

The home exchange phenomenon in the sharing economy: a research agenda

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The emergence of the sharing economy has been driven by the increasing value of temporary access to goods over ownership as an alternative mode of consumption. This economy has been enabled by the rapidly evolving Web 2.0 technologies. Scholars have turned their attention to the implications of this sharing economy for the tourism and hospitality industries. However, research on peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation-sharing has mainly focused on a few global (monetized) platforms, especially Airbnb, while other manifestations of P2P sharing accommodation have remained underexplored. This is the case for 'home exchange', an example of non-monetized P2P sharing accommodation where individuals exchange their homes via web-based platforms. Aiming to address this gap, this paper reviews existing literature on the topic and identifies three key research dimensions, namely, economic, social-psychological and spatial. The paper also argues for the value of using second-home tourism literature in the examination of the home exchange phenomenon. Main research gaps and directions for future research are then addressed. Finally, the conclusions and limitations are presented.

Keywords: home exchange; sharing economy; peer-to-peer accommodation; hospitality research; tourism

Introduction

Changes in consumer attitudes over the past decade because of growing awareness of the negative impacts of hyper-consumption on societies and the environment, the need for more sustainable behaviour, and the quest for authentic, individualised tourism experiences, have contributed to the rise of new forms of collaborative consumption that have transformed the production and consumption of tourism (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015, 2017). As argued by Belk (2014a), these sharing and collaborative consumption practices are based on non-ownership models of temporary access to goods and services made possible by Web 2.0. technologies.

The contested nature of the sharing economy is exemplified by the plethora of definitions found in the academic literature (see the work of Acquier et al., 2017 for a recent review). The terms ‘collaborative economy’, ‘sharing economy’ and ‘peer-to-peer economy’ have been used interchangeably, but also with different terminologies in different disciplines (Chen, 2016; Gössling & Hall, 2019). This research focuses firstly on the original concept of sharing economy (Botsman & Rogers, 2011), that is, the exchange of goods and services with access over ownership as the most common mode of exchange (Hamari, Sjöklint & Ukkonen, 2016). Secondly, it looks at private non-commercial transactions as the focus of the exchange (Gössling & Hall, 2019). Central to this concept is the notion of higher levels of utilisation of already-existing but underutilised goods (Voytenko Palgan, Zvolska & Mont, 2017).

One such example of access over goods is sharing of accommodation. The rapid growth of this form of peer-to-peer (P2P) consumption has stimulated a rise in the academic literature related to this topic (Belarmino & Koh, 2020; Prayag & Ozanne, 2018), with a special emphasis on Airbnb, the most successful business model of P2P accommodation sharing since it was launched in 2009 (for a recent literature review on Airbnb, see the work of Dann, Teubner & Weinhardt, 2019). However, other forms of P2P accommodation remain underexplored (Voytenko Palgan et al., 2017). This is the case for home exchanges, a non-commercial form of hospitality (Grit & Lynch, 2011).

Home exchanges give consumers the opportunity to ‘exchange’ their homes via digital platforms. The scale of the home exchange phenomenon is still marginal compared to traditional forms of hospitality and relatively new profit-oriented P2P accommodation-sharing platforms such as Airbnb (Gössling & Hall, 2019). The phenomenon has, however, been growing worldwide during the last decade (Tonner, Hamilton & Hewer, 2017). In contrast to the widespread negative impacts associated

with monetized forms of P2P accommodation-sharing platforms (i.e. Airbnb), this paper argues that the practice of home exchange has the potential to realise many of the aspirations and social and economic outcomes associated with the sharing economy. The phenomenon therefore requires detailed and systematic academic investigation.

In order to better understand home exchanges, the purpose of this study is threefold. First, this paper provides insights into the current progress on home exchange research and identifies the main variables examined in this context. The literature review shows that the attention paid to home exchange has been very limited, usually adopting a user perspective. Thus, three key dimensions are identified and thoroughly discussed, namely economic, social-psychological and spatial dimensions. Second, this paper proposes a nexus between second-home tourism literature and the home exchange phenomenon. The notion of ‘second home’ in the context of home exchange (i.e. permanent homes temporarily transformed into ‘vacation homes’) challenges normative assumptions of tourism consumption practices and offers a fruitful field for research. Third, this paper highlights avenues of research that have been under-researched or overlooked, such as the sustainability dimension, and that can enhance and stimulate further research on the topic. This is in line with recent recommendations for carrying out systematic reviews within tourism and hospitality research (Furunes, 2019).

Theoretical background

P2P accommodation sharing

Previous research on P2P accommodation-sharing platforms has mainly focused on Airbnb (Dann et al., 2019). The key concepts that have been studied include “user motives and types, reputation systems, text reviews and self-descriptions, profile

images, prices and pricing, economic and media impact, and legal and regulatory aspects” (Dann et al., 2019, p. 3).

From a guest (demand) perspective, P2P accommodation is strongly driven by motives such as cost (Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). It is also motivated by other factors, namely: sustainability and social and environmental responsibility (Guttentag, Smith, Potwarka & Havitz, 2018; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016; Voytenko Palgan et al., 2017); the desire for stronger social relationships and a sense of community (Guttentag, 2015); the search for authentic tourist experiences (Guttentag, 2015; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2018); and the design, amenities, space and location of the accommodation (Guttentag, 2015). Users’ motives related to sustainability in the sharing economy connect with the growing concern about global environmental change and the ecological, societal and developmental impacts of tourism (Martin, 2016). These motives form a bridge to the sustainable consumption literature (e.g. Gullstrand Edbring, Lehner & Mont, 2016; Prothero et al., 2011) and are linked to ideology, moral norms, social responsibility and in some cases anti-establishment sentiment (Hamari et al., 2016). P2P accommodation-sharing platforms also appeal to travellers socially, as they provide a chance to engage in what is perceived as a unique, authentic and valuable local experience (Forno & Garibaldi, 2015; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016), in other words, a ‘real’ tourism experience. This is realised by “living like a local, interacting with the host or neighbours, and possibly staying in a ‘non-touristy’ area” (Guttentag, 2015, p. 1197). From a host (supply) perspective, hosts are mainly driven by financial motives (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016; Stephany, 2015), although research has also found other factors that drive the supply, such as “hosts’ (genuine) passion to meet people”, “make use of unused space”, or “share my world/house” (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016, p. 160).

However, a more critical analysis of collaborative consumption practices in a tourism context warns of the underlying inequality of these encounters. A common criticism relates to the distance between the ideological notions and principles in which these exchanges are based, ‘the sharing economy manifesto’ (Murillo, Buckland & Val, 2017), and the practice of ‘sharing’. In other words, a growing dissonance between the aspirations and social aims embedded in the notion of sharing and “the platform capitalism practices operating in the sharing economy which, ultimately, render the initial sharing economy aspirations difficult to achieve” (Murillo et al., 2017, p. 66). Acquier et al. examine the contested and paradoxical nature of these digitally-enabled interactions, arguing that the sharing economy “aggregates different types of environmental, social and economic promises, each corresponding to different framings, values and debates” (2017, p. 2). It is also argued that many practices within the sharing economy do not involve true sharing and are, at best, examples of ‘pseudo-sharing’, where feelings of community and expectations of reciprocity are somewhat replaced by profit seeking motives (Belk, 2014b), evidencing the neoliberal logic behind many of these encounters (Martin, 2016). The tensions between the ethos and the practice of sharing are also pointed out by Gössling and Hall in their critique of the collaborative economy, suggesting that it “is turning into an increasingly neoliberal model in which global corporations ‘collect’ a share of revenue even from the smallest social entrepreneurs” (2019, p. 17).

Research has also shown that these exchanges are more likely to occur “between like-minded and privileged members of the creative middle class, rather than low-income people” (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015, p. 297), and that the collaborative economy is being “driven and benefited by people with high cultural, digital and networking capital” (Gyimóthy, 2016, p. 110). It has been argued that the owners of

shared goods rarely interact with their guests (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015) and that, instead of meaningful social interactions and genuine hospitality, these exchanges usually involve “fleeting interactions and professional encounters” with other outsourced intermediaries (Sigala, 2019). Likewise, the sharing economy is said to exacerbate the uneven distribution of income levels, especially where owners of valuable assets in specific localities primarily profit (Frenken & Schor, 2017). For example, researchers have also highlighted the spatial and social unevenness of the collaborative economy, arguing that these practices tend to take place in “chic neighbourhoods of larger cities and mostly among urban residents with managerial, professional and administrative jobs” (Gyimóthy, 2016, p. 110).

Finally, collaborative consumption practices in tourism have also been criticised for leading to the commodification of the home and the personal sphere (Gyimóthy, 2016), with the perceived value of the exchange being seen as a trade-off between benefits (i.e. authentic experience, lower cost) and sacrifices (i.e. sharing your private space with strangers) (Farbrother, 2010). In some instances, the quest for supposedly local authentic experiences can also lead to the commercialisation of authenticity and a romanticised notion of the practice of sharing (Sigala, 2019).

The home exchange phenomenon

While much attention has been paid to monetized forms of P2P accommodation-sharing platforms, the home exchange phenomenon remains under-researched. Home exchanges represent a non-commercial vacation alternative in which consumers have the opportunity to ‘exchange’ their homes via digital platforms. When joining a home exchange network, consumers pay a modest fee (an annual subscription or a pay-per-night plan) for unlimited access to the community of hosts (homes). Once registered, they create an online profile where they list their home(s), preferred destinations and

exchange dates availability, which allows them to send and/or receive exchange offers. Members can also opt for doing reciprocal or non-reciprocal exchanges. In reciprocal exchanges, both partners travel at the same time whereas in non-reciprocal exchanges partners can travel at different times or have just one of them travelling. Also, consumers may swap their first and/or second homes (and even their cars).

Although, there are many companies offering host-guest home exchange intermediation services, only a few give access to a reasonably large number of homes with a worldwide reach (e.g. Guest to Guest, Love Home Swap, Intervac, Homelink, Green Theme International, Guardian Home Exchange or Home Exchange).

HomeExchange has the widest offering of homes, claiming it has more than 400,000 homes across 187 countries, representing over 70% of the market share and accounting for 2.8 million overnight stays (HomeExchange, 2019). The company started in the early 1990s and was acquired in 2017 by the Guest to Guest platform. In December 2018, the two websites created a unified platform keeping the HomeExchange brand.

To illustrate the scale and geographical scope of the home exchange phenomenon, Figure 1 shows the 501,825 homes currently offered in the countries where HomeExchange is represented. Europe, America and, to a lesser extent Australia, are the most popular home exchange ‘supply’ areas: a primarily “western affair” as noted by Russo and Quagliari-Domínguez (2014, p. 161).

[Figure 1 near here]

However, a search of the literature shows that research on this specific form of sharing accommodation is very limited. As shown in Table 1, a number of studies have examined the characteristics and motivations of people engaging in this form of sharing accommodation and also the symbolic notion of home (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2014; Forno & Garibaldi, 2015; Tonner et al., 2017); meanwhile other works have

either focused on the characteristics of home exchange organizations or studied the spatial distribution and impacts of home exchange (De Groot & Nicasi, 1994; Grit & Lynch, 2011; Russo & Quagliari-Domínguez, 2014, 2016).

[Table 1 near here]

The above literature review suggests a number of potential key dimensions of varying scope for examining the nature and impacts of home exchange, namely: economic; social-psychological; and spatial dimensions. This categorisation leads the discussion of the existing knowledge in the field and provides the basis for the subsequent development of research propositions to advance the understanding of this phenomenon.

Research dimensions of the home exchange phenomenon

Economic dimension

Existing research on home exchange related to the economic dimension focuses mainly on the economic benefits (extrinsic motivation) of home exchanges. Thus, homeowners/hosts are tapping into the principle of ‘unlocking idling capacity’ proposed by Botsman and Rogers (2011) by mobilising a fixed property asset and turning it into a valuable good that can be exchanged. For Schor and Fitzmaurice (2015, p. 416) connected consumption centres on “the ability to save or make money, provide a novel consumer experience, reduce ecological and carbon footprints, and strengthen social ties”.

Hosts are thus using their homes entrepreneurially as assets that can be capitalised (Tonner et al., 2017) in order to gain temporary access to homes in other locations of their choice possessing different relative ‘exchange values’ depending on characteristics and location (Mosedale, 2012). From the guests’ perspective, this form

of collaborative consumption dramatically reduces the costs of travelling, as accommodation represents one of the main expenditure factors in holiday tourism (e.g. Lockyer, 2005). This form of P2P accommodation-sharing thus has the potential to contribute to the democratization of travel, by enabling people to travel and engage in authentic local experiences that they otherwise could not afford or access (Sigala, 2017).

Social-psychological dimension

Trust and trustworthiness

According to the literature, host-guest interactions are based on the principles of reciprocity, respect and confidence (De Groot & Nicasi, 1994), and require a certain level of “trust, open-mindedness, inventiveness, enthusiasm and flexibility” (Forno & Garibaldi, 2015, p. 202). A strong sense of trust is paramount to the success of home-sharing as the exchange is unregulated (Mosedale, 2012), and involves some risk and uncertainty (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2014). As in the case with Airbnb, where trust is at the centre of both hosts granting permission to stay and guests agreeing to book particular accommodation (Karlsson, Kemperman & Dolnicar, 2017), in home-sharing, trust is usually built through the process of agreeing to the exchange terms prior to the reciprocal visit (Decrop, Del Chiappa, Mallargé & Zidda, 2018), a process in which participants arguably “remain as strangers developing a transient but meaningful relationship” (Tonner et al., 2017, p. 36). In this sense, new technologies have facilitated the creation of mutual trust among host and guests through digital connections such as Skype meetings, online information exchange (e.g. photos, videos), emails and hosts and guests’ ratings. This digital infrastructure enables host-guest exchanges and facilitates the development of sufficient levels of trustworthiness among the parties involved to agree to the home-sharing experience. When sending or

receiving a home exchange request via the online platform, both hosts and guests have the opportunity to ‘gaze’ upon each other’s homes and personal virtual profiles in a voyeuristic manner. The home and personal profiles of home exchange users are intended to appeal to potential ‘exchangers’, unlike monetized peer-to-peer networks where the onus is on the guests to ‘sell themselves’ (Karlsson et al., 2017). The dual role of users as both ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’ in reciprocal exchanges requires a concerted effort to warrant trust among ‘strangers’. Online platform requirements for verification of personal details and guests’ reviews provide other mechanisms for building trust among those involved in the exchange. The role of online profiles and peer rating systems in generating higher levels of trustworthiness among users have also been noted in recent studies of the sharing economy (Ert, Fleischer & Nathan, 2016; Gyimóthy, 2016; Tussyadiah & Park, 2018).

Sociality, domesticity and uniqueness

Home exchangers’ behaviour is also driven by the desire for stronger interactions with local communities and the search for authentic (as in *true*) tourist experiences (Paulauskaite, Powell, Coca-Stefaniak & Morrison, 2017). By engaging in home-sharing practices, travellers/guests experience a sense of ‘sociality’ and ‘domesticity’ which is absent in commercial travel (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2014; Tonner et al., 2017) since “each host, each home and each vacation is unique, and experiences are priceless” (HomeExchange, 2019). The home-sharing experience allows users to enjoy “staying in real, lived-in houses, with their own personality, in authentic neighbourhoods, with great neighbours for you to meet. You can feel at home at someone else’s house for a few days. And maybe you can even help your host out by watering his or her plants, or picking up his or her mail, because remember... they’re not houses for rent: they’re real homes” (HomeExchange, 2019). Home exchange users

are thus rewarded with a more meaningful and supposedly ‘real’ local tourist experience, more genuine contacts with the local population and the opportunity of more direct relationships between hosts and guests. This in turn increases the feeling of taking part in a unique ‘local’ (as in *authentic*) experience and translates into a more immersive travel experience and a deeper relationship to place (Decrop et al., 2018; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2018).

The experience of domesticity and sociality embedded in these new forms of consumption is seen as unique since “the production and provision of such homely feelings is something that one can never buy and get in the traditional tourism industry” (Sigala, 2017, p. 348). Tonner et al. (2017) also note that home exchangers adopt a symbolic interpretation of home as “transient and discontinuous”, as they are quickly able to make themselves at home in different (exchange) locations (p. 43). The search for authenticity has also been found to be a determinant in other sharing accommodation practices such as couch surfing (Steylaerts & Dubhghaill, 2012).

These notions of domesticity, sociality and uniqueness are at the heart of the home-sharing experience. As claimed on their site, “the HomeExchange platform is made of real homes. Places full of life, identity and humanity. People places” (HomeExchange, 2019). For Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016), the interactions with the hosts outside the sphere of touristic places provide visitors with a valuable ‘insider’ knowledge enabling them to engage in activities traditionally reserved for locals; it also encourages the consumption of local services. As also noted in the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) literature (Shani & Uriely, 2012), home exchange users in a ‘host’ capacity have an important role as ‘local tourist guides’ influencing decisions regarding places visited and activities undertaken by their guests. The authentic social experiences expected by the platform users, exemplified by the interaction with locals and even with

neighbourhoods far from typical tourism hot spots, are likely to influence home exchangers' choice and behaviour (Guttentag & Smith, 2017; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016).

Surprise, fun and adventure

Typically, in order to arrange a home exchange, users seek out contact with potential 'exchangers' by sending out exchange request messages via the online platform.

Sometimes, the exchange offer will originate from destinations identified as 'of interest' in the user's web profile (i.e. places they would like to exchange with). However, in other instances, these requests come from destinations neither originally selected as 'of interest' nor previously considered as potential holiday spots. This adds an element of randomness to their exchange decision-making process and translates into a more 'reactive' and, to a great extent, more exciting strategy in their destination selection.

Thus, when receiving an exchange proposal from destinations not initially considered, it becomes a source of innovation and rarity in travel decision-making and contributes to the perception of fun or adventure. "HomeExchange can always surprise you. Maybe you'll receive an exchange offer from a place you never thought of visiting before or that you couldn't point out on a map. And you'll think... Why not?" (HomeExchange, 2019).

This element of randomness and adventure is seen as one of the value-added attributes of the home-sharing experience; however, it could also be interpreted as an element of 'disruption' or 'innovation' in traditional consumer behaviour in the context of destination selection.

Spatial dimension

Origin-destination spatial patterns

An interesting stream of research has focused on the spatial patterns associated with home exchange. Previous research on P2P accommodation suggests a close spatial relationship between Airbnb and hotel accommodation, with Airbnb increasing the pressure on city centres (Gutiérrez, García-Palomares, Romanillos & Salas-Olmedo, 2017). Conversely, Russo and Quagliari-Domínguez (2014, 2016) argue that the home exchange phenomenon signifies a rupture in traditional core-periphery patterns of tourism and impacts on processes of attraction, place-making and tourism practices. As noted by Russo and Quagliari-Domínguez (2016), the spatial distribution of home exchange offers is not related to ‘tourist places’ (as would the commercial accommodation) but to places where the community of swappers is more active and/or large. This allows a wider and more distinct destination choice than traditional tourist destinations, including places not previously considered (Russo & Quagliari-Domínguez, 2014). In fact, the most solicited destinations (the declared preferences of home exchangers in their profiles) do not match the real flows of tourists, although these “origin-destination flows take place mostly within the Western world” (Russo & Quagliari-Domínguez, 2016, p. 162).

Home-exchange nexus with second-home tourism

While existing research on home exchange has paid attention to some of its spatial implications (i.e., users’ locations and spatial flow patterns), this paper further proposes the examination of home exchange through the lens of second-home tourism literature. Owning a second home for recreational purposes has had a long tradition in many parts of the world and has seen sustained research over the last two decades (Hall & Müller,

2018; McIntyre, Williams & McHugh, 2006; Roca, 2013). The central attributes of second-home tourism are primarily private ownership and utilization of a secondary dwelling for leisure and recreational purposes, often rented out to tourists or exchanged within familial networks (Visser & Hoogendoorn, 2015). This paper argues that for many home exchangers, their permanent home becomes an opportunity to access a ‘temporary vacation home’ without owning a second home and with a greater level of spatial-temporal mobility and flexibility. Indeed, the spatial extent of accessing a ‘temporary second home’ becomes global in its geographical reach.

Home exchange represents a hybrid type of recreational accommodation in which a fixed asset (the home exchanged) becomes tradable. Home exchangers utilize the relative attractiveness of their homes transforming them into exchangeable commodities that enable them to gain temporary access to leisure accommodation in the location of their choice (Mosedale, 2012; Tonner et al., 2017). The leisure value of the primary home becomes the medium by which to access a variety of possible locations, without the financial risk of buying a second home or increasing mortgages on a first home. The attractiveness of the home determines the value or the potential ‘swapping power’ for the owner. Logically, the more attractive the home is, the more potential swappers will be available to choose from, increasing the range of potential destinations to travel to and accommodation types to select. In a similar fashion to second homes, owners who rent out their properties via online platforms must attempt to persuade potential guests to choose their properties (Dias, Correia & Martínez López, 2015). Home exchangers living in non-traditional destinations thus adopt a ‘marketing’ strategy to attract guests, highlighting elements different from the attractiveness of the destination itself, such as house amenities and surroundings (HomeExchange, 2019).

The uniqueness of home exchange is that it uses the fixed asset and leisure value of the primary home (not necessarily the same as the monetary value) and transforms this into a temporary tradable asset that can be swapped in a wide variety of locations.

Discussion of gaps and directions for future research

In the following sections, this paper suggests a number of research gaps (RG) and directions for future research to advance academic understanding of the home exchange phenomenon.

Research gaps related to the economic dimension

Existing studies dealing with the economic dimension have focused on users' cost-saving mechanisms associated to home exchanges (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2014; Russo & Quagliari, 2014; Tonner et al., 2017), while missing out on the implications of this phenomenon from a destination perspective, which will be emphasized in this section.

RG1. Economic impact at the destination level

Further studies need to address the impact of home exchangers' travel patterns (e.g. length of stay, level of expenditure, frequency of visitation) and consumption practices at the destination. The economic benefits of visiting friends and relatives (VFR) travel and second home tourism have received significant academic attention (Bieger, Beritelli & Weinert, 2007; Rogerson & Hoogendoorn, 2014), and are generally seen to be economically beneficial owing to longer stays, higher expenditure, local consumption and contributions to local rates and taxes (Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2015). It can be argued that home exchanges can have more economic benefits than second home ownership, because higher spending behaviour is prevalent among tourists due to

increased levels of disposable income and free accommodation for guests. The increase in the length of stay has been positively correlated to an increase in expenditure at the destination (Wang, Rompf, Severt & Peerapatdit, 2006). For example, Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016) found that a reduction in accommodation costs translated into a significant expansion in destination selection, an increase in travel frequency and length of stay, and the range of activities undertaken by the users. Furthermore, an increase in length of stay can also be associated with more widespread patterns of visits (i.e. from central to peripheral 'non-touristy' neighbourhoods), as is also the case in VFR travel (Asiedu 2008) and may arguably lead to decreased time and space pressure on destinations (Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2018). The implications for destinations of these changes on users' travel patterns included spill-over benefits to neighbourhoods not zoned for tourists and consequent positive economic impacts on local business (Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016).

RG 2. Substitution effects on the tourism accommodation market and related businesses

In the study field of commercial P2P accommodation, there have been a number of investigations that attempt to empirically estimate the impacts of Airbnb on local housing markets (e.g., Horn & Merante, 2017; Schäfer & Braun, 2016), as well as on the tourism accommodation market (e.g. Gutiérrez et al., 2017; Guttentag & Smith, 2017; Zervas, Proserpio & Byers, 2017). Similarly, further attention could be paid to the potential substitution effects between home exchange and traditional accommodation (i.e. using home exchange instead of commercial accommodation). Future research could analyse longitudinal changes in accommodation selection (and other tourism expenditures) before and after joining home exchange platforms. This could also include an examination of the potential revenue lost by traditional accommodation and

other local businesses operating at destinations (e.g. car rental) and the spatial distribution of such economic impacts across different territories (i.e. core-periphery patterns of tourism).

Research gaps related to the social and psychological dimension

The social and psychological has been the most studied dimension within the context of home exchanges, with a particular focus on the notions of trust, reciprocity, domesticity, and/or uniqueness embedded in the host-guest interactions (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2014; De Groot & Nicasi, 1994; Forno & Garibaldi, 2015; Mosedale, 2012; Tonner et al., 2017). However, other research aspects that require further consideration are identified below.

RG3. Decision-making process in home exchange

The review of the literature reveals that the home exchange decision-making process (pre-exchange, during-exchange and post-exchange stages) and the related intervening factors, have received limited scholarly attention. In the pre-exchange stage, research could examine the role that aspects such as destination image, transport costs, attractiveness and location of the home, trustworthiness of the host or guests' reviews might play in the decision-making process to accept or reject exchange requests. Home exchange has the potential to also affect the destination selection through users visiting 'off the tourist track' destinations as a result of accepting non-requested exchange proposals. This has implications, not only at the individual decision-making process level, but also at the destination-management level. During the exchange, the research focus could turn to the hosts' recommendations and suggestions and their influence on guests' behaviour (attractions and local businesses visited and related economic impact). A key question would be to what extent (if any) the hosts' role as 'local tourist

guides' exerts a real influence on guests' choices. In addition, guests' behaviour would presumably be greatly influenced by the accommodation location and destination characteristics. During the post-exchange stage, research could assess guests' visit satisfaction, intention to recommend the destination and future travel intentions.

RG4. Factors influencing home exchange behaviour

Additionally, existing research on home exchange has examined only a limited number of internal factors related to the decision-making process involved in such exchanges, such as motivations, perceptions of trust and lifestyles (see Table 1). However, home exchange behaviour might be influenced by other internal or individual characteristics (e.g. emotion, gender, age, education and income) and by other external factors or travel characteristics such as the trip purpose, travel party, or time constraints. These factors would require further attention. For example, it could be argued that home exchangers engage in this activity because they believe that it will increase their personal reputation (their status as travellers versus tourists) among their reference groups (e.g. friends and relatives). Underlying this reasoning process is the self-conscious emotion of pride, as "pride appears to capitalize on opportunities to promote the social value of the individual in the minds of others" (Sznycer, 2019, p. 146). Future research should also pay attention to the cultural dimension of the home-sharing phenomenon and examine how notions of trust, reciprocity and sociality are understood in different geographical contexts.

RG 5. The quest for authenticity in home exchange

The literature review has highlighted the role of authenticity (i.e., authenticity seeking) as a driver of home exchanges (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2014; Forno & Garibaldi, 2015). However, further research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms (if any)

whereby home owners use (or not) this construct for their own purposes, namely, to market their homes. Investigation is needed into how home owners make their homes more appealing to potential guests, thus differentiating them from ‘competing’ offers. Existing literature shows that authenticity is a complex concept, but increasingly important in the tourism context (e.g. Le, Arcodia, Abreu-Novais & Kralj, 2019).

Research gaps related to the spatial dimension

With regard to the spatial dimension, Russo & Quagliari-Domínguez (2014, 2016) have stressed the geographical relevance of the home exchange phenomenon, examining users’ locations and spatial flow patterns derived from the exchanges. From a destination management perspective, however, further research is needed to assess the wider spatial implications of this phenomenon.

RG 6. Spatial configuration of home-exchange offers and effect on destination management

Over the last decade, mature and even emerging destinations have suffered from an increasing pressure resulting from tourism growth (Milano, 2018). Indeed, under the realities of rapidly growing Web 2.0 technologies, P2P accommodation-sharing platforms have often exacerbated such pressures – also known as ‘overtourism’ (Koens, Postma & Papp, 2018). In this context, existing research seems to point out that home exchanges constitute an interesting alternative to traditional hospitality, promoting both ‘off the tourist track’ destinations and alternative neighbourhoods to stay in when visiting traditional destinations. This in turn might contribute to deconcentrating tourism flows and alleviating negative impacts such as tourist saturation; this is likely to be the case given that simultaneous exchanges do not add greater numbers to cities’ population. Therefore, future research could examine the spatial distribution of home-

exchange offers and compare it to that of other P2P accommodation platforms and traditional commercial accommodation (e.g. hotels, bed and breakfasts).

RG 7. The nexus between second-home tourism and home exchange practices

This paper has argued for the usefulness of investigating the logic of home exchange through the lens of second-home tourism literature. The home exchange phenomenon therefore challenges normative assumptions of economic value of tourism and how recreational properties are utilized. This is in addition to how these values can be traded on the market, and hence opening a promising avenue for future research. The literature on second-home tourism highlights the blurring of traditional dichotomies of first and second homes (Hoogendoorn, 2011). In the case of home exchanges, the first home of the owner is temporarily transformed into a second home for someone else. This is in line with Paris (2014), as well as Back and Marjavaara (2017) who argue that second homes are defined by the ways in which such dwellings are used, not by the type or physical structure of the dwelling itself.

Home exchanges enable ‘swappers’ to engage in mobile lifestyles and, to some extent, in ‘multi-local living’ or ‘pluri-residentiality’ by affording individuals and groups an alternative mode of tourism consumption based on temporary access to a ‘second home’. The global offer of home exchanges translates into global networks of travellers acting as ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’ simultaneously, and their respective homes temporarily becoming somebody else’s second home. This resonates with Hall and Müller’s (2018) discussion of second homes as ‘alternate’ homes and the notion of ‘home’ comprising different aspects of identity and belonging. Indeed, one of the most sought-after attributes in the experience of ‘exchanging’ homes is precisely the domesticity appeal of the encounter, the notion of ‘living like a local’ (Tonner et al., 2017).

Research gaps related to sustainability

RG8. Examining sustainability issues and pro-environmental behaviour (PEB) of home exchangers

Sustainability and social responsibility, particularly as these relate to growing concerns about anthropogenic contributions to global environmental change, appear to be an important future dimension in the analysis of the home exchange phenomenon that has been overlooked. Discussing the potential impacts of the sharing versus collaborative economy on sustainable development goals, Gössling and Hall (2019) note that collaborative forms of exchanges such as Airbnb might negatively affect these goals. As argued by the authors, while the Airbnb model is likely to distort housing markets and increase pressure on existing housing availability, platforms such as HomeExchange may have the opposite effect as a result of existing capacity (hosts' and guests' homes) being better utilized. Thus, non-monetized structures of the sharing economy have the potential to contribute to sustainable development goals as 'benefits are potentially retained and distributed among stakeholders, in more transparent and participatory ways, and with more limited environmental impacts' (Gössling & Hall, 2019, p. 15). However, longer and/or more frequent stays usually associated with home exchanges could also have an adverse effect on the environment (e.g. higher emissions from intense traveling) (Voytenko Palgan et al., 2017).

Further research may also focus on home exchangers' pro-environmental behaviour in the form of mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change. An interesting avenue for research could be to examine self-reported pro-environmental behaviour (PEB) (e.g. water and energy consumption) and related variables (e.g. climate change beliefs, ecological fear, emotions, place-attachment, nature-connectedness) of

home exchangers. Recent research on the topic offers a valuable avenue to further develop research (e.g. Han & Hyun, 2018).

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to examine the home exchange phenomenon, an example of non-monetized P2P sharing accommodation that enables consumers the means to exchange their homes via digital platforms. The literature review has shown that research on this topic is rather limited and exploratory in nature. Thus, three key research dimensions have been identified and examined: economic, social-psychological and spatial. In addition, a nexus between second-home tourism literature and the home exchange phenomenon is proposed. Next, a discussion of gaps and directions for future research has been presented. With regard to the economic dimension, further studies are needed to address the impact of home exchangers' travel patterns and consumption practices at the destination, which includes spill-over benefits to neighbourhoods not zoned for tourists and the economic impacts on local business. Also, the substitution effects on the tourism accommodation market and related businesses require more attention. As for the social and psychological dimension, a potentially fruitful avenue for future research relates to the variables affecting the decision-making process of home exchanges, as well as the internal and external factors influencing home exchange behaviour. It would also be worthwhile to examine the role of authenticity seeking as a driver of home exchanges. In terms of the spatial dimension, more research is needed to examine the spatial distribution of home-exchange offers and compare it to other P2P accommodation platforms and traditional commercial accommodation, while considering the implications for destination management. Furthermore, a promising avenue for future research arises by applying the second-home tourism literature to the analysis of home exchange and examining this

phenomenon as an alternative mode of tourism consumption based on temporary access to a ‘second home’. Finally, another area of research that warrants further attention relates to sustainability and the potential impacts of home exchange on development goals and home exchangers’ pro-environmental behaviour.

These research gaps are not without challenges—the most pressing one being the limited amount of readily accessible data on home exchanges. Similarly, this study is not without limitations. Although the literature review comprised work published in peer-reviewed journals and books (and excluded conference proceedings and masters’ theses), this was limited in number. The paper therefore only provides a limited scope of review. Given the status quo on data accessibility, this approach is similar to that taken in another recent P2P accommodation literature review (Belarmino & Koh, 2020). A further limitation is that the scale and scope of our analysis are based on existing literature from the global north (specifically in Europe); thus, it is not necessarily representative of the economic, social and spatial realities of the global south.

Despite the limitations of the present study, the home exchange phenomenon deserves further research attention due to the paramount importance of online accommodation platforms in the interpretation and usage of tourist products and spaces globally. Home exchange practices appear to potentially overcome some of the criticisms made to monetized forms of P2P accommodation-sharing platforms (i.e. Airbnb) and to realise some of the aspirations and outcomes associated with the sharing economy. Thus, this paper aims to lay down the groundwork for future research on the topic by proposing a research agenda for the study of home exchange practices within a number of disciplines, namely, economics, consumer behaviour, second-home tourism, geography, sociology, anthropology and sustainability.

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