



3. EXPLORING THE ORGANISATIONAL IMPACT

3.1 SHARING ECONOMY BUSINESS MODELS FOR SUSTAINABILITY: DESIGN, FUNCTIONING AND IMPACTS

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A nurtured branch of studies about the sharing economy industry is focused on the business models these platforms have developed over time and that have been analysed under different perspectives. The economic paradigm of the sharing economy is based on the development of digital platforms that match supply and demand, enabling users to gain access to assets and complementary services provided by other users. This implies the reconfiguration of the business models of the platforms, in which the rules and the interactions that are proper of traditional businesses are drastically reshaped.

Several aspects of the sharing economy business models pinpoint a commitment towards sustainability (e.g., the intent of valuing the otherwise idle capacity of goods and assets), growing the interest towards a deeper investigation of the role that sustainability has in driving the processes of business model definition and reconfiguration.

A further aspect concerns the impact these platforms might have in both economic and non-economic terms. On the one hand, sharing economy business models are often associated with positive effects on the environment, economy, and society, yet many authors have also pointed out the negative effects of sharing (e.g., income inequality, concentration of markets and revenue streams, precariousness in working conditions). Further investigations are required to understand how to identify the proper methods and tools for evaluating their impacts.

The analysis cannot disregard the answers of consumers, for whom the perception of sustainability might be a key driver when turning to the sharing economy.

Basing on these premises, this track welcomes research developed around (but not limited to) these research questions:

- Does the sharing principle imply an attention to sustainability?
- Which role do sharing economy platforms give to sustainability in the definition (and reconfiguration) of their business model?
- Are traditional measurement systems suited to analyse the impact of sustainable business models for the sharing economy?
- How do consumers perceive sustainability in the sharing economy?
- To what extent do they value it and see it as a driver?

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