

Technological Forecasting and Social Change

Special issue announcement

Promises and paradoxes of the sharing economy

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While sharing is an old social practice (Belk, 2010), it is currently being expanded and redefined into an exploding “sharing economy” through the addition of information technologies. The sharing economy refers to peer-to-peer sharing of goods, services, and information coordinated through community-based technological services and by new venture companies (Hamari, Sjöklint & Ukkonen, 2015). Such an economy holds major promises for the transformation of the way we work, produce, consume and exchange goods and services (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). Alternatively, the sharing economy is presented as a way to boost environmental stewardship through recirculation or a more intensive use of goods; a field of experimentation of new, distributed governance models; a way to democratize access to services and information; and as a case for open innovation and new (disruptive) business models (Schor, 2014). It also questions some fundamental institutions of our societies, such as employment, work and state regulation (Sundararajan, 2016).

While the sharing economy would involve major institutional and social transformations, so far the field is still in its infancy and replete with paradoxes and tensions. For example, some observers claim that the sharing economy marks the “end of hierarchies” (Laloux, 2014) and the emergence of new collaborative commons (Bauwens & Kostakis, 2014). In contrast, the development of Airbnb, Uber and Blablacar suggest that the field may give birth to new technological giants that use power asymmetries to capture most of the value created by contractual workers (Slee, 2016). The sharing economy is thus driven by a profound tension between market-driven logics and non-market alternatives to market capitalism (Schor, 2014).

The sharing economy provides a fascinating case for investigating the emergence of a new and heterogeneous organizational field. It also offers an appropriate setting for questioning

the effects of technologies on markets and societies, and analyzing the disciplinary effects of technologies on the individual. Accordingly, this special issue aims to explore the promises and paradoxes of the sharing economy. We welcome empirical and theoretical papers at the crossroads between technology, strategy and organization, exploring the following topics:

- How (and by whom) is the field of the sharing economy framed and created? What is the history of the sharing economy and how can the dynamics of the field be described?
- What are the promises and myths of the sharing economy? What are its ideological underpinnings?
- How do sharing economy entrepreneurs cope with hybrid logics and paradoxes within the field?
- What are the emergent business models and governance forms in the sharing economy?
- How does the sharing economy redefine work-life balance and the boundaries between professional and private spheres?
- How do sharing technologies enable new forms of organizational governance?
- How do sharing technologies create new forms of work, identity and work relationships?
- How do sharing technologies (such as algorithms, rating and trust systems) create new forms of power and social control? How is power distributed in the sharing economy?
- What are the social and technological prospects of the sharing economy? For example, what are the potential effects of current technological developments (such as blockchain and peer to peer technologies) on sharing economy organizations and their regulation?

By exploring the promises and paradoxes of the sharing economy, this special issue is focused on a core mission area of Technology Forecasting and Social Change (TFSC): exploring how technology affects present and future social change.

Important dates:

- **Submission of full paper: 12th July 2016**
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