

**ENRICHING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE SHARING ECONOMY:
SHARING OF GOODS VS. SHARING OF SERVICES**

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SUMMARY

The sharing economy (SE) is a contentious topic because of its sustainability implications as well as its contested conceptual boundaries. Peer-to-peer (P2P) resale platforms, while having conceptual proximity with the consensus understanding of the SE, are often considered not part of the SE. Drawing from the theory of property rights (Haase and Kleinaltenkamp, 2011), we posit that P2P resale platforms constitute good sharing in the SE, supplementing service sharing which is the predominant area of research in the SE. The current research paper explores the state-of-the-art of the good sharing literature and highlight opportunities for future research. Findings from our systematic literature review show that while research on good sharing is scarce, the area offers a fertile ground for SE scholars to experiment with innovative ideas, exploratory methods, rich contextual studies, and novel theory development. We present a framework for understanding good sharing in the SE, and discuss how the research paper will be developed further.

Keywords: sharing economy, technology/digital business, responsible business, international business, systematic literature review

Word count: 2487 words (excluding tables and references)

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1. Introduction

The sharing economy (SE) has been in the centre of the debate around sustainable alternative consumption models for over a decade (Prothero *et al.*, 2011; Schor, 2014; Cheng *et al.*, 2020; Cocquyt, Crucke and Slabbinck, 2020; Ek Styvén and Mariani, 2020; Tan *et al.*, 2022). Yet the conceptual boundaries of the SE are still an ongoing conversation among scholars that hold different views (Gerwe and Silva, 2020; Bai and Velamuri, 2021; Kozlenkova *et al.*, 2021; Markman *et al.*, 2021). Specifically, five dimensions of the SE that embody distinct perspectives have been identified: (1) focusing on access vs. ownership, (2) being intermediated by the Internet, (3) entailing commercial vs. non-commercial sharing, (4) shared assets being owned by peers vs. businesses, and (5) shared assets being underutilised (Gerwe and Silva, 2020; Kozlenkova *et al.*, 2021). While disagreements still exist when dealing with the latter three dimensions, consensus has been achieved to some extent with the two former dimensions (Kozlenkova *et al.*, 2021). Consequently, research on digital sharing platforms (intermediated by the Internet) that focus on ride sharing and accommodation sharing services (focusing on access over ownership) is predominant in the SE literature (Mody, Hanks and Cheng, 2021).

While the current common understanding of the SE helps narrow down the focus of SE literature, limitations prevail. First, such a common understanding may alienate research on different operationalisations of the SE concept which have important implications to the sustainability aspect of the SE. Peer-to-peer (P2P) resale platforms, for example, being in the forefront of sustainable alternative consumption practices, are not considered as part of the SE due to their deviation from the access-focused nature of the SE as defined by extant literature (Eckhardt *et al.*, 2019; Gerwe and Silva, 2020; Kozlenkova *et al.*, 2021; Markman *et al.*, 2021). Second, despite achieving a certain consensus as abovementioned, the literature remains fragmented and inconclusive findings and confusion prevail (Parguel, Lunardo and Benoit-Moreau, 2017; Delacroix, Parguel and Benoit-Moreau, 2019; Akhmedova, Marimon and Mas-Machuca, 2020; Ek Styvén and Mariani, 2020; Davlembayeva, Papagiannidis and Alamanos, 2021; Oliveira, Barbeitos and Calado, 2022; Tan *et al.*, 2022).

The purpose of this review paper is thus to propose a new understanding of the SE that helps resolving the conceptual tension existing in the SE literature, as well as mapping out future research directions to enrich our knowledge of the phenomenon. Consequently, we address the following research questions:

RQ1: What do we know about P2P resale platforms?

RQ2: How can future research on P2P resale platforms enrich the SE literature?

The paper is structured as follows: in the next section, we discuss the conceptual boundaries of the review (Section 2); after that, we explain the research method adopted (Section 3), present the findings revealed by our review (Section 4), and finally outline how we plan to further develop the paper prior to the conference (Section 5).

2. Conceptual boundaries

Scholars have made several attempts to define the SE (Gerwe and Silva, 2020). In this study, we adopted the definition provided by Kozlenkova et al. (2021) as it provides conceptual clarification that covers all five abovementioned important dimensions of the SE. Accordingly, SE refers to “consumers (peers) granting one another temporary access, through online services, to their underutilized assets for a fee” (Kozlenkova *et al.*, 2021, p. 1448).

P2P resale platforms present a unique opportunity to push the conceptual boundaries of the SE. Considering that P2P resale platforms are Internet-mediated outlets where peers share their possessions with one another for a fee, the conceptual proximity with the SE is evident. Tension arises because on P2P resale platforms, transferring of ownership occurs. Furthermore, the underutilised nature of assets being exchanged on P2P resale platforms is also a question mark.

To resolve the conceptual tension between P2P resale platforms and the SE, we propose that temporary access be understood as ends rather than means (Figure 1). If the purpose (ends) of the consumer when participating in the SE is to get temporary access to goods and services, then whether they get it through renting (service sharing) or buying (good sharing) (means), it should not create such a distinction. At the same time, when we look at the total life span of a product, and then ownership of the product acquired for just a certain amount of time in its life span is *fundamentally* temporary access. Furthermore, if a product is originally purchased by the owner to serve a particular need, but is not in use or no longer in use, it has temporary idle capacity (Kozlenkova *et al.*, 2021) and thus can be seen as underutilised. In that way, the act

of a peer selling pre-owned no-longer-in-use products to another peer through online platforms for a fee with the purpose of recirculating it in the market actually satisfies every aspect of the SE definition.

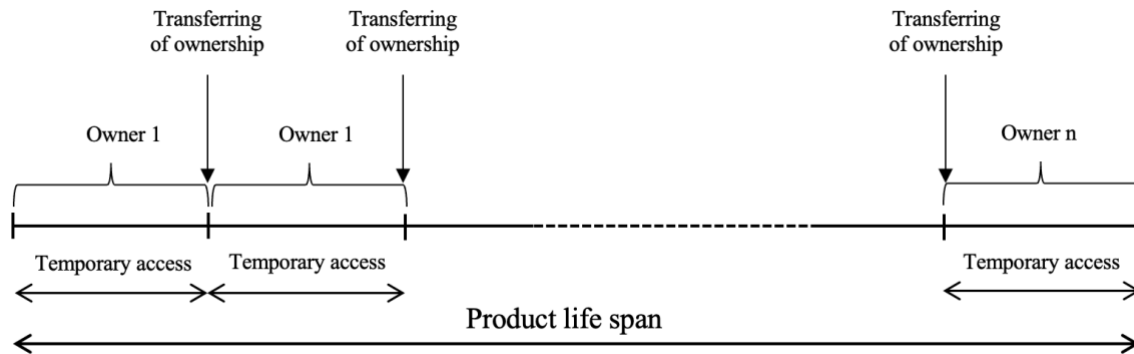


Figure 1: Transferring of ownership (means) helps to accomplish temporary access (ends).

Source: Authors.

To that end, we are offered a new understanding of the SE, thus positing that P2P resale platforms belong to the realm of the SE. Particularly, leveraging Haase and Kleinaltenkamp’s (2011) theory of property rights, we categorise P2P resale platforms as good sharing (transferring of ownership) as opposed to service sharing (transferring of property rights), which is predominantly how the SE was understood in the literature.

3. Research methods

To answer our research questions, we employed systematic literature review (SLR) as the method for this review. Given that the SE is a broad terminology covering several topics from multiple disciplines and subject areas (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017; Schüßler *et al.*, 2021), the SLR method allows us to design a focused review with clearly defined conceptual boundaries and ultimately achieve the objectives (Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, 2003). The approach has proven to be helpful in investigating novel phenomena in the fields of the SE (Mody, Hanks and Cheng, 2021; Belezas and Daniel, 2023; Song *et al.*, 2023). The five steps of the SLR method are presented in Figure 2 below.

We used a set of keywords to identify articles for the review by looking at keywords used in previous reviews and running pilot searches. We tested with a range of keywords that are often interchangeably used to refer to sharing economy, such as “sharing economy,”

“collaborative consumption,” and “peer to peer consumption” (Davlembayeva, Papagiannidis and Alamanos, 2020; Barari *et al.*, 2022), and filtered down the results by incorporating different terms that could be used to describe platforms including “platform” and “marketplace” (Van den Bussche and Dambrin, 2021). Even though the objective of the review is to focus on P2P sharing economy platform, we noted that including the word peer-to-peer in the search would not produce a comprehensive set of articles, given that not all articles would have a title, an abstract or set of keywords that explicitly contain this word. Therefore, we decided to use broad search terms to mitigate the risk of unintentionally excluding relevant articles in the initial dataset. Subsequently, the following keywords were chosen to identify the set of articles for the review— “sharing economy” or “collaborative consumption,” and “platform” or “marketplace”, resulting in 4 search strings.

We entered each search string into Scopus database within Article title, Abstract, Keywords to identify articles for the review by following the inclusion and exclusion criteria (Figure 2). We restricted our search to high quality peer reviewed articles published in 3 and 4* journals in the ABS Academic Journal Guide, and excluded conference proceedings, books and lecture notes. We then triangulated our search results by conducting a backward reference check. This step identified 7 additional articles to supplement the data set.

After checking for duplication, we identified a sample of 331 articles to download for further analysis. These articles went through 2 careful rounds of review. In the first round, we categorised articles based on whether they are empirical studies or non-empirical studies. Non-empirical studies including review papers, mathematical modelling papers, and descriptive case studies are excluded from further analysis. The remaining empirical studies proceed to another round of review where we categorised them based on the type of sharing economy platforms (SEP) they are focused on: P2P platforms, B2C platforms, B2B platforms, hybrid model platforms, or a mixed focus on multiple types of platforms. Only studies focused on P2P SEP were included in our final sample for thematic content analysis.

As a result, 181 articles from 2016 to 2023 were selected for the SLR. For a detailed analysis, we used a basic coding scheme to categorise articles based on their theoretical framework, methods, study contexts, as well as analytical units.

Step	Description	Inclusion/Exclusion criteria	Results	Number of chosen articles
1	Search on Scopus, apply inclusion and exclusion criteria Keywords: "sharing economy" or "collaborative consumption" and "platform" or "marketplace"	<i>Inclusion criteria:</i> - Scopus database - Up to and includes May 2023 - Relevant subject areas - Journals ranked 3 and 4* in the ABS Academic Journal Guide <i>Exclusion criteria:</i> - Articles that focused on digital platform, but not within the scope of the sharing economy - Articles that focused on other types of sharing that do not satisfy the adopted SE definition	3422 results	326 articles
2	Backward reference check	<i>Inclusion criteria:</i> - Cited by one of the 326 articles identified in Step 1 - Relevant subject areas - Published in journals ranked 3 and 4* in the ABS Academic Journal Guide <i>Exclusion criteria:</i> - Articles that focused on digital platform, but not within the scope of the sharing economy - Articles that focused on other types of sharing that do not satisfy the adopted SE definition	7 additional articles	333 articles
3	Eliminate duplicate articles	Check for DOI number for duplication	2 duplicate articles	331 articles
4	1 st round review based on reading of title, abstract, and keywords to categorise empirical and non-empirical studies	Empirical methods use objective data to evaluate and produce a theory. Non-empirical methods draw conclusions solely based on theories and personal interpretation.	95 non-empirical studies, 236 empirical studies	236 articles
5	2 nd round review based on in-depth reading of article content to categorise the focus of study	<i>Inclusion criteria:</i> - Platforms that facilitate a triadic relationship among a platform, an individual provider, and an individual buyer <i>Exclusion criteria:</i> - Platforms where either or both the provider and consumer of goods and services are enterprises (B2C, B2B, C2B) - Platforms where there are more than three actors participating in the transactions (B2B2C or B2C2C)	181 P2P articles, 6 B2C articles, 33 hybrid model and mixed focused articles, 16 other articles focused on different types of digital platforms	181 articles

Figure 2: Data collection and selection process.

Source: Authors.

4. Findings

Table 1 shows the number of published articles over the years and presents a breakdown of studies on service sharing and good sharing. The oldest articles identified by our review were published in 2016, which echoed Liu, Li and Wang's (2021) remark about platform moving from a research object to a research context within the sharing economy from 2015 onward. The number of articles is increasing exponentially over time. One remarkable insight from the breakdown was that literature on good sharing is relatively scarce, with only 8 out of 181 articles considering good sharing—either with a sole focus on good sharing, or a combined focus on both service and good sharing.

Table 1: Distribution of articles over time.

Source: Authors.

Year	Number of published articles on the SE	Good sharing	Service sharing
2016	2	0	2
2017	14	1	13
2018	13	0	13
2019	28	1	27
2020	31	2	29
2021	39	2	37
2022	41	2	39
2023	13	0	13
Total	181	8	173

In terms of publication outlets, even though there is a good mix of different journals in multiple subject areas, we can note a slight concentration of good sharing articles in the area of Innovation with 4 articles published in Technological Forecasting and Social Change (Table 2). We can therefore infer that that while the good sharing phenomenon has been around for a long time (Hallem *et al.*, 2021), it can still be considered a novel area of research and has the potential for innovative ideas and practices to be explored and tested.

Table 2: Publications investigating good sharing.

Source: Authors.

Authors	Title	Year	Source title	ABS Area
Parguel B., Lunardo R., Benoit-Moreau F.	Sustainability of the sharing economy in question: When second-hand peer-to-peer platforms stimulate indulgent consumption	2017	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	INNOV
Delacroix E., Parguel B., Benoit-Moreau F.	Digital subsistence entrepreneurs on Facebook	2019	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	INNOV
Akhmedova A., Marimon F., Mas-Machuca M.	Winning strategies for customer loyalty in the sharing economy: A mixed-methods study	2020	Journal of Business Research	ETHICS -CSR- MAN
Ek Styvén M., Mariani M.M.	Understanding the intention to buy secondhand clothing on sharing economy platforms: The influence of sustainability, distance from the consumption system, and economic motivations	2020	Psychology and Marketing	MKT
Davlembayeva D., Papagiannidis S., Alamanos E.	Sharing economy platforms: An equity theory perspective on reciprocity and commitment	2021	Journal of Business Research	ETHICS -CSR- MAN
Halle A.P.Y., Abbes A.P.I., Hikkerova P.L., Taga M.P.N.	A trust model for collaborative redistribution platforms:A platform design issue	2021	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	INNOV
Oliveira T., Barbeitos I., Calado A.	The role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in sharing economy post-adoption	2022	Information Technology and People	INFO MAN
Tan T.M., Makkonen H., Kaur P., Salo J.	How do ethical consumers utilize sharing economy platforms as part of their sustainable resale behavior? The role of consumers' green consumption values	2022	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	INNOV

A wide range of theories have been used in SE research to explore the different aspects of the phenomenon. Interestingly, however, almost half of the publications (84 articles in total) did not use any theory; and amongst the rest, most of the theories are only used once (Table 3). The most commonly used theories are typically the ones used for exploring consumer behaviour and social psychology. Our findings corroborate results reported by extant reviews such as Mody, Hanks and Cheng (2021) and Lim, Yap and Makkar (2021). Furthermore, we found that good sharing contexts allow for novel theories to be adopted, such as in the case of Facebook buy-and-sell groups, digital entrepreneurship theories were used to understand how poor families utilise sharing platforms to cope with poverty (Delacroix, Parguel and Benoit-Moreau, 2019).

Table 3: Theories in SE research.

Source: Authors.

Theories in service sharing	Number of articles	Theories in good sharing	Number of articles
Social exchange theory	7	Theory of reasoned action/Planned behaviour	2
Signalling theory	6	Subsistence entrepreneurship theories	1
Service dominant logic	5	Self-licensing theory	1
Theory of planned behaviour/reasoned action	3	Self-determination theory	1
Theory of consumption values	3	Theory of consumption values	1
Construal level theory	3	Spill over effect psychology	1
Social penetration theory	3	Equity theory	1
Transaction cost theory	3	Collaboration theory	1
Value co-creation theory	3		
<i>Other theories</i>	89		
Articles with theories	90	Articles with theories	7
Articles without theories	83	Articles without theories	1
Total	173	Total	8

The methods used to investigate the SE are influenced by the choice of theories, with the majority of studies employing quantitative methods (surveys) to understand consumer behaviour (Table 4). Exploratory research is comparatively limited.

Table 4: Methods in SE research.

Source: Authors.

Methods	Good sharing	Service sharing	Total
Qualitative methods	1	41	42
Quantitative methods	6	114	120
A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods	1	18	19
Total	8	173	181

In terms of study contexts, research on the SE has a strong influence from the Western perspective, with the majority of the studies set in developed Western countries (Table 5). Specifically, all studies on good sharing were conducted in developed countries.

Table 5: Study contexts in SE research.

Source: Authors.

Countries	Good sharing	Service sharing	Total
<i>Single-country or multi-country</i>			
Single-country	7	102	109
Multi-country	1	24	25
<i>Country categories</i>			
Developed economies	8	78	86
Developing economies and economies in transition	0	34	34
Mixed country	0	11	11

Based on our coding scheme, we constructed a framework for good sharing and service sharing in the SE (Figure 3). Users are drawn to the SE because of their own personal *motivation* (intrinsic or extrinsic) and through the building up of sufficient *trust* (in the system, in the platform, and in peers). Their decision-making process is a balance weighing between *value* and *risk*, wherein users try to minimise the risks and maximise the values from the SE. The antecedents of motivation, trust, risk and value differ fundamentally between users in consumer's role and users in provider's role. However, because the SE facilitate role fluidity, users of the platforms can act as both consumer and provider, assuming the role of "prosumer"

(Nguyen, Didi Alaoui and Llosa, 2020; Xiang *et al.*, 2022). Antecedents from prosumers' perspective, therefore, would have overlaps with those of consumers and providers.

Since service sharing platforms have enjoyed global adoption and popularity, they have created strong and enduring impacts at many levels, positively as well as negatively. At individual level, for example, service sharing platforms have gained trust, participation, satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty from their users (Wu, Zeng and Xie, 2017; Shao and Yin, 2019; Akhmedova, Marimon and Mas-Machuca, 2020; Lu, Wang and Zhang, 2021; Chen, Yu and Lu, 2022; Ruiz-Alba *et al.*, 2022; Garrod, Zhao and Koenig-Lewis, 2023; Shin *et al.*, 2023). However, because of the platforms' unique proposition and operational structure, opportunistic users can choose at their own discretion and without consequences either to comply with (Park, Kwak and Lee, 2019) or to bypass platforms' policies and regulations (Nguyen and Llosa, 2023). At firm level, service sharing platforms have become the forefront of many firms' CSR initiative (Bhappu and Schultze, 2019). At industry level, they have created impact on the whole competitive landscape of the industries they are operating in by providing substitutions/supplements to the traditional models and lowering service price (Blal, Singal and Templin, 2018; Roma, Panniello and Lo Nigro, 2019; Alrawadieh *et al.*, 2020; Jiang, Law and Li, 2020). At community and macro-environment level, while service sharing platforms offer an alternative, greener way of consumption that fosters a sense of community and builds resilience (Ozanne and Ozanne, 2016), their promise to sustainable development is far from reality (Cheng *et al.*, 2020). In fact, one of the most negative impacts that these platforms have on the community that they choose to enter is gentrification, and the cost competitiveness results in more consumption and environmental backlashes (Gurran, Zhang and Shrestha, 2020; Cocola-Gant and Gago, 2021; Zhang, Lin and Maeng, 2021; Morales-Alonso and Núñez, 2022).

On the other hand, because good sharing platform is a relatively new and under researched area, their impact was only recognised at individual level in the literature. With the various benefits that these platforms offer, users are drawn to participate and continue using them to reap those benefits (Delacroix, Parguel and Benoit-Moreau, 2019; Ek Styvén and Mariani, 2020; Hallem *et al.*, 2021; Oliveira, Barbeitos and Calado, 2022; Tan *et al.*, 2022). However, as with service sharing platforms, the financial gains from engaging with these platforms compared to traditional modes of consumption induce users to indulge themselves in even more consumption, which negates the environmental and social benefits that they promise (Parguel, Lunardo and Benoit-Moreau, 2017).

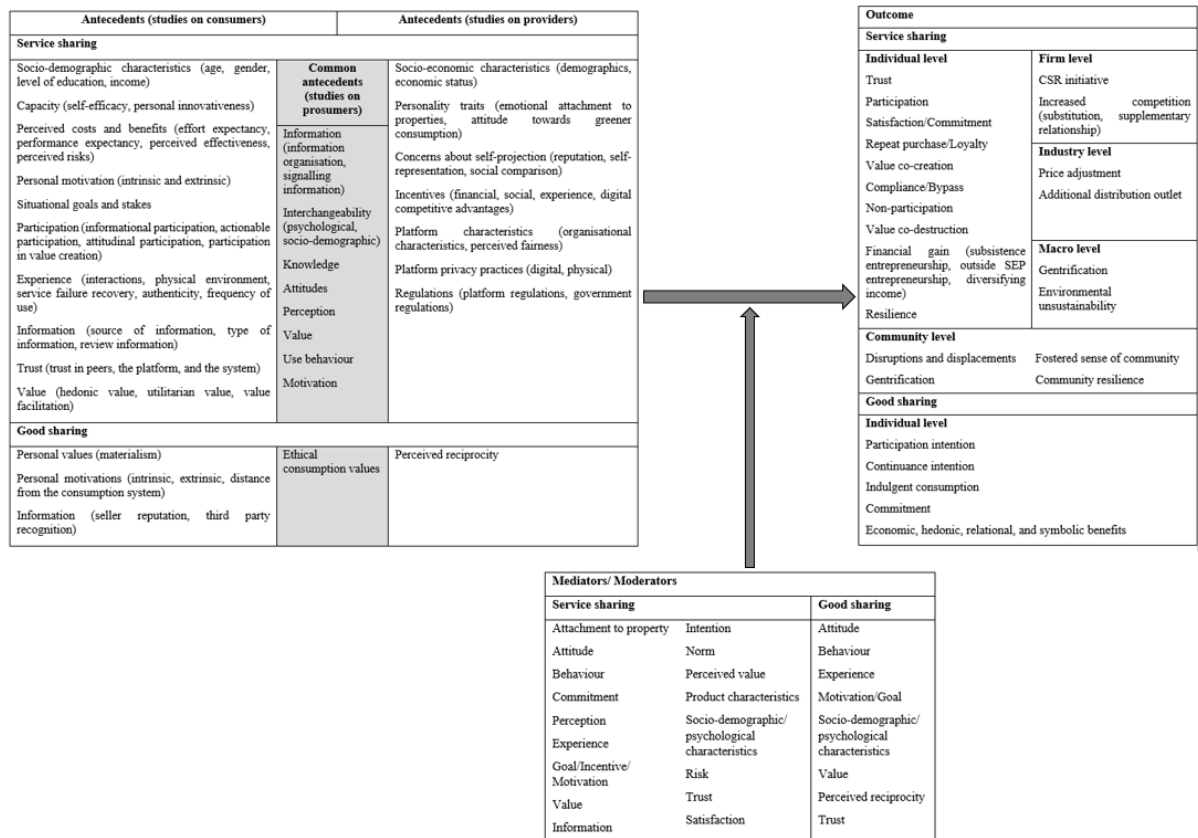


Figure 3. A framework for good sharing and service sharing in the SE.

Source: Authors.

5. Discussion of how to develop the research

Since this research paper is at the developmental stage, results are preliminary. To go forward we plan to: (1) update the literature review to include the most recent published articles, (2) finalise the analysis of the literature review, (3) develop a theoretical framework to illustrate the relationship between key concepts, (4) highlight a future research agenda and limitations of this study. We will also work on extending this literature review with an empirical study, for instance by conducting an exploratory research on good sharing contexts, engaging with the tenets of the institutional theory and Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory to draw insights from a comparative inquiry between an emerging and a developed context.

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