

# Perspectives on the Sharing Economy



# Perspectives on the Sharing Economy

Edited by

Dominika Wruk, Achim Oberg  
and Indre Maurer

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INTRODUCTION:  
PERSPECTIVES ON THE  
SHARING ECONOMY

DOMINIKA WRUK,  
UNIVERSITY OF MANNHEIM  
WRUK@IFM.UNI-MANNHEIM.DE

ACHIM OBERG  
UNIVERSITY OF MANNHEIM  
OBERG@IFM.UNI-MANNHEIM.DE

AND INDRE MAURER  
UNIVERSITY OF GOETTINGEN  
INDRE.MAURER@WIWI.UNI-GOETTINGEN.DE

**Summary**

The current developments in the sharing economy are of great economic, political, and public interest. These developments provide researchers from different backgrounds and disciplines with new opportunities to study many aspects of this evolving economy. The aim of this volume is to bring together researchers to encourage academic discourse on the sharing-economy phenomenon. To that end, this volume has collected the best conference papers submitted to the 5th International Workshop on the Sharing Economy (IWSE). All of the papers included here focus on the sharing-economy phenomenon, yet examine it from different disciplinary perspectives. These perspectives include business history, economics, organization studies, management and strategy research, information systems, political science and legal studies, and linguistics and semantics. By bringing together different perspectives on the sharing economy, this volume provides a more coherent picture of the organizations within it: how they operate, interact, and diffuse from a historical, regulatory, and competitive context.

## **The Sharing Economy: A Playground for Different Theoretical Perspectives**

Sharing instead of owning is one of the major trends in modern life (Belk, 2010; Botsman & Rogers, 2011). While the sharing principle is not new and has historical precedents, the current rise of the sharing economy has the potential to impact many areas of business, politics, and society to an unimagined extent. By changing how people consume (Botsman & Rogers, 2011), the sharing economy might redefine the roles of owners, consumers, and producers (Hamari et al., 2016); create innovative business models (Schor, 2016); disrupt existing industries (Martin, 2016; Belk, 2014); lead to an alternative economy (Geels, 2011; Hobson & Lynch, 2016); and challenge political as well as regulatory institutions (e.g., Lamberton & Rose, 2012; Matzler, Veider, & Kathan, 2015; Sundararajan, 2016). The varied and unknown potential effects of the sharing economy fuel the public debates on it and encompass a broad spectrum of topics. The breadth of these public debates makes the sharing-economy phenomenon a novel playground for theoretical advancement, attracting a multitude of research and researchers from different disciplines (Mair & Reischauer, 2017).

Public debates in this context address questions such as how sharing-economy organizations should be designed and operate in order to achieve the sustainability goals they promise—questions that are being addressed primarily by organization-studies and management scholars (e.g., Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014; Parguel, Lunardo, & Benoit-Moreau, 2017). Public debates also reference the role of technology as an enabler of the sharing economy, the technical design of platforms, and their related risks—topics that attract information systems scholars (e.g., Puschmann & Alt, 2016). Last but not least, public debates address the implications of the altered nature of economic competition, including the threats new organizations within the sharing economy pose for traditional industries, the need for a level playing field, and the role of legal regulation—issues being studied by scholars in economics, political science, and legal studies alike (e.g., Koopman, Mitchell, & Thierer, 2014; Uzunca, Rigtering, & Ozcan, 2018).

A result of these debates is a rapidly growing amount of research in the last years focusing on the sharing economy, studying it from different theoretical angles. Testaments to this growing research interest can be seen in contributions in leading journals from different disciplinary backgrounds that have announced or already published special issues on the sharing economy. A special issue by the *Journal of Management Studies*, for example, addresses the challenges and opportunities of the

sharing economy from a managerial and strategic perspective (Wang et al., 2018); a special issue by the *Journal of Business Ethics* invites work from researchers applying an ethical perspective on the sharing economy (Etter, Fieseler, & Whelan, 2018); a special issue of *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications* concentrates on technological aspects and electronic commerce (Naldi & Hoang, 2018); a special issue of *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* addresses conceptual and definitional boundaries of the field (Acquier, Daudigeos, & Pinkse, 2017); a special issue of *MIS Quarterly Executive* takes an information-systems perspective to explore aspects of the sharing economy that are of interest to technology leaders (Junglas, Koch, Sundararaja, & Wang, forthcoming); and finally, a special issue of *Internet Policy Review* focuses on the role of legal regulation in the sharing economy (Erickson & Sorensen, 2016). In addition to these special issues, sessions on the sharing economy have been included in the programs of academic conferences in disciplines as organization studies (e.g., EGOS 2016), management and strategy research (AoM 2017), system science (HICSS 2018), and information systems (ICIS 2018).

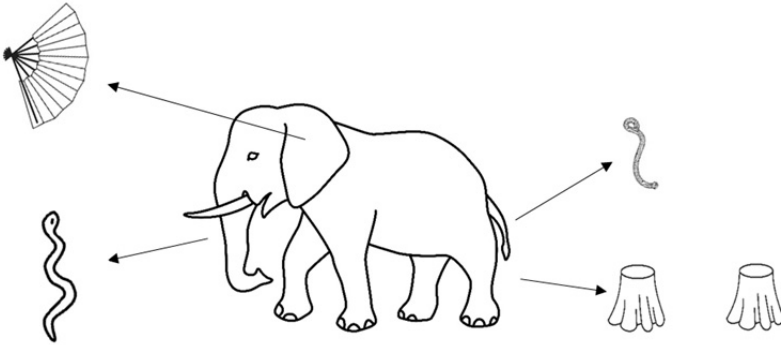
Since special issues and conference sessions necessarily have a narrow conceptual focus, the platform they provide is not usually broad enough to include different theoretical perspectives. To overcome this limitation, this volume acknowledges the perspectives on the sharing economy from a multitude of disciplines and examines the sharing economy from different angles that, in sum, provide a more comprehensive view of a new and exciting phenomenon than any single perspective could on its own. The theme of the recent International Workshop on the Sharing Economy (IWSE 2018)<sup>1</sup> was “sharing theories and insights,” and in line with this theme, this volume gives space for researchers from different theoretical perspectives to present their work on the sharing economy.

### **Different Theoretical Perspectives: Advantage, Downside, and Potential**

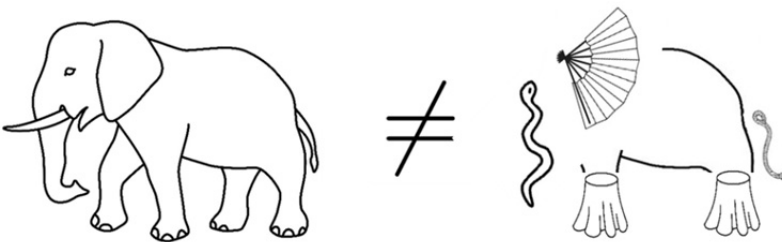
A well-known Indian parable tells of a group of blind men, each one describing an elephant based on touch. Since each man is limited by his own perspective, the descriptions of the elephant are all different. This parable illustrates both advantage and downside of looking at the same phenomenon from different perspectives.

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<sup>1</sup> The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research provided financial support for the 5th International Workshop on the Sharing Economy (IWSE 2018).



A limited perspective is advantageous because it allows us to look at a phenomenon with a specialized set of lenses and thus to develop a precise and detailed picture of an individual part of the whole. For example, organization studies and strategy scholars identify and describe the different forms sharing organizations have and the business models of each. This accurate and precise perspective enables us to categorize and structure the sharing economy (Acquier, Daudigeos, & Pinkse, 2017; Muñoz & Cohen 2017). A downside of a single perspective is that its focus inevitably leaves out other critical parts of the phenomenon. When mapping the field of organization forms in the sharing economy, organization and strategy scholars are unlikely to examine its technical infrastructure, legal challenges, or historical role models—issues that might instead be of interest to researchers with an information-systems, legal studies, or business-history perspective. Yet even when one fits these individual perspectives together, the combined picture is unlikely to be complete.



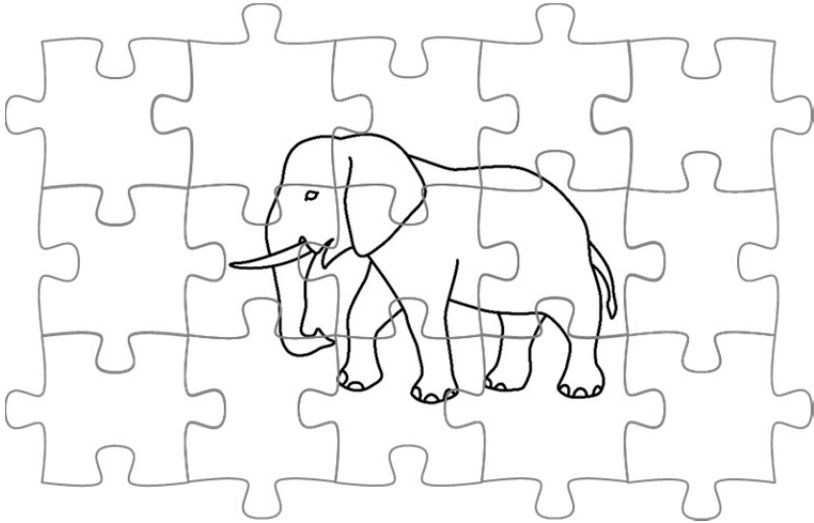
In contrast to a narrow focus, using an approach that acknowledges and comprises multiple perspectives and theoretical backgrounds at the same time enables a complex phenomenon to be treated more cohesively

(Argote, McEvily, & Reagans, 2003; Smith, Dinev, & Xu, 2011). The potential of incorporating different perspectives seems a more fruitful way to move the field forward. This volume makes a first step in this direction. Bringing together research studying the sharing-economy phenomenon from different theoretical disciplines and perspectives allows us to:

- gain a better understanding of each perspective—its peculiarities, research focus, and main insights as well as the blind spots of each;
- stimulate academic discourse across perspectives, identify similarities, differences, and areas of complementarity;
- develop a comprehensive picture and common understanding of the sharing-economy phenomenon.

To reach these aims, we have selected 21 short papers (representing approximately 25 percent of those submitted) from all contributions presented at the 5th IWSE held from June 28th to 29th, 2018 at Mannheim University in Germany and supported by the i-share project, a project funded by German Federal Ministry of Education and Research BMBF (for further information see <https://www.i-share-economy.org/en>). Short papers for this best-paper proceedings volume were selected in a competitive two-stage process based on their quality, rigor, content, and fit.

This process resulted in a collection of papers that all focus on the sharing-economy phenomenon, but approach it from seven different theoretical perspectives, including business history, economics, organization studies, management and strategy research, information systems, political science and legal studies, and linguistics and semantics. The cumulative impact of these short papers, by examining the subject from different disciplinary angles, is a coherent and comprehensive overview of research on the sharing economy. Specifically, this volume paints a comprehensive picture of organizations in the sharing economy: the way they operate, interact, diffuse, and relate to their historical, regulatory, and competitive context.



Accordingly, the audience for this work is primarily researchers from a variety of disciplines focusing on the sharing-economy phenomenon. We also expect this work to be of interest to researchers within the specific disciplines included in this volume as well as researchers interested in multidisciplinary work.

### **Perspectives on the Sharing Economy: Sharing Theories and Insights**

Table 1 below gives an overview of each chapter and the short papers included in each one. Each chapter corresponds to a specific theoretical perspective on the sharing economy and the papers presented in each provide insights into state-of-the-art research within this perspective.

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Perspective</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Paper</b>
1.1	Business and Economic History	Mosmann	Renaissance of shared resource use? The Historical Honeycomb of the sharing economy
1.2		Gruber	Can the sharing economy regulate itself? A comparison of how Uber and Machinery Rings link their economic and social goals
2.1		Hofmann, Hartl, Sabitzer, Marth, Penz & Hoelzl	Regulating consumers' contributions and usage of a shared good: An experimental approach
2.2	Economics	Gyódi & Nawaro	Determinants of accommodation prices provided by Airbnb in four EU cities
2.3		Herrmann, Zaal, Chappin & Schemmann	Does education still matter in online labor markets?
3.1		Wruk, Oberg, Maurer & Klutt	Types of business models in the sharing economy: An exploratory study in Germany
3.2	Organization	Hartl, Penz, Schüßler & Hofmann	Shared mobility business models—Trust building in the sharing economy
3.3	Studies	Farstad & Landa Mata	From shared mobility to shared lifestyles—Understanding whether and how household carsharing practices spread into other sectors
3.4		Schöllhorn	Theorizing technologies for the sharing economy: The Blockchain example
4.1		Oliver & Statler	Stakeholder theory and the sharing economy: Toward a research agenda
4.2	Management and Strategy Research	L'Euyer	Mapping the stakeholders and their relationships in the sharing economy: The case of Airbnb
4.3		Plewnia & Guenther	A collaborative energy system—How business models of the sharing economy may drive the energy transition
4.4		Guyader & Piscicelli	Car-as-a-service platforms

5.1	Eichhorn, Jürss & Hoffmann	To share or not to share: A digital divide in the sharing economy
5.2	Teubner & Glaser	Up or out? The dynamics of star-rating scores on Airbnb
5.3	Hawlicscek	In Blockchain we trust? Consumer trust relationships in the “sharing economy 2.0”
5.4	Frey, Trenz & Veit	Facilitating or regulating the sharing economy? Uncovering the impact of carsharing
6.1	Pentzien	Conceptualizing the role of the state in the digital platform economy
6.2	Voytenko Palgan, Mont & Zvolaska	Sharing and the city: Roles, relations, and governance mechanisms
7.1	Curtis & Lehner	A conceptual development of the sharing economy from the field of linguistics and semantics
7.2	Zarifs & Ingham	Building trust in English and German for collaborative consumption: A comparative case study of the language and content used by collaborators on Airbnb

Table 1: Overview of chapters and short papers



Despite differences in their theoretical background and approach, the short papers share—in one way or another—a focus on organizations in the sharing economy: how they operate, interact, diffuse, or relate to their historical, regulatory, or competitive context. Figure 1 illustrates the content of the short papers.



Figure 1: Focus of the short papers on organizations in the sharing economy

This joint focus creates overlaps, and thus a single issue is addressed from different disciplinary perspectives. Therefore, before presenting each chapter and its disciplinary perspective and papers, we first clarify where and how these perspectives overlap. We make no claim to completeness here; we can only encourage readers to look for issues that interest them, and to see how these issues are illuminated by looking at them from different theoretical perspectives. Figure 2 presents an orientation framework that shows some initial examples and offers guidance for further ones.

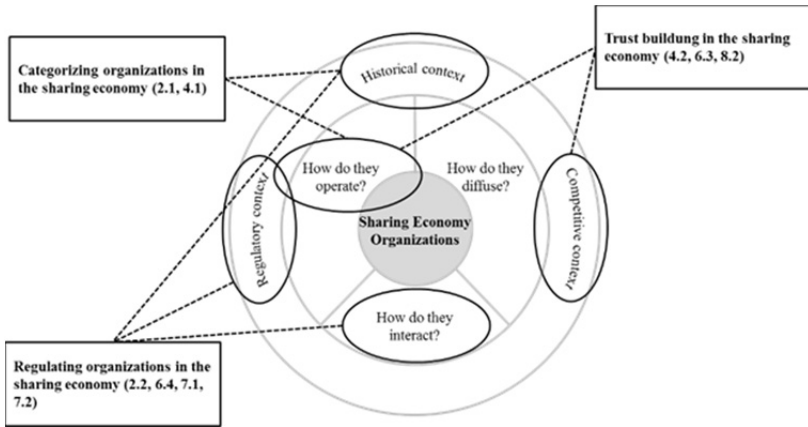


Figure 2: Joint focus of short papers and common issues

A first area of overlap includes papers examining how sharing organizations operate and using this understanding as a basis for *categorizing organizations in the sharing economy*, an issue of great importance for understanding this new phenomenon (Acquier, Daudigeon, & Pinkse, 2017). From an organization-studies perspective, paper 4.1, “Types of business models in the sharing economy: An exploratory study in Germany” by Wruck et al., applies a business-model concept to systemize types of sharing organizations and their defining characteristics. The study reveals clear boundaries between different types of organizations based on how they operate; in other words, how they create and capture value. Paper 2.1, “Renaissance of shared resource use? The Historical Honeycomb of the sharing economy” by Mosmann, approaches the phenomenon from a business-history perspective and adds to the current debate on organization forms in the sharing economy. By connecting historical and modern forms, this paper acknowledges the historical context of sharing-economy organizations.

Taken together, both papers reveal the great variety of (modern and historical) forms of sharing organizations and illustrate the vast breadth of organizations included in the sharing economy. The authors also suggest approaches for delineating the sharing economy and categorizing the sharing organizations within it. While some delineations are similar, others are different. These differences are typical for research in the sharing economy, where a number of categorizations of what constitutes sharing-economy organizations have been put forward during the last years (e.g., Muñoz & Cohen, 2017; Schor, 2016; Botsman & Rogers, 2011). Such

differences mark the starting points for future research, which can either build on the categorizations previously put forth or seek out further variety and indicate how to choose the categorization that fits best for specific research interests. Moreover, it might be fruitful for future research to turn away from suggesting how to delineate within the sharing economy and move toward exploring the boundaries of the sharing economy itself. As both papers indicate, the sharing economy comprises much more than the well-known and often-cited platform organizations. What remains unclear and debated is which organizations belong to the sharing economy and which do not (Belk, 2014). Exploring the blurred boundaries of the sharing economy, perhaps by acknowledging historical forms of sharing, thus seems an important endeavor for future research.

A second point of overlap can be seen in several papers that, while grounded in different disciplines, focus on *trust building in the sharing economy*. From an organization-studies perspective, paper 4.2, “Shared mobility business models—Trust building in the sharing economy” by Hartl et al., explores whether and how different mechanisms (e.g., reputation systems, offline events, tracking of cars) foster consumers’ trust in carpooling platforms. From an information-systems perspective, paper 6.3, “In Blockchain we trust? Consumer trust relationships in the sharing economy 2.0” by Hawlitschek, shows that in a case of contested technology (here Blockchain technology) a crucial task for sharing organizations is to establish trust in the technology itself. From a linguistics and semantics perspective, paper 8.2, “Building trust in English and German for collaborative consumption: A comparative case study of the language and content used by collaborators on Airbnb” by Zarifis and Ingham, explores the role language plays in building trust and finds that it has only limited impact compared to platform norms and habits.

Taken together, all three papers identify trust building as a task that is both important and challenging for sharing organizations when seeking to attract users to reach and maintain a favorable competitive position. This finding underscores recent calls in the literature to examine the development of trust in the sharing economy (e.g., Hawlitschek, Teubner, & Weinhardt, 2016). At the same time, the papers provide insight into the multitude of possible trust-building mechanisms available. Some of these mechanisms, such as trust in the (technical) infrastructure, present necessary preconditions, it seems, while others, such as norms and habits, should be selected wisely depending on business-model, national, or linguistic context. We hope these findings will encourage future research to further explore the role of sharing organizations as facilitators of trust building among their users.

A third and final example of the overlap of perspectives can be seen in two papers in this volume that tackle *regulating organizations in the sharing economy*, an issue of utmost importance for both theory and practice (Matzler, Veider, & Kathan, 2015; Murillo, Buckland, & Val, 2017). Using a political-science and legal-studies perspective, paper 7.1, “Conceptualizing the role of the state in the digital platform economy” by Pentzien, and paper 7.2, “Sharing and the city: Roles, relations, and governance mechanisms” by Voytenko Palgan et al., explore interaction patterns between governmental institutions and sharing organizations and uncover the different roles governments can take to regulate the sharing economy. Paper 6.4, “Facilitating or regulating the sharing economy? Uncovering the impact of carsharing” by Frey et al., is grounded in an information-systems perspective and takes a critical view of regulation, whereas paper 2.2, “Can the sharing economy regulate itself? A comparison of how Uber and Machinery Rings link their economic and social goals” by Gruber, is grounded in a business-history perspective and shows how to overcome the polarization of regulation and deregulation.

Taken together, these four papers present a differentiated view of the effects and dynamics of regulation as well as the role of governmental institutions. They suggest potential solutions for resolving the trade-offs of regulation and innovation. Still, given the great diversity among organizations in the sharing economy and the context in which these organizations are embedded, the papers also indicate that none of these questions has a quick-fix answer, leaving room for further inquiry by future research.

### **Perspectives on the Sharing Economy: Overview of Chapters and Short Papers**

This section gives an overview of each chapter, its disciplinary perspective, and a brief description of the short papers contained within it (also see Table 1).

**Chapter 1** takes a *business and economic history perspective* on the sharing economy. Business-history research uses a combination of historical and statistical methods and also applies organization and management theory; together, these methods and theories provide a micro-economic perspective on the history of individual business organizations (Maclean, Harvey, & Clegg, 2016). Research interests in this discipline include examining the embeddedness of organizations within different social, economic, and political environments; the actions, structures, and

decision processes of these organizations; as well as the biographies of the organizations' founders.

While the rise of the sharing economy appears to be completely new, scholars and practitioners alike should not forget that the idea of "sharing instead of owning" has deep historical roots and that we are currently witnessing its revival (Heinrichs, 2013; De Moor, 2015). History has many examples of organizations and economic models based on the principle of sharing, bartering, or lending (Warde, 2013). While some current sharing models closely resemble their historical predecessors (e.g., community gardens and commons), others appear as modern interpretations of historical models (e.g., sharing platforms, carsharing, and ride sharing), and still others represent a break with historical models (e.g., crowdsourcing). Recognizing these historical precedents then raises the question of what we can learn from the past and thus calls for a business-history perspective on the sharing economy. While a comparison of historical and modern sharing models is of great value, so too is an examination of contemporary contexts and linkages. This line of reasoning supports the importance of the sharing economy as a research subject: whether prior findings on business models need to be revised or expanded and how historical models can inform the development of joint resource use over time (Bradley & Pargman, 2017).

The papers in this chapter examine the origins of the sharing economy as a phenomenon based on the concept of joint resource use, explain how the variety of sharing models emerged and developed, and illustrate the drivers of this development. In the first paper, "Renaissance of shared resource use? The Historical Honeycomb of the sharing economy," Mosmann identifies and systematizes fifteen historical forms according to their industry, function, and practice areas. This approach brings the current debate on definitional boundaries of the sharing phenomenon forward, while also offering an initial conceptual framework connecting historical and modern forms of the sharing economy. This framework illustrates that the idea of shared resource use is a renaissance of these historical forms and shows that current sharing-economy organizations are imitating and transforming these forms. In the second paper in this chapter, "Can the sharing economy regulate itself? A comparison of how Uber and Machinery Rings link their economic and social goals," Gruber builds on this conceptual connection and draws attention to the stated missions of Uber and machinery rings. In doing so, she unpacks their separate economic and social goals and shows how the two organizations deal with competing goals in terms of internal regulation. While Uber operates on an under-socialized picture of its users and stresses freedom of

usage, machinery rings maintain a highly socialized picture of their members. This picture helped (and continues to help) machinery rings overcome the polarization between regulation and deregulation, while at the same time opening up debate about how organizations and authorities manage to balance adequate legislation with innovative business models.

Taken together, these two papers address the gap of identifying and connecting historical and modern forms of shared resource use and broaden the understanding of how to capture and define a sharing economy while also acknowledging its historical roots.

**Chapter 2** includes papers representing an *economics perspective*. Economics is a social science that studies the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Focusing on the behavior and interactions of economic agents as well as on entire economies, economics is often divided into micro- and macroeconomics (Krugman & Wells, 2012). Microeconomics deals with individual agents and markets and their interactions and outcomes. This branch includes households, firms, buyers, and sellers. Macroeconomics, by contrast, concerns the overall economy (aggregated production, consumption, savings, and investments) and the issues affecting it, such as resources, inflation, growth, and public policies (e.g., monetary, fiscal) (Caplin & Schotter, 2008).

The sharing economy, with its new organizations such as Uber, Airbnb, and crowdsourcing platforms, enables individual actors to engage in new forms of interactions and transactions, to access all kinds of tangible and intangible resources, to generate alternative sources of income, and to build new old markets (Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017). These new organizations bring with them many opportunities, risks, and challenges, and thus the sharing economy offers great potential for studying new forms of work, new forms of compensation, the rise and development of new national as well as international markets, and how these aspects relate to each other from an economics perspective (Hamari, Sjöklint, & Ukkonen, 2016; Teubner & Hawlitschek, 2017).

The first paper in this chapter, “Regulating consumers’ contributions and usage of a shared good: An experimental approach” by Hofmann et al., the authors address the issue of government regulation. The authors propose that authorities within can apply different forms of power to assure that organizations’ behavior is compliant and contributes to the shared good and articulated causes of participants in the sharing economy. While there is no shortage of coercive power, the authors find that self-regulation is a legitimate power that has a strong impact on participant contribution. This finding has powerful implications for organizations as they consider how to increase participants’ contributions and engagement.

The second paper, “Determinants of accommodation prices provided by Airbnb in four EU cities” by Gyódi and Nawaro, sheds light on the demand for Airbnb accommodation in four different tourist-friendly cities in the European Union. The authors of this study use price-hedonic theory to examine the relationship between the price for accommodations and selected attributes, such as location, when these properties are competing with hotels. They find that host, quality, and location are important drivers of listing prices, and their research contributes to a deeper understanding of price determinants in comparison to the traditional hotel industry.

The third paper, “Does education still matter in online labor markets” by Herrmann et al., investigates the degree to which educational attainment influences wage levels in online labor markets. The authors argue that the gig economy, which allows its workforce to provide one-time and on-demand services, challenges prevailing paradigms linking educational attainment and pay levels. They find that wage levels in the sharing economy are influenced by individuals’ education, work experience, reviews, time active on the platform, and gender. The theoretical and practical implications of this study for literature at the intersection of labor economics and economic sociology are great, and also challenge the design of the current education system.

Taken together, the three papers in this chapter depict current topics and issues from an economics perspective while using different approaches to assess the sharing economy from different theoretical backgrounds. The work and perspectives in this chapter advance research on the sharing economy and open future avenues of research by stressing the impact the sharing economy has on traditional industries, such as hotels, and on prevailing systems, such as those in education.

**Chapter 3** comprises the *organization studies perspective*. Research in this field, most generally, focuses on examining organizational structures, processes, and practices; how each is diffused; and how each affects organizational performance (Clegg & Bailey, 2008). One recent approach for understanding these issues in a comprehensive manner is the business-model framework. Business models describe an organization’s logic of doing business and organizing along different dimension (Lambert & Davidson, 2013); these are, namely, an organization’s value proposition, value creation, and value capture (Zott & Amit, 2010).

With the rise of the sharing economy, different business models based on the basic idea of sharing, bartering, or lending have emerged and are being diffused into a wide variety of application areas, ranging from carsharing to co-working and community gardening (Owyang, 2014). Within these areas, the sharing economy has the potential to redefine the

role of owners, consumers, and producers (Hamari et al., 2016); change their mode of transaction; create innovative business models (Schor, 2016); and disrupt existing ones (Martin, 2016). These changes pose a number of challenges to organizing, operating, and creating value within the sharing economy and thus call for an organization-studies perspective on the sharing phenomenon.

The four papers in this chapter provide a better understanding of different business models in the sharing economy and articulate how single practices or technologies can be adopted or diffused to other sectors.

The first paper in this chapter, “Types of business models in the sharing economy: An exploratory study in Germany” by Wruk et al., examines how sharing-economy organizations interpret the sharing principle and turn that principle into their logic of doing business. To be more concrete, this paper shows how sharing-economy organizations create, deliver, and capture value using the business-model concept. Building on results of an exploratory study and based on qualitative and quantitative data, the paper observes three different types of business models: grassroots, platform, and traditional. What differentiates these three types of business models is the way they create and capture value. This research indicates the overlaps, boundaries, and reach of the new and heterogeneous field of the sharing economy.

The second paper, “Shared mobility business models—Trust building in the sharing economy” by Hartl et al., explores the emerging business models within the segment of shared mobility, and investigates how applying different business models in sharing-economy platforms fosters consumers’ trust. The results of this exploratory study reveal that users of carpooling platforms perceive review systems as a key element for establishing trust between drivers and riders. This study contributes to research by showing that trust mechanisms affect trust differently depending on whether or not participants own a car.

The third paper, “From shared mobility to shared lifestyles—Understanding whether and how household carsharing practices spread into other sectors” by Farstad and Landa Mata, deals with how practices from one sector are adopted by another. The authors investigate whether and how car-sharing practices within the personal-mobility sector spread to other tourism-related sectors and explore the possible implications from a sustainability perspective. Taking the lens of social-practice theory, they conducted interviews and show that this approach is useful for identifying elements and relationships of a specific practice, and further investigate whether these elements and relationships are also present in tourism-



related sharing practices. They point out the need for further research to identify the elements of shared-resource use that are likely to promote or support achievement of more sustainable travel and tourism.

The fourth paper, “Theorizing technologies for the sharing economy: The Blockchain example” by Schöllhorn, answers the question of how Blockchain has been linked to illegitimate or legitimate domains at different points in time. The paper aims to reconstruct the theorization of Blockchain technology, as a way of improving understanding of legitimization and the preconditions of diffusion. Results show that the diffusion of a technology becomes more likely when 1) a new technology gains legitimacy and is de-linked from illegitimate activities, and 2) when a new technology is abstracted and generalized beyond its initial application. This paper contributes to work on the theorization of knowledge.

Taken together, the four papers in this chapter take a deeper look at different business models within the sharing economy and explore the effects of these models on different aspects of the economy, such as sustainability and trust as well as antecedents for adoption and diffusion. Findings show that the sharing economy encompasses a wide range of business models. The contribution of these papers is in showing the numerous possibilities that exist for different business models to create value and influence different dimensions. The research in this chapter offers significant contributions for both researchers and practitioners.

In **Chapter 4**, the *management and strategy research perspective* deals with the development, planning, and implementation of an organization’s vision and goals. This perspective focuses on future business activities and is of great importance for the stakeholders of a company (Pearce et al., 2000). There are two levels to consider: the company level and the business-fields level. The company level includes the design of a business portfolio to optimally distribute a company's resources to the individual business areas, as well as the strategic design of a company’s structures and systems. At the business-field level, this perspective addresses the question of how a company must optimally operate in each individual business in order to remain successfully competitive (Beard & Dess, 1981).

With the rise of the sharing economy, new and innovative organizations and organizational forms have emerged, disrupting traditional business fields (Heinrichs, 2013). Sharing-economy organizations in particular have to compete with other sharing organizations as well as with traditional ones (Demary, 2015). The

strategic decisions about which segments and markets to invest in, which resources to allocate, and which stakeholders to address are key.

The four papers in this chapter provide a better understanding of how organizations in the sharing economy develop and grow, and which strategic decisions they undertake will help them to stay competitive.

The first paper in this chapter, “Stakeholder theory and the sharing economy: Toward a research agenda” by Oliver and Statler, develops a research agenda for stakeholder theorists organized around three emergent tensions arising from the sharing economy. These tensions encompass ownership versus sharing, reciprocities versus transactions, and platforms versus organizations. The paper discusses how each of these key tensions might be usefully approached from the descriptive, instrumental, and/or normative-stakeholder perspectives.

The second paper, “Mapping the stakeholders and their relationships in the sharing economy: The case of Airbnb” by L’Ecuyer, explores the relations among stakeholders in the sharing economy as regulations and competition constantly change. The paper examines the case of Airbnb, whose main objective is to connect hosts and guests via a free platform. When a rental transaction is concluded, Airbnb receives a commission from both the host and the guest. Results show that sharing-economy organizations should first be concerned with stakeholders’ relations and interactions within its ecosystem rather than with profit maximization, and that the promising future of sharing-economy organizations depends on their effectively and sustainably cultivating relationships among a complex group of inter-organizational stakeholders.

The third paper, “A collaborative energy system—How business models of the sharing economy may drive the energy transition” by Plewnia & Guenther, aims to bring together the topic of an evolving sharing economy and the role of new business models within the transitioning energy system. Following a multi-case study approach, the paper shows that attributes of sharing-economy business models can be associated with a wide range of activities and developments currently taking place in the energy sector, and that these activities and developments can contribute significantly to ongoing energy transitions by fostering technical, economic, and behavioral changes.

The fourth paper, “Car-as-a-service platforms” by Guyader & Piscicelli, examines business-model diversification in the shared-mobility sector. A case analysis of GoMore reveals three customer segments (owners, independents, and resilient) that are differentiated based on their need to access a car and their cost orientation. Business-model diversification in this case not only allows the platform to increase its

supply of peer providers in its peer-to-peer markets, but it also addresses different customer segments of shared mobility.

Taken together, the four papers in this chapter take a closer look at strategies to increase competitiveness and efficiencies. They show that the sharing economy has the potential to transform different sectors and business fields. The papers here contribute by highlighting the strategic potential of sharing-economy business models.

**Chapter 5** represents the *information systems perspective*. The information-systems discipline addresses phenomena at the intersection of organizations, people, and information technologies (Lee, 1999) and involves insights from behavioral as well as design science (Hevner et al., 2004). Whereas the former focuses on developing and validating theories that explain the behavior of organizations or humans, the latter acknowledges the limits of organizational and human capabilities and seeks to design innovative IT artifacts. In the recent past, one major objective of information systems has been understanding the implications of digital technology. Accordingly, this research addresses the impact of digital technology on firms' strategies, structures, and processes (Sambamurthy et al., 2003; Sambamurthy & Zmud, 2000). In addition, research in these fields investigates the role of information technology in creating business value and in building sustainable competitive advantage (Kohli & Grover, 2008; Nevo & Wade, 2010).

The rise of the sharing economy is closely linked with the development of innovative technologies and their growing acceptance in modern society. Organizations from the various sectors of the sharing economy rely on information and communication technology platforms to coordinate a peer-to-peer-based sharing of access to goods and/or services (Puschmann & Alt, 2016). Socio-technical developments in particular, such as the increasing spread of mobile devices and electronic services, enable a broad reach of sharing offers, which would be inconceivable without such developments (Elliot, 2011). Therefore, it seems fruitful to take an information-systems perspective on the sharing economy. The papers in this chapter answer questions concerning socio-technical enablers and constraints of the sharing economy, as well as the role of information technology.

The first paper in this chapter, "To share or not to share: A digital divide in the sharing economy" by Eichhorn et al., explores which factors facilitate or impede (potential) users' engagement with sharing-economy organizations. To empirically derive and test mediating factors, they conceptualize the difference between users and non-users as a digital divide. Their analysis reveals that materialistic motivations such as higher

income and education, internet usage, and residence in urban areas are positively related to user participation.

In the second paper, “Up or out? The dynamics of star-rating scores on Airbnb,” Teubner & Glaser empirically examine the dynamics of the star-rating system of Airbnb, as literature has recently called into question the functionality and effectiveness of reputation systems on peer-to-peer platforms. Shedding light on an important pillar of electronic commerce, the authors find that the skewness of ratings results from their dynamics over time, as reputations emerge and change.

The third paper, “In Blockchain we trust? Consumer trust relationships in the sharing economy 2.0” by Hawlitschek, addresses the underlying mechanisms of Blockchain as a technological environment and questions how these mechanisms affect trust. Consequently, the focus within this paper lies on consumers’ trust relationships in the sharing economy, as enabled through Blockchain technology. Findings show that organizations must establish trust in the Blockchain technology itself, and the study contributes to theory and practice by exploring the multitude of targets and trust relationships among peer-to-peer sharing.

In the fourth paper, “Facilitating or regulating the sharing economy? Uncovering the impact of carsharing,” Frey et al. examine how carsharing affects society, the car manufacturing market, and users, as well as how the effects can be supported and mitigated. The authors find positive and negative effects that differ from the effects in the traditional tourism industry. Because the positive effects predominate, they indicate there is no need for further regulation. Nevertheless, this study contains valuable recommendations for how policy makers, providers, and users can mitigate any negative side effects.

Taken together, the four papers in this chapter address technological issues and link them with societal and economic factors. Findings show that the sharing economy is strongly dependent on innovative technology and a high rate of internet usage, and these findings also open up significant opportunities for further research in other disciplines and fields. In addition, these contributions of these studies offer enormous potential for researchers and practitioners to evaluate business opportunities and challenges and thus add valuable insights to ongoing debates about efficient use of technology in innovative business models in the sharing economy as well as in established industries.

**Chapter 6** takes a *political science and legal studies perspective* on the sharing economy. The study of law deals with the interpretation and the systematic conceptual pervasiveness of current and past legal documents and sources, focusing on a wide variety of topics such as

criminal, property, insurance, civil, tax, commercial, environmental, and family law. Legal studies are part of the humanities and a hermeneutic discipline (Griffiths, 2002). Research in this field can be considered as a process of identifying and retrieving information necessary to support legal decision making that is based on the legal system of an institution, a nation, or a region. The political perspective, however, concerns systems of governance and the analysis of political activities, behaviors, and thoughts. Determining the distribution of power and resources, political science comprises fields such as international relations, political theory, political economy, and public policy (Roskin et al., 2007).

With the rise of the sharing economy, business models will develop that will change the lives and welfare of millions of people (Koopman, Mitchell, & Thierer, 2014). These business models promise more efficient use of physical assets, less resource use, and less wasted energy (Katz, 2015). At the same time, the sharing economy is associated with undesirable effects such as platform monopolies, privacy violations, exploitation of labor, and unfair competition. In debates about the sharing economy, firms like Uber or Airbnb are prominent examples of its downsides (Daniel & Schleicher, 2015; Flores & Rayle, 2017), and their actions have forced judges, legislators, and regulators, as well as industry associations, unions, consumer protection agencies, and labor movements to rethink the rules by which these businesses should be governed (Sundararajan, 2016). The various challenges regarding rules and regulations within the sharing economy call for a Political Science and Legal Studies Perspective on the sharing phenomenon (Kassan, & Orsi, 2012).

The two papers in this chapter examine the undesirable effects of the sharing economy: which actions and new laws are needed and how existing laws and regulations have to be adjusted by multiple legal and/or political actors to address these undesirable effects (Ranchordas, 2015).

In the first paper in this chapter, "Conceptualizing the role of the state in the digital platform economy," Pentzien investigates the role of the state in facilitating and shaping the development of the platform economy. By conceptualizing a new analytical framework, he puts particular focus on the relationship between state activities and the market (platform economy and policy fields). Based on his findings, the author contributes to the field by stressing the ex-post approaches to fixing markets, which allows him to observe conflicts throughout the policymaking process. These approaches also make visible the state's patterns of activity that have facilitated the formation of the global network of the platform economy.

The second paper, “Sharing and the city: Roles, relations, and governance mechanisms” by Voytenko Palgan et al., sheds light on the dynamics and mechanisms of how cities engage with sharing and how organizations of the sharing economy influence cities. Based on an analysis of five different cities across the world, the authors identify five different categories of actions cities can take to promote, ignore, or inhibit urban sharing organizations. The roles of cities differ: city as regulator, as provider, as enabler, and as consumer, and their paper shows how city government and urban sharing organizations interact both positively and negatively. This adds to existing literature by suggesting a wide degree of governing latitude when it comes to sharing organizations.

Taken together, the two papers in this chapter—based on holistic approaches and rich data—create a thorough understanding of state activities and policymaking that can both support the positive economic and societal effects and outcomes as well as contain the negative ones resulting from the sharing economy. More precisely, they highlight the relationships and mutual actions among states, cities, and sharing-economy organizations.

**Chapter 7** encompasses the *linguistics and semantics perspective*. Linguistics examines human language using various approaches. Research in this field deals with language as a system, language in use, its individual components, and its units (De Saussure, 2011). Semantics is a part of linguistics that focuses on the meaning of language. Research in this perspective answers the question of how we experience and understand things, ourselves, and each other (Bréal & Cust, 2013), since it deals with the denotation of words, phrases, signs, and symbols.

Since the rise of the sharing economy as a new phenomenon, researchers have struggled with the term and meaning of “sharing economy.” The phenomenon still lacks a commonly accepted definition (Botsman, 2013; Belk, 2014; Hamari et al., 2016; Habibi, Davidson, & Laroche, 2017). However, what makes the sharing economy so special is that the majority of people all over the world are able to participate in it, despite speaking different languages (Muñoz & Cohen, 2017). The linguistics and semantics perspective can help us better understand the phenomenon by clarifying the meaning of terms while also examining characteristics and effects of different languages used when approaching the sharing economy in an international context.

The two papers in this chapter provide a better understanding of how difficult and at the same time important it is to define new phenomena like the sharing economy and to understand whether language influences trust, especially in transactions between actors within the sharing economy.