



Summers, Mhairi Anna (2018) *The perceived impacts of short-term rentals in Glasgow: a resident's perspective on Airbnb*. [MSc].

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The Perceived Impacts of Short-Term Rentals in Glasgow: A
resident's perspective on Airbnb.



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Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of M.Sc
City Planning and Real Estate Development

Word Count: 14,234

August 2018

Abstract

In recent years, STRs have expanded rapidly and at a global scale raising considerable planning and regulatory concerns for cities around the world. At the centre of this is Airbnb, the world's largest accommodation provider which operates in 34,000 cities worldwide. Consequently, Airbnb has attracted attention considerable media attention as cities grapple to address the emerging impacts and regulate the platform. Therefore, this dissertation aims to explore the perceived impacts of short-term rental, such as Airbnb, in Glasgow. A series of 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with residents in Glasgow who lived in neighbourhoods that have a higher than average presence of STRs. The data was the analysed thematically, using extended quotes, in order to determine what resident perceived the positive and negative impacts to be and what the appropriate regulatory response is. A range of positive and negative impacts were identified in the data, although it became apparent that these impacts were not felt as harshly as other European cities. Finally, residents proposed solutions to the perceived impacts discussed, suggesting legislation should mirror the HMO licencing process.

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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Moira Munroe for her advice and continued support throughout – it has been incredibly helpful. I would also like to thank all the interviewees, who kindly took time out their day to take part in this study, as without them this dissertation would not have been possible.

1. Introduction

1.1. Context and relevance of study

Over the past decade, there has been a significant transformation within the tourism accommodation sector. The availability of short-term rentals (STRs) has grown exponentially and at the centre of this transformation is Airbnb. The site describes itself as: “an online community that connects people who have space to spare with those who are looking for a place to stay” and as of 2016, an estimated 150 million people have chosen to stay in one of the 3 million homes and rooms listed in 191 countries (Airbnb, 2018). Consequently, the platform is now the biggest holiday accommodation provider, with more availability than both the Hilton (804,000 rooms in 56 countries) and the Marriot (1.2 million rooms in 120 countries), all without owning a single property (Hilton, 2018; Marriot, 2018). The highest concentration of Airbnb is found in Paris, France, with 78,000 rentals available, followed by London, United Kingdom (47,000), New York (46,000), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (26,000) and Los Angeles, California (23,000) (Bishop, 2017). In Scotland, Edinburgh has 10,356 active rentals and Glasgow has 2,711 active rentals of which more are entire homes (1,644) than private rooms (1,049), which is the same for all the cities listed above (AirDNA, 2018).

The explosive growth of Airbnb has led to numerous debates, regulatory battles and political opposition from around the world. Some of the debate centres around Airbnb’s position within the collaborative economy, with proponents arguing that it allows users to supplement their income by offering their homes as STRs, whilst detractors suggest the platform is exploitative (Quattrone et al., 2016). Other debate focuses on the impact STRs are having on local communities, suggesting Airbnb has resulted in an influx of tourists in residential areas which in turn has created conflict between guests and residents, exacerbated the shortage of affordable housing and caused gentrification (Gurran, 2017; Wachsmuch and Weiser, 2018). The most heated debate arguably surrounds how best to regulate Airbnb and like platforms as many local governments are grappling to impose old regulations to deal with emerging issues without much success or are facing fierce legal battles with the platform itself (Hickey and Cookney, 2016). However, whilst the debate continues at a global scale Airbnb continue to encourage tourists to ‘live like a local’ focusing on the economic benefits tourists bring to hosts and local businesses (Benner, 2018).

Consequently, online holiday rental and home-sharing platforms, like Airbnb, raise important questions for urban planners and policy makers. For example, what impacts are increasing numbers of tourists in residential areas having at a neighbourhood scale? Or how successful are existing measure and controls at regulating tourist accommodation in residential areas? Despite this, there has been very little academic research into the impacts of STRs and Airbnb in particular. This is partially because Airbnb is still a relatively new phenomenon as it was only founded in 2008 and because of the rapid growth that it and other home-sharing platforms within the collaborative economy have experienced (Gurran, 2017). Additionally, to date there has been a distinct lack of data to assess the scale and impacts of the platform (ibid). Themes that have been flagged as areas that would benefit from further research include destination impacts, such as how Airbnb influences a destinations tourism economy and resident attitudes such as what factors influence residents positive and negative attitudes towards STRs and in turn how this affects their attitudes towards tourism (Gurran, 2018; Guttentag, 2015 and Jordan and Moore, 2017).

1.2. Why Glasgow?

This dissertation seeks to address some of the gaps in knowledge regarding destination impacts and residential attitudes by examining the perceived impacts of STRs by residents in the City of Glasgow. This dissertation is collaborative with Glasgow City Council (GCC) which is the primary reason Glasgow was selected as the focus of this study. Therefore, this issue is obviously deemed to be of importance to GCC and this may relate to problems Glasgow has had with STRs in the past, that the council wish to prevent from happening again, especially as Airbnb expands in the city. For example, in 2009, the Southside neighbourhood of Queens Park captured local media attention when 11 out of 15 newly built flats were operated as STRs and ‘party flats’ (Evening Times, 2009a). As a result, residents were subjected to weekend partying, drinking and anti-social behaviour, that eventually drove some residents out their homes (Evening Times, 2009b).

Additionally, since deindustrialisation in Glasgow, the City has been trying to improve its image on an international scale through unique cultural events and promoting tourism to foster economic development (Gomez, 1998). Today, the City still has an ambitious tourism development plan, seeking to increase overnight leisure tourism by one million visits per year over the next six years and for spending to grow from £482 million to £771 million in the same time period (GCC, 2017a). In order to meet the projected demand, the city requires a further 2,500 rooms and the tourism strategy is supportive of Airbnb, and STRs more generally, suggesting that being based in a distinctive neighbourhood will

help visitors ‘get under the skin and discover Glasgow’ (Indigo House, 2017:49). Whilst the plan does not highlight where these distinctive neighbourhoods might be, planning guidance for STRs does highlight where they should not be, stating that STRs will be strongly resisted in the conservation areas of Crosshill, Dennistoun, Glasgow West, Park, St Vincent Crescent and Strathbungo (GCC, 2017b). At present, STRs and Airbnb account for about 7 per cent of tourism accommodation in the city and this has steadily been increasing year on year, from 1 per cent in 2014 when there was a notable increase during the Commonwealth Games, to 3 per cent in 2015 and 5 per cent in 2016 (Visit Scotland, 2017). Based on the rise in supply during the Commonwealth Games to meet increasing demand, GCC is now working with Airbnb, using it as a tool to enable economic growth and further investment in the city (Indigo House, 2017). For example, this year, when Glasgow played host (alongside Berlin) to the inaugural European Championships, GCC and Airbnb partnered, and the platform was the official provider of alternative accommodation for the event.

Finally, whilst it is unlikely that Glasgow will ever become a great tourist destination like Paris and Barcelona, or even Edinburgh is, the study will be able to provide insight into the effects STRs are having on the ‘second cities’ across Europe. Glasgow, more so than many English cities, is comparable to European cities due to its built form particularly in relation to dominance of tenement style buildings. This is especially important when investigating the impacts of STRs as it is in their shared spaces that much of the conflict between residents and visitors occurs. Therefore, this study will be beneficial for both cities with emerging tourist economies and a high proportion of medium density housing.

1.3. Aims and Research Questions

The aim of this dissertation is to establish whether the rise of short-term tourism accommodation in residential areas of Glasgow, facilitated by online platforms such as Airbnb, have resulted in undesirable neighbourhood impacts and therefore require regulatory response from urban planners and policy makers. Therefore, in order to determine resident’s attitudes, the research questions are as follows;

- What are residents of Glasgow’s perceptions of the positive impacts of short-term rentals for local communities?
- What are residents of Glasgow’s perceptions of the negative impacts of short-term rentals for local communities?

- Do residents believe the regulatory response to short-term rentals is sufficient and if not, how should the regulation agenda address the impacts felt?

1.4. Dissertation Outline

This dissertation will be divided into five chapters, comprising of: a literature review, methodology, results and analysis and finally, a conclusion.

Firstly, the literature review covers three overarching topics that are prominent within academic research on short-term rentals. The first of which focuses on the collaborative economy and the need to define the concept in relation to STRs. This section will explore how Airbnb, along with other online sharing platforms, has become a poster child for the collaborative economy through its use of emerging technology and its innovative business model. Once the theoretical framework has been established, consideration shall be given to the perceived impacts of Airbnb on the tourism industry, local housing markets and residential communities, all of which are recurring themes within the literature. As research on Airbnb from an urban planning perspective is still emerging, literature is somewhat limited, especially in relation to the impacts on the housing market and local communities. The final section of the literature review discusses the regulatory difficulties associated with Airbnb, and similar sites, due to its overlapping position within many different policy agendas. Attempts to regulate the platform by local government authorities in Europe will also be explored in order to establish lessons that can be learnt for Glasgow from established policy and regulation. The primary aim of the literature review is to provide insight into what is already known within this field of study and identify any gaps of knowledge within the literature. Therefore, this section shall also shape the aim and research questions presented in this study.

The methodology section of this report introduces the empirical approach adopted in this study to determine the impacts Airbnb is having on residential communities in Glasgow. The section will discuss the pros and cons of utilising semi-structured interviews and explain why their use was appropriate for this study. The methods used to find suitable participants and the manner in which the data will be analysed shall also be explained. Thought will also be given to ethical considerations.

The results section shall analyse the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews in order to determine if it successfully fulfils this study's aim of determining whether short-term rentals in Glasgow have resulted in undesirable neighbourhood impacts according to local residents living in close proximity to an Airbnb.

The final chapter is the conclusion and it will discuss study itself, consider how it adds to existing literature and present any recommendations. It shall also remark on some the limitation of this study and areas for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In the last few years, online holiday rental and home-sharing platforms have transformed global travel. These platforms have become emblematic with the collaborative economy due to their use of technology to allow users to share and make use of their underutilised assets. One of the most compelling examples of such a platform, is Airbnb. Despite the growing interest from media, city authorities and policy makers, the majority of research investigating Airbnb, and like services, is either produced by tourism scholars or commissioned by STR stakeholders. Therefore, the research often overlooks the impact Airbnb's are having on local neighbourhoods and the housing market (Guttentag, 2015). Consequently, this literature review attempts to address these issues by firstly providing insight into the theoretical framework that surrounds STRs and Airbnb as there is a need to conceptualise them within a larger body of work, during an era of increased travel (Gurran, 2018). Additionally, the problems Airbnb presents for planning authorities and neighbouring property owners will be explored. This section will finish by examining how jurisdictions both abroad and in Scotland have attempted to regulate STRs.

2.2. The Collaborative Economy and Short-Term Rentals

The collaborative economy is not a new phenomenon, as sharing, gift and barter economies have existed for centuries (Belk, 2014). Over the past 10 years, the digital collaborative economy has commanded attention due to its wide-reaching social, economic, environmental and political impacts and the rise of platforms such as Uber and Airbnb. The potential impact of the collaborative economy is not to be underestimated: *Time* magazine identified it as one of the top ten ideas to change the world (Walsh, 2011) and its importance has been likened to the industrial revolution in terms of reinventing consumer behaviours and business models (Botsman, 2012). The contemporary collaborative economy focuses on reinventing traditional approaches to sharing, lending, renting and swapping by creating new kinds of relationships and changing how we consume (Michael O'Regan and Choe, 2017). For example, content sharing platforms, such as Youtube and Instagram, and online encyclopaedias, like Wikipedia, are all considered to be part of the collaborative economy as technology has simplified the sharing of both physical and nonphysical goods (Hamari et al., 2015). Technological advances, such as increased access to the internet, have been central for the sharing economy's growth as they have facilitated transactions between strangers and transcended geographically defined communities (Dredge and Gyimothy, 2017).

Despite the growing body of work investigating the collaborative economy, defining it still presents a challenge. This is partly due to a plethora of interchangeable terms used to describe it, for example, it has been referred to as the sharing economy, the peer-to-peer economy, the gig economy, the access economy, the gift economy, the on-demand economy, the people economy, the enabling economy, shared capitalism and hippienomics, all of which are argued to have slightly different meanings (ibid). Consequently, the European Commission developed the following definition:

“... the term "collaborative economy" refers to business models where activities are facilitated by collaborative platforms that create an open marketplace for the temporary usage of goods or services often provided by private individuals” (2016: p. 4).

However, definitional challenges are still present as the characteristics of the collaborative economy are somewhat changeable due to continuing disciplinary contributions and the emergence of new innovations. Secondly, academics from different disciplinary backgrounds offer different definitions to fit their own agenda (Dredge and Gyimothy, 2017).

Further complexities emerge when we focus on specific sectors within the collaborative economy and how to define them such as peer-to-peer accommodation. In Europe, it is estimated that peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation is the largest sector of the collaborative economy, with a total transaction value of €15.1 million in 2015 (PWC, 2016). The sector's rapid growth has been attributed to high demand, the range of prices on offer, the availability of household amenities and a more diversified experience than traditional tourist accommodation (Guttentag, 2015; Gyimothy, 2017c). P2P accommodation utilises digital technologies to provide an opportunity for anyone to rent out their residence to travellers, as tourist accommodation (Jordan and Moore, 2018). The types of accommodation vary from a living room futon to entire castles (Wortham, 2011), however the typical offering is normally a private room or an entire dwelling. In some instances, the host is present and resides alongside the renters and in others, they are absent, either on holiday themselves or operating the space as a permanent rental (Guttentag, 2015). Furthermore, Dredge *et al.* (2016) argue that any definition of P2P tourism accommodation should be as inclusive as possible, accounting for the potentially large range of business models within the collaborative economy. Additionally, Airbnb themselves suggest that a 'shared city' is stronger socially, economically and environmentally because space, such as

spare rooms in houses, is not wasted, communities will be supported and enables cities to produce more but waste less (Chesky, 2014). However, as Gurran (2018) highlights, there is a small but growing body of literature that questions the notion of 'sharing'. Cockayne (2016) denounce the collaborative economy suggesting it promotes neoliberal practice such as exploiting precarious working arrangements, whilst proclaiming noble social values. For example, Airbnb challenges traditional employment through virtual employment that is often free or minimally paid. Moreover, some scholars have begun to question the idea of collaborative economy accommodation platforms, referring to them as the 'so-called Sharing Economy' (Gurran, 2018). Platforms, like Airbnb, move away from the founding idea of renting underutilised space within you home increasingly towards whole properties being rented out. In Paris, for example, 88 per cent of listings are for entire homes (AirDNA, 2018b).

Within the P2P accommodation sector business models tend to fall into two categories: commercially extractive models and the commons or generative model. The majority of academic literature, facilitated by media coverage, has focused upon the extractive models manifested by a small number of global home sharing platforms such as Flipkey and VRBO (Gyimothy, 2017a). In extractive models, profit is generated and captured by private platforms that offer booking services and guarantees on a digital platform. These services are offered for a fee and platform operators often charge 15% to cover the transaction and administrative costs such as host verification, quality assurances and instructions for hosts and visitors (ibid). A key feature of extractive platforms is that they do not invest back into the third-party asset, product or labour and are therefore criticised for extracting and redistributing wealth rather than generating value, monetary or otherwise, for the host or the local community (Dredge et al., 2016). Consequently, extractive P2P accommodation models are not deemed, by some, to be socially fair or sustainable (ibid). In comparison, the commons model of the collaborative economy is when peer-to-peer mediated sharing is powered by solidarity, mutuality and co-ownership, and where benefits are returned back into building the capacity of users or to the commons (Scholz, 2016). The cooperative model is founded upon fairness, the commitment of its members and reciprocal relationships among them to contribute with an in-kind asset, like a couch, a room or an apartment. For example, the platform Couchsurfing requires all members to be prepared to let their couches out to fellow members (Gyimothy, 2017b). Such models can be both for profit and not-for-profit, however, the creation and distribution of value is shared. Therefore, if a surplus is generated it is invested back to the

people who contributed, or it is used to maintain the platform itself. Another key feature of the commons model is its auto-mediated organisational setup. This means the platforms are either owned and managed by the organisation itself or mediated by a public or non-profit body (*ibid*). Advocates of the commons models promote locally owned platforms, run by either a local government or housing cooperative, that offer accommodation like Airbnb, but profit would be invested into city projects and community facilities (Dredge *et al.*, 2016). For example, such a project is underway in Seoul, South Korea, with a platform called Munibnb. The platform aims to collaborate with different cities around the world to would pull their resources together, to create a platform that city councils would require all STRs to register on. It is proposed that the fees would predominately go to host and the remainder would go the local council in order to maintain the urban realm (Scholz, 2016). Gurrán (2017) suggest Airbnb falls somewhere in between the extractive and generative models because of the variety of its offering, as hosts can offer accommodation in a shared room, a private room, a whole home whilst they are away or provide a second house or holiday home that would otherwise be vacant. Additionally, through an innovate business model, Airbnb has been able to overcome the obstacles often faced by P2P accommodation providers, which have long been an established holiday rental option, by taking advantage of internet technologies to connect hosts and potential guests and establishing trust between the two unknown parties through their peer review system (*ibid*).

2.3. What are Airbnb's impacts?

2.3.1. Tourism Industry

The majority of the academic literature exploring the impacts of STRs focuses on Airbnb within tourism research. Zervas *et al.* (2015) is the most comprehensive study to date, which investigates the impact of Airbnb on hotel revenues in Texas and found that in urban areas, hoteliers experienced an estimated 13 per cent loss of room revenue for every 10 per cent increase in Airbnb listings. Hotels at the lower end of the market, especially those who failed to cater to business tourism by not having a conference room, for example, were most likely to be affected. Similarly, when investigating the potential impacts that Airbnb will have on tourism, hotels and city destinations over the next 5 years, Boswijk and Oskam (2016) hypothesise that Airbnb will directly compete with 2 and 3-star hotels, especially on price. Consequently, the authors concluded that Airbnb 'is bad for hotels but good for tourism' (2016: p28). From a broader perspective, Guttentag (2015) describes the platform as a disruptive innovation, suggesting that Airbnb undermines traditional accommodation, primarily hotels, and gives rise to an informal tourism sector. He argues

that the ‘innovation’ comes from the company’s innovative business model and its unique appeal to tourists, whilst its ‘disruptive potential’ is the threat posed by the offer of alternative accommodation. In a subsequent paper by Guttentag (2017), guests’ motivations for using Airbnb were explored from a demand side perspective to determine the extent to which the site was being used as a substitute for hotels. The study found that whilst the platform provided a different offer to traditional accommodation, Airbnb was predominantly used as a substitute as 64.8 per cent of respondents indicated they used Airbnb rather than stay in mid-range hotel, with a further 16.6 per cent using it as replacement for hostels and 9.9 per cent instead of a bed and breakfast.

Conversely, there are numerous reports, many of which are commissioned by Airbnb themselves or STR stakeholders (Gurran and Phibbs, 2017) that suggest the impacts of Airbnb are predominately positive. For example, Airbnb suggest that the platform is actually expanding the tourism market as it is complementary to traditional accommodation rather than competing directly with hotels for customers. In a series of destination specific studies carried out in cities where Airbnb has received some unwanted media attention, it was found that 70 per cent of Airbnbs were located outside of traditional tourist corridors and that hotel occupancy and daily rates continued to grow whilst Airbnb increased their market share (Airbnb, 2018). Guttentag (2015) acknowledges that Airbnb’s appeal is somewhat limited to young, technologically savvy, adventurous and more budget conscious travellers and therefore cannot compete for all tourists. It should be noted, however, that Airbnb has come under criticism for flooding public debate with their own reports and hiring professional lobbyists to push an agenda that focuses on the positive impacts the platform has on cities (Codagnone and Martens, 2016). Moreover, the data provided by Airbnb has not been substantiated by independent studies (Boswijk and Oskam, 2016)

2.3.2. Housing Market

Globally, numerous cities have raised concerns that Airbnb and other STR platforms will increase pressure on the local housing market and there has been extensive media attention on the subject. In Berlin, an emotive anti-Airbnb campaign captured the headlines when poster with adapted Airbnb logos (as shown in Figure 1), depicted the platform as ‘castrating’ and ‘milking’ the cities communities and housing supply. The campaign was deliberately targeted at tourists with English slogans reading ‘Who pays for your holiday’ to draw attention to the perceived impacts of Airbnb (Gurran, 2018; Pereira, 2016). There is also a small but growing body of work by community groups and housing advocates

exploring the impact of Airbnb is having on the availability of affordable housing. In Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) analysed the Airbnb market in the city, finding that the platform removed 11 units of housing stock from the rental market each day. Therefore, significantly decreasing the availability of new housing that has been built to counteract rapid rent increases (LAANE, 2015). A similar study conducted in New York found that Airbnb was responsible for removing 20 per cent of vacant properties of the rental market, increasing to 28 per cent in popular neighbourhoods such as the East Village (NYCC and RAFA, 2015).

Figure 1: Anti-Airbnb Campaign in Berlin (Source: Pereira, 2016)



Text below reads: ‘When you book an apartment, think about the rising rent prices for locals, an increase in touristification and people going through social displacement. For each holiday apartment a local tenant has to leave their home. #boycottairbnb’

Empirical research exploring the direct effects of home sharing is more limited and to date only a handful of academic papers have been published. The first of which, was Lee (2016) who provides a descriptive analysis exploring how STRs affect and supply and affordability of housing rentals in Los Angeles. The paper found that 7,316 housing units had been removed from the city’s affordable rental market and in popular beach side locations up to 15.5 per cent of properties in the neighbourhoods were on the platform. Horn and Merante (2017) take advantage of recently available ‘big data’ in the form of weekly rental listings and web scraped Airbnb listings from Boston between 2015 and 2016 to determine

how the platform is affecting the rental market in the city. The paper utilises the data to model the effect on mean residential asking rents, finding that one standard deviation increase in Airbnb density results in a 0.4 per cent increase in local rental price. In a methodologically similar paper, Barron et al (2018) used data from the whole of the United States to find that a 1 per cent increase in Airbnb listings leads to a 0.018 per cent increase in rents 0.026 per cent increase in house prices for the median owner/occupant for a specific zip code. For renting, the small but significant increase is attributed to landlords switching from long-term rentals to STRs due to the monetary returns presented. This phenomenon is widely acknowledged (Lee, 2016; Arias Sans and Quaglieri Dominguez, 2016). The increase in house prices is attributed to enabling homeowners to generate income from their underutilised assets (spare rooms) and therefore raising the price relative to renting and increasing the price-to-rent ratios. Gurran and Phibbs (2017) highlight that although the change in percentage is small when considered on a neighbourhood scale this can create a notable impact. There are, of course, limitations to these papers as numerous other factors could influence rents and housing prices, such as a decrease in crime, public realm improvements and new local developments (Horn and Merante, 2017).

These findings sit in opposition to a report commissioned by Airbnb to explore the impacts on housing affordability in Portland. The paper found no link between the presence of Airbnb and changes in rent, rather it focused on the benefits of hosting supported by evidence that Airbnb helps hosts supplement their living costs (ECONorthwest, 2016).

2.3.3. Local Communities

There are also numerous positive and negative impacts associated with the presence of STRs for local communities. Jordan and Moore (2018) conducted an in-depth exploration of residents' perceived perceptions of STRs finding that residents considered there to be a range of positive and negative impacts associated with living close to a STR. Positives focused on the spread of economic benefits out with tourist areas, whilst negative impacts focused on the detrimental effects on sense of community such an increase in the number of strangers, security issues and increased traffic and congestion.

At a macro level, a positive relationship between the presence of STRs and increased employment in the tourism industry has been found (Fang et al., 2016) and that spending had increased due to an influx in the number of visitors as a result of cheaper accommodation (Jordan and Moore, 2018). Airbnb echo that the platform has a range of

economic benefits for host communities as tourist expenditure is driven into new areas, guests on average spend 2.1 times more than a typical visitor and of that spending, 42 per cent is in the local neighbourhoods where guest stayed (Airbnb, 2018b). Advocates of the platform also suggest that Airbnb supports local communities as it allows hosts to supplement their income, helping them afford their rent or their mortgage and therefore can continue to afford to live in the area (Airbnb, 2017). However, the economic benefits cited by Airbnb are somewhat contested as Guttentag (2017) suggests that spending is overstated because Airbnb guests tend to be budget travellers. Additionally, Airbnb's negative economic impact may be felt by local businesses and their employees as the flexible expansion of tourism means employment could become limited to periods of peak demand such as during conferences or sporting events (Guttentag, 2015). However, similar to most research relating to Airbnb, empirical evidence of the economic impacts remains limited (Oskam and Boswijk, 2016).

A further benefit for local communities is that Airbnb facilitates social connections between host and guest, where guest have the opportunity to gain insight into the 'backstage' areas of tourist destinations, or in the words of Airbnb 'live like a local'. According to Nica and Potovaru (2015) this experience can have a sociocultural impact on both locals and tourists as interactions between groups of people from different backgrounds can lead to open-mindedness and positive attitudes. Conversely, the presence of tourists when coupled with anti-social behaviour can also lead to distrust and conflict. For example, tensions in Barcelona relating to STRs and Airbnb has been increasing for years, culminating in the 2014 riots referred to as the 'Barcoloneta Crisis' as a result of the drunken behaviour of tourists in residential areas (Gurran, 2018; Arias Sans and Quagliari Dominguez, 2016). Additionally, Gottlieb (2013) highlights that the continued presence of tourists can prevent participation in community activities and limit social capital because tourists replace permanent residents who could be participating in community life. In order to limit conflict, Airbnb established a forum for locals to report any anti-social tourist behaviours with the promise of passing the feedback along to the associated host (Airbnb, 2018c). There has, however, been more media attention surrounding tourist behaviours than academic research and the research that does exist often fails to consider the perspective of the host community (Jordan and Moore, 2018). As a result of this both Gurran (2018) and Guttentag (2015) have suggested destination impacts and resident attitudes would benefit from further study.

Finally, Airbnb and STRs have also been accused of causing gentrification and displacement. For example, US media outlets have accused landlords of evicting permanent tenants in order to establish Airbnb rentals and in Los Angeles criminal action has been brought against a landlord for doing so (Poston, 2016). It has been argued that presence of STRs can lead to income disparities within neighbourhoods and when STRs become common place within a community the value of local housing can increase causing existing residents to pay higher taxes (Kasturi and Loudat, 2014). Lee (2016) further explores the notion of displacement and gentrification in LA's residential communities, suggesting middle income renters are displaced from expensive neighbourhoods, in which Airbnb are predominantly located, forcing them to move to cheaper neighbourhoods, displace its original community and subsequently gentrify the area. Moreover, he argues Airbnb also limits integration within communities and heightens socioeconomic inequality. Wachsmith and Weisler (2018) also suggest that Airbnb is a vessel for gentrification. Using New York as a case study, they argue that STRS have introduced a new source of revenue into the housing market which in turn has created a new form of rent gaps in desirable neighbourhoods that is easily exploitable in by developers, landlords, tenants and homeowners.

2.4. Regulation

2.4.1. Regulation within the Collaborative Economy

Major innovations, characterised by novel products, services and business models, often present regulatory dilemmas for policy makers and STRs are no exception. This is especially true in the case of Airbnb, who planned to establish themselves as firmly as possible within the tourism industry before addressing regulatory concerns (Yglesias, 2012). As a result of this policymakers have had to play catch-up because prior regulations were not adequately equipped to address the complexity of Airbnb, as they were designed to govern only what had previously existed (Guttentag, 2017). This, coupled with the company's rapid expansion, has forced policymakers to address the so called 'regulatory black hole' and do so quickly. Currently, the legality of many rentals remains unclear to both hosts and users, this is because in many jurisdictions Airbnb initially went unregulated and therefore they now fail to comply with the public health and safety standards that are imposed on other forms of tourism accommodation (Oskam, 2016). Unregulated STRs also undermine spatial strategies that determining where STRs can and cannot be located, the ratio of STRs within a given community and the number of times they can be rented out annually (Guttentag, 2017). Additionally, tourism industry groups also argue that

Airbnb competes unfairly with traditional tourism accommodation providers, as there are not under the same tax obligations that hotels, hostels and B&Bs are (Gurran, 2018).

Regulating Airbnb is not, however, an easy task and attempts to incorporate Airbnb into contemporary regulations have been likened to a regulatory battlefield (Palombo, 2015) and a “perfect storm” (Dredge et al., 2016: 17). The difficulty arises as successful regulation would have to simultaneously address numerous issues such as considering the needs of diverse range of stakeholders (consumers, local residents and the community, the accommodation hosts and traditional accommodation providers) and encompass numerous different policies and regulation agendas. This is because Airbnb occupies a dual position within the collaborative economy and the highly regulated tourism industry (Guttentag, 2017). Consequently, policymakers, will have to reassess current policies in order to encompass the wide range of positive and negative impacts associated with Airbnbs. Cannon and Summers (2014) argue that conflict between local governments and sharing economy platforms is counterproductive as their agendas often align because they both have a vested interest in consumer protection. It is in platforms such as Airbnbs best interest to share data on listing and bookings with regulators as they pose a far greater threat to their business in terms of regulations and sanctions, than any new or current competitors will (ibid).

Moreover, the growth of Airbnb has also occurred at the same time as many European cities have started to feel the impacts of decades’ worth of pro-growth tourism strategies. Tourist activities have intensified, and visitor numbers have experienced sustained growth as a result of city branding and the increased practice of using events as a tool for economic development (Dredge et al., 2016). Airbnb’s increased popularity has also coincided with housing shortages and affordability issues. As STRs are often more profitable than renting to local residents, investors seeking to maximise profits are drawn to Airbnb, and similar sites, for access to a global market (Poston, 2016). Therefore, some of the current problems closely linked to STRs have existed prior to the rise of the collaborative economy tourism sector, meaning Airbnb’s may have exacerbated problems, rather than create them (Dredge et al., 2016). Nevertheless, as Airbnb grows on a global scale, policy must address local housing and tourism policy issues that are embedded within local institutions at different scales and within different horizontal sectors. This means there is no single solution, or one size fits all approach, cities must learn from each other whilst manoeuvring within their own policy agenda.

2.4.2. International Planning and Regulation Concerns

International and local jurisdictions have initiated measures to regulate Airbnb as it continues to impact cities globally and whilst there is a general consensus that regulation is required, the best way to do so is unclear. Whilst some cities, such as Amsterdam, initially adopted a laissez-faire approach to regulation, they are now few and far between, with more stringent regulations following Airbnb around the globe, especially in major Europe cities such as Barcelona and Berlin.

Amsterdam has adopted an open and supportive approach to the collaborative economy, aiming to be the first Sharing City in Europe, consequently, the City Council has tried to work with Airbnb to tackle STRs (Pieters, 2016). In 2014, the City Council announced a cooperative approach with Airbnb. The city approved new private rental laws allowing residents to list their properties for a 2-month period if the appropriate tourism taxes were paid. In return, Airbnb would help enforce the 60-day limit, collect tourist tax and ensure that all hosts were aware of the new rules and regulations (Haar, 2016). However, in 2016 three quarters of listings were still available for more than 2 months of the year. This prompted stricter regulation and as of January 2018, all hosts had to register with the authorities, the number of rental days was halved to 30 days and a limit of four guests per rental was introduced (ibid).

Barcelona has arguably become the poster child for strict STR regulation as a result of Airbnb being fined €30,000 in 2015 and a further €600,000 in 2016, for continuing to advertise unlicensed properties on its site (Badcock, 2016). It is estimated that of the 16,000 rentals available through Airbnb and similar sites, nearly 7,000 of the properties are illegal¹ (Burgen, 2017). In 2014, permits² for STRs in central Barcelona were suspended whilst new regulations were being developed (Hsi, 2016). New regulation in the form of the Special Urban Plan for Tourist Accommodation (PEUAT) came into effect in 2017 outlining the characteristics of 'touristic use of houses' (TUH) or STRs. Firstly, all TUH must apply for a registration number which must be displayed in any advertisement of the property otherwise the rental will be deemed illegal (Burgen, 2017). Secondly the property use will legally be changed from a residential household to a business property, providing a link to local planning regulation. Finally, all properties must offer the full apartment, not

¹ Properties are considered illegal if owners fail to inform the City Council of their intention to use the property as an STR.

² All STRs require a permit from the Council which confirms the rental meets the legal requirements stipulating the number of people who can stay, suitable furnishings and perfect state of hygiene. All flats must have a certificate of habitability (City Hall of Barcelona, 2018)

spare rooms and only for a period of 30 days each year (PEUAT, 2017). The PEUAT also identifies geographically distinct areas within the city, such as historic and central core (Area 1) and peripheral neighbourhoods (Area 3), that are defined by their own regulations such as the number of listings in each neighbourhood and the physical distance between them. Finally, this year, an agreement has been reached between the city council and Airbnb, allowing the council access to Airbnb data to help identify illegal accommodation, however Airbnb have still to comply with the removal of listings that fail to display tourist license numbers or offer spare rooms on their website (Airbnb, 2017).

2.4.3. Regulation in Scotland

One of the key issues surrounding STR regulation in Scotland is the lack of a precise definition. As a result of this, STRs are often defined by what they are not, for example they are not a main residence and should not be let for more than 31 days at one time. This presents challenges in terms of regulation as currently STRs are not addressed within planning laws like the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act (1997) which determines all land uses. The most applicable land uses for an STR would be either Class 7, Hotels and Hostels or Class 9, Houses and sui generis a residential flat. However, due to their residential location, STRs are not considered to be Hotels and due to their commercial element they are not considered as homes, therefore, STRs sit out with their land uses. Additionally, STRs, particularly those market at large groups of travellers, do not have to comply with Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licence requirements which stipulate that any property in which three unrelated adults reside, must meet fire, health and safety standards (Housing (Scotland) Act, 2006) and Scottish Government, 2012). There is also a degree of uncertainty surrounding regulation of noise pollution (Anti-Social Behaviour etc. Scotland Act, 2014) and environmental protection such as waste removal (Environmental Protection Act, 1990) in which STRs are again, not addressed. In order to address some of these issues, the Scottish Government set up the Scottish Expert Advisory Panel on the Collaborative Economy, in 2017, to determine the opportunities of the collaborative economy and overcome any regulatory, economic and social challenges (Scottish Gov, 2017b). The report, in which Airbnb sat on the advisory panel, explicitly addresses tourism accommodation within the collaborative economy providing numerous recommendations addressing many of the issues flagged in the literature and experienced in other cities. However, these recommendations have yet to lead to further regulation.

Glasgow City Council has published its own guidelines for regulating STRs. Firstly, GCC defines STRs as 'Residential flats used as quasi hotel accommodation, where periods of

occupation are generally less than 90 days' (GCC, 2017a: 14.). The guidance states that houses being used as STRs do not require planning permission for a change of use, this is because the incivilities associated with STRs are more limited in this setting due to a lack of shared spaces. Conversely, STRs in flats do require planning permission, this is because flats have communal facilities and STRs have the potential to cause conflict between residents and guests. Additionally, areas where there is already a notable mix of residential and non-residential uses and have problems with parking and traffic congestion will not be allowed STRs.

2.5. Summary

As is clear from the literature, STRs and more specifically Airbnb have rapidly expanded on a global scale, raising substantial planning and regulatory concerns. Although research on the subject is increasing there is still very limited robust evidence of the impact Airbnb is having on local communities, especially from a destination and residents' perspectives (Gurran, 2017; Guttentag 2015; Jordan and Moore, 2018). Therefore, we ask residents in Glasgow what they perceive the impact of Airbnb to be in their local neighbourhoods in order to determine if STRs generate neighbourhood impacts such as helping the local economy or a reduced sense of community and a limited housing supply. As the literature highlights, the question is no longer do we need to regulate such platforms but rather how to best do so. The challenge associated with doing so is closely linked to Airbnb's innovative business model and the collaborative economy. Consequently, this study will also investigate residents' opinions of current regulations in order to determine if there is mismatch between the regulation agenda and residents' experiences.

3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to establish whether the rise of tourism accommodation in residential areas of Glasgow, facilitated by online platforms such as Airbnb, have resulted in either positive or undesirable neighbourhood impacts and therefore, whether a regulatory response is required from urban planners and policy makers. This chapter shall outline the qualitative methods employed to collect the data, and in doing so attempt to dispel any ambiguity concerning the empirical findings.

3.2. Research Philosophy

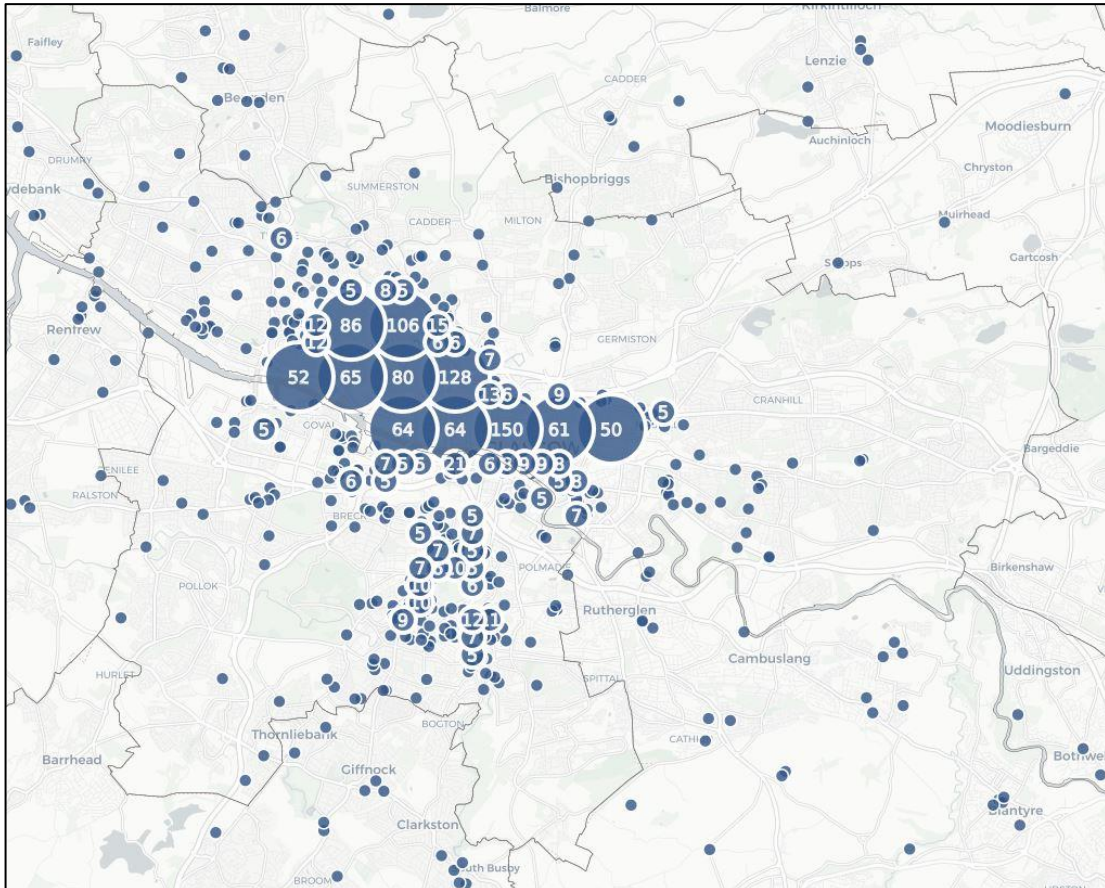
When determining social research strategies, it is important to give thought to epistemology and ontology as the research philosophy that is adopted will help shape the work that follows (Bryman, 2014). Epistemology provides a philosophical grounding for different types of knowledge and determines how knowledge can be considered legitimate and adequate when investigating a particular phenomenon (Blaikie, 2000). In line with most qualitative research, this dissertation has adopted an interpretivist epistemological position, meaning there is a focus on understanding the social world, in this case is residents' view towards STRs, by examining the interpretation of the world by its participants, which was achieved by conducting interviews (Bryman, 2014). Ontology is concerned with the nature of what exists, and within the social sciences, ontology is concerned with people's knowledge, interpretations and experiences (Blaikie, 2000). Therefore, this dissertation adopts an ontological position known as constructionist, as it is believed that the views expressed in the interviews are a result of the interactions between residents and STRs (Bryman, 2014).

3.3. Research Methods

In order to obtain the primary data for this dissertation, a qualitative approach was adopted as personal opinions and experiences were being recorded, not statistics or numbers which would warrant a quantitative approach (ibid). Prior to the collection of primary data, a thorough review of relevant secondary sources such as official publications, policies and academic literature was conducted. This is an important first step as it identified what is already known about similar investigations and the methods that have been used to evaluate them (Oliver, 2012). Additionally, the review helped identify neighbourhoods in Glasgow with high concentrations of Airbnb listings (shown in Figure 2). These areas were specifically targeted when looking for interviewees to ensure participants lived in close proximity to an Airbnb and therefore had some opinions on STRs. The densest

concentrations were found in the Merchant City, the West End, particularly Hillhead and Finnieston, and Partick. Whilst Airbnb listings are predominately focused in central Glasgow, there is a growing presence in the Southside neighbourhoods of Battlefield, Shawlands and Strathbungo.

Figure 2: Cluster map of Airbnb listings in Glasgow in 2016.



(Source: Scottish Gov, 2017).

3.4. Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were selected because they allow researchers to explore subjective viewpoints and a gather in depth accounts of participants experiences due to their flexible and fluid structure (Flick, 2009). The purpose of conducting interviews in such a manner was to generate data interactively, meaning both the interviewer and the interviewee had an active role in the process of knowledge construction. A more structured approach may have imposed the researcher's preconceived ideas into the framework of the interview which could have resulted in events or experiences deemed important by interviewees being overlooked (ibid). Moreover, this approach allows the interviewer to address specific topics whilst simultaneously allowing the interviewee to discuss the issue on their own terms, discussing other relevant topics and themes without limiting the

opportunity for the participant to provide new insight into the topic at hand (Choak, 2012). This method does of course have its drawbacks, for example the data gathered cannot be used for direct comparison between each interviewee as they are not standardised (Mason, 2002) and the interview questions are susceptible to researcher bias as result of the close relationship that needs to be formed between the interviewer and interviewee (ibid)

When conducting semi-structured interviews, it is common practice to follow a schedule, therefore, each interview loosely followed a script of ten questions, which were predominantly open ended and contained several prompts depending on the direction of the conversation (see Appendix 1). The total number of interview question was kept between 10-12 to avoid interviewee fatigue (Choak, 2012) and in line with Rubin and Rubin (2012) the interviews attempted to resemble a 'flowing conversation'. The interview script included an explanation of the resident's relationship to STRs in their neighbourhood, questions about the positive and negative impacts STRs have had in their area and a discussion about current regulatory measures. Interview length ranged from 15 minutes to 1 hour and 5 minutes and it was deemed that data saturation was reached when the last two interviews produced no new information about the impacts of STRs (Bradford & Cullen, 2012).

A series of 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with residents who lived in close proximity to a STR. All participants self-identified as either, a resident who lived in close proximity to a short stay rental, an owner or operator of a permitted B&B or as member of a community council or group. Additionally, participants' geographical location was important and therefore areas with a high density of Airbnb listings, as highlighted above in figure 2, were targeted when looking potential interviewees. This proved to be more challenging in some areas, for example, the Hillhead area of the West End and the Merchant City are heavily dominated by a student population and as this research was conducted during the university holidays, some of the target population was harder to reach. Residents living close to an Airbnb, in high density areas, were asked to participate to ensure they had some experiences with STRs and therefore some opinions on the matter. Originally, it was hoped that owners and operators of STRs would participate in the research, however, they were difficult to contact potentially due to negative media attention. For example, this year Scottish STR operators were accused of collectively avoiding £10 million in taxes and have come under criticism for the unruly behaviour of their guests (BBC, 2018).

The sampling method used for this dissertation was purposive in order to target residents living close to STRs. Purposive sampling was selected because it allows the researcher to select participants based on their specialist knowledge or to fit specific selection criteria (Wallman, 2006). Snowball sampling was used in conjunction with purposive sampling, which is when the researcher asks members of the target population for further contact who may be able to help. Therefore, all participants have been strategically selected based on their knowledge or personal experiences with STRs or Airbnb in Glasgow. Participants who were targeted purposively were contacted through community groups and community councils operating in areas that had been identified as prone to STRs. At the end of the interview, the interviewee was asked if they had any contact who might be willing to help. In order to protect the anonymity of participants, no names or demographic information was collected.

3.5. Data Analysis

Following on from the epistemological and ontological perspectives of this research, a thematic approach to analysis was adopted as it is useful for researchers who have adopted a constructionist methodological position (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is probably the most common approach to analysing qualitative data by searching for underlying themes within with the data (Bryman, 2014). Evans (2017) highlights it is not always easy to identify what the theme are and therefore suggest identifying the themes and patterns within the data should begin at the data collection stage and continue throughout transcribing, reading and re-reading. Themes generally appear more than once within the data set and should capture important ideas in relation to the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Therefore, after each interview the data was transcribed and read twice. The first reading focused on content and understanding and the second was for identifying observations that coincided with context from the literature review. If the observations appeared throughout the transcripts and related to the research questions, it was deemed to be a theme. Finally, when analysing the data care was taken when representing the themes identified in the data.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Consideration of the ethical responsibilities towards interview participants identified three main areas for reflection. These were: anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation . Prior to taking part in the interview, all participants were provided with a Plain English Statement (See Appendix 2) which explained why participants had been selected, the consequences of taking part and stressed that the interviews were completely

anonymous. Post interview, anonymity was achieved by removing any identifiers from interview transcripts and interviewees were made aware of this process prior to conducting the interview. The Plain English Statement also highlighted that the information gathered would be solely used for this research and shall not be passed on to any third parties. Finally, voluntary participation was sought as personal information and private views were being recorded. This was achieved as interviewees were made aware that participation was optional and that they were welcome to stop at any time. Moreover, consent forms were signed before starting the interview to ensure the participant fully understood. These measures allowed ethical approval to be granted by the University of Glasgow College of Social Science Research Ethics Committee.

3.7. Summary

This chapter outlines the methodological approach taken in this dissertation. Consideration has been given to both epistemological and ontological position of this work and how it has shaped the collection and analysis of the data. The use of semi-structured interviews has been justified due to their flexible nature, so not to limit interviewees responses. The main drawback of this method is it prevents direct comparison between each interview, however, the use of thematic analysis helps overcome this as it allows recurring themes to be identified in the data.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1. Introduction

As is clear from the literature, more research is needed into the impacts that STRs are having on host communities and their residents. Therefore, to address this gap in the knowledge, this chapter will analyse the findings from the semi-structured interviews conducted with residents from neighbourhoods with a high density of STRs. Overall, respondents appeared to have a positive attitude towards STRs in their locality and this was primarily due to limited contact with the guests using them. Many did, however, acknowledge that this opinion might change if their interaction with host and guest was to change in the future. A few interviewees had had bad experiences with STRs, mainly with drunk and anti-social visitors, and unsurprisingly this had tainted their opinion of both Airbnb and its users. From the data numerous trends and themes were identified in relation to the research questions, a total of three positive impact and five negative impacts were identified through a thorough review of the interview transcripts. These findings are summarised below in Table 1:

Table 1: Summary of themes from interview data

<i>Theme</i>	<i>No. of interviews</i>	<i>No. of references</i>
<i>Positive Impacts</i>		
Economic Benefits	8	14
Host Benefits	5	5
Respectful Travellers	2	3
Social Connections	1	1
<i>Negative Impacts</i>		
Noise	6	11
Anti-Social Behaviour	4	7
Security	3	5
Inconveniences - Traffic/ Parking/ Litter	3	4
Property Values	2	3

The positive impact themes included: economic benefits, host benefits, respectful travellers and social connections. Negative impact themes include noise, anti-social behaviour, small-scale inconveniences (as acknowledged by interviewees) such as parking, traffic and litter, security, property values and sense of community. Negative impacts were more diverse, with a wider range of issues being raised, whereas there seemed to be more consensus regarding the positive impacts. Finally, when discussing current regulations,

many respondents admitted to having very little knowledge of them, especially in relation to Glasgow.

4.2. Positive Impacts

The first research question aimed to explore the residents of Glasgow's perceptions of the positive impacts of STRs. The most frequently stated positive impact was the thought that STRs would bring economic benefits to the area, such as, boosting the local economy by supporting local businesses and increasing tourism outside the traditionally touristic areas. Participants tended to focus more on the macro-economic benefits, for example:

“Economy wise there is obviously a lot of money that is spent in local shops and my impression is that there will be a lot of money spent in local pubs and restaurants as well.” (Resident, #2)

“Well I suppose if people are coming to visit here, they are going to spend money, they're going to go to the bars and visit restaurants. So that's good for the local economy. I guess they're bring tourism to Glasgow so that can only be a bonus.” (Resident #3)

“For Glasgow, in general, the money that they would spend in the shops and the restaurants and the bars would be beneficial. And there are benefits for the local community too because as you know there are lots of restaurants on Gibson Street so people spending more money in them is good for the local community.” (Community Council Member #2)

The perceived economic benefits are in line with past research which suggests STRs and Airbnb tend to have more macro-economic benefits than micro-economic benefits. These finding also support Airbnb's belief that the platform encourages spending on non-accommodation expenditure such as food and beverages, retail and entertainment (Airbnb, 2012). Interestingly, no interviewees considered there to be any negative economic impacts which also feature heavily in the literature. This may be because residents do not have the same understanding of the economic benefits and setbacks of tourism as someone working within the industry. However, this does not limit the importance of their perceptions because when investigating destination impacts, resident's opinions are just as important as a professional's views regardless of their expertise on the topic (Jordan and Moore, 2018). One respondent also suggested that in addition to helping local business, more business might be attracted to the area as result of STR guests staying outside the tourist core:

“You know, there are a few empty shops and things, like commercial units that are not filled, and I think if it was a thriving touristy area it would attract more local businesses into the area... so if there were some more tourists in the area because of STRs, I think there might be more of a thriving food and drinks scene. I think it might be a bit more cultured. On the whole it’s a quite a nice area but having some tourists and visitors in the area would only be an asset.” (Resident #1)

Whilst this observation fits within the theme of economic benefits, this idea does not feature in the established literature. This may be because Airbnb and STRs are generally located in expensive, middle class neighbourhoods in which fewer empty commercial units are likely to be found, as result of greater competition for prime real estate (Lee, 2016). However, in Glasgow high concentration of STRs are found out with such areas, such as in Finnieston, Strathbungo and Battlefield. There could be numerous reasons for this, for example, Finnieston and Strathbungo have received notable media attention in recent years as Finnieston was voted the ‘hippest place in Britain’ (The Times, 2016) and Strathbungo was named in the top ten best places to live in Scotland (The Times, 2018). Therefore, as awareness of areas out with the traditional tourist core increases, there is likely to be greater demand for STRs in such areas. Moreover, if an increase in STRs and tourism does create a ‘thriving food and drinks scene’ it could eventually drive up rent and house prices causing displacement and gentrification, much like Lee (2016) suggested Airbnb was doing in Los Angeles.

Another theme that emerged from the interview data was the personal benefits experienced by hosts or landlords suggesting there is some truth in the assertion that Airbnb helps host to supplement their income, afford their rent or mortgage and continue to afford to live in desirable areas. One community council member said:

“There would also be economic benefits for the host themselves I suppose, what they are advertising seems to be at the lower end for Airbnb, in comparison to other cities, but they still seem to be making some financial gain out of it.” (Community Council Member #1)

Interviewees who mentioned the economic benefits experienced by hosts were supportive of their desire to supplement their income by using the platform, especially in cases where rooms rather than entire properties were being rented out to travellers. Another respondent, who did not address the potential financial benefits to hosts did, however, acknowledge the fact that host in their neighbourhood had what she deemed to be good

jobs as otherwise they would not have been able to afford property in the area and that one host owned four properties on her street. Therefore, in these incidents Airbnb is less about supplementing an income and participating in the collaborative and has instead become a commercial business.

Less dominant themes also emerged from the literature, focusing on the type of guests using STRs and the type of interaction residents have had with them. Two interviewees discussed how the travellers appeared to be more respectful than guests using other types of accommodation in terms of respect for host community:

“One thing I will say, you never heard a peep out of them, even when families came. They were all terribly nice. They were very aware of it being a tenement flat and the fact that other people live here. It’s not the behaviour I would normally think or associate with people staying in cheaper types of accommodation.”
(Resident #6)

Again, this point was somewhat dispelled by other interviewees stating the exact opposite, suggesting STRs attract visitors who want the freedoms that are not afforded to them in traditional tourism accommodation such as hotel and B&Bs. Therefore, highlighting that perceived benefits of STRs are very changeable even when the rentals are geographically close to each other. Reference was also made to guests being respectful of the environment;

“We've got big recycling bins there for glass, behind the school and nobody would know they were there unless somebody said to them, and I have to say the guests are good at using them. They do seem to have a lot of beer bottles and again, I do have to say they are usually very good at putting them in the recycling, it is just wee things like that.” (Community Council Member #1)

Jordan and Moore (2018) had a similar finding when interviewing residents of Oahu, Hawai'i, with one resident suggesting STR guests were more environmentally conscientious than residents. They acknowledge this finding is new to the body of literature investigating STRs and the sharing economy. Whilst some tourism literature links environmentally conscious behaviours to certain types of tourist, such eco-tourists, no links have been found between tourist's behaviours and types of accommodation.

Finally, one respondent made reference to the social interactions experienced with guests:

“I think it's quite nice, I'd rather have it as an Airbnb, you get chatting the guests in the lift and it to find out where they are from and what they are getting up to in Glasgow.” (Resident #5)

To warrant a topic becoming a theme, generally it must appear more than once in the data, however only in the instance above was the experience described as positive. That is not to say all other interactions were negative but rather the other interviewees did not consider their encounters with STR guests to be personally beneficial. This encounter suggests that STRs could be having a small sociocultural impact upon locals as well tourists (Nica and Potovaru, 2015), especially as Resident #5 noted interactions were often with international guests from Australia, South America and Canada. However, experiences such as these were limited in the literature and this may be because most cities that are experiencing severe issues with Airbnb have experienced high volumes of tourism for some time. In these cities, such as Amsterdam, Berlin and Barcelona, the debate focuses more on how to control such high volumes of tourists rather than instances of pleasant encounters that have likely been happening for years. Therefore, the literature suggests there may be a correlation between increased tourism and decrease in the perceived benefits of cultural exchange with tourists, as residents become more exacerbated with a high volume of visitors.

4.3. Negative Impacts

The most commonly cited negative impact of STRs in residential locations is the noise guest make. Several interviewees mentioned that they had noticed an increase in noise and the times at which it was being made;

“I would say the problems are small scale because they don't particularly affect me or my way of life. In terms of anti-social behaviour there isn't really any, at least not what people have come to associate with Airbnb, just a little more noise but nothing to complain about.” (Resident #2)

“You can hear them out on the balcony bit because my bedroom backs on to the area and the noise really travels if someone's out on there. So, if people are using the flat as a party rental and people are out there after a night out or are out there smoking, you can hear them in the room. Sometimes you would be kept up by the noise, this is something me and my flatmate have noticed but apart from that, it's not too bad.” (Resident #3)

“I think the room that is let out is below the one that I sleep in so occasionally you hear people coming and going at funny hours but nothing that’s particularly disruptive to my way of life” (Resident #6)

Many residents that raised the issue of increased noise levels, were also quick to identify that it was having a minimal impact on their day to day life. This idea is furthered within the data as interviewees who had had some contact with international visitors noted they were using the STRs as a base to explore the surrounding countryside or for short business trips. That being said, there were some reports of anti-social behaviour, including loud parties and reckless drunken behaviour. One interviewee describes such encounters:

“We’ve had a few drunken people as well, our bedroom is right on the street, so they maybe come down (the close) drunk, laughing and screaming, making lots of noise generally. My husband caught one peeing in our plant pot whilst his two friends were round the corner waiting for him. One night we actually found a drunk guy sleeping in the porch. Just things like that, that make you think what’s happening here!?” (Permitted B&B owner)

Whilst a second resident had encountered even more extreme anti-social behaviour as a result of STR guests throwing a party in the flat below her:

“About 1.30am the music started back up, and there was a lot of shouting... We looked out the window, and saw about 30 people hanging outside the door, with more inside. I woke up again about an hour, two hours later with someone honking a car horn. I went back through to the living room, and my partner was still up – he said that there’d been some fighting outside, and now some other guys had turned up at the door. It was the middle of summer, so all the windows were open – I could smell them smoking joints outside the flat, and looked out and saw that a dealer was there selling wee baggies of white powder/crystals that I can only presume was coke or mandy... I shouted down out the window and asked them to turn the music down and got told to ‘fuck off.’” (Resident #4)

Encounters such as these have been experienced in countless tourism studies, however as a result of STRs, these conflicts are no longer limited to touristic cores and are occurring more frequently in residential areas around the globe. In Glasgow, these issues appear to be the exception rather than the norm as Airbnb’s offering in the city is still fairly limited. This may be because Glasgow is less of a tourist destination than cities like Edinburgh or

Barcelona and therefore attracts a different type of visitor. However, dismissing these incidents as a one off is not the answer, as the 'Barcoloneta Crisis', which saw thousands take to the street in Barcelona, was the result of similar experiences repeatedly happening in one residential neighbourhood in the city. Whilst Glasgow may be a long way away from their own crisis, it does put policy makers and planners in a privileged position of being able to learn from other cities experiences and react accordingly.

Closely linked to the anti-social behaviour of visitors was the issue of safety and security. Numerous residents reported concerns about their own safety and the security of their property;

“I do actually sometimes wonder about the security of it all, strangers coming and going from the building. Obviously, I assume that she’s (the host) keeping tabs on it. You never really know who you are inviting into your home and that has crossed my mind before.” (Resident #1)

“After our experiences, my partner and I spoke about how we didn’t feel safe in the flat. We didn’t know who had access to the close – whilst it was a front-door flat, they had a back door into the close to get to the bins. When you’re living somewhere, it’s nice to get to know the neighbours – not in a buddy-buddy way, but in a “ok, cool, I’d trust them to take a parcel in.” (Resident #4)

“While I remember as well, we had an issue with door lock as well, people were leaving the main entrance off the lock and when asked why they were doing it, it turns out they hadn’t been given a key for the front lock and had been told by the Airbnb owner that the door was always unlocked. That’s not the case – that door is always locked and it’s a security issue.” (Resident #7)

The safety of residents and the security of their properties is not a dominant theme within current literature. This theme may feature more heavily in Glasgow as result of many STRs being located in the West End, Merchant City and Finnieston where a high percentage of accommodation is in flats and tenement buildings. This means visitors have access to closes and shared spaces within the building making it considerably easier to access residents’ flats. Additionally, tourism studies have identified a negative relationship between an increase in tourism and a decrease in safety, security and in extreme cases, quality of life (Gu and Ryan, 2008). Therefore, if STRs are increasing levels of tourism both in the city and in residential areas, it is highly likely that an influx of strangers, in close

proximity to homes will have an impact on safety and security or at least, resident's perception of safety and security.

Additionally, a range of neighbourhood impacts were raised including increased traffic, greater competition for parking and increased littering. One interviewee said:

“Ehh, the volume of people, the parking. We pay for parking and you can't get a space, you cannot get a space. And they're talking about putting the price up again. You've already got the SECC people using the parking because it is free after 6 and then you've got the extra from the Airbnb. It's all the small things that are mounting up.” (Resident #7)

And a second interviewee, when describing how they first noticed Airbnb and STRs in their area, said:

“It was because of incidents like rubbish getting thrown in the garden and stuff like that. A high volume of litter, we had 30 pieces of litter in our garden in one week, that was really unusual... We also noticed there was a lot of rubbish getting thrown out in the garden. The residents put everything in bags, but they were getting thrown all over, like with no bin bags, just thrown in the garden near the bin area. So, we were having to clean that, it cost us 100 quid to get someone to come in and get it gutted because they were just throwing it in any old way.” (Permitted B&B Owner #1)

These experiences have become common place in both tourism studies and literature specifically focusing on STRs. Increased litter because of Airbnb guest has been experienced throughout Scotland, with MPs in the Highlands suggesting that Airbnb should publish clear guidelines on appropriate behaviour specific to the destination. Issues such as traffic and limited parking are also common within the literature, with Gurrán and Phibbs (2017) identify it as growing problem in Sydney, Australia, and its surrounding suburbs. Issues relating to traffic and parking may be exacerbated in Glasgow due to the higher densities of traditional tenement flats and the associated grid street plan, that were not designed with high car ownership of tenants in mind.

Finally, some residents discussed the affect STRs appeared to be having on property values. Residents believed that tourist accommodation in residential locations was starting to increase competition when flat hunting and affect rental prices. Interviewees said:

“Also, when I was flat hunting it was extremely competitive, we were looking for a very long time and we had many offers that weren’t accepted. I wasn’t aware at the time and I didn’t have much of a perception of Airbnb being much of a thing in this part of the world, cause I’ve never really thought of Glasgow as a tourist place. But since becoming more aware of it and given the difficulties I had trying to get a flat it could have had something to do with it, but again it is difficult to say” (Resident #1)

“I think it’s also driving rent prices up. I might now have a PhD, but I am a long time away from owning my own place, so renting is how I live for now – and with us both being from working class families, I don’t really know if or when we will about to own property in Glasgow. I love living in the area – particularly where we are now...but there’s too many greedy landlords hoarding properties for STRs” (Resident #4)

Many other cities around the world especially where housing market were already very competitive, such as New York and Sydney, have noticed that Airbnb has exacerbated these problems. Although Glasgow may not be experiencing the impacts of STRs on the same scale as these cities, it presents an opportunity for Glasgow to tackle the problem head on and prevent it from escalating as the alternative is already known. Additionally, there are early indications that the problem could be getting worse, as one resident described an eight-bedroom property that was being sold on her street that was marketed as suitable for Airbnb because of the number of bedrooms.

4.3. Regulation

When discussing regulations with interviewees it became apparent that few interviewees were aware of current regulations and guidelines, especially in Glasgow. Only one out of the ten interviewees had any knowledge on the Glasgow City Council’s guidelines for STRs and this individual had had some of the worst experiences within the data. Consequently, this interviewee, along with their neighbours contacted their local councillor for further information regarding STRs. The lack of knowledge from the rest of the interviewees suggests there may be a link between bad experiences with STRs and knowledge of regulation. For example, one interviewee said:

“I don’t feel like STRs and Airbnb’s are something that are having a particularly big impact on my day to day life at the moment, so I don’t particularly take any issues with them myself or how they are regulated and managed. If it was something that was to become more prevalent where I live, then I may feel differently but I’m not sure.” (Resident #1)

This line of thought was common for respondents with little to no knowledge of the regulatory system. Consequently, it could be argued that on the whole that as majority of respondents have not felt it necessary to investigate regulations as they have had predominately positive experiences with STRs.

Although most of the respondents were not aware of current regulations, they did make suggestions regarding what they felt should be covered based on their personal experiences. Many interviewees wanted prior warning from landlords if a property was about to become an STR and suggested STRs should have to register in the same way HMOs do:

“Similarly to HMOs they should have to make neighbours aware and put in a bid with the council to become one because I don’t think this happens with Airbnb. They’re very much under the radar. At least you would know what’s happening, instead of having to become a detective.” (Community Council Member #2)

“There should be a separate registration system, and a cap on how many can exist in the area. Landlords of STR should be required to have direct communication with neighbours in close proximity.” (Resident #2)

The suggestions outlined above are broadly in line with Barcelona’s current attempts to regulate STRs. For example, all STRs have to register with the council, display their registration number when advertising the property and the council provides an online register for residents to enquire about STRs in their area. Additionally, spatial limits have been implemented and where possible STRs are located in the same building as each other in order to minimise impacts on residents. Therefore, if GCC adopted the measures suggested by the residents of Glasgow

they would be following in the footsteps of Barcelona, which is widely regarded to be one of the most successful approaches to regulating STRs.

The lack of interviewee understanding of regulation limits the scope of the research somewhat, however it does present an opportunity to discuss regulation in Glasgow more generally. As previously discussed, Glasgow City Council has in planning terms addressed the change of Use Classes for STRs however they GCC fail to address how such properties will be licenced and managed. As mentioned above, some residents suggested a system in line with HMO licensing. An HMO licence is required if three or more unrelated adults live together and share a bathroom and a kitchen. Therefore, shared flats, halls of residence and hostels would all require an HMO. In order to become registered landlords must ensure that a number of health, safety and fire requirements are met such as. Additionally, owner must display a notice outside the property for 21 days in order to inform the public of the application and allow them to submit an objection to the local authority. Such measures for registering STRs would be beneficial to GCC for three reasons, firstly the council would have an accurate record of who was operating STRs and therefore would be able to enforce the appropriate tax regulations. Although concerns over the correct taxations did not emerge as a theme from this data set, it is a regular feature within other studies as STRs often avoid paying tourism taxes. Secondly, STRs will be held to the same safety standards, alleviating the concerns of residents, in terms of protecting their own property and guest wanting to know the accommodation is safe. Finally, by requiring landlords to display a notice outside the flat for a period of 21 days, it would ensure that residents in the immediate vicinity are aware of the proposed plans and gives them the opportunity to voice a complaint. Moreover, nearly all private landlords must register with the council to ensure that they are 'fit and proper' person, however this does not apply to STR owners. This process is reviewed on a three yearly basis and if the above criteria is not met, landlords can face fines of up £50,000.

4.4. Summary

As a result of the thematic approach adopted to analysis, numerous themes have emerged from the data providing detailed insight into resident's perspectives of STRs in Glasgow.

The analysis of the interviews has identified what the positive and negative impacts of STRs are on local communities, as deemed by members of these communities, as well as provided insight into their thoughts on the current policy agenda. Focussing on the research questions, the data has provided answers for all three research questions, confirming there are some positive impacts of STRs for local communities, some negatives impacts and identifies ways in which the regulatory agenda could address some of the impacts experienced in Glasgow. Moreover, from the data it has emerged that Glasgow is beginning to experience many of the impacts discussed in the literature and whilst the sample size is too small to say for certain, the experiences are as widely felt in the established touristic areas as well as less frequently visited neighbourhoods in the Southside.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary

This dissertation aimed to establish if the rise of STRs in residential areas of Glasgow, has resulted in positive or negative neighbourhood impacts. Additionally, this dissertation also investigates if residents believe the regulatory response to STRs is sufficient and how residents believe it could be improved. The review of literature found in section 2 provides insight into the current problems associated with STRs and Airbnb, highlighting that neighbourhood impacts have been felt in numerous cities across the globe. Most importantly, through a combination of the empirical evidence gathered and a review of the literature, the three research questions were answered.

Firstly, residents perceived numerous positive impacts of STRs in their local area. These included economic benefits to the local economy and the potential social connections as a result of interactions with visitors. The most frequently discussed benefit in terms of both the number of interviewees that mentioned it and the number of references within the interviews was the perceived economic benefits. Whilst this is a common theme in the literature, its dominance within the data may be a result of GCC using the platform to promote economic development in the city, especially during international events, such as the European Championships. In terms of furthering the research, the finding that residents enjoyed meeting and welcoming tourists is somewhat novel to the literature, this may be because Glasgow's tourism industry is limited in comparison to other cities that are more dominant in the literature (Barcelona, Berlin, London and Paris), therefore making these encounters rarer and more enjoyable for residents.

The second research question, which explored the perceived negative impacts, was also sufficiently answered. Issues such as noise, anti-social behaviour and security were discussed the most frequently. Interestingly, although a range of negative impacts were raised, including disruptive instances with quite extreme anti-social behaviour, most residents acknowledged that to date STRs had had little impact on their day to day life. Therefore, this adds to this study as it provides insight into a city that has not yet reached crisis point both in terms of STRs and tourism. Consequently, providing an opportunity to address the impacts before they escalate.

Finally, in relation to the last research question which asked if residents believed the regulatory response to STRs was sufficient and if not, how they felt regulations should address the perceived impacts. This research question was the hardest to answer as many

interviewees had little awareness of current regulations. This lack of knowledge could suggest that STRs are having a fairly limit impact on local residents as they have not felt the need to learn more about the regulations. Despite the apparent lack of knowledge, some residents still had strong views on how the regulation agenda ought to address the perceived impacts, with the most common suggestion focusing on implementing a system similar to HMO licensing.

5.2. Research Limitations

Whilst numerous articles have explored the impact STRs are having on communities and the local housing market, few have specifically looked at residents' perspectives on such matters. Therefore, available literature regarding residents' perspectives of STRs is still fairly limited, which presented a limitation in terms of constraining the literature review. A further limitation is the sample size, as 10 interviewees are not representative of the population as a whole. Thus, the interviewees provided a depth of knowledge but not a breadth. Furthermore, some of the participant were willing to take part on the account of bad experiences with STRs, this coupled with the purposive snowball sampling many have resulted in interviewees having stronger opinions on STRs than the wider community.

5.3. Future Research and Recommendations

Unsurprisingly, as research regarding STRs and Airbnb is generally quite limited, more research is needed. As residents only represent one viewpoint it would be beneficial to include other key stakeholders such as local planners, owners and providers of STRs and tourism industry experts as the findings will better inform new policy and regulatory interventions. Additionally, it is likely that the perceived impacts of STRs vary from destination to destination. Therefore, research would benefit from similar studies in different geographical locations that also vary in term of development and levels of tourism.

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Appendix 1: Interview Script

Section 1: This section seeks to understand a bit about the area in which you live.

- Where do you live? Can you tell me a bit about residential area?

N.B. I don't want specific address just the wider area, for example Hillhead/ the Merchant City/ Battlefield.

- How long have you lived there?
- How well would you say you know the area?

Section 2: This section aims to better understand your interactions with short-term rentals (STR) or Airbnb where you live.

- When did you first notice STR(s) in your local area?
- How close do you live to an STR/ Airbnb?
- What interactions have you had with this STR or what experiences have you had as a result of living close by to it?
- As far as you are aware, what type of visitors use the STR?
- Since becoming aware of STRs in your local area, how has the sector changed – if at all – since then?

Section 3: This section explores what impacts STRs are having on local communities.

- What do think the benefits of STRs within your local community are?
- What do think the negative impact of STRs within your local community are?
- How aware are you of regulations addressing STRs in Glasgow?
- Based on your personal experiences with STRs, what do you think regulations should include?

Plain Language Statement

The perceived impact of short term rentals in Glasgow.

Researcher: Mhairi Summers (20310275)

You are being invited to participate in a research study that aims to investigate the perceived impact of short term rentals in Glasgow. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study aims to investigate the perceived impacts (positive and negative) of short stay rentals, such as Airbnbs in Glasgow.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate as you identify as one of the following;

- an owner/operator of a short stay rentals
- a resident who lives in close proximity to a short stay rental
- a member of a residential/ community group
- you possess knowledge on the regulation and enforcement of short stay rentals

This enables you to provide insight into the impacts of short stay rentals in Glasgow.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any point during the interview.

What will happen to me if I take part?

The answers you give, along with those of other participants, will form the basis of the analysis conducted within this dissertation.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

The interview process is confidential and anonymous. All information provided will be stored securely and destroyed after use. Direct quotes may be used but identifiers will be removed insuring that your identity remains anonymous.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this research study will be used to produce two documents; the first of which is my dissertation and the second in the form of a lay report that will summarise my dissertation and its findings. The lay report will be submitted to Glasgow City Council.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by the ethics committee at the University of Glasgow.

Contact for Further Information

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the School of Social and Political Science, the researcher or their supervisor.

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Researcher: Mhairi Summers

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