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COLLABORATIVE TOURISM: FROM THE FIRST SIGNS TO ITS DIFFUSION

TURISMO COLABORATIVO: DE SUS INICIOS A SU DIFUSIÓN

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation will be focused on new economy trends born in the last decade: the sharing economy and the collaborative tourism. The aim of this work is to show the benefits these new procedures could bring to society. The analysis will be preceded by an explanatory chapter, followed by examples stating the origins of these movements and statistically confirmed studies quantifying the relevance of leading firms that operate in the tourism sector. The dissertation will be supported by a bibliography chosen for its economic and socio-economic nature. A final SWOT analysis will define points of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of this socioeconomic revolution, outlining the successful impact achieved so far.

Keywords: sharing, tourism, economy, revolution, society, Data&Stats, opportunities, origin.

ABSTRACT

El presente trabajo se basa en las nuevas tendencias económicas nacidas en la última década: la economía y el turismo colaborativos. El propósito de este estudio es mostrar los beneficios que estos nuevos procedimientos aportan a la sociedad. El análisis va precedido por un capítulo explicativo, seguido de ejemplos que corroboran los orígenes de estos movimientos, así como de estudios de confirmación estadística que cuantifican la relevancia de las empresas líderes en el sector turístico. El trabajo se apoya en una bibliografía seleccionada por su naturaleza económica y socio-económica. Por último, un análisis DAFO definirá las debilidades, amenazas, fortalezas y oportunidades de esta revolución socioeconómica, con el énfasis puesto en el impacto del éxito alcanzado hasta la fecha.

Palabras clave: colaborativo, turismo, economía, revolución, sociedad, datos y estadísticas, oportunidades, origen.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse the phenomenon caused by sharing economy and collaborative tourism, starting from their historical origins and going through their most significant changes, in order to look at their current impact on the tourist sphere, as well as their levels of diffusion.

The act of sharing is a very old phenomenon, but its applications in the sharing economy and collaborative tourism represent a new trend born in the twenty-first century, with the emergence of the Internet. In fact, its spread, together with the rise of social platforms such as Youtube and Facebook, has encouraged people to create and share their own contents in different ways. Similarly, the sharing economy concept has started to be used both in the tourist industry and in a wide range of companies; as a result, its applications have steadily increased. In this light, it can be said that “in what is called the sharing economy, collaborative consumption or the peer economy, [today] individuals participate in sharing activities by renting, lending, trading, bartering or swapping goods, services, transportation solutions, space or money” (Möhlmann, 2015). All this has certainly become possible thanks to the technological advancement of the recent years, as well as the free circulation of people, ideas and goods which enable people to have free access to goods and services. As a consequence, it is no surprise that in 2015 the Oxford Dictionary should add the term ‘sharing economy’, defined as “economic system in which assets or services are shared between private individuals, either for free or for a fee, typically by means of the Internet”, as well as ‘rideshare’ with the meaning of “to participate in an arrangement in which a passenger travels in a private vehicle driven by its owner, for free or for a fee, especially as arranged by means of a website or app”.

Having said that, it is interesting to understand when exactly the phenomenon of the sharing economy started to expand. It has been said that many of the peer-to-peer companies were born after the financial crisis of 2007-2009, as a consequence of the need for spending less money and reduce consumerism. In this sense, it can be argued that a transition from consumerist mass consumption into a thriftier mass shared consumption has occurred. Certainly, this has been possible, above all, in big cities a large number of inhabitants, that is to say, a considerable amount of potential users of the new sharing-economy-based services. Therefore, shared consumption can be seen as a mainly urban phenomenon. However, it can also be argued that, while some aspects have been easy to be established within the global market, others have had to face cultural or technical problems, such as the cultural clash with conservative ideas, or the lack of the necessary technology.

As Rachel Botsman, co-author of *What's Mine is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative consumption* (Botsman, 2010), has affirmed, collaborative consumption has three key benefits, namely the economic one, the environmental one and the community one. The first one offers longer lasting and

efficient use of financial resources, the second one is concerned with the use of the most innovative and sustainable natural resources, while the third one provides deeper connections among people.

In this light, within the sphere of the sharing economy, the trend of collaborative tourism has been developed. Eugeni Aguiló Pérez and Salvador Anton Clavé wrote about it in their book *20 retos para el turismo en España* (Aguilo and Clave, 2015), where collaborative tourism is seen as a social response to the concerns of the twenty-first century generation of travellers born in the information society. Concretely, this is a generation of young people who are familiar with the latest technology and have both an affective and virtual relationship with other members of the Internet community, and who have been forced by external circumstances to move from their territory of origins and be placed in a 'permanent state of mobility'. From this perspective, their willingness to share their experiences and learn from other people and cultures can be seen as a driver for the emergence of the collaborative tourism. As a consequence, this phenomenon has been studied by social scientists who are trying to analyse it, as well as the more general trend of sharing economy, through the lens of social sciences and mobility.

Regardless of its origins, as underlined by Geron (Geron, 2013), the concept of sharing economy has enabled the emergence of profitable online platforms based on shared goods and services that were not seen as monetised before, i.e. based on what is called peer-to-peer sharing, or P2P. From a business initially meant to rise personal income in a complicated financial situation, Geron continues, this turned into a widely used large-scale phenomenon. In addition, the increase in profitable peer-to-peer sharing online platforms can be claimed to have changed the way people travel. Indeed, this makes a significant contribution to the traditional tourism industry. A few examples of the main peer-to-peer sharing online platforms will follow, divided by sector.

Liftshare is one of the oldest online platforms of the kind, born in 1998, and it represents the UK's largest car-sharing network. The idea at the basis of its system is to match people with similar journey routes so they can travel together while saving money. In this respect, in 2015, 430,000 Liftshare users claimed to have saved just under 60 million GBP since its creation. A similar platform is Car2go, founded in 2008 and providing car services in European and North American cities, which stands for the largest car sharing company in the world, and which in May 2015 counted over 1,000,000 members. Another online transportation company of the kind is Uber, founded in 2009 in the US. Uber works through a mobile app that enables people to download it on their smart phones and request a trip route. This is submitted to the Uber drivers in the area, who pick up and drive their clients to their destination with their own cars. For this reason, despite its huge popularity, Uber has been the subject of protests and legal actions from taxi drivers and companies, as well as governments, which are still currently relevant.

Other online platforms in regard to tour guides and related activities are Vayable, Toursbylocals and Tripforeal, which offer travellers the possibility to look for experiences in the city of their destination, at the same time that locals are paid for volunteering as tour guides in the same city. Similarly, Eatwith, EatWithlocal, Meal sharing, and Cookening are platforms which help people to arrange private dining experiences at the locals' homes.

The third type of online platforms is concerned with the sphere of accommodation, whose best-known examples are represented by Couchsurfing and Airbnb. Couchsurfing emerged as a non-profit organisation in 2004 with the idea of letting people sleep on a couch at someone's home without paying for it. By August 2015, it counted over 10 million users. Airbnb, founded in 2008, developed the same concept of sharing spaces such as rooms or flats, but paying for it. In 2014, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC, 2014) calculated that Airbnb had registered 155 million guest stays so far, whereas Airbnb itself counted 17 million total guests worldwide just in the summer of 2016. In addition, Merrill Lynch analysts estimated that by 2020 Airbnb figures in listings would increase by 40-50% per year.

In relation with the aforesaid data, and taking into account a period in which the difference between proper tourism businesses and just tourism-related businesses has not been well-defined yet, this dissertation will attempt to focus on the first cases. In other words, it will leave aside non proper tourism-related services such as finance, food services and entertainment. The research will subsequently address the sphere of accommodation, with rentals and Couchsurfing, the sphere of transport services, such as car sharing and bike sharing, and the sphere of activities in the country of destination and tour guides. In order to provide a wider context for these recent tourism developments, though, it is necessary to focus briefly on the available literature on the topic.

1. TRAVEL LITERATURE AND STUDIES RELATED

Like Geron in his masterpiece *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (Urry and Larsen, 2011), John Urry assumes that the sharing economy mechanisms have their roots in a time when people are free to move and have contacts with real or virtual friends who have the same freedom, and are able to go with them on their tours as well as use the same technology. In this context, we can understand the success of the collaborative economy, which provides networks of individuals (who at some point will become consumers) with potential services, and where the market structure is aligned with the logic and with the mechanisms of functionality of the virtual communities that are flourishing in the information society, namely cultural proximity, trust, reputation and experience. The 3.0 travellers - as the users of this new economy trend are defined - want to have a unique experience tailored to their concerns and expectations. They neither want to miss the opportunity of a comfortable house and a social context, nor renounce to the simplification and standardisation of the tourist industry. All this emerges in Urry's several works, applied to different disciplinary fields as a new way to study the human condition and its relations to space and social production. Among these considerations, the exceptional nature of the tourist cognitive condition is supposed to lead tourists to affirm that they perceive their destination as 'alien', and that this impacts on them in different ways. For instance, it makes them act differently from how they would act in their daily life, or at least from how locals would act. In contrast, one could claim that, on the contrary, the sharing economy probably puts travellers more at ease, as it enables them to share the experiences of other people living in the same city of their destination.

The academic literature on the sharing economy studies different areas that can be divided into two main subgroups. The first one focuses on the psychological aspect, while the second one concentrates on the legal and financial aspects. The latter is the most related to the peer-to-peer sharing, which includes a wide variety of items such as cars, houses, toys, and it describes sharing as "an alternative to the private ownership that is emphasized in both marketplace exchange and gift giving" (Griffiths, 2012).

In the context of sharing, Belk (Belk, 2010) has suggested establishing a distinction between 'sharing in' and 'sharing out', that is, gift giving and exchange respectively. Similarly, Kennedy (Kennedy, 2015) has remarked the differences in sharing as a channel for economy, distribution or social intensification.

As far as peer-to-peer accommodation rentals are concerned, their steady rise in the recent years, as well as their consequent impact on the traditional hospitality sector, have led many researchers to start analysing the phenomenon more in depth. As an example, Guttentag (Guttentag, 2013) claimed that tourists use Aibnb not only because of its 'economic benefits', but also because of its 'experiential

values'. In the same light can be interpreted Möhlmann's study (Möhlmann, 2015), which shows that tourists' satisfaction and their preference for the sharing accommodation lies in self-beneficial factors such as "utility, trust, cost saving and familiarity". According to Tussyadiah (Tussyadiah, 2015), following a similar line to Rachel Botsman's work, people choose Airbnb accommodation because of three major determinants, namely "sustainability (i.e. social and environmental responsibility), community (i.e. social interactions), and economic benefits (i.e. lower cost)".

Moreover, it has been agreed that the recent global economic recession, which can be seen as a continuation of the 2007-2009 financial crisis mentioned above, together with the general trend towards austerity, has favoured the triumph of the collaborative economy in many countries. Therefore, it could be alleged that sharing has represented a post-crisis response to the excessive consumption which exploded in 2007. In fact, this is true both for accommodations and transportation, as the emergence of many car-sharing companies between 2008 and 2010 confirms. In this way, it has been stated that the collaborative consumption can be understood within the 'green zeitgeist', or the green spirit of the time. In other words, probably the idea of the collaborative tourism stemmed from the precise circumstances of the time, which pushed the individuals of a particular society to come up with it.

Retaking the concept of 'sustainability' as formulated by Tussyadiah and Botsman, the idea of 'ride-sharing' and its schemes for connecting large cities by bike can be accounted for. Another example is represented by the announcement of one of the most important car rental companies: namely, each time someone rents from this company, twenty personal vehicles are kept away from the traffic. In addition, it has been revealed that a growing percentage of consumers are willing to use somebody else's car rather than their own one if the former one has the same efficiency. Thus, the environmental impact can easily be reduced.

Having reviewed the available literature on the field, the question that now arises is: which are the real effects of the sharing economy on the traditional tourism sector? An eloquent survey can be mentioned. Zervas et Al, (Zervas et Al, 2014) carried out a statistical analysis in the state of Texas, US, and found out that every 1% increase in Airbnb listings corresponded with a 0,5% decrease in hotel revenues. Moreover, Airbnb appreciation was established after consulting more than 600,000 Airbnb listings worldwide, where the results of the analysis showed that about 95% of them had a users' rating of either 4.5 or 5 stars out of 5. On the contrary, the same study demonstrated that the TripAdvisor rating of half a million hotels worldwide was much lower, with an average rating of 3.8 stars, and more contrariety in general.

Although several similar studies on the sharing economy trend have been conducted from various perspectives, the academic, theoretical contribution is still scarce, and a large part of its sociocultural aspect is missing in the available literature. Therefore, it is interesting to understand whether the

sharing economy trend could be defined as something related to the desires of any given society. Probably, the answer is yes, and the flourishing, prospering phenomenon of the shared consumption in big cities can be seen as a form of communication between people, as well as a desire to get to know whoever is close to us. As Albert Cañigueral (Albert Cañigueral, 2014) - a specialist in collaborative consumption - has indicated, the exposure to digital culture is increasing the acceptance and development of this new type of economy. Therefore, if it is evident that the main reason for sharing is economic, it is also true that it is increasingly becoming a social process.

Not only has the sharing economy changed many aspects of the tourism sphere, but it can also be argued that tourism is one of the sectors most widely affected by peer-to-peer sharing, as locals are agreeing more and more to sharing their homes, cars, tours, and meals with tourists. In contrast, little attention has been paid to the impact that this relatively new phenomenon is having on the landscape of the most popular cities hit by its influence.

Tourism can be seen as a varied industry, whose main actors have different interests. In the tourism literature, there are three traditional major ones, namely “tourists (or consumers), host community (or tourism destination), and the tourism industry (or business owners)”. However, with the emergence of the sharing economy, its businesses have started to be regarded as a fourth major actor, or ‘stakeholder’. Accordingly, it is interesting to understand the role and influence of the latter on the previous ones. In fact, while the first three actors have already been analysed as “factors influencing residents’ attitudes toward tourism”, the rise of the sharing economy factor “blurred the boundaries between consumers and service providers as well as local residents and business entities in the tourism destination” (Heo, 2016). Hence, if a local resident is providing any type of sharing economy service to tourists, his or her attitude toward tourism development may be different from that of normal local residents. Furthermore, no research has been conducted on the impact of sharing economy services on tourism demand or the economic impact on tourism destinations, and this would be very interesting to investigate.

Forced to face legislative challenges and conflicts between ‘stakeholders’, the future of the sharing economy remains uncertain. Nevertheless, it seems that it is here to stay. In fact, many existing laws of the tourism industry were designed to protect and limit commercial entities, either corporate or individual ones. As this paradigm has changed, for example in the economy of collaborative consumption, the legislation is enabling a protective rather than restrictive barrier, and it is likely to change in order to please the growing businesses.

The criticism towards the sharing economy businesses concerns topics such as taxes, the right of workers, industry regulation and zoning. Firstly, many owners are not paying taxes on their incomes earned by renting rooms or services, like taxi drivers who are not declaring incomes. Secondly, sharing companies do not have to pay insurance, pensions or overtime work, and workers are left

without any kind of protection. Thirdly, unlicensed drivers are not always covered by insurance and do not even know the road map or the crime sites, and this should not happen. Similarly, people who share their own apartments do not have to adapt their flats to security rules which hotels have to comply with. Finally, residential areas are ignored by those who share the flats that are exposed to public nuisance and can disturb neighbours, while they should stick to residential safety rules made to protect the security of the complex.

In light of these reflections, it is evident that hotel managers and taxi drivers look at Airbnb and Uber as unfair competitors, at the same time that they blame them for evading taxes and skipping regulations. In addition to this, the sharing business is still in its early stages, and its abrupt spread has welcomed many individual, or ‘me-too’, businesses that have not been regulated by any legislation so far. If this trend continues, sharing economy services will probably cause a negative impact on local tourism businesses and will lead to conflicts among different tourism actors, as many might be concerned about the ‘unbalance of powers’. Therefore, in order to better understand the situation and solve it, further research from the tourism businesses viewpoint is needed. In the same way, it would be interesting to understand whether the sharing economy’s popularity reflects tourists’ desires to have connections with the local community or not, as little is known about new tourists using P2P sharing services. Likewise, it is necessary to conduct further evaluation on their perceived value of experiences compared to tourists who use traditional tourism services. Thus, the quality of social interaction and the relationship with hosts may be important factors for tourists’ perceived value and satisfaction of P2P sharing services. In addition, tourist perceived value of sharing economy service may change over time as their experience accumulates trip after trip. For instance, some have stressed the importance of the ‘environmental potential’ of the sharing economy, giving the example of the increase in the usage duration of green resources. They base their claim on the shared usage of a great amount of material resources (such as cars, bikes, underused tools) which surely gain a different value, linked with community needs apart from personal ones. However, the relationship between responsible tourism and the sharing economy is still unclear. As the sharing business model is still in its early stages, there is not a clear estimation of the impact of the peer-to-peer sharing services on tourism. Consequently, the topic still needs to be investigated. Clearly, the jury is still out on whether the sharing economy hurts or helps tourism.

2. FROM SHARING TO CONSUMERISM: THE REASON WHY

As it has been shown, sharing behaviours have been deeply rooted in society for a considerable time. In fact, it is widely believed that it is the very human nature what led people since its origins to share, barter and swap. In a second phase, consumerism replaced sharing behaviours, but today it seems that the former have come back again. Having all this into account, it is interesting to ask oneself why these sharing procedures have changed their natural flow into consumerism. Travel literature and psychologist studies have not gone deeper enough in the analysis of the phenomenon of this transition, but some stories can provide the valid argumentation for the causes of this change. The examples of the following stories help to clarify the current situation, otherwise difficult to explain.

The first story of sharing-into-consumerism proposed goes back to 1907, when Hugh Moore and his roommate Lawrence Luellen left Harvard in order to carry out their idea for a business. At that time, people were used to drinking water from public fountains from the so-called 'tin-dipper' reusable cups, which were rarely washed and never replaced. Sharing those cups was considered normal by everyone. Nevertheless, being aware of recent findings on hygiene, the two friends realised that this act of sharing cups could lead to the spread of disease, so they searched for a way to turn that drawback into a lucrative opportunity. Consequently, Luellen came up with the idea of a water dispenser with paper cups, and together with his friend Moore, he bought a factory next to Alfred Schindler's Dixie Doll Company. Shortly after, they launched the first paper cup, into the market, which they called 'Health Kup' in the first place. Not being satisfied with the name, and seeing the word 'Dixie', printed on the Doll Company's front door every day, Moore decided to rename it. At that moment the 'Dixie Cup' was born, and over time, the most prestigious brand of paper cups in the US was created. In the beginning, the idea did not turn into a huge success, but eight years after the launch, Moore and Luellen started a campaign to raise awareness of the sanitary aim of the Dixie Cups. Their friends and business partners became known as 'The Cup Campaigners' who wanted to educate people about the 'clinical use' of the cups, stressing that reusable metal cups used at water fountains were a source of germ contamination. To make their message even clearer, they distributed a pamphlet with a graphic illustration of a cup of the kind in a skeleton's shape on a fountain. This campaign was not all propaganda, as the common drinking cup did spread serious diseases, such as tuberculosis and smallpox, and in this sense, the disposable paper cup did have a positive impact on society. Today, 220 billion paper and plastic cups are used worldwide every year, with 146 billion cups used only in North America. In order to picture this exponential distribution, one can think that the daily production of cups is equivalent to a forty-two-floor building. Moreover, this creates an endless profit for manufacturers, as cups are thrown away after use and thus they force consumers to keep buying

them. From this example, it is evident that this sharing-to-consumerism transition happened because the initial sharing behaviour was acknowledged as unhealthy and life-threatening.

A similar profit potential was found out soon after World War I, when the abundance of war material, stocked in warehouses, needed new buyers. One initiative was represented by a celluloid-made absorbent material used during the war for military bandages and gas mask filters, which was turned into a disposable Kotex sanitary towel. In other words, manufacturers managed to find a way to change the “wartime ethic of thrift, sharing and reuse” - which included mending socks, using different pieces of string together, cleaning carpets with tea leaves, making rugs from rags - into the culture of ‘throwaway habits’ and of new products to spend the money on. During the war, the US government used to advertise posters of the kind: ‘Waste Not, Want Not’. And by late 1917, it used to ask shops across the country to show on their windows signs such as “beware go thrift and unwise economy”, in order to help encourage ‘repetitive consumption’.

In this light, it can be alleged that health and safety legislation, still valid now, helped the development of the ‘throwaway economy’, denouncing the danger derived from some sharing behaviours. Surely, the motivation of health issues has led to the tendency to refuse the sharing economy in other sectors, even if completely different ones.

As far as this change in the economy trend is concerned, the birth of consumerism can be seen through other examples. One of them regards the situation in Africa. As Rachel Botsman highlights (Botsman, 2010), anyone who has been to rural Africa knows that the adjective that mainly describes its economy is “more”. In fact, as she correctly pointed out, people over there need more water, food, infrastructure, education, health and governance. The lack of these basic resources and the consequent poverty were also tackled by Adam Smith more than two hundred years ago. Smith, known as the great Scottish economist, looked for a way out from the agrarian squalor of the eighteenth century. That is, he believed that a society could be healthier if it became more productive. In ‘The Wealth of Nations’ (W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1776), Smith claimed that humans are driven by ‘self-interest’ and ‘self-love’, and that “the exploitation of this trait leads to greater wealth for all and a more effective distribution of labour”. In this sense, if one looks back, it is understandable why Adam Smith wanted to find a strategy for the economy to be more productive. In fact, in the eighteenth century Britain was not the nicest place to live in, a place where the average life expectancy was not above thirty-five years, and where dead animals were found on the streets, together with waste, whose sum created the perfect environment for the spread of diseases such as bubonic plague, tuberculosis and smallpox. In that context, medicine was still very primitive, and this is confirmed by the fact that in 1755 only the Bill of Mortality counted more than eight hundred deaths attributed to teeth problems. Moreover, at that time hygiene was definitely not the watchword: many people used to live in just one room whose walls were made of crumbling bricks, and therefore it was not unusual that entire

buildings fell to pieces. If one could then claim that ‘more’ was very much needed, it is true that, in today’s uncontrolled consumer economy, ‘more’ has lost its meaning. One could argue that Smith would be probably puzzled over how his simple goals of increasing productivity and achieving market efficiency have nowadays turned into mass production and what has become consumerism, which poses an “ideological threat to our economy, society and planet”. In his book *When corporations rule the world* (Korten,1995) David C Korten wrote that “Smith did not advocate a market system based on unrestrained greed. He was talking about small farms and artisans trying to get the best price for their products to provide for themselves and the families. That is self-interest - but it is not greed”. In conclusion, it can be stated that Adam Smith, like Milton Friedman after him, genuinely believed that an individual driven by his self-interest could really promote the good of society. Nonetheless, it is evident that, not long after, this concept was transformed from a “relatively healthy narrative of technological ingenuity to a frenetic quest for personal identity through brands, products and services, before finally becoming an extreme system of insatiable consumerism” (Botsman, 2010). By the fifties, with the ‘dawn of hyper-consumerism’, people started to perceive themselves firstly as a society of individual consumers, and only secondly as a group of citizens. In this sense, people ended up believing that they were better off when relying on corporations rather than when cooperating with one another. Accordingly, collective and community-based values started to be avoided in favour of consumer independence and a ‘me, me, me’ mentality. The pursuit of individuality and independence were summarised in the motto ‘what’s mine is mine’, where the self-reliant attitude was the ultimate goal. In his book *LIFE INC* (Rushkoff, 2009), Douglas Rushkoff wrote that “each home was to be its own fiefdom. Self-sufficiency was part of the myth of the self-made man with his private estate, so community property, carpools, or sharing of almost any kind became anathema of the suburban aesthetic”. His point was to make people reflect on the neighbour on the other side of the fence. According to this, people must ask themselves if they know their neighbour well enough to borrow his ladder. Rushkoff believes that the answer is no, that neighbours have become total strangers, and this is not an exception; rather, it sadly represents today’s norm. In the same view, a recent survey shows that three out of four Americans confessed that they do not know the people who live next door. Similarly, in the UK six out of ten people don’t know their neighbours’ names. By the same token, it seems that the consumer culture of ‘more’ helped business get bigger and charge the society more and more. It is also true that in the fifties and sixties American workers were encouraged by manufacturers and marketers to give up their hobbies and free time to buy bigger cars, better homes and higher-tech technology. As a result, the ‘social capital’ declined dramatically. The concept became known thanks to Robert Putnam, a political science professor at Harvard University, who defined social capital as “the trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency go society by facilitating coordinated actions”. In his book *Bowling Along* (Putnam, 2000), Putnam focused on

the decline in social capital through a study of American membership in bowling leagues. Putnam found out that between 1980 and 1993, while the number of people playing bowling in America increased by ten per cent, the number of bowling leagues decreased by forty percent. In 1993, about eighty million Americans played bowling at least once, but the tendency is more and more to go there alone. In relation to this, it can be said that the more people who bowl alone, the fewer conversations over beer and pizza, and the greater the overall decline in human interaction took place. Indeed, the fewer time people spent socialising, the more time they spent in the office or shopping. According to Putnam, the irony lies in the fact that while the American ability to consume between 1980 and 2000 tripled, they found themselves with far less time to enjoy the results of their hard work. This was also confirmed by former President Bill Clinton, who a 1993 speech claimed that “most Americans are working harder for less” (Clinton, 1993).

Adam Smith wanted to create a better society through healthy competition and balance between ‘pursuit of self-interest’ and ‘pursuit of the greater good’. If at the beginning his vision was replaced by mere consumerism, arguably, two centuries later this is probably taking shape. In this sense, people are likely to be coming out of the ‘consumer trance’ they have lived in for the past around fifty years. Two intertwined phenomena can be accounted for this transformation, both regarding a general shift in values. The first one lies in a growing consumer awareness that the combination of infinite growth and consumption based on finite resources is not possible. As a consequence, people are starting to look for ways to get more out of what they buy, and foremost, out of what they do not buy. The second one is that people are starting to recognise that the constant search for material things has grown at the expense of impoverishing relationship with friends, family, neighbours, and the whole planet. Inversely, people are now more willing to re-create stronger communities. In this view, the pursuit of ‘what’s in it for me?’ is changing towards ‘what’s in it for us?’ More importantly, people are beginning to see that self-interest and collective good depend on each other. In sum, the common mind-set nowadays seems to have become the following: “it is in my self-interest to stop global warming; it is in my interest to participate in elections; it is in my interest to correct an online entry in Wikipedia”. This new trend will be further discussed in the next chapters.

Once more, focusing the attention on the birth of consumerism at the expense of the sharing behaviours intrinsic in human nature, it would be interesting to extend the discourse analysing to the analysis of the word ‘common’. The idea of ‘the commons’, related to resources which that belong to each person, dates back to the Romans, who defined certain things as ‘res publica’, with the meaning of things meant to public use, such as parks, roads and public buildings; and others as ‘res communis’, with the meaning of ‘things common to all’, such as air, water and wildlife, as well as culture, languages and public knowledge. The notion of the ‘common’ flourished and remained almost unchallenged until the fifteenth century, when undefined common pasture lands in England

started to be fenced and divided into private owners' lands. The concepts of 'private property' and 'enclosures' became popular across Europe and America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the 1968 science article "The tragedy of the commons" by the microbiologist Garret Hardin (Hardin, 1968), it can be read that "privatisation was justified by the rationale that shared resources were subject to overuse and misuse by individuals, who will always act in their own short-term self-interests". Hardin described this scenario through the 'parable of the field' meant for the grazing cattle. In his words, "Picture a pasture opens to all. It is to be expected that each herdsman will try to keep as many cattle as possible on the commons... As a rational being, each herdsman seeks to maximise his gain. [...] the rational herdsman concludes that the only sensible course for him to pursue is to add another animal to his heard. And another; and another... But this is the conclusion reached by each and every rational herdsman sharing a common. Therein is the tragedy". In other words, according to Hardin, people will always take too much, either consciously or unconsciously, even if it is not a collective or long-term good. In addition, he stressed that "freedom in a commons brings ruin to all". If one looks at the example of a traffic jam on the main road of a big city, Hardin continued, at first everyone would choose that particular road for the logical reason that that is the fastest route. In the beginning, each additional car would not slow down the traffic, as there would be enough room on the road for the additional drivers. At some point, however, each car would reduce the average speed and eventually there would be so many drivers on the path that the traffic would go at a slower pace. Therefore, the initial desire of people to minimise their own driving time would result in nothing else than a longer commute for everyone. What Hardin wanted to demonstrate with these examples is that doing what is rational often results in a negative outcome for the collective interest of all people. More generally, this logic can also explain global environmental issues such as "overfished seas and rivers, air pollution and water scarcity". Since its publication, "The tragedy of the commons" has become one of the most reprinted articles in scientific journals and has been cited in hundreds of books.

Indeed, individuals competing for resources are at the centre of one of the most widely discussed and debated questions of economic theory and free markets, to wit: "how can we balance the interest of individuals and the interest of the group?" The typical answer is that self-interest will always beat the collective good, and being vigilant is thus required. But history has demonstrated that this is not always the only answer. The work of the Nobel Prize Winner Elinor Ostrom, for instance, downplays Hardin's claim that 'tragedy is inevitable'. David Bollier, a renowned expert on the cyberspace commons, notes that "her work clearly speaks to the ways that people can self-organize themselves to take care of resources that they care about" (cited in Botsman, 2010).

Another scholar who has devoted his career to the study and promotion of the value of "a commons of cultural, educational, and scientific ideas" is Stanford law professor Lawrence Lessig. Nicknamed

the ‘King of internet law’, around ten years ago, Lessig agreed on the importance of facilitating “the sharing, remixing and reuse of creative content such as songs, photos, knowledge, films” (Botsman, 2010). In 2002, he launched ‘Creative Commons’, a platform with free copyright licenses, where the creator gave his consent to the use of his/her work, in order to favour sharing and collaboration. This has proved to be increasingly popular, as more than 100 million licenses in fifty-two countries have been released since its launch. Concretely it has been used, among other places, in the White House, as well as by artists like Ridley Scott and Gwen Stefani. In Lessig’s words, his platform was invented as “a solution for failed sharing”. What is more, it represented a way to enrich the culture of online socialising encouraging people to share, no less than providing social value to the community through digital experiences.

As David Bollier wrote in *Viral Spiral*, “the commons - a hazy concept to many people - is a new paradigm for creating value and organising a community of shared interests” (Bollier, 2009). In contrast, it can be claimed that collaborative consumption is expanding towards many parts of our lives, encouraging the willingness to enter a community based on common interests. This is true as much for the ‘collaborative’ as for ‘consumption’. As an example, if a single phone is useless, it is evident that the more people own telephones, the more valuable that telephone becomes to each owner, as the network increases. Similarly, the more people participate in programmes such as Airbnb or bike sharing, the better the system works for everyone. In other words, every member of the community who joins or uses collaborative consumption, creates a value for another one, even if unconsciously or unwillingly, and this generates a ‘network effect’. From this analysis, one can perceive the different nuances of the word “common”: it was born as an ‘intensifier of community’, it then became a ‘threatening term’ related to the surplus of resources, and recently it has been re-evaluated as fundamental way to achieve success and effectiveness in new businesses. In this light, the question which arises is how, then, it should be read. The aim of the next chapter is to try and discover the origins of the sharing economy. This throwback will help to identify all the natural functions the sharing economy has brought to society, as well as the spontaneous sharing actions of the free human beings.

3. BACK TO THE ORIGIN: SHARING BEHAVIOURS AS OLD HABITS

This chapter will look into the collaborative economy as an intrinsic part of human life since long time ago. Even if it is widely believed that collaborative consumption represents a new trend which was born at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is the aim of this chapter to deny this thought and, on the contrary, to claim the real, old origins of this kind of economy. In fact, as historical and psychological studies of well-known academics prove, the fundamentals of the sharing economy and collaborative tourism can be undoubtedly dated back to centuries ago, as well as related to the innate behaviour of human beings.

A recent example of this can be found in the fact that when Bryan Chesky, co-founder of Airbnb, told his grandfather about his business idea, the latter sounded perfectly normal to him while, conversely, his parents had a different reaction. Initially, Chesky could not understand why, but later he realised that it was because his parents had grown up in the ‘hotel generation’, whereas his grandfather used to stay in farms and little houses during his travels. Indeed, before the 1950s, staying with friends, or friends of friends, was a habitual practice, and Airbnb's concept is certainly not far from that experience. While hotels represent a modern invention, Airbnb accommodations can definitely be seen as a return to the past. More specifically, Airbnb lies in an old idea that has been replicated and renewed through peer-to-peer networks and new technologies. Today’s ‘unbounded marketplace’ offers the perfect environment for efficient peer-to-peer exchanges between producer and consumer, seller and buyer, lender and borrower, and neighbour. Current online exchanges are imitating the face-to-face ones which used to exist in villages, but on a larger and non-restricted scale. To put it in another way, technology is reinventing old forms of trust. In Chesky’s words, “the status quo is being replaced by a movement. Peer-to-peer is going to become the default way people exchange things, whether it is space, stuff, skills or service” (cited in Botsman, 2010). Furthermore, it can be argued that this condition is true in many fields. As an example, today in the US there are more than 2500 ‘CSA schemes’, compared to the only existing one back in 1985, where people can pay a yearly sum of money to a local farmer who, in return, delivers a box of fresh seasonable fruit and vegetables to them. The growing people’s desire of going back to the origins and choose the products they want is probably an answer to the oppressing economy of the last decades, in which consumers were bound by consumerism and its supplies of selected products.

‘Product service’ and ‘redistribution markets’ are two systems that make people rethink of the reasons and the ways they consume, deliver and supply products. What is more, they now involve less tangible and more personal assets of people’s everyday lives, such as “knowledge, time, workspaces, creativity, money, homes, gardens and other social spaces”. In this sense, it is evident that not only consumer goods can be loaned, bartered or gifted, but this can also apply to a couch, a garden, an

office, a carpool, a workspace, a meal, a chore, skill or home-grown produce. These exchanges are undoubtedly flourishing in the so-called 'collaborative lifestyle' system.

The idea of the free exchange of goods or services for other goods and services is the oldest form of economic trade, namely barter. In fact, in the ancient world it was very common for people to exchange goods such as metals, crops and cattle. Similarly, tribes in Mesopotamia used to exchange, among other goods, weapons, spices, salt and clothes. Barter was practised for thousands of years, until the birth of metal coins and paper money during the Renaissance. After that, its concept re-emerged in poor economies as a need for people to find non-monetary ways to survive. As an example, during the Great Depression in the 1930s, there was an 'extensive barter economy'. When, in 1933, President Roosevelt ordered to close the banks of the country for an entire week, many department stores accepted food in exchange for dresses, some doctors and lawyers accepted batteries or oil as payment, and butchers agreed on alcohol or tobacco in return for meat. However, this practice ended as soon as a stronger economy returned.

The 'product service system', or PSS, also helped to remove the barrier of price, availability or social status. An example is represented by public libraries, which is another old form of sharing in this sense. Many libraries in the early 1600s were not open to the public, as they were only accessible to scholars who often had to consult books on the spot. The first library with free access was the Boston Public Library in Massachusetts, US, which opened in 1854 and gave everyone the possibility to borrow books and take them home to read. Nonetheless, this example represented the exception rather than the norm, and knowledge and literacy were still a privilege of few people. This changed, however, thanks to the precious contribution of the philanthropist and businessman Scottish-American Andres Carnegie. Working in a telegraph company in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, he learned that education and information were the keys to a successful life, and he decided to take action in order to promote the message. As such, he started to take some books from his personal library's collection of four hundred volumes and each Saturday afternoon he used to lend them to any worker who wanted to read one, giving him the chance that he was denied elsewhere. Carnegie himself acted as the librarian, allowing each employee to borrow one book and exchange it for another one on the following Saturday. Carnegie's personal experience as an immigrant who worked hard to become a rich man was made possible thanks to a society based on merit, and this was what motivated his campaign of building libraries worldwide. Earning the nickname the Patron Saint of Libraries, he managed to build more than 1689 libraries in the late 1800s. Many of them became civic centres, whose goal was to entertain and educate hundreds of small American communities, from Maine to California. The architecture of these building was various, from Spanish colonial to baroque, but they all showed the same feature: a beautiful doorway with a large staircase which was meant to welcome people and symbolise their 'elevation' through learning. Above the doors of the Carnegie Library of

Pittsburgh, founded in 1895, today it is still possible to read Carnegie's own words, carved in stone: 'Free to the people'. Besides, inside Carnegie's libraries piles of books are available, and outside each of them, there is a lamppost as a symbol of the light of knowledge coming in.

From these examples, it is evident that the idea of a service that enables people to benefit from a shared product is not new. Today, it seems that an increasing number of consumers is appreciating what Aristotle said a long time ago: "On the whole, you find wealth much more in use than in ownership" (cited in Botsman, 2010). People are more and more staying in hotel rooms, using a public laundry facility or a photocopy shop, renting a dinner jacket or a dress costume, hiring some tables and chairs for a party, all actions whose principles of 'not owning' can be traced back to the most ancient form of commerce.

In 1984, a team of archaeologists discovered some clay tablets belonging to the Sumerian city of Ur that proved leases of farm equipment from priests to agricultural workers in the year 2010 BC. In the US, the act of leasing dates back to the 1700s, when liverymen used to lease out horses, buggies and wagons, and it became more popular in the 1870s, when transportation businessmen developed new financing methods in order to rent barges, railway vehicles and locomotives as 'equipment trust certificates'. By the early 1900s, the leasing of commercial equipment was a common part of the everyday business. Today, commercial leasing regards everything, from printing presses to power plants, office copiers to offshore drilling rigs, telecom equipment to large-scale computer networks; it represents a \$225 billion-plus industry in the US and a more than \$600 billion industry worldwide. In addition, it is interesting to note that commercial leasing concerns not only companies, but also consumers who have preferred the benefits of usage rather than of ownership. As a matter of fact, nowadays everything can be leased out, from furniture to jewellery, from plasma screens to sporting goods, and even artwork, from more than twelve thousand rental companies in the United States alone. The traditional consumer rental and leasing forms and today's current product service systems are very similar as they both give people access to product, tools and capabilities on a temporary basis. In the same vein, the new --or Web 2.0-- platforms offer an unprecedented opportunity to the sharing economy, as a wide variety of products can be accessed on demand conveniently and cost-effectively. That is, today's technology creates fresh relevance and massive opportunities to design systems of shared use that are perceived as entirely different from traditional rentals. As an example, in the past, renting a car included being familiar with advance booking, queuing, filling in paperwork and interacting with agents who used to explain the hidden costs and remind the customer of his status of 'renter'. Sometimes, it also happened that the car was not the right one after all those procedures. Moreover, there used to be considerable restrictions about the picking up time of the car, the minimum time of rental admissible, and the return time. With the emergence of the Internet, together with GPS technologies, all these formalities have been eliminated, and this has enabled car-sharing services

such as Zipcar and Streetcar to be almost 100 percent self-service. Likewise, car-sharing has often become far more convenient, as the cars are located in residential neighbourhoods, and there are so many available that most of the time they are close to their customer's houses. This removes the cost of rental cars' pickup and drop-off in branches often located in airports or remote underground car parks. As such, today's car sharing is a great example of how modern product service systems are changing the mark and frame of old-fashioned renting and leasing into an experience far closer to the associations, convenience and control benefits of ownership.

Like many forms of Collaborative Consumption, car sharing has roots back in old centuries. The concept of 'public transport for rent' existed in Europe already two hundred years before the car was invented, when horse-drawn carriages and drivers were available for hire. In 1891, the idea of the taxicab was born after the German Wilhelm Bruhn invented the taximeter, a tool which measured the distance travelled, or the time taken, to determine an accurate fare. Shortly after, a Nebraskan named Joe Saunders caught the opportunity to use a similar device to start the first 'rent-a-car' businesses. He began to lend out his Model T and charge ten cents a mile for its use. It is rumoured that Saunders's first customer was a salesman who needed transportation to impress a local girl he was taking out for dinner. Whether his client succeeded or not is unknown, but what is certain is that Saunder's idea became very popular and, by 1925, he had set up car rental depots in twenty-one states across America, perhaps becoming the first rental tycoon.

If Saunder's attempt can be seen as a first rudimental rental try, it can be claimed that the contemporary concept of urban car sharing has been around for more than sixty years. More specifically, it started with the Sewage cooperative in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1948. In spite of this, car sharing has become popular, and it has been addressed as 'hip', 'financially smart', and as part of an 'environmentally conscious lifestyle', only in the past couple of years. Today, there are more than one thousand cities in the world across four continents where people can share cars through companies such as Mobility in Switzerland, ORIX Auto in Japan and Streetcar in the UK. Launched in April 2004, Streetcar has become a popular alternative to car ownership in the UK, with a presence in more than 1100 locations across eight cities and with more than 80,000 members. Similarly, membership of US-based Zipcar, born in January 2000, is growing by more than 100 percent per year, and this proves that consumers are willing to embrace an alternative to leasing or private car ownership if the service is delivered and branded in the right way. Robin Chase, founder of Zipcar, said that "it's the car your mother said you could never have. When you are not using it, it is someone else's problem, and who cares" (Botsman, 2010). As with other forms of Collaborative Consumption, the rapid growth of car sharing is fostered by increasing cost consciousness and environmental necessity. Social networks and wireless technologies have removed the obstacles involved in coordination of lessors and renters. Suffice it to say, trying to organise only a couple of hundred car

users in 1940s would have been very hard. With such a large gap between effort and benefit, it is no surprise that people chose to buy their own car. Conversely, today social networks have cancelled this problem out by creating platforms that make the coordination of users automatic, as well as car sharing easy and convenient.

After writing about the historical process behind some of the most diffused sharing procedures, it would be interesting to mention the shift to some psychological research over the human being personality and habits. At this point, one may ask oneself the reason why people spend so much time teaching children how to be friendly and share their toys with others when for adults sharing becomes a 'loaded concept'. In other words, people are used to sharing roads, parks, schools and other public spaces, but also to drawing a sharp line in other areas of their lives, when they concern their personal belongings. As a society, people are suspicious of the old 'C's' associated with sharing: cooperatives, collectives, and communal structure, words which are themselves loaded with stigmas and unfortunate associations. Probably, people fear that these words will put their personal freedom of individuality, privacy and autonomy at risk. It seems relevant to look at what Botsman defines the smartest creatures on the planet, the bottlenose dolphins, to understand that this is not the case.

Like other mammals, these dolphins have innate cooperative and coordinated behaviours which encourage them to catch fishes and look after each other. Bottlenose dolphins live in close family pods of about six-ten members, and when they are in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans they can form, for minutes or hours, a larger social group called super pod, of more than one hundred or sometimes even of one thousand dolphins, with the purpose of catching fishes in coordination, or of 'cooperative feeding'. Dolphins identify their prey, which usually coincides with a large school of fishes, and they encircle it from all sides, like cowboys used to do with Bisons. Using their bodies as a wall, large male dolphins create a barrier which is impenetrable and allows the pod not to lose their prey and to be protected against outer predators. Once the school of fishes is surrounded, dolphins force it in a 'tight ball', and in turn, they go into the ball to catch them easily. Sometimes, to make it easier for the rest of the pod, the same Dolphins go below the school in order to force the captured fishes to go up towards the side which is waiting to be fed. In both ways, the cooperative principle is the same: the more dolphins in the pod, the more easily and the more fish are caught, as well as the greater individual and collective benefit is generated. In relation to this, it would be sufficient to act worse than bottlenose dolphins to find a role model for group cooperation. In fact, they represent the best example which is hard to emulate, as their key strength is to take advantage of the secure, closed networks of their family or social group to open networks to the other dolphins of the pods, which represent the weakest tie. That bound, the pod faces an aggregation completing tasks and solving problems in ways that would be unimaginable for a single dolphin to do. Furthermore, it is important to say that their group behaviour does not undermine their autonomy, as it is visible when looking at

the single dolphin jumping on ocean waves or on boats' wakes. It can thus be claimed that they splendidly fulfil basic human needs, namely individual freedom and collective security.

For centuries, people have acted like dolphins, finding a way to obtain what they needed and sharing access to food, land and other resources by combining their forces. Back to millions of years to the Stone Age, humans were used to grouping into tribes or bands of approximately twenty-five to one hundred people who managed to survive thanks to the common effort to harvest plants and hunt wild animals. Like dolphins, tribes seemed to understand that the chances of getting food were higher if they hunted and searched for food together. For instance, if one animal was killed, the meat was cut into pieces and shared with everyone in the camp.

Cooperative efforts of the kind continued throughout human history. Babylonian farmers relied on each other to share equipment, build barns, gather crops and defend the land. Anthropologists believe that this act of people helping each other, or mutualism, as well as of promising fair exchanges, or reciprocity, represent 'hardwired human behaviours' that should be on the basis of human cooperation and at the core of people's existence.

The American development psychologist Michael Tomasello conducted some research on cooperation in young children. According to his studies, when infants up to fourteen months see a known or unknown adult who needs to open a door but cannot, as he has many things in his hands, they will immediately try and help him. Similarly, infants of the kind will be likely to point at objects that an adult pretends to have lost. In addition, if an adult drops something in front of a two-years-old baby, the latter will probably pick it up for him. In his recent book *Why We Cooperate* (Tomasello,2009), Tomasello argues that these behaviours shown by children are explained by the fact that they are sociable and cooperative by nature. Based on these findings, Tomasello believes that empathy and cooperative actions are neither learned from adults nor shown in a view of the expectation of a reward. In contrast, also according to Tomasello's studies, by the age of three, children start to adhere to 'social norms' shaped by their culture. At this stage, they begin to worry about how others in a group will judge them, and this can discourage collaboration. Reciprocation plays a key role in it, as a child will share more generously with another one who has already been nice to him. Tomasello also believes in the selfish nature of human beings, by which cooperativeness and helpfulness are based on self-interested. Certainly, it is true that in the past fifty years children have grown up in a 'hyper-individualistic society', so it is not a surprise that their inherent selfish side has prevailed over their natural social inclination to share. In spite of this, today this tendency is likely to be changing. In fact, over the past couple of years, a quiet but powerful revolution of collaborations is growing and spreading through the cultural, political and economic systems. It seems that people are re-learning how to benefit from shared and open resources in ways that balance

personal self-interest with the goals of the larger community. In this sharing process, people are learning that they can participate without losing their autonomy or single identity.

To summarise, it can be assumed that people are more and more benefiting from a ‘collaborative individualism’. If it is true that an increasing number of Millennials have grown up with collaborative consumption, it is also evident that these habits cannot be limited to one generation only. As a matter of fact, the old-rooted nature of the sharing economy is likely to help this set of trustable procedures to take shape as well. As Stephen Ufford wrote in his article on Forbes, according to Pew Research, only 19% of Millennials, that is people aged 18-33, believe that most people can be trusted, versus the 31% of GenX’ers, that is people born in mid-1960s to early 1980s. In Ufford’s words, “if the future is a peer-to-peer marketplace, it will require increasingly reliable, innovative ways to identify those peers. Making sure this emerging economy has high standards and strong values will allow it to continue to expand” (Ufford, 2015). In order to solve this problem, he also believes that “verified identity helps peel back the first layer of trust between strangers, which is crucial for the success of the sharing economy” (Ufford, 2015). This is what Trulioo program is trying to focus on, Ufford explains, which is meant to help international businesses check on online identities through its electronic identity verification product ‘GlobalGateway’. As Ufford reassures, the latter is currently able to verify identity authentication for over three billion people in more than forty countries. Complementary to this, it is clear that the recent development of technology and online data is the biggest ‘enabler’ of all the changing process. In a time when people are giving out a huge amount of information about themselves online, these data can be useful for re-creating the puzzle of their identities. Collecting, organising and analysing these pieces can become a valuable and accurate way to verify identity, and can represent the first step to increase the trust for a successful sharing economy.

4. QUANTIFYING SHARING ECONOMY AND COLLABORATIVE TOURISM

The aim of this chapter is to quantify sharing economy and collaborative tourism, analyse data and lead to some conclusions about the effectiveness of this new trend in the global economy.

Carlota Perez (Perez, 2002), a leading economist at Cambridge University and an expert in techno-economic paradigm shifts, has tried to figure out, once and for all, the steps forward this renewed trend: Perez posits that every seventy years, a disruptive technology emerges altering the foundations of the current economy. The standards by which society constructs itself (i.e. our homes, our workplaces, our education system), how it is governed, as well as how the community spends its leisure time, are all aspects that can be transformed. The five ‘ages’ of transformation that have happened to date are the following ones: the industrial revolution first, followed by the age of steam and railways; the age of steel, electricity and heavy engineering; the age of oil, automobiles and mass production, until the most recent age of information and telecommunications. Richard Duvall, a successful banking entrepreneur, head of IT at the banking giant Prudential and defined by Bill Gates as “one of the most dynamic people I have ever met”, wanted to understand the socioeconomics of how these shifts have transformed people’s lives. Duvall explained: “we used to define ourselves by what we consumed, the brands we wore, the cars we drove and the consumer electronics that we stuffed under the TV set. Now we’re defined much less by brands and more by the things we do, the choices we make, our values and beliefs, our self-expression” (cited in Botsman, 2010).

4.1 Community as the new brand

It is widely believed that one of the most important features of the sharing economy is belonging to a community.

In 1943, Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist, published ‘a Theory of Human Motivation’. In this pioneering paper, he drew a sort of hierarchy of needs. This pyramid was thought to be composed of the safety requirements and basic physiological needs like food, warmth and water at the bottom, leaving the top of the scheme to feelings of esteem, belonging and self-actualisation. More than sixty years later, Maslow scheme represents the most important model to understand the consumers’ priorities and to explain the reasons for their behaviour on the marketplace. Accordingly, it is widely believed that services such as Uber, BlaBlaCar or Airbnb meet many of the primary needs in the lower parts of Maslow’s pyramid, as they help to take care of consumers by housing them, transporting them and so on. At the same time, they push them towards higher needs of community, such as belonging and esteem. In contrast to the ‘me’ brands of hyper-consumerism, the defined ‘we’-based relationships are created on Collaborative Consumption ideals. In the recent period, some

brands have manipulated the society by making it want more and more things, taking advantage of strong advertising campaigns made for leading consumers to consider some additional human needs as fundamental. Although it seems strange, brands can make us want something different: they can support sustainable values and benefits linked with the Collaborative Consumption's principle. These honourable values include relationships, respect, support, skills, happiness, new habits, space and even time. It has been said that society became 'hooked on the likes' of Apple, Volkswagen, and Abercrombie & Fitch because these brands helped it create self-esteem and identity. Nowadays, the community is relying on the rising services of Collaborative Consumption for similar reasons, but through interactions and community, not mere shopping.

Moreover, even mega consumer brands such as Nike are shifting their brand focus advertising away from products, and towards the creation of collaborative communities. In this way, Nike is spending fifty five percent less on traditional advertising and impressive celebrity support than it was doing ten years ago. On the contrary, it is investing in "nonmedia social hubs" such as NikePlus, co-created with Apple. Thanks to this app, runners around the world can post running routes, map their itineraries, offer advice, support and ideas to one another, track their progress towards a goal, upload stimulating songs, and organise meeting with other runners in the real world. With such a move, NikePlus has in many ways become a 'cultural commons', as a shared community of people has created a knowledge hub devoted to running. By the end of 2009, Nike had aggregated more than 1.2 million runners who collectively registered with their watches, or clocked, more than 130 million miles. As the same Nike's brand president, Charlie Denson, described in a recent speech to investors, "consumers want to be part of a community, whether it's a digital community or a virtual community, or whether it's a physical community. They want to feel like they are a part of something. They want to be engaged" (cited in Botsman, 2010).

Even though it can be maintained that people who join Nikeplus program are more likely to buy Nike products - actually, it is counted that 40 percent of community members who previously did not own Nike products ended up purchasing them -, what is essential for the Collaborative Consumption's growth is that society is moving beyond an era in which the mere ownership of a particular t-shirt, or a pair of shoes following the last fashion, was the only aspect that defined a person. Admittedly, now people like to express who they are more in a "what they join" basis, for instance the world's largest running club.

Brands have realised that they need to offer different experiences, not just products. Nowadays, a new concept is taking shape that is setting aside the image of Nike as the sportswear company in favour of the athlete him/herself, meeting his/her needs through the facilitation of the Nike brand. Power is certainly shifting to consumers.

Nevertheless, it is widely believed that, even in the world of Collaborative Consumption, the role of brands is far from extinct; rather, the way they are created, managed and diffused has changed. The way that many emerging brands of Collaborative Consumption follow is similar to already well-known Web Households such as Skype, Facebook and Airbnb. As a matter of fact, they are based on ‘empowering communities’, often using the Internet as a platform to give the consumer a voice, as well as on the realisation that a whole community, and not a campaign, is needed to create a brand. In agreement with that, Airbnb has received an array of top-tier traditional press praises, from TIME magazine to CNN. However, founder Brian Chesky has admitted that there is something viral that has enabled Airbnb to build a big mass of more than 210.000 users, in more than 157 countries, and in less than three years. In his own words, “People want to go to work on Monday, and when asked what did you do over the weekend to be able to say, ‘Well, I hosted this brother and sister from Sweden’” (cited in Botsman, 2010). Apparently, users want to declare their collaborative, non-owning or sharing status. “It seems that people approach Airbnb all the time with ideas on how they can help us. They will start forums, host their own Meetups, and more than 80 percent will write a review after their stay”, Chesky continues.

It can be argued that a person who uses Airbnb for the first time, or an ‘early fan’, is inclined to join Airbnb looking at it as a possibility to take part in a growing community based on trust and loyalty among members. As the brand grows, these ‘early evangelists’ feel a sense of satisfaction in the role they have played in its success. Moreover, their ‘payback’ lies in the social reinforcing dynamics: people join Airbnb because their friends have already done so. In other words, when a traveller needs to choose whether to stay in an Airbnb’s accommodation or to book a cheap hotel on Expedia, the first option sounds more appealing to him/her than the others.

4.2 Quantifying Collaborative Tourism

As anticipated in the introduction, it seems necessary to divide tourism into three main areas, in relation to the effects the sharing economy has on them. It has been thought that the three most important sectors are the accommodation one, intended as flat rentals and couch surfing services; the transport services one, which is mainly based on Car-sharing and Bike-sharing; and the last one, referred to activities in the country of destination and tour guides.

For each of these sectors, we will provide an initial explanation about how they have developed, followed by data and statistics referred to the most prominent leading firms.

4.2.1 Accommodation Market

The major drivers of peer-to-peer shared accommodations involve the renting of rooms or the entire property. The online booking process occurs in virtual supermarkets connecting people, or hosts, with a place to share and with people, or guests, who are looking for a place to stay. As it has been said, the engines that fuel this tendency may have different matrices:

- At a social level, it can be said that, nowadays, consumers need to create real connections, to look for unique and local experiences, and to keep environmental awareness, all aspects driving the interest more towards the p-2-p.
- From an economic point of view, the convenience and price are undoubtedly a p-2-p key benefit in respect to hotel prices.
- The technological matrix refers to the mobile technology and social networks that make possible the encounter between supply and demand across a much wider network and with a reasonable level of confidence. In this light, the online payment system has been designed to prevent fraud and to guarantee secure transactions.

At first sight, accommodation services linked to collaborative tourism are those referred to private rentals, either formal or informal. Their value sales in 2013 amounted to US\$39 billion globally, and they are expected to grow more and more by 2018. However, private rentals remain a small part of travel accommodation market, accounting for only 6% of global market accommodation. Such a service is being improved every day by the need of people to create real social connections, a unique and local experience combined with a reasonable price and using trusting online payment systems for costumers to avoid fraud and to feel sure about their reservations. The clearest example of success in this sector is Airbnb: in 2008 Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia were just trying to figure out a way to

pay the rent, so they created a website that advertised \$80 to rent an air mattress on the floor of their apartment plus breakfast. Three people decided to try it and, in this way, Airbnb was born, now spreading over 150 countries in 57.000 cities, accounting for 50 million users and 640.000 Airbnb hosts.

Admittedly, a considerable amount has been written about the impact of peer-to-peer accommodation platforms, primarily focusing on the main players Airbnb and HomeAway. On the one hand, their incredible growth clearly justifies this attention. On the other hand, there is very little clarity about the impact private rental platforms have on the hotel industry. Having this into account, we are now going to discuss the opinions, the implications, the challenges and the opportunities born by the development of private rentals, starting by the contextualisation of the current financial power of Airbnb and HomeAway.

Arguably, hoteliers might not be able to see the impact of private rentals on their businesses yet, but rather than pretending that nothing is happening, it is important that they consider the power that these platforms are starting to have, competing with the traditional firms of the market.

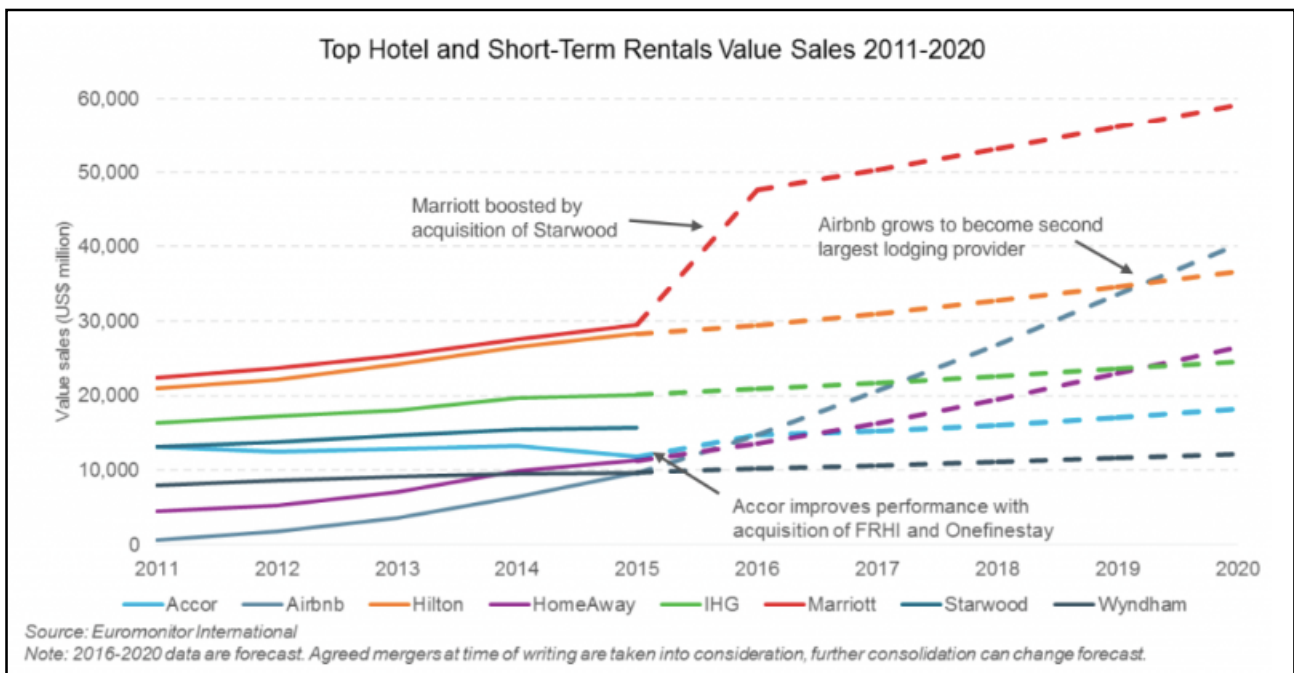
As further proof of this fact, if the new projections imagined by the London-based global market research firm Euromonitor International are right, in 2020 Airbnb will be the second world's largest hospitality company concerning total room sales. Airbnb would only be subordinated to the combined Marriott-Starwood group, and it will have approximately \$40 billion value of short-term rental sales per year (Geerts, 2015).

One may claim that a lot could happen between now and 2020 that could change these projections or completely refute them, particularly speaking about Airbnb. Nevertheless, it is clear that Airbnb's multi-billion dollar reserve of cash made until now, as well as its ambitions to add business travel into its developing business, are two aspects that put it in a position susceptible to stay in power.

Euromonitor's recent report on short-term rentals concerns Airbnb's expansion regarding target audience, and property composition will help determine how cities and countries are adapting their regulatory frameworks to either legalise or ban it. As the report states, "it has lost its image as a technology start-up and peer-to-peer platform championing the rights of homeowners" (Geerts, 2015). Moreover, the report says that the company is attracting more than just private owners. Independent hotels, serviced apartment operators and real estate agents are showing an interest in using the platform to rent out properties. It is important to emphasise that, since Airbnb is supporting and increasing this amount of commercial businesses offering a lot of resources on its platform, it will have to deal with legislators that are likely to sue the company and avail themselves of the existing laws regulating the accommodation market. It seems that Airbnb will be forced to battle with them, risking facing an obstruction of the growth in supply, especially referred to the most luxury services it is offering on the platform.

Nevertheless, according to Euromonitor’s projections (Peltier, 2016), by 2020 Airbnb’s total annual sales is supposed to be about \$20 billion behind Marriott-Starwood’s; likewise, another large chain such as Hilton or IHG could make an acquisition like Marriott International did last year and change the ranking of biggest players expected.

The following graph based on financial data shows how Airbnb, HomeAway and major hotel chains fit into the overall global accommodations scheme and how that could shift by the end of this decade. These projections also take into account new fusion announcements.



Graph 1: Top hotel and Short-Term Rentals Value Sales 2011-2020 - Source: Euromonitor International

The response from hotels to turnaround

It is important to add that many hotels have decided to avoid threatening or suing P2P companies: the main reason can be assumed from the discourse of Hyatt CEO, Mark Hoplamazian (Santoli, 2014), who maintained that he does not see the necessity to find an immediate answer to the type of business Airbnb is proposing. The reason for this position can be inferred from the interview he gave to Yahoo Finance on the 2nd of June 2014, when he stated that indeed, as Airbnb is thought to offer a different service from the qualified product provided by the hotels and to a different customer tier, such a brand cannot be considered as direct competitor. He added that some similar sharing services already existed before Airbnb was born, citing Holidays Homes as an example.

In contrast, other firms have opted for denouncing such services. In May 2014, American Hotel and Lodging Association, representing 52,000 properties in the US, announced a plan to confront these types of short term rentals companies. The aim of this action was to combat those companies

regarding a health and safety legislation point of view and reclaiming the lack of a regulated taxation scheme.

From this perspective, in New York the situation is very complicated and still under development. Airbnb has started to take steps to ensure that hospitality taxes are paid by their hosts but, at the same time, it requested the change of some local legislation asking to waive some fees. However, ‘The hotel association of New York’, as a prompt response, immediately stated the impossibility to accept Airbnb request of change. It is clear that by doing so, they would legitimise the peer-to-peer business, to the detriment of standard ones.

Airbnb economic impact on global cities

It is widely believed that cities in North America and Western Europe are the target of Airbnb Market. Surely, it is mostly diffused as an urban phenomenon, although some rural realities are appearing in that scenario as well. In all cases, the ongoing issue of short-term rentals has favoured changes or caused problems to several local authorities.

The Amsterdam City Council, for example, has renewed its legislation in order to make its short-term accommodation practices legal, and ensuring tourist taxes by both parts. As they declared, “The City of Amsterdam and Airbnb today announced an agreement that will promote responsible home simplifying the sharing and payment of tourist tax for hosts in the city”. (Legislation of Amsterdam, 2014). On the other hand, San Francisco has a ban on all short term rentals, unless the host has a license, and it is likely that soon the city’s law will change, asking a fee to Airbnb’s guests.

Nevertheless, despite Airbnb’s continuous and tumultuous relationship with New York authorities, one may claim the beginning of a favourable partnership between them: after Hurricane Sandy catastrophe, Airbnb proposed itself as a solution for the victim providing them with a free or low-cost housing.

Another example of cooperation between Airbnb and some local authorities can be found during FIFA World Cup 2014 in Brazil. As a matter of fact, the accommodation demand during the event was higher than the accommodation supply. In that situation, the city of Rio De Janeiro, notoriously poor of hotels, needed to ask for help to Airbnb, who provided visitors with 14,000 rooms, guaranteeing an excellent service during such an important event.

Table 1 proposes a scheme of the biggest market in which Airbnb acts.

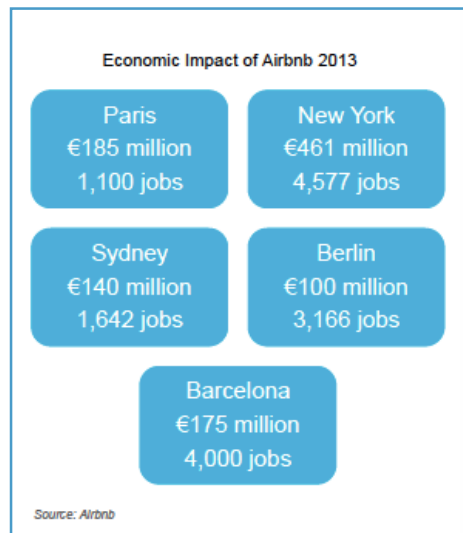


Table 1: Economic Impact of Airbnb 2013- Source: Airbnb data

Age range service demand

The domain of those who use the accommodation type of collaborative consumption and embrace initiatives such as Couchsurfing has expanded to leisure travel business, and it is open to people of all ages. As Airbnb says, 38% of the hosts are aged between 30 and 39, and in the same category can also fit the 31% of the guests. More than 20% of the guests are over 50, with a 4% more than 65. Hence, it can be predicted that the host profile will evolve more and more.

4.2.2 Transport service market

In this chapter, the relationship between transportation services and the sharing economy will be stated and analysed. Innovation, use, supply and demand channels for car-sharing and bike sharing are current topics called into question by service providers and users. Through the analysis of the impact of this economy, the environmental and economic benefits that can be introduced into the world economy will be outlined.

Car-sharing

Car-sharing services may well be said to belong to the emerging class of ‘mobility services’ that are drawn on new technologies, enabling the new concept of car-based mobility without the consumer’s need to own the physical resource, that is, a car. In contradiction with the traditional procedure of selling cars to end users, this trend requires new value premise, new organisational structures, and new ways of interacting with the public sector. Unlike them, taxis and traditional car hire are an older alternative form of transport services that do not need the same modern information and

communicational technology to be commercially viable, even if starting as well to make use of new technologies towards customer service improvements.

Even if traces of car-sharing have existed since 1948 in Switzerland, it was only in the last 15 years that the concept was developed and evolved into a proper mobility solution in the United States.

The University of California, Berkeley's Transportation Sustainability Research Center (TSRC), a reliable source of research on shared services, has released its winter 2016 car-sharing report. According to authors Susan Shaheen and Adam Cohen, car-sharing is continuing to grow quickly worldwide, regarding both memberships and fleet size (Shaheen, 2014).

The document captures car-sharing market trends and fleets size statistics in a series of charts. The most recent numbers, from October 2014, are already over two-years-old, but they indicate a cut in total memberships. For instance, global car-sharing membership more than doubled between 2012 and 2014.

At the time the data were collected, the car-sharing transaction could be detected in 33 countries on five continents for a total of approximately 4.8 million members. Europe occupies the first place for plurality of car-sharing memberships, at 46 percent, and North America the second place at 34 percent. Europe and the North America also claim the largest fleets, with 56 percent and 23 percent of them deployed, respectively. Meanwhile, Mexico and Italy had the highest member-to-vehicle ratios, 131:1 and 107:1, respectively. (12th September 2016).



2014 data confirm the continued rise of carsharing memberships worldwide. (TSRC, Winter 2016 Carsharing Outlook)

Graph 2: Car-sharing global trend - Source: TSRC, Winter 2016 Carsharing Outlook

The terminology of car-sharing has never been standardised and it represents an ongoing source of confusion for both industry professionals and end users. In particular instances, clarity is important. However, such a service is usually defined depending on the particular form of taxation under which is subjected. For example, car-sharing activity has occasionally been deemed to be subjected to taxes intended for traditional car rental, what in many cases was motivated by a desire to tax a jurisdiction's visitors rather than its residents.

Although there is no undeniable correct definition, car-sharing remains the term commonly used to refer to mobility services with the following characteristics:

- The user must pass through a pre-qualification process for the verification of identity. Keyless access is typical, although not all car-sharing services have in-vehicle telematics required.
- The vehicle is driven by the end-user as in traditional hire, since he is not a paid chauffeur as in a taxi, and the consumer is using it on a personal basis or on behalf of some employees, or corporate car sharing.
- Usage is billed in time increments of minutes or hours, and sometimes also by distance travelled.
- There may be a one-time sign-up fee or annual subscription besides the other charges.
- The vehicles are typically available from disrupted locations across a service area.
- Service/cleaning is done by the operator's staff on an occasional basis.

There are several forms of car-sharing: the classic Round-Trip car-sharing where users generally book a car for when they need to use one, usually through smartphone apps or on a website set apart for the particular service. It often happens that the user specifies both the time and the duration of the rental. The rental is 'round-trip' because the customer must, with few exceptions, return the car to the same place from where it was accessed. Another form is peer-to-peer car-sharing, in which the critical distinction with the round-trip model described above is that the car-sharing fleet is de-centralised, owned by private individuals. Another car-sharing model is point-to-point, free-floating car-sharing, which enables one-way journeys within a specified geographic zone, in contrast to round-trip car-sharing. Usage is typically spontaneous. The last one is the point-to-point, station-based car-sharing, through which the user picks up a car from one parking station and returns it in another one.

Apart from the aforesaid cases, in the UK car-sharing refers also to multiple people travelling together in a car at the same time. Can UBER be considered a car-sharing service then? It has been said that the media frequently use the term car-sharing in general audiences more loosely than it has just been explained. For instance, services that connect drivers with passengers who want to be driven from point "A" to "B", such as Uber, are regularly described as car-sharing services by the mass media,

such as Bloomberg, Forbes and Wall Street Journal. Such a service is becoming increasingly prominent, being valued at \$10 billion when it raised capital in early June 2014.

Uber is a car-sharing company that offers, through a mobile app, a connection service between passengers and independent drivers. Established in 2009 in San Francisco, the company has grown to 400 cities and 70 countries. In March 2015, it was evaluated approximately around US\$ 62,5 billion (DMR, 2016). The company provides different rates depending on supply and demand in a particular period of time. However, Uber has caused controversy in many global locations with unresolved problems of tax payments or violation of the law that regulates the taxicab: taxi drivers defined this service as illegal and unfair, because laws ended up imposing taxes and duties to taxi drivers but not to Uber ones. As a consequence, there were strikes across Europe that made governments regulate traffic, imposing in Uber the same obligations the other similar services have.

On the other hand, it is known that protests by taxi drivers failed elsewhere like in London, where the same day of strikes an increase of 850% in Uber users was recorded.

Finally, it must be explicated that today Uber is prohibited in Brussels, Berlin, and Virginia in the US, and there are other places that are still fighting with local governments. One example could be found in France's statement, on 3rd November 2015, when the local journal of Marseille, despite the declarations of suspension stated by French authorities, announced the regularity of the service: "Uber n'est pas un taxi, Uber est une entreprise de technologie, dont l'application pour smartphones met en relation des chauffeurs indépendants avec des passagers inscrits sur la plateforme. Aujourd'hui disponible dans plus de 300 communes et 12 métropoles en France, l'application Uber permet à plus d'un million d'utilisateurs Français de se déplacer de manière fiable, sûre et économique. Elle est accessible 7j/7 et 24h/24, et a déjà contribué à la création de plus de 10 000 emplois en France" (Chape, 2015). Under this statement, the Uber group made clear the terms and conditions of Uber service, declaring it legal, a producer of employment and not in competition with regular taxi service.

Allegedly, Uber has redefined the role of a digital innovator. Not only has it disrupted the transportation market, but it has also completely taken over its ride-for-hire segment. In less than seven years, it has become one of the largest privately funded companies in the world. But how big has Uber become? The last statistics available were released at the beginning of 2016 and count Uber in more than 400 cities around 70 countries, with an average of Uber daily trips of 2 billion rides. According to the source, the number of Uber trips in July 2016 reached 62 million trips, exactly 8 million more of the precedent month. The new landing of Uber in China is also a case in point, where it counts its presence already in 100 cities, with a value around \$7 billion, however the losing annual value necessary for the instalment estimated around \$1 billion.

The Government's role in fixing the mobility system

When talking about equality and the social impact of mobility, experts start to question the government's role in today's mobility system. Should the government have more or less impact going forward?

A clash of two fundamentally different world views can be seen: while some claim that the free market will create the best possible outcome, others argue that failing market forces are the cause of current mobility issues, and that stronger governmental regulations are the only way of fixing this.

This sounds like the classic battle between socialism and capitalism, but no matter what side is privileged, one fact is clear: even the most innovative companies cannot change the world without governmental support, and the same can be said for governments alone. Fixing today's mobility systems seems to require, then, a team effort which includes cities, transit agencies, mobility providers and the general public working hand in hand.

Here is an example for a win-win-situation: the community-based traffic and navigation app Waze provides the city of Los Angeles with information about current road conditions, and the city returns information on road closures. This is a great illustration of how effective data sharing between public and private operators is able to improve traffic and public transit planning.

Age range service demand

Car-sharing activity has been studied quite extensively by both academic and private sector researchers. This section will describe what is known about car-sharing customers and their travel patterns.

Although the publicly available evidence is fragmentary, it is clear that car-sharing users have a distinctive socio-economic profile. This section briefly highlights patterns and relationships that are typically observed.

The evidence base regarding car-sharing users and their behaviour is most robust for round-trip car-sharing services, even if some research studies are presently investigating other types of car-sharing services.

Users of round-trip car-sharing services tend to be:

- well-educated,
- predominantly males (Loose reports a range of 53%-69% of males among various services in Europe (Loose,2010), but Martin and Shaheen counted a split of 57% of females versus a 43% of males in North America),(Martin and Shaheen 2010),

- young adults, predominantly between 25 and 45 years old (70% of British car-sharing users are in this age range),
- living as a single person or as a childless couple,
- coming from middle or middle/upper-income families,
- owners of a car maximum,
- living in urban neighbourhoods,
- users of public transports or used to walking or cycling.

For car-sharing operators, increasing the business travel as a share of overall usage can help to increase fleet utilisation during periods when the demand for personal use of car-sharing services is low, for instance in daytime hours during weekdays. Employers may also find staff use of car-sharing attractive as a substitute for providing company cars or pool cars - for cost and sustainability reasons – or, conversely, staff use of their private vehicles for business travel - due to insurance/liability issues. In some cases, an employer provides employees with access to a car-sharing service for their personal use as an employment benefit - sometimes they pay their employees' subscription fees - as well as their business use.

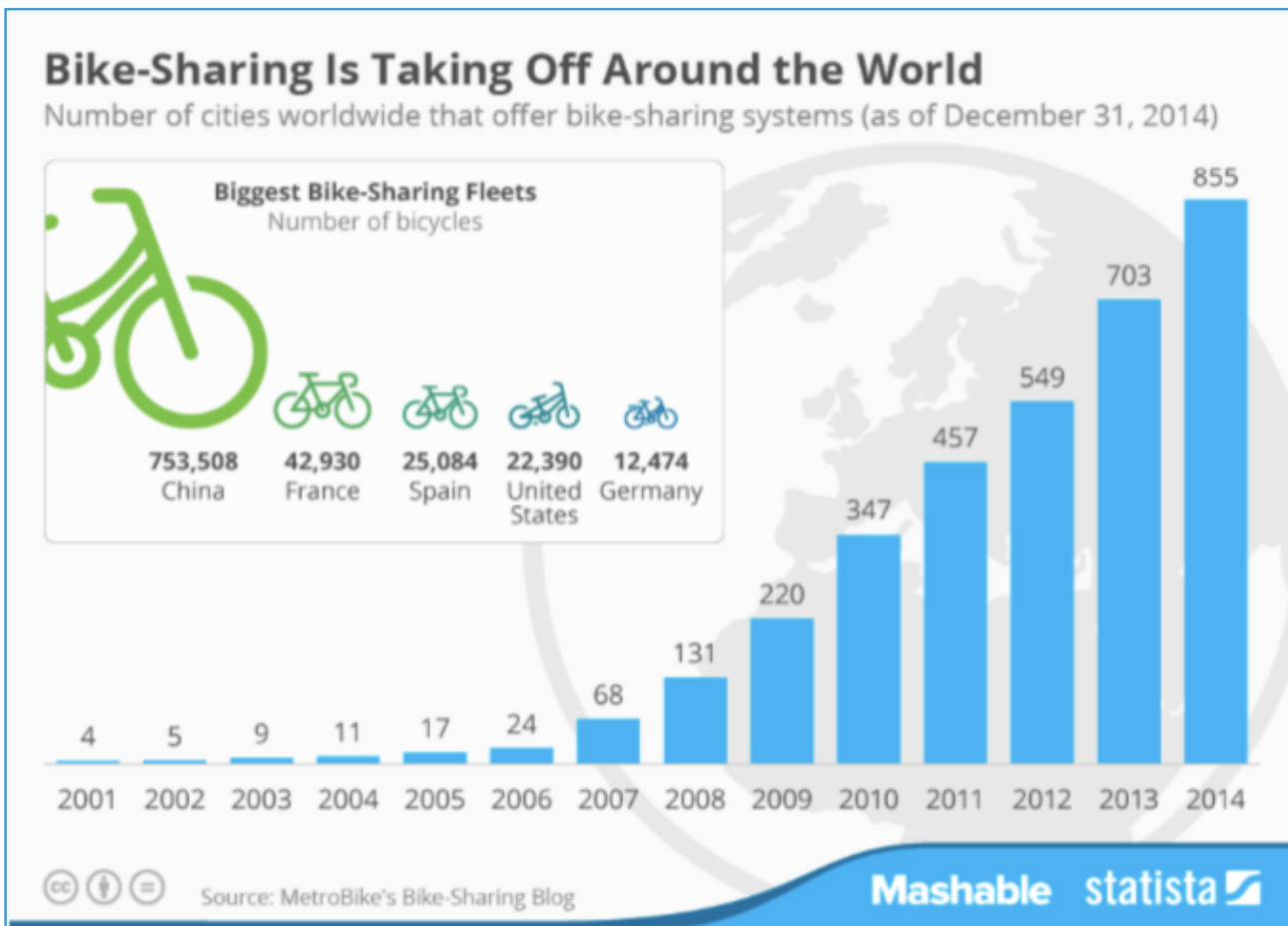
Moreover, the number of students who need to move is evolving thanks to what the opportunity the car-sharing represents, as well as thanks to the technological developments combined with the advance of mobile collaborative consumption economy. It should be noticed that these services are seen as complementary to public transportation, and not in competition, since the people who are using them are often the same who use public buses and trains as well.

Bike sharing systems

Over the past decade, every day more cities around the world have adopted the so-called bike-sharing systems, which consist in the organisation of bicycle pick-up points from where users are enabled to take a bike for a small fee, use it and leave it at the bike station closest to their point of interest. The pricing structure of the bike-sharing systems is often built on the idea of offering the possibility of short-term usage, as well as of encouraging this means of transport instead of other ones. In this way, the user is invited to borrow a bicycle without thinking twice about other more expensive and less healthy solutions.

Bicycle sharing systems have been observed as an option to deal with urban traffic, which is why they are particularly popular in the major cities and densely populated areas. By the end of 2014, bike-sharing systems were counted in 855 cities around the world. According to 'data and stats' compiled by Russell Meddin for MetroBike, a consultancy specialised on bike-sharing, the global

bike-share fleet counts almost 1 million bicycles, with the most of them registered in China.(Richter, 2015)



Graph 3: Number of cities that offer bike-sharing systems - Source: <https://www.statista.com>

City bike sharing is a successful story that has developed worldwide. This service is enjoyed by both tourists and residents and ensures environmental sustainability. The use of this service has improved with the development of mobile applications, which enable to spot the nearest stations, as well as the number of bikes available at a given time. This is very useful both for who wants to rent a bike and for who wants to return it. Nevertheless, such a service had to face problems as vandalism or theft, and this makes it a service which requires heavy maintenance and investment. On the one hand, if the service did establish successful programs, on the other hand, they sometimes were abandoned after an unsatisfactory start.

Some of the most successful bike-sharing systems follow:

- BICIMAD: with 3,166,130 people, Madrid is a city that has turned its back on the bike for decades. In the last years, the bicycle rides have increased while the use of other means of transport has

reduced. Nonetheless, in 2012 only 0.1% of all journeys included the use of bicycles, according to the average daily traffic intensity report. (Madrid en bike, 2014)

- Santander Cycle: formerly Barclays Cycle Hire, this is a public bicycle hire scheme in London, United Kingdom, which was launched by Mayor of London Boris Johnson in 2010. This is why the bicycle's system, also known as Boris Bike, was named after him. Barclays Bank was the first sponsor, till March 2015. In spite of this, the credit for developing and launching this scheme is already a source of debate. If Johnson took the credit for the plan, the first draft was probably made by his predecessor, Ken Livingstone, during the last period of his mandate. No matter who did it, the idea behind it was the same. In fact, while Livingstone claimed that the program would have heralded a “cycling and walking transformation in London”, Johnson argued that he “hoped the bikes would become as common as black cabs and red buses in the capital”. Surprisingly, a survey showed that cyclists using the bike systems are three times less likely to be injured per trip than “normal” cyclists in London on the whole, possibly thanks to motorists who give more roads to Boris Bike than to private ones. Consequently, a recent customer survey stated that 49 percent of Cycle Hire members give the credit of their cycle habits to this cycle sharing systems. Not only the system is safe, then, but it is also popular, as the daily record for cycle hires is 73,000. (Wikipedia, 2016)
- Hangzhou Public Bicycle: if one expected Europe to dominate the list, he would be shocked to know that the expectation was wrong. The city of Hangzhou, China, with a population of around 7 million, boasts the world’s largest bike share program (icebike.org, 2015). As a matter of fact, no other bike share schemes in the world are close to the number they have: 66,500 and 78,000 bicycles in their program organised across around 2700 stations. As the say goes, there are so many hired bikes across the city that it seems to be impossible to walk without seeing at least one every five minutes. Due to the success of this ‘cycling revolution’, the local government has decided to invest more money to allow the Hangzhou Public Transport Corporation to expand even further. Thanks to an investment equivalent to 18.5 million UK pounds, the company announced an increase of the actual fleet that is supposed to reach 175,000 bikes by 2020. Considering that the program only started in 2008, it has definitely registered an explosive expansion.

4.2.3 Another collaborative resource: tour and activities service

“Tour and activities” is becoming a real part of the collaborative economy, where locals offer their services to tourists. Websites like Touristlink, Peek and Vayable connect travellers with residents

who can add something unique to the site visit. While these companies claim to operate globally, the truth is that they cover the most visited tourist areas still excluding some niche sites, far from the most crowded tourist places. Social media represent a critical issue because the consumer can write down a feedback with an either pleasant or unpleasant description that can influence other customers' choice to use the same service or not. Similarly, the importance of trust and connections is essential, as the guides who obtain good evaluations are likely to be the ones who will work the most. Even so, the activities sector is finding some difficulties in its development. As an example, there is the case of the search site Kayak, which decided to terminate its collaboration with GetYourGuide, a mobile provider proposing tours and activities. In this light, it must be said that many travellers still want to book these types of services in situ and no longer during the booking process. However, in 2013 TripAdvisor started its collaboration with Viator, a global resource for book activity, and now tourists can directly access the website of Viator while using the TripAdvisor City Map Guide.

5. COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION: DETERMINANTS OF SATISFACTION AND THE LIKELIHOOD USING A SHARING OPTION AGAIN

In March 2013, *The Economist* (*The Economist*, 2013) published an editorial addressing the sharing economy, paying tribute to an emerging trend that is transforming consumer behaviours. In recent years, more and more people are embracing services of car sharing such as Uber or Zipcar, ride bicycle sharing such as CityBike in New York, swapping books or DVDs such as Craigslist, booking accommodation via online community marketplaces such as Airbnb. Collaborative consumption is not a niche trend anymore. The school of Economics and Social Sciences of the University of Hamburg Von-Melle-Park, Germany, conducted a survey research trying to answer the following questions:

- a. What are the most important determinants to explain the satisfaction with a sharing option?
- b. What are the most important determinants to explain the likelihood of choosing a sharing option again?

The framework of the determinants of a sharing option has been developed through two quantitative surveys, one in a business-to-consumer or b2c context, and one in a consumer-to-consumer or c2c context, whose aim is to either confirm or reject the initial hypotheses. The data have been analysed and results, implications and limitations will be discussed.

While sharing behaviours among collectives, corporations and communities have been evident for centuries (Belk, 2010), today new forms of collaborative consumption are increasingly finding applications in the private, public and non-profit sector. Nowadays, collaborative consumption spills over into areas whose nature was previously seen as ‘non-collaborative’. As already said, the rise of the Internet has played a key role in this process, due to the fact that it has facilitated it with the easy constitution of online-based communities and networks for little transaction costs. Particularly, mobile apps enable a very instant exchange of information. According to Belk, the definition of collaborative consumption is the “people coordinating the acquisition and distribution of a resource for a fee or other compensation”. Thereby, collaborative consumption excludes sharing activities where no compensation is involved.

On the one hand, collaborative consumption might refer to b2c services, such as commercial car sharing. On the other hand, it might apply to c2c sharing in the form of redistribution markets or collaborative lifestyles, such as accommodation sharing marketplaces, facilitated by an external

provider like an online platform. So far, 80 million people in the US are estimated to be involved in collaborative consumption activities.

5.1 Development of framework and hypotheses

The developed framework of the determinants of choosing a sharing option illustrates ten factors which have an effect on the variable ‘satisfaction with a sharing option’, or on the variable ‘likelihood of choosing a sharing option again’.

The ten determinants are the following:

1. community belonging
2. cost savings
3. environmental impact
4. familiarity
5. internet capability
6. service quality
7. smart phone capability
8. trend affinity
9. trust
10. utility

The first is community belonging. Community membership, or the aspiration to be part of a group or a community, is argued to be one determinant of practising sharing or collaborative consumption activities. In “From Generation Me to Generation We” (Botsman, 2010), Botsman and Rogers discussed a shift in society, which has become evident in recent years. Albinsson and Perera (Albinsson and Perera, 2002) stressed a sense of community to be the principal driver of regular participation in sharing activities.

The second is cost savings. Mont (Mont, 2004) has asserted that the satisfaction of car sharing customers would be influenced by cost savings, including the initial cost of investing in a transportation option. Lumberton and Rose (Lumberton and Rose, 2012) found cost benefits of sharing to be a key determinant of usage.

The environmental impact is illustrated as the third one. In times of growing scepticism toward capitalistic structures and anti-consumption movements, alternative forms of green, ethical or sustainable consumption have become increasingly important. In this way, the material required for

each episode of sharing is reduced, and the waste is avoided. In fact, studies demonstrated that users of car-sharing services reduced their emissions by up to 50 percent each.

The fourth determinant is the familiarity with a sharing option. Some consumers might be reluctant to use a service for the first time because they do not have any experience with it. Accordingly, a high familiarity with sharing services might help users minimise these transaction costs. Therefore, familiarity might be a relevant determinant of the satisfaction and further usage of sharing options.

The fifth component is Internet capability. Internet technology has reduced transaction costs and increasingly cut distances over the last couple of years. This applies in particular to c2c sharing platforms.

Service quality is the sixth determinant in the framework. The perception of service quality depends on the experience a customer lives when consuming a service. In the context of the sharing economy, a user of a car sharing service or accommodation marketplace is more likely to use the service again after having had a positive experience with the customer service.

The seventh in the list is smartphone capability. The smart phone enables users to find out immediate availability and location of cars in their direct surroundings, together with the walking route to the car chosen, in order to book one easily.

Trend affinity is the eighth determinant, and it refers to the fact that collaborative consumption is an emerging trend, which influences consumer behaviours on a large scale.

Trust is the ninth component, because it is considered a principal determinant of choosing collaborative consumption options.

The tenth and final determinant is utility. As mentioned in the previous chapters, many researchers have described the human being as a self-interested individual seeking to maximise efficiency. In fact, many studies have demonstrated that utility influences people's consumption decisions and habits. More specifically, research has focused on the perceived utility of sharing options in contrast to non-sharing options.

5.2 Data collections, sample and measurement

Two different collaborative consumption services have been surveyed and analysed in order to answer the questions listed at the beginning of the present chapter.

- The b2c car-sharing service Car2Go is operating internationally, with 11.000 small cars in 26 cities worldwide.
- The c2c accommodation sharing service Airbnb is the largest working online community marketplace for accommodation worldwide with procedures that are increasing its results.

After conducting two series of tests in spring 2014, two independent quantitative online studies were presented in July 2014. Both questionnaires used the same measurement items. The links to the web interface of the studies were sequentially distributed via a mailing list to the students of the University of Hamburg by the research laboratory WISO Forschungslabor. Participants of both studies were offered the incentive to earn a prize in vouchers with a value of Euros 40 each, where the research laboratory made sure that the overall value of the vouchers distributed was equal to ten euros per hour of response effort by students, for a total of four hours.

Finally, the data of N=236 of Car2Go users (study 1) and N=187 Airbnb users (study 2) were collected. Scale answer options ranged from 1= “strongly disagreed” and 7= “strongly agreed”, with the additional option “I cannot tell”.

5.3 Data analysis

The PLS (partial least square) technique has been chosen, as it is particularly useful to study relatively complex models by using relatively small sample sizes, to elaborate data that not necessarily have a parametric nature, and to carry out a management-related research with a predictive research scope.

Measurement models for study 1 and 2: initially, the measurement models of both studies were estimated to analyse the relationship between the two variables - a. satisfaction with a sharing option and b. likelihood of choosing a sharing option again - and its ten determinants.

Structural model of study 1 (b2b car-sharing Car2go): the analysis reveals that four determinants have no significant effects on any of the two endogenous variables of the framework. This is evident for environmental impact, internet capability, smartphone capability and trend affinity. For the other determinants, significant effects are found on one or both endogenous variables. In support of hypothesis 1b - namely, the effect of determinant 1 on the variable b - the data reveal that determinant 1 community belonging has a positive and significant effect on variable b likelihood of choosing a sharing option again. Hypothesis 1a is rejected because of its weak and insignificant effect. Hypothesis 2a is confirmed because cost savings has shown to have a positive and significant effect on the satisfaction with a sharing option. Hypothesis 2b is rejected. The fourth determinant familiarity seems to have an active and substantial impact on the satisfaction with a sharing option (4a) but no significant effect on the likelihood of choosing a sharing option again (4b). The sixth determinant, service quality, is confirmed just regarding the satisfaction with a sharing option (6a). Hypotheses 6b is rejected. The critical role of trust as hypothesised in 9a can be confirmed because of a highly

significant and positive effect is found on the satisfaction with a sharing option. Hypothesis 9b is not confirmed. As far as the tenth determinant is concerned, a highly significant path coefficient is estimated from the utility on the satisfaction with a sharing option (10a) and on the likelihood of choosing a sharing option again (10b).

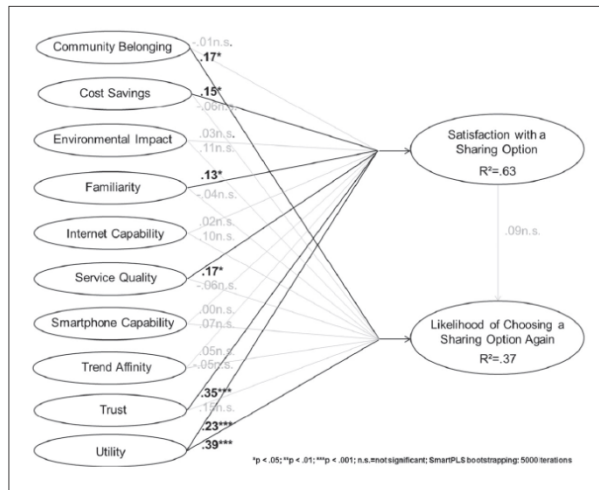


Figure 2. Results of the PLS analysis of study 1 (B2C car sharing *car2go*).

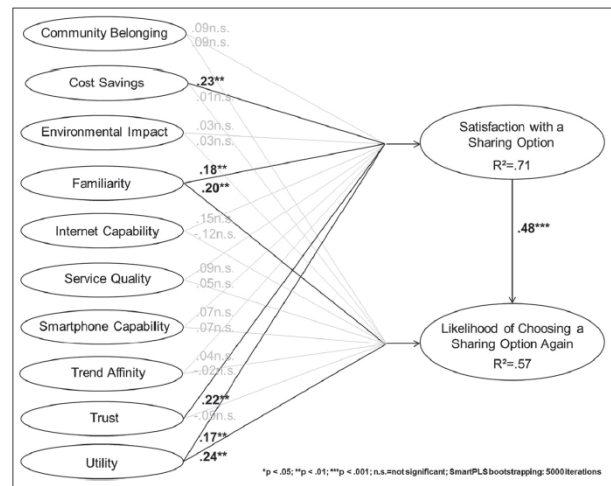


Figure 3. Results of the PLS analysis of study 2 (C2C accommodation marketplace *Airbnb*).

Images 1 and 2: PLS analysis - Source: Journal of Consumer Behaviour, J. Consumer Behav. 14: 193-207 (2015)

Structural model of study 2 (c2c accommodation marketplace Airbnb): as in study 1, determinants that neither have a significant effect on the satisfaction with a sharing option nor on the likelihood of choosing a sharing option again variable have been identified. This applies to the variables community belonging, environmental impact, internet capability, service quality, smartphone capability and trend affinity. In line with the hypothesis 2a, cost savings is found to have positive effect on the satisfaction with a sharing option variable. However, 2b is rejected. Hypotheses 4a and 4b can both be confirmed, approving the positive relationship between familiarity and the satisfaction with a sharing option again. Whereas hypothesis 9b is rejected, a significant effect is estimated from the trust variable on the satisfaction with a sharing option. In line with hypotheses 10a and 10b, a large path coefficient has been calculated between the utility variable and the satisfaction with a sharing option and the likelihood of choosing a sharing option again. Eventually, the analysis reveals a significant path coefficient between the satisfaction with a sharing option and the possibility of selecting a sharing option again variable.

5.4 Summary and discussion

In study 1, users of the car sharing service Car2Go were surveyed and their answers offer insight into a b2c context of a collaborative consumption setting. Seven significant path coefficients have been estimated for this model. The variables cost savings, familiarity, service quality, trust, and utility are

found to have a positive effect on the satisfaction with a sharing option. Furthermore, the variable community belonging and utility are found to have a positive effect on the likelihood of choosing a sharing option again construct.

The results of study 2, in which users of the c2c accommodation marketplace Airbnb were surveyed, reveal that the four variables costs savings, familiarity, trust and utility influence the satisfaction with a sharing option positively. Besides, familiarity and utility are estimated to have a significant and positive effect on the likelihood of choosing a sharing option again.

As a result, several similarities can be identified among the determinants in both studies, indicating a high external validity of results. In general, it can be claimed that users pay attention to the fact that collaborative consumption helps to save money and has great utility in a way that it is a valid substitute for a non-sharing option. Familiarity with a service is found to be a major determinant, probably because it lowers transaction costs of getting to know the specifics of the sharing process. Furthermore, both studies reveal the important role of trust as an essential determinant of the satisfaction with a sharing option.

Important insights can also be drawn from the difference in results shown in both studies. In contrast to study 2 (c2c accommodation sharing context Airbnb), in study 1 (b2c car-sharing context Car2go) two additional determinants with significant effects have been identified. Respective respondents indicate that community belonging would positively influence the likelihood of choosing a sharing option again. What is more, service quality is found to affect the satisfaction with a sharing option. Thereby, in study 2 (c2c), a more frequent relationship between the satisfaction with a sharing option and the variable likelihood of choosing a sharing option again is estimated, founded in the analysis of two determinants utility and familiarity. This relationship is not revealed in study 1 (b2c).

It is also interesting to notice that four determinants, previously identified in the literature, had no significant effects on any of the two endogenous variables in both studies, and this applies to environmental impact, internet capability, smartphone capability and trend affinity.

5.5 Research and management implications

A large hotel chain is likely to try and convince costumers that its booking accommodation has several advantages, such as the assurance that they will always receive the same standardised quality for the same set price, that any problems with a hotel room can be easily resolved by transferring them to another or a partner hotel, and so on. In reality, the conventional non-sharing service provider might think about incorporating sharing services in their product range, in order to diversify and respond to the new trend. The AVIS group, for example, has expanded its offers by acquiring the car sharing company Zipcar (Möhlmann, 2015).

New market systems

China has not become a market of collaborative consumption yet. In this country, the accommodation market potential is believed to be low due to Chinese culture, which makes people be reluctant to share their rooms. However, C-Trip, one of the most famous Chinese travel agencies, decided to invest in tujia.com, a Chinese start-up for flats rental where people can turn their home into a hotel. Today, Tujia offers more than 40,000 properties in 65 Chinese cities. Recently, many companies - including HomeAway, whose income is the highest worldwide - invested \$100 million in Tujia, which now works with many more foreign markets and also offers cleaning services.

As far as the transport sector is concerned, Uber has also been established in China, but since the government does not allow the use of private cars, this well-known car-sharing service has to refer to Chinese car rental companies that make the trip very expensive.

Future technologies will facilitate the "sharing."

As Google's Instant Buy, Visa's or MasterCard's V.me Masterpass increased their popularity, so did the 'mobile wallet', and the power of the smartphone is likely to replace the wallet in the future. It must be observed, though, that the ongoing process of mobile payments makes the buyer more vulnerable in situations of theft or capture of data by third parties, phenomena that can often occur. In spite of its weaknesses, the advancement of mobile technology remains crucial in what concerns the collaborative economy. It is no surprise that many of the countries that are demonstrating propensity to the use of digital payments are houses of the largest cities in the world. As connections are improving worldwide, the accessibility to services such as Bitcoin helps many people and small activities to join this new possibility of online purchase. Apple itself is developing a software that can include all currency transactions in one app.

Construction: key development aspect

The collaborative economy is primarily an urban phenomenon: the city is the place where a high-density amount of consumers engages in limited shared spaces, whereas rural populations are still struggling to develop this type of consumer and business. However, urban populations are registering an increase worldwide and Euromonitor International foresees that 70% of the hosts in 2030 will be urban (Eghbal, 2014). Accordingly, this massive urban expansion is likely to continue and push on infrastructure, environment and urban resources. It is also true, though, that customers always demand

better services and develop higher professionals need, and no one can predict with certainty what their idea of good business will be like in the future.

CONCLUSION

As we have maintained throughout this dissertation, the sharing economy and collaborative tourism are socioeconomic revolutions that are changing the way we think business and travel nowadays. It can be assumed that, even if they are bringing back old values to the society, they still need time to take shape and to affirm themselves in everyday life.

Harvard University and Dr Niles Eldridge at the American Museum of Natural History came up with the theory that fossil records show that evolution happened in rapid bursts, which became known as ‘punctuated’ equilibrium. Today, this theory continues to be a source of fascination not only to scientists but also to business management theorists and philosophers. It is hard not to feel that in the last fifteen years people have been living in a world of rapid changes. It seems that every day people wake up feeling that the world has changed overnight, and go to sleep wondering how the world of tomorrow will be transformed. In the past, this seemed to be different, as just a few centuries ago one of the most important revolutions of the time, the industrial revolution, took almost one hundred years to take root. The words ‘industrial revolution’ were first used in a letter written by French envoy Louis Guillaume Otto on 6th July 1799, but its concept did not become popular, nor did it come into use for a long period. In fact, this occurred more than eighty years later, when Arnold Toynbee, an English economic historian, started to give lectures painting a vivid portrait of how the system had created a major turning point in modern history, affecting almost every aspect of people’s existence. Human beings have become increasingly adapted to change, and because Collaborative Consumption is based on natural behavioural instincts of sharing and exchanging, innate to us but suppressed by hyper-consumerism in the past, the same change has the potential to grow notably fast.

To conclude, one may wonder which benefits could this socioeconomic revolution bring to society. The aim of the conclusion is to try and find out pros and cons of this current movement towards a rediscovery of old habits. In order to analyse all the perspectives of this recent change, a SWOT analysis, with its points of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, has been outlined.

SWOT Analysis of Collaborative Tourism

POINTS OF STRENGTH:

The value of money: the collaborative economy offers consumers a chance to win more financial stability through the sharing of their goods and services. At the same time, this ensures a lower price that the consumer has to spend for the service.

Underused resources usage: consumers can offer their own underused or unused resources and this enables a trade-off of the initial asset cost.

WEAKNESS POINTS:

The economy of collaborative consumption is an urban concept, thus rural dwellers are unable to participate due to the lack of potential guests.

Legal implications: many collaborative consumption operations are not meeting the requirements and legal obligations regarding hospitality tax payments and residential rules.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Development of niche markets: increasing opportunities for some specialised niches through web pages. The business trip will probably be the next area of expansion, offering advantageous solutions to consumers. For instance, a tourist level in specific or small Bed & Breakfast can list their properties on Airbnb, without a host cost.

Large enterprises are incorporating collaborative services: the reputation of this economy is growing more and more and is becoming stable and prosperous, some venture capital firms are starting to invest, and other major companies are eager to do the same. As an example, in summer 2014 Expedia was linked to HomeAway in order to collaborate.

Development of the standard of hospitality and international growth: improving the experience of visitors and hosts and creating new kind of experiences linked with host market customs and traditions. As an example, China and Brazil are now developing their guidelines on that, giving birth to this new economy, although adapting it to their natural environment.

Solving legal problems: working with lawmakers to regulate this growing phenomenon.

Investment in new technologies: the mobile phone use as an essential for future development, including mobile payments, as well as association with other secure circuits payments.

THREATS:

Trade union action: recent strikes by taxi drivers across Europe against the advance of Uber have demonstrated the continuing problems of regulation of this movement. It is widely believed that only through the adjustment to the rights and obligations of the existing business, such as taxi, these new marketplaces can become a healthy way of competitiveness.

Health and safety: the liberal nature of this type of economy has led to discussions on health and safety regulations that remain difficult to accept for most people, who are used to counting on the greater reliability of licensed services such as hotels and taxi.

Legal problem: Airbnb as Uber have to work on the solving of these problems. Even if they have already registered much progress, a lot still remains to be done. As a matter of fact, the same founder of Uber, Travis Kalanick, in 2013 affirmed that Uber had three lawyers as staff and more than fifty law firms around the world working on their legal issues.

Offer: the growth of supply and future demand will remain restricted by local governments, by associations of owners and by the law. These procedures are thought to defend the existing businesses from the 'attack' of collaborative ones, limiting their potential success.

As already mentioned, one may argue that this new kind of economy is bringing back some old values the society seemed to have forgotten. If, on the one hand, traditional businesses are shocked in front of this 'renewed' phenomenon, scared by the possibility of their prerogative loss, on the other hand, the society is welcoming it, as a sign of comfort in an economically difficult period, as well as a natural way of recovering after the recent economic crisis suffered.

The Graph underneath shows a USA survey elaborated by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC, 2010) in December 2014. The multinational professional service network is the largest professional service firm in the world and one of the biggest four auditors. The PWC held salons in New York and San

Francisco, where industry specialists were invited to measure the sharing economy phenomenon and the future it holds.

Specifically, the survey proposed to outline the way society is re-thinking about the effectiveness of the sharing economy. According to it, the three most significant benefits declared in the introduction of this dissertation are confirmed:

1. 78% of the surveyed agree that sharing economy and collaborative tourism help the creation of a stronger community, where 63% of them find it funnier than the traditional businesses.
2. Stated that trust is fundamental in this new sharing mechanisms, 81% of the surveyed declare it less expensive than ownership, denouncing the ownership as unnecessary and confirming the economic benefit derived from sharing consumption.
3. As a consequence, even if not explicitly declared, it is evident the environmental advantage of this trend, in which the simple web access is considered by 57% of the surveyed as a new form of ownership. The less material is needed, the most the environment can benefit from it.

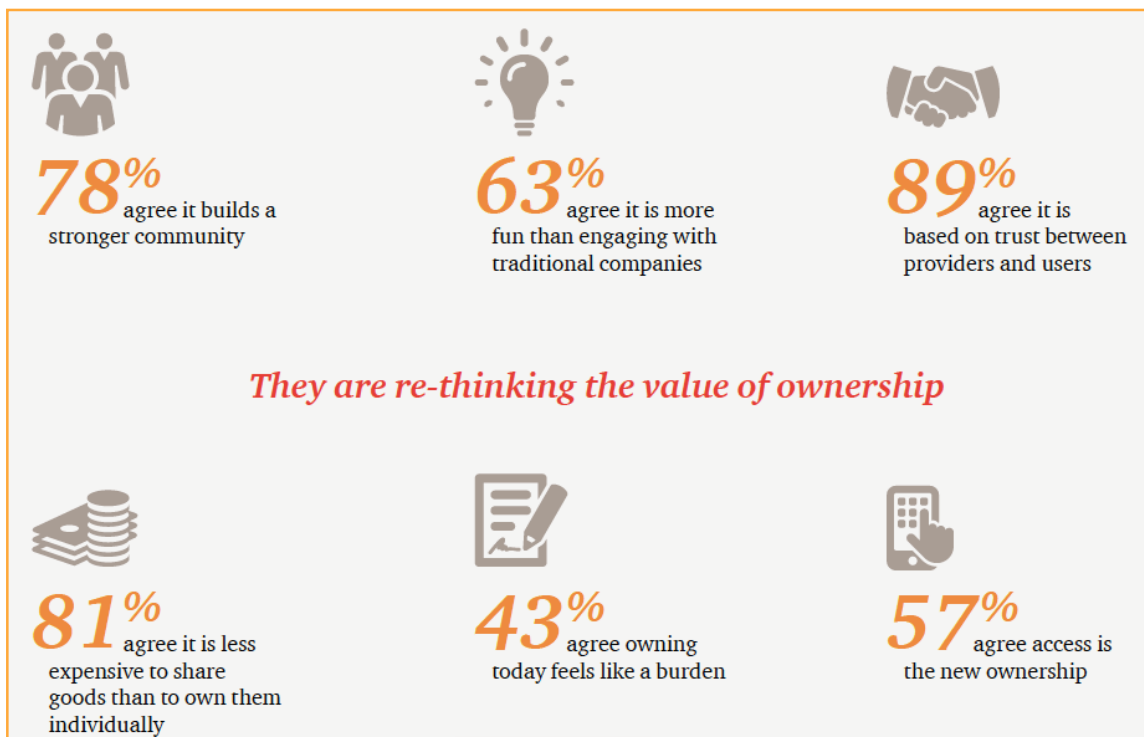


Image 4: Sharing Survey Source: PWC (<https://www.pwc.com/us/en/technology/publications/assets/pwc-consumer-intelligence-series-the-sharing-economy.pdf>)

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