

**Mountain tourism and Web 2.0 home based accomodation :
an exploratory study**

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The strong development of Web 2.0 has greatly facilitated exchanges between Internet users. The websites of the collaborative economy are platforms bringing together, for market or non-market purposes, suppliers and demanders of goods, services and information. For Jacquet (2015), the collaborative economy is based on five main principles: cultural change with new values, technological change, the desire for a stronger social bond, rejection of classical economics and a major concern for the environment. More and more studies analyze this phenomenon, examining, for example, the motivations to participate (Nica & Potcovaru, 2015, Shaheen et al., 2016) or its negative impacts (eg Richardson, 2015, Martin, 2014). Airbnb (a community platform linking tourists and hosts from all over the world) is often referred to as one of the greatest achievements of this new economy. Revenues generated by seasonal rental housing on platforms such as Airbnb have thus surpassed 3.5 billion euros in 2013, with an annual growth of more than 25% (Geron, 2013). This form of accommodation affects the competitive landscape by diverting tourists from hotels (Tussyadiah & Zach, 2015). Zervas, Proservio and Byers (2014) have estimated that a 1% increase in accommodation on the Airbnb website decreases revenues in Texas hotels by 0.5%.

Guttentag (2015) suggests that tourists prefer seasonal rentals because of their economic and experiential value. Paying less, value for money and a desire for social interaction would be major motivations for seasonal rental (Möhlmann, 2015). Tussyadiah (2015) identified three major factors motivating users of seasonal rental: sustainable development (in its environmental and social dimensions), community feeling (through social interactions) and economic benefits (lower prices than those of hotels). Traditionally, hotel-related aspects such as location and facilities were not identified in the study, suggesting differences in the way tourists look for an alternative accommodation to the hotel. Tussyadiah and Zach (2015), conducting a comparative study of the comments posted on Tripadvisor and on a recognized seasonal rental platform, confirmed that the tourists' evaluations focus on apartments, hosts

and experiences of the stay. Being well received in a dwelling is particularly emphasized. As for hotels, tourists also evoke the location (proximity to the city center, restaurants or airport). On the other hand, hotel-specific services are highlighted in the comments as airport shuttles in case of very early morning flights, free parking and varied breakfasts. Thus, according to these authors, if central service elements are common to the comments submitted for both types of dwellings (eg, a nice and clean apartment and a comfortable bed), others constitute a competitive advantage for each type of accommodation (hotel or home based rental).

So far most research on the perceptions of tourists of home based accommodation were made on cities. Nevertheless we can consider that the context, in terms of territory specificities, may have an impact on these perceptions. Therefore we may wonder if the expectations of tourists regarding this new form of accommodation are the same in a city context and in a mountain context. Moreover, the current strategic priorities of rental platforms like Airbnb is to attract new customers segments (eg. Business travelers) and to expand in “new” territories (others than cities). As this form of accommodation is usually regarded as more sustainable than hotels, mountain territories may be interested in understanding better the reasons why a tourist will choose this type of accommodation. The objective of our research will be therefore to explore the perceptions of tourists of home based accommodation in mountain regions. Our methodology will be based on a content analysis of the comments posted on Airbnb by tourists who stayed in a flat located in the Alpine mountain. This analysis will be completed by the end of May 2017.