



'This City is Theirs': Lived Experiences of Short-Term Rentals (STRs) and Overtourism in European Cities

Executive Summary

Our research investigates the impact of over-tourism and the growth of the STRs market on Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Lisbon, through the lens of mobility justice. Using a mixed-methods approach, our findings suggest that STRs contribute to rising rental prices, city centre overcrowding, and the erosion of cultural fabric.

Methodology

Qualitative element: **13 semi-structured interviews**; purposive sampling; verbatim transcriptions; and thematic analysis.

Quantitative element: Open-source secondary data at neighbourhood level used for regression analysis; monthly rent (dependent variable); STR frequency (treatment); neighbourhood area, population and average property value (control variables).

Findings & Discussion

- **Quantitative analysis:** Barcelona and Lisbon demonstrate statistically significant associations between STR density and rental prices, respectively with effect magnitudes of **€0.0037/m²** and **€0.0024/m²**. Methodological constraints in Amsterdam meant an economically substantial effect but statistically insignificant by traditional thresholds.

Table 3: Effects of Short-Term Rental on Housing Costs - Barcelona

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-statistic
Airbnb Frequency	0.0037***	(0.0008)	4.71
Area (ha)	-0.0012	(0.0013)	-0.89
Population	-0.0001*	(0.0000)	-1.78
Property Value	0.0121***	(0.0034)	3.56
Constant	15.66***	(2.10)	7.55

- **Housing affordability:** Housing affordability issues extend well beyond STRs, with rising costs shaped by structural shortages, speculative investment, and tourism policies.
- **Spatial displacement:** Overcrowding by tourists impedes on locals' daily mobility and creates spatial segregation, with locals actively avoiding tourist dense hotspots, 'no-go zones.'
- **Cultural displacement:** Tourism and STRs undermine neighbourhood cohesion by displacing local languages, identities, and social ties.
- **Regulation:** Interviewees emphasised the need for holistic, evidence-based, and well-enforced regulation that balances social, economic, and spatial impacts rather than piecemeal or politically driven interventions.

Conclusions:

Overtourism, driven in part by STRs, negatively impacts housing affordability, mobility, and cultural cohesion in cities like Barcelona, Lisbon, and Amsterdam, fuelling resident displacement and public opposition. While regulatory responses vary in effectiveness across these cities, lasting solutions require holistic, evidence-based approaches that address STRs within the broader system of urban transformation.



Supervisor: Dr Ioanna Gouseti, Visiting Fellow, LSE Sociology



Samuel Brownlow, BSc International Relations | João António Gomes, BSc History & Politics
Meghana Kalagana, BA Social Anthropology | Sophia Marosszeczy, BSc Economics
Laura Millán Drews, BA International History | Fatema Tapia, BSc History & Politics

