps with the number of reservations. For the second host, interior design and nice decorations that attract more bookings were also very important.

Only one host in Ljubljana argued that the market is not saturated. He confirmed that his property is located in the most attractive part of Ljubljana and gets constant attention from potential guests. His opinion was interesting, because his full-time job is also in this field as he works in hotel industry. In his words, there is no increased competition from Airbnb for hotels as they perform with a similar level of occupancy. He expressed this as below:

"No, the market is not saturated, I can raise the price every year, because I have really good reviews and a great location. I don't know how it is for someone who has a location outside the centre. They are doing great sales in hotels; there is no difference in occupancy due to Airbnb. Airbnb has a completely different clientele from hotel guests. Some hoteliers have been complaining a lot, especially the manager from Hotel Slon, who said that Airbnb was taking guests. But when you look

closely, you see that when hotels are empty, Airbnb is empty, and when the hotels are full, the Airbnb occupancy levels are also high. However, the hotels are full when there is an event in the city, when there is a conference–for example, 2400 cardiologists came last year in May–and you do not have the capacity for these guests. Of course, there are regular guests in the hotels, corporate guests plus all the other guests, and Airbnb and private accommodation eventually saved the event, because the cardiologists were able to find somewhere to stay. There are only a limited number of hotel rooms in the whole of Ljubljana, with hotels having regular guests and corporate guests, it is hard to put all the guest somewhere ... there will be a big demand in 2021 and we don't even know yet how we will handle this issue."

5 DISCUSSION

In this chapter the results from the previous chapter will be discussed and the research questions answered. In the second part of the chapter, some practical implications will be discussed. Lastly, limitations and suggestions for future research will be outlined.

5.1 Summary of main findings

The main objective of the thesis was the analysis of motivational factors for Airbnb hosts in Slovenia.

RQ1. What are the personal reasons that influence homeowners to start hosting the property on Airbnb or other platforms?

The main motivational reason for the hosts in the sample was income. Income was brought up with different terms, either as earnings, economic reasons or purely an interest in additional income on the part of the host. Six out of 10 interviewees cited it as the first personal reason to start hosting property on Airbnb. It was interesting to note that seven out of the 10 hosts were renting purely to supplement their income from their regular full-time employment or in addition to something else they do through their sole trader company. Only three hosts were solely involved with this kind of activity as their main occupation.

Another reason for starting to rent out a property to tourists was mentioned by three hosts. It was not always cited as the first reason, but it was important for my analysis. This was that they had empty accommodation and they wanted to get some earnings out of it. Two hosts started with renovations, one in Bohinj and other in Ljubljana, and once the property was set up for guests, they started hosting.

Another reason that was mentioned twice was socialising and looking for new challenges. This reason was not as significant as the first one, but still important.

Hosts wanted to experience something new, to learn to be more organised and consequently, wanted to achieve some earnings, if possible.

Only one host did not own the property before, and he bought his apartment solely with purpose of renting it out. This host wanted to be flexible and have the option to sometimes close apartment bookings so that his brother returning home from abroad could use it, and rent it out at other times.

RQ2. What are the possible obstacles and challenges that face homeowners when starting to host their property on Airbnb or other platforms?

Some hosts had more challenges in the process than others. Overall, the duration of time between having the initial idea to starting and the registration of the listing and the first guests varied a lot. It ranged all the way from one week up to three years, for one of the hosts. For most hosts it was between two and three months, with five hosts answering within this time frame. The time depended on various factors, such as whether the property had to be renovated, or if the apartment was already empty and only had to be registered before the first guests could come.

In terms of making the actual listing on Airbnb, there were no complications as this is a very straightforward and user-friendly process. None of the 10 interviewees referred to having any difficulties at the start.

In terms of the registration and documentation process for the hosts at the start, the answers were split in two different directions. On the one side are those hosts who started renting back in 2014 and up to 2017 and who faced many challenges. They had no experience in the market, and there was no concrete legal structure to follow or instructions for how to register everything correctly. They were alone at the start and they had to make a lot of phone calls and visit different institutions to get any kind of help. Even the institutions themselves were not sure how to advise the hosts. All this started to change in the last two, maybe three years. Hosts who went through this process in 2018 or 2019 had no problems at all. They confirmed this by saying that by then all the information was available on the internet, there were seminars available to give full details on the whole process of registration and finally, institutions had more experience to be able to advise new hosts.

RQ3. Did the experience of hosting guests on Airbnb or other platforms fulfill the expectations of homeowners, and do they wish to continue this business for many years to come?

All 10 interviews of Airbnb hosts in Slovenia confirmed that hosts are satisfied with hosting via Airbnb in Slovenia. Their initial expectations of hosting properties for short periods of time were fulfilled and they gained more than just income. They mentioned that hosting also brought them many new positive experiences, and new cultural education, as well improvements in their English language ability and social skills. This was followed by the increased capability to be organised, punctual and hard working in order to be successful in the business. One host would perhaps have a more demanding request for Airbnb to improve their platform and provide some new features so that hosts can have greater control of their pricing and for setting availability. Some have also started to understand the complicated bureaucratic system in the country and understand how to follow the exact rules to help yourself.

For the future, all hosts want to continue this business for an indefinite time, except one host who is thinking of renting his apartment out on the long-term real estate market. He believes that the workload and lack of time he faces are forcing him to stop for a while, and now that the prices are higher, enter the real estate market. This would be more profitable in his case, as there are no bills to be paid and no work needs to be done.

The main obstacle that could affect hosts in the future are the new laws and bureaucracy. Most of the hosts are concerned with these two factors and feel that they might affect their future possibility to continue to advertise on the Airbnb or Booking.com platforms. The law is in the process of being ratified, but the proposal is to require the consent of 100% (up from 75%) of all owners in multi-dwelling buildings where a homeowner wishes to rent out a property.

RQ4. How do homeowners evaluate the differences between hosting their homes on Airbnb and on other platforms?

The structure of the hosts who took part in the interviews shows that all 10 of them are listing their properties on the Airbnb platform, with six hosts also use the Booking.com platform. No other platform is used among the hosts in the sample. Nine hosts prefer and give more trust to the Airbnb platform, while one host favours Booking.com.

The differences in the advantages of Airbnb for the hosts are: (1) Airbnb allows the option to not have instant booking, which means that guests can be checked before the reservation is accepted. This gives hosts the freedom to choose the type of guests they like. On the other hand, Booking.com only has the option of instant booking and no information about guests is given before the day of their arrival at the property. (2) With Airbnb payment is instant as you receive the money once the guest checks in to your accommodation. On the other hand, Booking.com accumulates reservations and transfers the money four times a month or once a month, depending on the host's preferred method. (3) The review system at Airbnb is two-sided (between host and guest), meaning that the host also evaluates the guest. As a result, the general attitude towards the property itself is better from guests who come via the Airbnb platform. In the case of Booking.com, the reviews are only given to hosts once the guest leaves the property. The host cannot share information with the public if the guest misbehaved or did not follow the house rules. (4) Communication on the Airbnb platform is more personal and each host can create their own personal profile with additional personal traits and any information that he feels relevant to note. On the other hand, Booking.com automatically creates the profile page and gives the host no option to make any alterations. (5) The commission fee for each transaction on the Airbnb platform is 3%, while on the Booking.com platform the commission is 15%. (6) People on the Airbnb platform are more friendly and open, and even in the case of solving problems, they are more flexible and family-friendly. On the other hand, at Booking.com the staff and guests are strictly official, very one-sided and the guests are sometimes very unfriendly.

Overall, the interviews confirmed that the preferred platform is Airbnb, but some of the hosts still use both to fill their empty rooms. In some cases, due to location, one platform brings more guests than the other.

RQ5. What are the trends in the ways in which Slovenian homeowners rent out property on Airbnb (apartment purchased specifically to rent out on Airbnb; sharing own apartment; etc.)?

The trend among the hosts who took part in the interviews was that between the 10 hosts there are 17 properties advertised on the platforms. Of those 17 properties, two hosts have multiple properties, of which one has six listings and the other has three listings. It is notable that both of these hosts started hosting in 2014. Of the 17 listings, three listings are houses and all the others are apartments. All 14 of the apartments are rented out as entire units, except one in Ljubljana that first started as private shared room and then developed into the whole unit.

My interviewee sample revealed an interesting statistic that only one out of the 10 interviewees bought the property as an investment and to rent it out. All the others confirmed they had the property before they started to rent properties on these platforms. Some had to perform some work before the unit was ready for hosting, either with interior decoration or with complete renovation of the space. Because of this, different time frames exist between the formation of the idea and the arrival of the first guest. A few of the hosts wanted to try out something new and used their empty apartment for short-term lettings to tourists instead of the more usual long-term lettings.

In the case of the one listing where apartment was purely bought for investment and with the intention of having it available for short-term lettings, the idea was that the owner wanted some freedom and flexibility with the unit and option to have the apartment completely free and available at different times during the year. The investment has paid off and the owner is happy with the earnings from the apartment.

5.2 Practical implications

The findings from the research suggest that Airbnb hosts in Slovenia are satisfied with being hosts and wish to continue renting out property on the platform. The fact is that for all future hosts it is important to correctly register the activity with FURS and other connected institutions from the outset. It is important to start in accordance with rules and to prevent any unnecessary control from the tax authorities. The knowledge is now in place and the institutions are able to provide accurate information to hosts, when they are seeking any kind of advice. In particular, authorities are able to give advice on how to perform the hosting activity legally and according to all the rules.

While the legislators are performing inspection checks, these checks should be done on an even bigger scale. The research showed that there was some evidence of penalties given to offenders, but even tighter control would eliminate the grey area of the business and force all illegal hosts to stop their activities. Stricter control by legislators would also prevent the dumping of prices that is happening on the market. The touristic offer in Slovenia is diverse and tourists arriving in the country are looking for quality offer and private accommodation providers are an extremely important part of the whole picture. In the busiest months of the year, the hotels alone cannot satisfy the demand so private accommodation providers are much needed.

The concern of hosts in the future is new legislation. They mentioned only the upcoming legislation and bureaucracy as a reason that might stop them from hosting their properties in the next few years. There is not much research showing how legislation for short-term lettings is being formed in Slovenia, but the legislators should keep in mind that the laws should not be too strict. Creating unfair and impossible conditions from the start would force many hosts to stop providing accommodation and would deter new hosts that might want to enter the market. Empty apartments would not be beneficial to anyone, especially when hosts are paying taxes and extra fees into the state coffers.

5.3 Limitations and future research

This research has some limitations that should be mentioned before studying and presenting the results.

Firstly, one limitation could be that there was no set age group for the representative sample of hosts in Slovenia. Another limitation is that hosts had different start years. This was interesting from the point of view of seeing the development across five years in terms of legislation in this field, but overall it is hard to compare the results from hosts who had different starting points and therefore different conditions. Another bias is that the sample has gender imbalance. The vast majority of the respondents were male and only one was female, therefore a more balanced sample might show different results.

Secondly, potential bias might come from the demographic statistics as the respondents were mostly from the top tourist cities, such as Ljubljana, Bled, Bohinj and Piran. In this case, some regions are not presented in the analysis and the results might be different if the hosts were from different, less “touristy” cities in Slovenia.

Lastly, there could also be a bias also in that the research and interviews were conducted just after the summer when all the hosts had positive experiences after the most successful time of the year. It might be interesting to hear the answers at the end of the year, so that the data could be compared after the performance of the full year.

The thesis cannot be generalised because the sample is too small and does not include all ages and all regions.

There is a lot of capacity for further future analysis. There is limited research and data available on Airbnb hosts in Slovenia. It might be interesting to remove the limitations and conduct much broader research with at least 100 hosts from the same generation. In future studies it might also be useful to look at analysis among hosts who have more than one property available. Regarding the gender bias, further research could be conducted with a sample of 50 female and 50 male hosts in each of the specific regions of Slovenia.

CONCLUSION

The market is rapidly changing in the direction of the sharing economy on various peer-to-peer platforms that exploit the technological advancement of recent times. The worldwide market is affected by these rapid developments and, consequently the Slovenian market is also affected. Airbnb is one of the key leaders among the short-term rental platforms that connect homeowners with free space and individuals who want to travel around the world. The motivational factors for individuals to start hosting are different, but mostly, they revolve around income, social interactions and sharing as the three major motivators (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016). Similar results were shown in this thesis, looking at only 10 different hosts from around Slovenia. The main personal reason for hosting on platforms was income and for some hosts, the empty available space. All hosts confirmed that registration on the Airbnb platform was easy, but some did struggle with bureaucracy and registration with the Slovenian authorities, before 2018, when there was much less experience. The hosts were satisfied with the platform and they all wish to continue hosting in the future, but they are concerned about upcoming new legislation. Overall satisfaction was confirmed during this research and supported with additional positive factors that hosts receive through hosting their property. As with all things, there is always a need to work hard and to offer something extra in order to be successful. With a positive attitude, great relationship with guests, and good individually built listings, the Airbnb hosts will keep their occupancy levels high across Slovenia.

The pressure of Airbnb on the whole industry is forcing some countries to introduce restrictions on the amount of hosting each host can perform. Something similar is not currently happening in Slovenia, but all the hosts who were interviewed expressed concerns with the future of this business, especially with the coming legislation and new additional bureaucracy. The wish is for legislation to be made correctly and in such a way that dumping of prices is eliminated and the grey economy disappears.

In conclusion, this thesis brings different practical implications that can be used as a base for more detailed studies on this topic in the future. It represents a small fraction of the market, but still captures some key ideas and concepts that can be used for potential new hosts in the future.

REFERENCE LIST

1. Airbnb. (2015). *Shared Opportunity: How Airbnb Benefits Communities.* Obtained 29 September 2019 from https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/public_comments/2015/05/01740-96152.pdf
2. Airbnb. (2017, 10th March). *Airbnb: Helping travel grow greener.* Obtained 29 September 2019 from https://www.airbnbcitizen.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Airbnbandsustainabletravel2017.pdf
3. Airbnb. (2019, 25th June). *Airbnb Luxe Reimagines Luxury Travel.* Obtained 26 August 2019 from https://press.airbnb.com/airbnb-luxe-reimagines-luxury-travel/
4. Airbnb. (no date-a). *About us – Airbnb Newsroom*. Obtained 28 March 2019 from https://press.airbnb.com/about-us/
5. Airbnb. (no date-b). *Fast Facts – Airbnb Newsroom.* Obtained 28 March 2019 from https://press.airbnb.com/fast-facts/
6. Airbnb. (no date-c). *Introducing Airbnb Plus.* Obtained 20 May 2019 from https://www.airbnb.com/plus
7. Airbnb Citizen. (2016, 23rd December). 140M arrivals. 1M instant Book. 112 Clubs. All people to people. Airbnb's 2016 highlights and 2017 trends we're watching. *Medium.* Obtained 26 April 2019 from https://medium.com/@AirbnbCitizen/airbnbs-2016-highlights-and-2017-trends-to-watch-ab9aee8f5f80
8. AJPES - Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services. (no date). *Start-ups Landlords.* Obtained 26 September 2019 from https://www.ajpes.si/Start-ups/Landlords/About#b487

9. Aydin, R. (2019, 20th September). How 3 guys turned renting air mattresses in their apartment into $31 billion company, Airbnb. *Business insider.* Obtained 28 November 2019 from https://www.businessinsider.com/how-airbnb-was-founded-a-visual-history-2016-2
10. Bardhi, F. & Eckhardt, G.M. (2012). Access-Based Consumption: The Case of Car Sharing. *Journal of Consumer research, 39*(4), 881–898.
11. Barron, K., Kung, E. & Proserpio, D. (2019, 17th April). Research: When Airbnb Listings in a City Increase, So Do Rent Prices. *Harvard Business review.* Obtained 10 October 2019 from https://hbr.org/2019/04/research-when-airbnb-listings-in-a-city-increase-so-do-rent-prices
12. Bautista, C. (2018, 25th October). Expedia acquires two home rental startups in fight with Airbnb. *The Real Deal.* Obtained 3 September 2019 from https://therealdeal.com/2018/10/25/expedia-acquires-two-home-rental-startups-in-fight-with-airbnb/
13. Belk, R. (2014). You are what you can access: Sharing and collaborative consumption online. *Journal of Business Research, 67*(8), 1595–1600.
14. Bernardi, M. (2018, 2nd October). *The impact of Airbnb on our cities: Gentrification and Disneyfication 2.0.* Obtained 29 April 2019 from https://labgov.city/theurbanmedialab/the-impact-of-airbnb-on-our-cities-gentrification-and-disneyfication-2-0/
15. Booking.com. (no date-a). *Booking.com: About Booking.com.* Obtained 16 September 2019 from https://www.booking.com/general.html?tmpl=docs%2Fabout&aid=304142&lang=en
16. Booking.com. (no date-b). *10 best apartments in Slovenia*. Obtained 19 January 2020 from https://www.booking.com/apartments/country/si.html?aid=304142;label=gen173nr-1DCAsoywFCE2FwYXJ0bWVudC1sYWR5LW0tNDlIMVgEaMsBiAEBmAExuAEYyAEP2AED6AEB-AEDiAIBqAIEuALVto3sBcACAQ;sid=d73126514ff3ecf8b94db956b3d67215;srpvid=eeb84b8f709f020e&
17. Booking.com. (no date-c). 29,015,996 hotel and property listings worldwide. 194+ million hotel reviews. Obtained 19 September 2019 from https://www.booking.com/index.html?aid=304142;label=gen173nr-1DCAsoywFCE2FwYXJ0bWVudC1sYWR5LW0tNDlIMVgEaMsBiAEBmAExuAEYyAEP2AED6AEB-AEDiAIBqAIEuALVto3sBcACAQ;sid=a7829fcc8c82b0cf6bbae1cf09b3ed74;srpvid=eeb84b8f709f020e&
18. Booking Holdings. (no date-a). *Booking.com.* Obtained 29 August 2019 from https://www.bookingholdings.com/brands/booking/

19. Booking Holdings. (no date-b). *Factsheet.* Obtained 29 August 2019 from https://www.bookingholdings.com/about/factsheet/
20. Botsman, R. & Rogers, R. (2011). *What's mine is yours: how collaborative consumption is changing the way we live.* London: HarperCollins.
21. Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic Analysis in psychology. (Ed.), *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101.
22. Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N. & Terry, G. (2019). Thematic Analysis. In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences* (pp. 843–860). Singapore: Springer.
23. Business Model Toolbox. (no date). *Airbnb Business Model.* Obtained 9 October 2019 from https://bmtoolbox.net/stories/airbnb/
24. Cheng, M. & Zhang, G. (2019). When western hosts meet Eastern guests: Airbnb hosts' experience with Chinese outbound tourists. *Annals of Tourism Research, 75*, 288–303.
25. Couchsurfing International, Inc. (no date-a). *About*. Obtained 14 September 2019 from https://www.couchsurfing.com/about/about-us/
26. Couchsurfing International, Inc. (no date-b). *Our Values*. Obtained 14 September 2019 from https://www.couchsurfing.com/about/values/
27. Crunchbase. (no date). Airbnb. Obtained 3 April 2019 from https://www.crunchbase.com/organization/airbnb
28. Eckhardt, G.M. & Bardhi, F. (2015, 28th January). The Sharing economy isn't about sharing at all. *Harvard Business review.* Obtained 20 January 2020 from https://hbr.org/2015/01/the-sharing-economy-isnt-about-sharing-at-all
29. Edelman, B. & Luca, M. (2014). *Digital Discrimination: The Case of Airbnb.com*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School.
30. English Oxford Dictionaries. (no date). *Definition of sharing economy in English by Oxford Dictionaries*. Obtained 4 April 2019 from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sharing_economy
31. Ert, E. & Fleischer, A. (2019). The evolution of trust in Airbnb: A case of home rental. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *75*, 279–287.
32. Ert, E., Fleischer, A. & Magen, N. (2016). Trust and reputation in the sharing economy: The role of personal photos in Airbnb, *Tourism Management*, *55*, 62–73.
33. eVEM. (no date). *Status in Registracija.* Obtained 25 September from http://evem.gov.si/info/podpogoji/drugiPogoj/14171/prikaziDrugiPogoj/
34. Expedia Group. (no date). *Vrbo.* Obtained 12 September 2019 from https://www.expediagroup.com/brands/vrbo/
35. Gole, N. (2017, 16th June). *Kako zakonito oddajati prek airbnb?* Obtained 26 September 2019 from https://www.delo.si/gospodarstvo/finance/kako-zakonito-oddajati-prek-airbnb.html
36. Gunter, U. (2018). What makes an Airbnb host a superhost? Empirical evidence from San Francisco and the Bay Area. *Tourism Management*, *66*, 26–37.

37. Hardy, A. & Dolnicar, S. (2017a). Networks and Hosts: A Love-Hate Relationship. In S. Dolnicar (Ed.). *Peer to peer accommodation networks: Pushing the boundaries* (pp. 182–193). Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers.
38. Hardy, A. & Dolnicar, S. (2017b). Types of Network Members. In S. Dolnicar (Ed.). *Peer to peer accommodation networks: Pushing the boundaries,* (pp. 170–181). Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers.
39. Henley, J. (2019, 20th June). Ten cities ask EU for help to fight Airbnb expansion. *The Guardian.* Obtained 29 September 2019 from https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/jun/20/ten-cities-ask-eu-for-help-to-fight-airbnb-expansion?fbclid=IwAR0ltk9UVaPd3Epf_tQa2cx9_Yzf482QuCBtsr6n5NIDgZnYxWSjOr9I-Hk
40. Ikkala, T. & Lampinen, A. (2015). Monetizing network hospitality: hospitality and sociability in the context of Airbnb. *Proceedings of the 18th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing* (pp. 1033–1044). New York: ACM.
41. Inalbea d.o.o. (no date). Airbnb. Obtained 10 October 2019 from http://www.inalbea.si/inalbea-airbnb-2/#sprejemanje-gostov
42. Kakar, V., Voelz, J., Wu, J. & Franco, J. (2018). The visible host: Does race guide Airbnb rental rates in San Francisco? *Journal of Housing Economics*, *40*, 25–40.
43. Karlsson, L. & Dolnicar, S. (2016). Someone's been sleeping in my bed. *Annals of Tourism Research, 58*, 159–162.
44. Kathan, W., Matzler, K. & Veider, V. (2016). The sharing economy: Your business model's friend or foe? *Business Horizons*, *59*(6), 663–672.
45. Kenton, W. (2019, 21st March). *Investopedia – Sharing economy*. Obtained 7 April 2019 from https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/sharing-economy.asp
46. Knežević Cvelbar, L.K. & Dolnicar, S. (2017). Filling Infrastructure Gaps. In S. Dolnicar (Ed.). *Peer to peer accommodation networks: Pushing the boundaries* (pp. 98–108). Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers.
47. Korošec, M. (2018, 14th July). Slovenski turizem kipi, na drugi strani birokracija dusi oddajanje sob prek Airbnb. *24ur.com.* Obtained 7 April 2019 from https://www.24ur.com/novice/gospodarstvo/slovenski-turizem-kipi-na-drugi-strani-birokracija-dusi-oddajanje-sob-prek-airbnb.html
48. Lampinen, A. & Cheshire, C. (2016, May). Hosting via Airbnb: Motivational and financial assurances in monetized network hospitality. *Mobile Life Centre.* Obtained 3 September 2019 from http://www.mobilelifecentre.org/sites/default/files/Airbnb%20Submitted%20Camera.pdf
49. Lardinois, F. (2015, 4th November). Expedia acquires Airbnb Rival HomeAway for $3.9B. *Tech Crunch.* Obtained 3 September 2019 from https://techcrunch.com/2015/11/04/expedia-acquires-airbnb-rival-homeaway-for-

3-
9b/?guccounter=1&guce_referrer_us=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_cs=xy5JyuT_kpPAUSs-h7lQzA

50. Leskovar, M. J. (2018, 31st October). *Postopek oddajanje nepremicnine preko AirBnb.* Obtained 3 September 2019 from http://c21.si/blog/podrobnosti/postopek-oddajanja-nepremicnine-preko-airbnb.html
51. Libnik, V. (2019, 23rd September). Akcija Fursa se pozna, registriralo se je tisoc najemodajalcev vec. Airbnb. *Siol.net.* Obtained 26 September 2019 from https://siol.net/posel-danes/novice/akcija-fursa-se-pozna-registriralo-se-je-tisoc-najemodajalcev-vec-airbnb-507812
52. Litvin, S.W., Goldsmith, R.E. & Pan, B. (2008). Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *Tourism management, 29*(3), 458–468.
53. Lodgify. (no date). *HomeAway vs Vrbo. Pros and Cons for vacations rental owners.* Obtained 3 September 2019 from https://www.lodgify.com/vacation-rental-guide/homeaway/vrbo/
54. MacLaine, Hil. (2018, 27th March). What is the difference between Airbnb and Vrbo. *Quora.* Obtained 3 September 2019 from https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-difference-between-Airbnb-and-VRBO
55. Martucci, B. (no date). What is the sharing economy – Example companies, definition, Pros & Cons. *Money Crashers.* Obtained 3 October 2019 from https://www.moneycrashers.com/sharing-economy/
56. Miller, D. (2019, 25th June). The sharing economy and how it is changing industries. *The Balance SMB.* Obtained 20 January 2020 from https://www.thebalancesmb.com/the-sharing-economy-and-how-it-changes-industries-4172234
57. Močnik, B. (2019, 15th September). Airbnb & Co.: Pospesevalci turizma ali krvniki mest? *Delo.si.* Obtained 19 September 2019 from https://www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/airbnb-co-pospesevalci-turizma-ali-krvniki-mest-225148.html
58. Molz, G.M. (2014). Toward a network hospitality. *First Monday*, *19*(3).
59. Munoz, P. & Cohen, B. (2017). Mapping out the sharing economy: A configurational approach to sharing business modeling. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *125*, 21–37.
60. Nims, B. (2018, 12th October). 10 Alternatives to Airbnb for Vacation Rentals. *Huffpost life.* Obtained 3 September 2019 from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/alternative-sites-to-airbnb-for-vacation-rentals_n_5a987ab9e4b0a0ba4ad184e9?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAFIbBCX6WYNE9kx7AEEoUgRvOmdX8ARfqBhHUme-tOA79Jg055_17o4uJOWyGItVZ7lQzeYgt74F0094ScSbxNENn0AmxTbP3-

a2K5xXhh_LiXKyhO9cnXZON6eCrKZS3bSH80B6BxZg25I-SiEoohlDakIJnUoIMPiiLTbyEUlw

61. Owyang, J. (2014, 5th May). *Framework: Collaborative Economy Honeycomb.* Obtained 27 January 2020 from https://web-strategist.com/blog/2014/05/05/framework-collaborative-economy-honeycomb-osfest14/
62. Prijatelj, M. (2019, 28th February). *Tourist arrivals and overnight stays, detailed data, Slovenia, January-December 2018.* Obtained 17 September 2019 from https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/News/Index/7978
63. Prijatelj, M. & Oblak Flander, A. (2019, 27th March). *Metodolosko pojasnilo. Prihodi in prenocitve turistov.* Obtained 17 September 2019 from https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/File/DocSysFile/7779
64. Prijatelj, M. & Vovko, M. (2017, 18th May). *Tourist arrivals and overnight stays, Slovenia, 2016.* Obtained 19 September 2019 from https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/News/Index/6681
65. Prijatelj, M. & Zupančič, T. (2019, 30th August). *Tourist arrivals and overnight stays, Slovenia, July 2019.* Obtained 27 January 2020 from https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/news/Index/8338
66. Property Management. (2019). *2019 Airbnb statistics – User & Market Growth Data (updated).* Obtained 26 April 2019 from https://ipropertymanagement.com/airbnb-statistics/
67. Pušnik, M. (2018, 3rd July). Kako je Airbnb pretresel nepremicninski trg v prestolnici. *Delo.si.* Obtained 3 April 2019 from https://www.delo.si/lokalno/ljubljana-in-okolica/kako-je-airbnb-pretresel-najemniski-trg-v-prestolnici-66943.html
68. Rabuza, M. (2017, 10th October). Poostren nadzor Fursa nad Slovenci na Airbnb obrodil sadove. *Siol.net.* Obtained 28 March 2019 from https://siol.net/posel-danes/novice/poostren-nadzor-fursa-nad-airbnb-obrodil-sadove-451024
69. Reinhold, S. & Dolnicar, S. (2017a). How Airbnb Captures and Disseminates Value. In S. Dolnicar (Ed.). *Peer to peer accommodation networks: Pushing the boundaries* (pp. 54–62). Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers.
70. Reinhold, S. & Dolnicar, S. (2017b). The Sharing Economy. In S. Dolnicar (Ed.). *Peer to peer accommodation networks: Pushing the boundaries* (pp. 15–26). Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers.
71. Robinson, D. (2019, 25th March). Sharing economy companies list: Featuring Airbnb, Uber, Omni and Hubble. *NS BUSINESS.* Obtained 21 January 2020 from https://www.ns-businesshub.com/technology/sharing-economy-companies-list/
72. Roh, T.H. (2016). The sharing economy: Business cases of social enterprises using collaborative networks. *Procedia Computer Science, 91*, 502–511.
73. Sabljić, N. (2018, 18th May). *Tourist arrivals and overnight stays, Slovenia, 2017.* Obtained 19 September 2019 from https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/News/Index/7411

74. Saop d.o.o. (2017, 19th June). Kako postati sobodajalec in s tem dodatno zaslužiti? Obtained 19 September 2019 from http://www.minimax.si/kako-postati-sobodajalec-in-s-tem-dodatno-zasluziti/
75. Sdino, L. & Magoni, S. (2018). The Sharing Economy and Real Estate Market: The Phenomenon of Shared Houses. *International conference on Smart and Sustainable Planning for Cities and Regions.* Springer: Cham.
76. Sheppard, S. & Udell, A. (2016, 30th October). *Do Airbnb properties affect house prices?* Obtained 20 November 2019 from https://web.williams.edu/Economics/wp/SheppardUdellAirbnbAffectHousePrices.pdf
77. Statista. (2019, 9th August). Value of the Global sharing economy 2014-2025. Obtained 20 January 2020 from https://www.statista.com/statistics/830986/value-of-the-global-sharing-economy/
78. STO – Slovenian Tourist Board. (2019). *Tourism in numbers 2018.* Obtained 20 January 2020 from https://www.slovenia.info/uploads/dokumenti/tvs/tourism_in_numbers_web.pdf
79. STO – Slovenian Tourist Board. (no date). *Tourism in numbers. I feel Slovenia.* Obtained 20 January 2020 from https://www.slovenia.info/en/business/research-and-analysis/tourism-in-numbers
80. SURS – Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. (2017, 18th May). *Tourist arrivals and overnight stays, Slovenia, 2016.* Obtained 19 September 2019 from https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/News/Index/6681
81. SURS – Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. (2018, 18th May). *Tourist arrivals and overnight stays, Slovenia 2017*. Obtained 4 April 2019 from https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/news/Index/7411
82. SURS – Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. (2019, 28th February). *Tourist arrivals and overnight stays, detailed data, Slovenia, January-December 2018.* Obtained 17 September 2019 from https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/News/Index/7978
83. Tadelis, S. (2016). Reputation and feedback systems in online platform markets. *Annual Review of Economics*, *8*(1), 321–340.
84. Trefis, T. (2018, 11th May). As a rare profitable unicorn, Airbnb appears to be worth at least $38 billion. *Forbes.* Obtained 26 April 2019 from https://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2018/05/11/as-a-rare-profitable-unicorn-airbnb-appears-to-be-worth-at-least-38-billion/#4849aa2f2741
85. Tripping. (no date). *VRBO vs Airbnb.* Obtained 4 September 2019 from https://www.tripping.com/industry/rental-companies/vrbo-vs-airbnb
86. Vinton, K. (2016, 6th March). Meet the 14 unicorn startups that have created 25 billionaires. *Forbes.* Obtained 3 April 2019 from https://www.forbes.com/sites/katevinton/2016/03/06/meet-the-14-unicorn-startups-that-have-created-25-billionaires/

87. VRBO - Vacation Rental by Owner. (2019, 2nd May). *Expedia Group Names Vrbo Primary Alternative Accommodations Brand.* Obtained 3 September 2019 from https://www.vrbo.com/info/media-center/press-releases/PR_2019/expedia-group-names-vrbo-primary/
88. VRBO – Vacation Rental by Owner. (no date). *About Vrbo.* Obtained 3 September 2019 from https://www.vrbo.com/l/about-vrbo/?_gl=1*1mdu287*_gcl_aw*R0NMLjE1NjczNTkyNzEuRUFJYUlRb2JDaE1JdExTZG1aU3c1QUlWUnVKM0NoMG5Md1NQRUFBWUFTQUFFZ0xNMl9EX0J3RQ..*_gcl_dc*R0NMLjE1NjczNTkyNzEuRUFJYUlRb2JDaE1JdExTZG1aU3c1QUlWUnVKM0NoMG5Md1NQRUFBWUFTQUFFZ0xNMl9EX0J3RQ.
89. Williams, L. (2016, 18th September). When Airbnb rentals turn into nuisance neighbours. *The Guardian.* Obtained 29 September 2019 from https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/sep/17/airbnb-nuisance-neighbours-tribunal-ruling
90. Zervas, G., Proserpio, D. & Byers, J.W. (2017). The rise of sharing economy: Estimating the impact of Airbnb on the hotel industry. *Journal of Marketing Research,* *54*(5), 687–705.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in Slovene language)

Delitvena ekonomija postaja eden najhitreje rastočih poslovnih trendov v zgodovini. Z naraščajočo priljubljenostjo v zadnjih letih in z napovedjo, da se bo trend še nadaljeval, naj bi se ekonomija delitve močno povečala, in sicer s 15 milijard dolarjev leta 2014 na 335 milijard dolarjev leta 2025 (Statista, 2019). Veliko podjetij v delitveni ekonomiji je zasebnih podjetij, zato je težko vedeti dejansko vrednost delitvene ekonomije. Ogromen vpliv delitvene ekonomije je opazen predvsem pri dveh glavnih akterjih na trgu, Airbnb in Uber. Vrednost Airbnb je predvidena okoli 31 milijardi dolarjev ter Uber na 72 milijard dolarjev, skupaj imata 103 milijard dolarjev tržne vrednosti, kar bi jih uvrstilo med 38. najbogatejšo državo na svetu (Miller, 2019).

Trg se hitro spreminja v smeri delitve ekonomije na različnih poslovnih panogah, ki so povezane s tehnološkim napredkom v zadnjem času. Hiter razvoj dogodkov vpliva na celoten svetovni trg in posledično čutimimo posledice tudi v Sloveniji. Airbnb je eden ključnih podjetij med kratkočasnimi najemnimi platformami, ki povezujejo lastnike stanovanj z prostim prostorom in posamezniki, ki želijo potovati po svetu. Motivacijski dejavniki za posameznike, da začnejo gostiti, so različni, vendar se večinoma vsi ukvarjajo s to dejavnostjo zaradi prihodkov, socialnih interakcij in souporabo kot tremi glavnimi motivatorji (Karlsson in Dolnicar, 2016).

Podobni rezultati so se pokazali tudi v tej magistrski nalogi, ko smo imeli intervju z desetimi različnimi gostitelji v Sloveniji. Glavni osebni razlog za oddajanje na platformah je bil dohodek in za nekatere gostitelje prazen razpoložljivi prostor. Vsi gostitelji so potrdili, da je bila registracija na platformi Airbnb enostavna, nekateri pa so se borili z birokracijo in registracijo pri slovenskih organih pred letom 2018, ko je bilo vse še bolj nedefinirano. Gostitelji so vsi zadovoljni s platformo in si vsi želijo, da bi oddajanje nadaljevali tudi v prihodnje, vendar jih skrbi nova prihajajoča zakonodaja. Kot je vedno v poslovnem svetu, je treba za svoj uspeh delati dobro in dati nekaj dodatnega, da bi bil uspešen. S pozitivno naravnanostjo, odličnim odnosom z gosti, dobrimi individualno sestavljenimi oglasi na portalih, bodo gostitelji Airbnb ohranili visoko stopnjo zasedenosti po vsej Sloveniji lahko tudi v prihodnje. Pritisk Airbnb-ja na celotno industrijo prisili različne države, da uvedejo omejitve glede časa oddajanja za določenega gostitelja. Nekaj podobnega se v Sloveniji še ni zgodilo, vendar so vsi gostitelji, ki so sodelovali v raziskavi, izrazili zaskrbljenost glede prihodnosti tega posla. Skrbijo jih zlasti novi prihajajočimi zakoni in novi dodatni birokratski koraki. Želja je, da se oddajanje dogaja legalno in se odpravi siva ekonomija.

V prihodnosti, bi bilo dobrodošlo narediti še dodatne raziskave na tem področju, za dodaten vpogled v motivacijske dejavnike pri večjem številu gostiteljev.

Appendix 2: Questions for in-depth interviews (in Slovene language)

Vprašanja za intervju z Airbnb gostiteljem

Spol: M Ž

Starost: ____________________

Poklic (job you do full-time): ____________________

Zaposlitveni status:

a) zaposlen b) brezposeln c) samostojni podjetnik č) študent d) upokojenec e) sobodajalec f) ostalo: ____________

Lokacija nepremičnine: ______________________

Leto pričetka oddajanja preko platforme Airbnb: ____________________

Število oglaševanih nepremičnin na platformi Airbnb: ____________________

Koliko mesecev letno gostite goste preko platforme Airbnb:

a) celo leto b) do 5 mesec letno c) samo obcasno d) drugo: ____________

1... Tip doma, ki ga gostite:

→ a) celotno nepremičnino b) zasebno sobo c) skupno sobo

→ a) apartma b) hišo c) bed & breakfast

d) other ________________

Lokacija nepremičnine: ______________________

2... Tip doma, ki ga gostite:

→ a) celotno nepremičnino b) zasebno sobo c) skupno sobo

→ a) apartma b) hišo c) bed & breakfast

d) other ________________

Lokacija nepremičnine: ______________________

Gostiteljev status:

a) Superhost b) normalni gostitelj

MOTIVACIJA ZA ODDAJANJE (MOTIVATION FOR HOSTING)

1. Kakšni so bili vaši osebni razlogi za pričetek oddajanje preko platforme Airbnb? Zakaj ste se odločili za oddajanje preko platforme Airbnb? (Motivi: zaslužek, druženje, ugled, skrb za okolje, drugo?...)

1.1 Ali ste morda nepremičnino kupili prav s točno tem določenim namenom oddajanja?

1.2 Ali imate družinske sorodnike ali prijatelje, ki se tudi ukvarjajo s oddajanjem?

2. Ali je oddajanje nepremičnine preko platforme vaša glavna dejavnost ali se ukvarjate s čim drugim in je to samo dodatna dejavnost?

PROCES ZA PRIČETEK ODDAJANJA (HOSTING PROCESS)

3. Koliko časa je preteklo od dejanske ideje za oddajanje do odprtja svojega profila in prvega gosta?

4. Kakšne so bile ovire predno ste začeli z oglaševanjem na platformi Airbnb? Kako je potekal proces registracije in dokumentacije pred pričetkom? Vam je kdo pomagal med procesom? Kdo in v kakšni obliki?

NAČIN ODDAJANJA (HOSTING STYLE)

5. Koliko časa letno oddajate svojo nepremičnino preko različnih platform? Če ne oddajate celo leto, ali prekinete z oddajanjem zaradi pomanjkanja časa, slabega obiska v nekaterih mesecih ali zaradi katerih drugih razlogov?

6. Vam pri oddajanju kdo pomaga ali celotno delo opravljate sami? (Spreminjanje cen nastanitve, dopisovanje z gosti, pospravljanje in čiščenje nepremičnine, oddajanje nepremičnine gostom, vodenje papirologije in izdajanje računom gostom…)

AIRBNB IN OSTALE PLATFORME (AIRBNB & OTHER PLATFORMS)

7. Ali mogoče uporabljate tudi katere druge platforme za oglaševanje vaše nepremičnine? (Booking.com, HomeAway, ...). Kateri najbolje zaupate? Katera vam prinaša največ gostov?

8. S katero platformo ste najbolj zadovoljni? Ali so opazne kakšne razlike med posameznimi platformami za gostitelje? Kakšne so negativne in pozitivne razlike za gostitelje? Kakšni so izzivi in koristi vsake od njih?

AIRBNB GOSTITELJ IN AIRBNB GOST (AIRBNB HOST VS AIRBNB GUEST)

9. Ali vam je v interesu z gosti navezati stike in se z njimi družiti? Ali vam oddajanje prinaša samo vir dohodka in ne želite interakcije z gosti?

10. Kakšne so vaše pozitivne izkušnje z dosedanjimi gosti? Ste uspeli navezati poslovne stike, prijateljstvo ali kaj drugega?

11. Kakšne so vaše negativne izkušnje z dosedanjimi gosti? Ste že izkusili kakšne neprijetne izkušnje in probleme z gosti? Kakšni so bili problemi in kako ste jih rešili?

12. Ali ste podjetje Airbnb poznali že prej (DA/NE)? Ali ste z njim potovali po svetu (DA/NE)? Argumentiraj zakaj DA ali zakaj NE? Kakšne izkušnje ste imeli, kot gost?

PRIHODKI OD DEJAVNOSTI ODDAJANJA PREKO PLATFORM (INCOME FROM HOSTING)

13. Ste zadovoljni z zaslužkom, ki ga prejmete? Je zaslužek manjši, večji ali enak vaši redni plači (ali plači, ki bi jo imeli, če bi bili zaposleni)?

14. Koliko odstotkov vašega dohodka prihaja iz Airbnb (naprimer: polovica mesečnega dohodka ali le majhen del?)

PRIČAKOVANJA, REALNOST IN PLANI ZA NAPREJ (HOSTING EXPECTATIONS, REALITY AND FUTURE PLANS)

15. Kaj vam je prineslo oddajanje preko platforme Airbnb poleg mesečnega zaslužka?

16. Vas je celotna izkušnja gostovanja gostov preko platforme Airbnb zadovoljila in izpolnila vaša pričakovanja? Želite to dejavnost opravljati še v prihodnosti? Vidite kakšne ovire, ki bi lahko vplivale na vašo odločitev v prihodnosti?

16.1 Kaj bi naredili drugače, če bi šli še enkrat v to?

16.2 Kaj bi vsekakor omenili prijateljem / družini, ki razmišljajo o pričetku oddajanja preko platforme Airbnb?

17. Se vam zdi, da je trg prenasičen? Kakšne so bile spremembe med posameznimi leti (od začetka do letošnjega leta)?