



THE HONG KONG  
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

香港理工大學

Pao Yue-kong Library

包玉剛圖書館

---

## Copyright Undertaking

This thesis is protected by copyright, with all rights reserved.

**By reading and using the thesis, the reader understands and agrees to the following terms:**

1. The reader will abide by the rules and legal ordinances governing copyright regarding the use of the thesis.
2. The reader will use the thesis for the purpose of research or private study only and not for distribution or further reproduction or any other purpose.
3. The reader agrees to indemnify and hold the University harmless from and against any loss, damage, cost, liability or expenses arising from copyright infringement or unauthorized usage.

### IMPORTANT

If you have reasons to believe that any materials in this thesis are deemed not suitable to be distributed in this form, or a copyright owner having difficulty with the material being included in our database, please contact [lbsys@polyu.edu.hk](mailto:lbsys@polyu.edu.hk) providing details. The Library will look into your claim and consider taking remedial action upon receipt of the written requests.

Pao Yue-kong Library, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Hom, Kowloon, Hong Kong

<http://www.lib.polyu.edu.hk>

UNRAVELLING SHARING ECONOMY:  
EXPERIENCES FROM HONG KONG

LAI KA WAI MICHAEL

PhD

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

2019

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Department of Applied Social Sciences

**Unravelling Sharing Economy:**

**Experiences from Hong Kong**

**LAI Ka Wai Michael**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2018

## Certificate of Originality

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it reproduces no material previously published or written, nor material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signed)

LAI Ka Wai, Michael (Name of student)

## Abstract

The emergence of hyper-consumption in contemporary society has caused serious environmental degradation and the adverse impacts are increasingly acknowledged by many to explore ways to reduce consumption and waste through sharing instead of ownership. The rapid development and popularity of sharing economy hence has been considered by many as an optimistic 'innovative disruption' of the conventional consumption-driven capitalistic economy that can save the environment. However, others have also criticized that such optimism is both misleading and focusing too narrowly on building a feel-good myth about sharing economy ignoring many of the shortcomings and difficulties in its operation exploitation. Furthermore, it has been noted that most current studies have been pre-occupied by a business orientation, seeing sharing economy merely as a novel business practice that could transform the current big business model, with little intention in exploring if it is a viable alternative in transforming current consumption values and behaviours which in turn could lead to a reduction of waste and an improvement in environment.

This thesis thus aims to fill this knowledge gap through the adoption of case study, by unravelling the experiences of two selected sharing economy projects as cases, Kai Fong Lai Mang Ride Sharing Community and Waste-No-Mall, at work in Hong Kong guided by the framework and theory of transformation proposed by Erik Olin Wright, especially focusing on how their vision, values, leadership and management strategies and style have effected change on participants and social transformation in local communities, specifically in terms of consumption values and pattern as well as waste reduction. A total number of 20 interviewees (10 in each case) were

interviewed through in-depth interviews, including founders, active participants and other participants to ensure the diversity.

The study has shown that both projects are able to make good progress in fostering sharing culture and practices among participants adopting very different strategies and management styles which include ride-sharing, sharing of benefits from organized group-purchase events, free-cycling and down-cycling events as well as workshops for school children. However, in terms of their impacts on changing individual consumption values and behaviour and community environment, the outcomes have been somewhat limited because of limitation of operation strategies, and resources.

Still, findings of this study have validated Wright's theory of transformation especially in terms of its emphasis on reality emancipation, reaffirming that in seeking to reach Real Utopia, there is no single but only diverse pathways that balance idealism and pragmatism, horizontal and vertical connections, as well as the importance of returning to a social-environmental and not only a business orientation. The case studies too have also highlighted the necessity of taking into consideration of the local contexts of sharing economy – the smallness, no-sponsor/no funder, and limited use digital technology in Hong Kong's project is a good reminder that more questions must be raised when applying findings from Western cases in unravelling the complexities of sharing economy projects elsewhere in effecting change and transformation.

## Acknowledgement

I must express my whole-hearted appreciation on many people who have assisted and suggested me with different parts of the PhD thesis during the whole journey. First, I must thank Dr. David Ip for his supervision. I was his student in Master programmes and motivated by him to start my PhD journey. He has also provided me essential comments on every stage of the PhD studies and eased my emotional fluctuation during hard times. Every time when I would like to discuss about the pop-up ideas that may be useful to my theoretical understanding of the thesis, David is always kind enough to stretch his limited time from working to discuss with me with amazing imagination and comments. An equal importance is my other supervisor, Dr. Amy Ho. She commented a lot on the gaps my initial of ideas, the process of my interviews, and my thesis writing. She also reminds me on consistently on the issue of time management as I always tend to take up work that could affect the progress of the thesis. Her timely reminders were instrumental in keeping me on-track with my thesis. Dr. Anita Koo, my current co-supervisor, has also given me insights for better conceptualizing on my writing.

Apart from my supervisors, I really appreciate Drs Kaxton Siu, Stan Wong, Ting Tin Yuet, Chow Sung Ming and Raymond Tam, giving feedbacks toy ideas, providing great suggestions during the whole research journey. Credits must also be given to the efforts of some PhD students in APSS, including Xu Heng, Qiqi Chen, Li Jun, Wang Peng, and Gina Yang in giving me their continuous support and valuable exchange on my own research by asking critical questions and making recommendations whenever I was in the student research office.

A great appreciation must be extended to the colleagues at the Hawke EU Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, University of South Australia whom I worked with during my exchange in the final stage of my thesis writing. In fact, around one-third of the thesis was written there. I wish to express my utmost gratitude to particularly Professor Anthony Elliott and Dr. Eric Hsu who gave me so much of their precious time to help me clarifying my thesis position and followed up with useful suggestions, especially on the style of writing for better communicating my ideas. Also, it was always a pleasure having meaningful discussions with Drs. Ross Boyd, Louis Everuss and Professor Robert Holton on my theoretical understanding of the concepts and framework adopted.

I am most indebted to Professor Erik Olin Wright whose critical writings on Capitalism and achieving Real Utopia for their inspiration for formulating my theoretical framework for this research. Likewise, his works have shown me a clear direction for my further academic/practitioner career on emancipatory social transformation.

I also need to thank the administrative staff in APSS, who have been most patient in helping me to deal with many administrative arrangements I had overlooked during in the past three years, especially in organizing of Postgraduate Conference in 2016. I must thank Ms. Fanny Cheng, Shirley Hui, Amy Chu, Mrs. Felix Ng, Jason Iu, and Ms. Jovy Ho for their timely assistance.

Lastly, I wish to thank a local Café named Cafe Je T'aime which has offered me a quiet refuge for reading, preparing confirmation papers and rethinking theoretical



perspectives in the past few years.

There are no doubts many names I have missed out preparing my acknowledgement but all of you remain a part of my academic and professional journey. To all of you I offer you my genuine appreciation and best wishes.

## Table of Content

Certificate of Originality .....	III
Abstract .....	IV
Acknowledgement .....	VI
Table of Content.....	IX
Chapter One            Introduction .....	1
Hong Kong: hyper-consumption and environmental problems .....	1
Sharing economy: a way out? .....	4
Research aims and research questions .....	7
Significance of the study .....	9
Structure of the thesis .....	10
Chapter Two            Literature Review .....	13
The rise of sharing economy .....	13
Defining sharing economy .....	14
Literature on sharing economy .....	19
Gaps in sharing economy literatures .....	40
Emancipatory understanding towards social transformation: Theory of Erik Olin Wright .....	43
The strategy of taking small steps: Creating changes through projects.....	48
Analysing transformation: A multi-level analysis.....	56
Chapter Three            Methodology.....	63
Research paradigm.....	63
Research design .....	65
Research strategy .....	68
Data collection .....	72
Data analysis .....	74
Quality management .....	77
Ethical consideration.....	79
Limitations of the study .....	81
Conclusion.....	81
Chapter Four            KFLM Ride Sharing Community.....	83
Origin and development .....	83
Founder’s vision, values and beliefs .....	84
Operation and management.....	101
Experiences of participants.....	105
Impacts on participants and values .....	114
Summary .....	129

Chapter Five	Waste-no-mall (Yuen Long).....	131
	Origin and development .....	131
	Mission, values and beliefs .....	133
	Core values and participants' perceptions .....	140
	Organization and strategies of operation .....	142
	Experiences of participants.....	151
	Impacts on participants and the project.....	158
	Future development .....	166
	Summary .....	170
Chapter Six	Discussion and conclusion .....	173
	Vision, mission, goals and objectives.....	173
	Approach and strategies .....	176
	Participants' perception and experiences .....	178
	Impact on Participants: values and behavioural changes.....	180
	Social transformation.....	182
	Some cautionary notes .....	184
	Discussing with Wright's theory of transformation.....	189
	Conclusion.....	191
Appendix A	.....	198
Appendix B	.....	199
Appendix C	.....	203
Reference	.....	204

## Chapter One Introduction

### Hong Kong: hyper-consumption and environmental problems

People in Hong Kong spend huge sums of their earnings on consumption (Mathews & Lui, 2001). Hong Kong's high household consumption expenditure has increased from US\$ 18,972.33 per capita in 2008 to US\$ 26,116 in 2017, which is now considered as one of the world's top ten (The World Bank, n.d.). For example, Hong Kong's seafood consumption, which averaged 71.2 kilogram per capita in 2011, earned the seventh highest position the world, also 3.8 times more than the world average and second in Asia (World Wildlife Fund Hong Kong, 2016). Likewise, according to Greenpeace, each Hong Kong resident spends around HKD\$ 10,000 annually purchasing new clothes, and around 900 million bottles of water was purchased and consumed every year, along with an average 4.25 mobile phones each person, which is more than South Korea, China, US and Germany (Pang & AFP, 2017).

The above consumption pattern has shown that over-consumption is one of the trademarks in Hong Kong society (Zhu, 2013). It has created tremendous waste problems which in turn, has led to a growing environmental concern for Hong Kong (Environment Bureau, 2013). For instance, while people are buying new clothes, one-sixth of these clothing items are rarely worn. This results in waste equivalent to 1,400 t-shirts being disposed every minute; the annual disposal is able to cover 25,000 sports stadiums in Hong Kong<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the rate for recycling textile products has also dropped to 3.9% in 2014 from 12% in 2011, with the remaining

---

<sup>1</sup> Hong Kong Stadium is the main sports venue of Hong Kong which the capacity is 40,000 people

96% of unwanted items ending up in landfills. At the same time, in Hong Kong E-waste is also the highest among East and Southeast Asian countries, with a total of 21.7 kilogram per capita in 2015 (160 kilo tonnes). This represents an increase of nearly one-fifth since 2010 but is double the average amount in the world (Honda, Khetriwal, & Kuehr, 2016). Worse still, as people continue to purchase bottled water, only 14 % of bottles are recycled, leaving 132 tonnes of plastic water bottles, equivalent to 5.28 million 430 millilitre plastic containers disposed as rubbish each day (The Green Earth, n.d.).

It is clear that the environmental problems in Hong Kong are becoming more alarming when its ecological footprint per capital ranked 17 in the world and second in Asia, and when landfills are running full in Hong Kong (World Wildlife Fund Hong Kong, 2017). More important, however, behind these consumption statistics lies a fundamental problem: hyper-consumption, i.e., the excessive consumption beyond what one needs.

Certainly, what Hong Kong is confronting is not unique. As Edwards (2000) puts it, as the world's economy is increasingly moving from production to consumption-based, individuals are encouraged to consume more by 'wants' rather than 'needs'. Ritzer (2012, p. 67) is equally correct in pointing out that in such consumption, people are consuming more than they can afford because they have been socialized to accept and enter a set of values that does not only justify their desire (Ritzer, 2001; Ritzer, Goodman, & Wiedenhof-Murphy, 2001; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009; Wright & Rogers, 2011) but is defined as a 'civilization of desire' in the new modernity (Lipovetsky, 2011) which is characterized by 'hyper-consumption'. Here, people are seduced to consume more than they can afford because they are

defined by what they own materially (Botsman & Rogers, 2010) without knowing consciously (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009).

This is particularly common among the working class when they are more prone to feel 'deprived' when they cannot get socially desirable consumption (Darley & Johnson, 1985; C. Hamilton, 2009). Bauman believed that the "adequacy" is socially defined as social duties (C. Hamilton, 2009). Those who fail to achieve this are excluded and 'flawed' and characterised as not having a 'normal life' (Bauman, 2005; Burchardt, Le Grand, & Piachaud, 1999; Caplovitz, 1963; Colic-Peisker & Flitney, 2018; K. Hamilton & Catterall, 2004; Schluchter, 1989). Moreover, as Schor (1999) indicated, much of the middle class is feeling more financial pressure than ever as they feel an expectation to go beyond 'keeping up with the Joneses'<sup>2</sup> to embrace the new hyper-consumerism for emulating the lifestyle of a higher socio-economic status (Schor, 1999; Wright & Rogers, 2011). This "upscale of lifestyle norms" does not only create status anxiety (De Botton, 2004) but also more frequent instances of impulsive consumption (Kharas & Gertz, 2010; Koutsobinas, 2014; Schor, 1999) using consumer credit to eliminate delayed gratification (Freudenberg, 2014). Impulsive consumption leads to frequent overspending (Schor, 1998), greater or 'hyper-debts' (Baudrillard, 1970/1998; Koutsobinas, 2014; Ritzer, 2012), and depleted savings (Schor, 1999; Wright & Rogers, 2011).

---

<sup>2</sup> 'Keeping up with the Joneses' is an idiom that refers to the comparison to the neighbourhood as a benchmark for the material goods they own to demonstrate similar socio-economic status. It became important in US during 1950s to 1960s when people were affordable in purchasing couch, televisions, cars etc. This has become a trend that people avoid lagging behind their neighbours by copying each other's consumption pattern. It is relatively moderate in comparison as the reference groups are neighbours rather than other classes (Schor, 1999).

Leonard (2010) blamed such runaway consumption of products for the mounting severe risks and costs to the environment as only 1 % of the goods people had purchased is used within six months, while the remainder is disposed. This increase in garbage also contributes to climate change, and undermines the resilience of people to react to disasters (Crate & Nuttall, 2016). In recent times, hyper-consumption has been increasingly regarded as unsustainable, and growing concern has prompted a greater number of people wanting to use innovative ways to address this issue. One of the most visible and frequently proposed ideas is: if hyper-consumption is all about ownership and possession of goods that most people use to define themselves, it makes sense to encourage people to share what they have so that others would not have to purchase more once they can access such goods via sharing. In simple terms, the creation of a sharing economy.

### Sharing economy: a way out?

The problem of hyper-consumption has gained much attention and alternatives, particularly in terms of advocating a different form of consumption. Many methods have been proposed to cope with the subsequent environmental waste produced. Botsman and Rogers (2010), for example, in their book, *What's Mine is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption*, suggested that collaborative consumption could be a way to disrupt hyper-consumption and reduce waste through sharing and de-emphasizing ownership. The idea soon was turned into a catch phrase and gave rise to the notion of sharing economy.

The idea of a sharing economy, however, is not without controversy. TIME magazine proclaimed that it would change the world (Walsh, 2011). Similarly Rifkin

(2014) asserted in his book *The Zero Marginal Cost Society* that the phenomenon of the 'Internet of Things'<sup>3</sup> would allow people to access products with almost zero marginal cost or for free, making it possible for our society to change from market capitalism to 'collaborative commons'. Heinrichs (2013) likewise declared that the sharing economy would potentially provide a new pathway to sustainability. This optimism rapidly brought the idea of a sharing economy into the limelight, with many believing that the digital-driven movement could blur national boundaries, stimulate the new development of corporation, generating greater revenues. Uber, for example, was one of the new sharing economy pioneers, spreading its wings to over 250 cities, while Airbnb followed suit, making its appearance all over the world. In 2015, Uber was valued at US\$ 41.2 billion by Pricewaterhouse Coopers. The accounting firm also projected that five key sharing sectors — travel, car sharing, finance, staffing, music and video streaming – would potentially boost their revenues globally from US\$15 billion today to around \$335 billion by 2025 (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2015, p. 14).

Yet sharing economy has also become controversial. As a concept, it is increasingly being contested. Many researchers have found its conceptual and empirical boundaries hard to define clearly (Acquier, Daudigeos, & Pinkse, 2017). There is, therefore, no consensus on what defines a sharing economy, although similar

---

<sup>3</sup> Internet of thing is an interconnected system linking digital devices, resources and people. It is widely adopted in daily life based on the fast growth of the Internet, lowering technology and transaction cost of accessing resources. For example, if the office equipment is running out of stock then it can be automatically re-ordered and noticed; cities have adopted this as well (smart cities) to improve efficiency of energy use and transportation. It connects everyone with everything through platforms. It is, however, also causing security and privacy concerns as all data are easily exposed with security threats. For more discussion in this concept, see Rifkin (2014).



concepts abound – e.g., access-based economy, gig economy, collaborative consumption, platform economy (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Frenken & Schor, 2017; Lessig, 2008; Parker, 2016; Stephany, 2015). At the same time, confusion and criticism continues to surface – with some calling it a ‘feel good’ story, while others see it as misleading and mystifying (Acquier et al., 2017; Murillo, Buckland, & Val, 2017; Slee, 2015). Schor (2014) added that the pro-sharing discourses are blind to its dark sides, especially in terms of the exploitation and inequalities these businesses have inflicted on their workers (Fairweather, 2017; Schor, 2017; Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017). The recent decline of Uber in several countries and ‘bike-sharing’ businesses in China and Hong Kong have further put an end to its fairy tale optimism, prompting Frenken and Schor (2017) earlier remark that one should not only associate sharing economy with positive outcomes.

In academia, discussions on sharing economy are similarly narrow. Current literature in the field has seen that while most works focus on how sharing economy has provided a new, innovative way of conducting business, there is a noticeable silence on whether or not sharing economy could curb rampant hyper-consumption (Martin, 2016), let alone discussing if sharing economy has the potential to reduce environmental waste and transform the values and structural elements that are responsible for fuelling these problems (Jacobs, 2006). It is in this context that a study to unravel the various controversies and uncertainties of sharing economy, particularly in a consumption-driven Hong Kong economy, proved both timely and necessary to gauge the prospects and possibilities of sharing economy in the days to come, it is necessary to study the examination of experiences of how certain specific sharing economy projects have fared, from both the perspectives of the project founders and those of the participants/followers.

## Research aims and research questions

The overarching aim of this study therefore, is:

*To examine specific cases of sharing economy in Hong Kong, with a particular focus on the reality of their visions, strategies of growth, attempts to overcome challenges and limitations and their relative desire to confront the problems created by hyper-consumption and the need to reduce waste.*

In unravelling how these sharing economy projects work, it is important to understand the visions and roles of the founders as well as the perception and expectations of the participants, as these are the elements that inspire, shape and determine the process of implementing the projects, the outcomes, and their directions and pathways for their future. For these reasons, this study also intends to achieve the following objectives:

- Guided by the concepts of current literature, especially those proposed by Wright (2010), this study hopes to develop a framework that is useful to understand the complexities of sharing economy at work;
- In turn, such a framework would help to shed light on the potential of transformation a sharing economy project would have on its participants, both in terms of changes in their consumption behaviour and value;
- On a broader plane, the framework would also help to uncover insights held by the relevant stakeholders in shaping the projects' operation and possible outcomes.

Following on this, the major research questions of this study are:

*How do sharing economy businesses in Hong Kong operate in terms of strategies and mechanisms, to realize their vision and mission?*

*How does the work of sharing economy businesses create potential to affect social transformation that contributes to addressing the problem of hyper-consumption and environmental pollution through sharing?*

To answer these questions, the study intends to probe into the following domains:

- The practices and implementation of sharing economy projects in Hong Kong;
- The possible impacts of such projects on the major stakeholders, including founders, participants, and other like-minded projects in altering their values and behavior in modifying hyper-consumption and saving the environment?
- The limitations and potential of the current projects' prospects and possibilities for moving forward.

A case study approach has been adopted to carry out this study with two sharing economy projects selected for this study. The rationale for the case selection as well as their methodological background will be discussed in detail later in Chapter Three.

## Significance of the study

The rise of sharing economy in recent times has been rapid and visible, making it a centre of attention in the arena of social change. Despite this attention, the bulk of the current literature in the field is focused on their business sides, especially in terms of their new formats in conducting businesses and their potential in expanding markets and generating greater profits. This approach risks turning the notion of sharing economy into a gimmick for increasing sales and consumption with little regard for the subsequent impacts on increasing waste and environmental degradation.

In terms of its theoretical value, the significance of this study is that it aims to approach sharing economy using a social science perspective that centres on highlighting the proclaimed social implications of sharing economy. The study will examine the claim that through sharing access of resources rather than ownership of goods, the problem of over-consumption, or hyper-consumption, and its subsequent production of waste and in turn, environmental degradation, can be curbed. In this process, the social science perspective emphasizes the transformational potential of sharing economy to change people's values and behaviour of consumption, rather than encouraging them to consume more. The clear lack of studies in this area is a theoretical and empirical gap that needs to be filled. This study also extends Erik Olin Wright's theory of transformation into the operational level, with both individual and institutional levels, to enrich his theoretical attempts for emancipatory social transformation. While his idea on real utopia focuses on direction and logic, this study links them into real practices.

Empirically speaking, given most current literature on sharing economy is Western-based, it is also interesting to know if the same notion fares well in a Hong Kong context. While case studies provided here would not be exhaustive to generalize how sharing economy works in a non-Western setting, the first explorative step is nevertheless significant in providing the field a new momentum for social science analysis.

In a practical sense, this study is significant in demonstrating how community practice can bring social changes, especially with the complexity and inter-relationship between human relations, project operation, and self-reflection. The study is particularly important as most of the current sharing economy projects in Hong Kong are still in their initial stage. A systematic and insightful path with potentials and limitations is, therefore, essential for further development towards environmental sustainability.

## Structure of the thesis

The structure of this thesis is quite straightforward. Following this introductory chapter, the next chapter (Chapter Two) aims to provide a critical summary of the current literature on sharing economy, highlighting the scope, major concepts, perspectives, limitations and ambiguities in the field, as well as the potential and possibilities for moving forward. Following this, informed by the literature reviewed, and guided by the notions of ‘transformation’ and ‘emancipatory social science perspective’ advocated by Erik Olin Wright, a multi-level conceptual framework for structuring, steering and implementing this empirical study is presented. Next, the rationale for the study’s methodological approach, research design, research

instruments, background and selection of cases and informants, as well as strategies for data collection and analysis are also presented (Chapter Three). Concerns for quality management, and limitations of the study, are also appraised.

Following this will be two chapters (Chapters Four and Five) devoted to documenting the works of the two selected cases: KFLM (Kai Fong Lai Mang) Ride Sharing Community and Waste-no-mall (Yuen Long). Both are leading examples within the sharing economy in Hong Kong. In these chapters, the visions, missions and beliefs as insisted by the key founders are first presented. The reality of practices and operation of these projects, especially in terms of operating strategies, managing tactics in the projects, simultaneously with the experience and perception held by participants and local communities are then delineated. An appraisal of the outcomes, indicated by the value and behavioural changes in consumption among participants and other key stakeholders, is then offered. To understand the effectiveness and limitations of the strategies that fosters the discussion in Chapter Six, the impact of the projects towards the participants' consumption (including buying and sharing) behaviour, value and awareness is also examined.

Based on the data collected, the objective of the following chapter (Chapter Six) is to provide a critical summary of the two sharing economy projects using the framework proposed earlier and along the lines of Wright's 'realist utopian' perspective (Wright, 2010). Wright's visions for strategic options for bringing forward 'transformation' will be used to assess the strategies of the implemented projects in the context of his trajectories for bringing social changes. The implications and lessons learned for future sharing economy projects in Hong Kong are also highlighted. The Conclusion of the thesis is also included in this chapter to revisit the key findings and highlight

the significance and contribution the case studies have for contributing to future social transformation (and in this case, building a better environment through sharing or less ownership).

## Chapter Two Literature Review

### The rise of sharing economy

The rise of sharing economy as a concept and a catch phrase has been phenomenal. In a period of just five years, the number of published articles on the topic has grown exponentially, increasing from only four in 2012 to 210 in August 2018<sup>4</sup>. Some attributed the rapid increase in attention it has received to disillusionment with the ever-expanding globalized economy. This disillusionment has grown with runaway consumption, or hyper-consumption becoming the norm, creating not only status anxiety for people, especially middle class, but also an explosion of garbage and waste worldwide. The increase in waste has led to an acceleration of environmental deterioration that has become a major global concern (Leonard, 2010). The easy access of the Internet and mobile technology certainly has helped to promote such awareness and consciousness of the extent and urgency of the problems, but other authors have also pointed out that the 2008 global financial crisis provided a persuasive context that prompted people to realise that they too had a role in perpetuating the environmental disaster as they continued to spend, purchase and throw things away (Schor, 2014). After Lessig introduced the idea of 'sharing economy' in 2007 (Lessig, 2008), and along with the publication of the book, *What's Mine is Yours: The rise of collaborative consumption* by Rachel Botsman and Roo Rogers (2010). Sharing economy, the notion of an alternative way of consumption

---

<sup>4</sup> The number is recorded in Scopus, through searching the key word "collaborative consumption" or "sharing economy", with the limitation on only 'article' and 'article in press' and 'English' in August 2018. There are totally 592 papers with most of them were published in 2018 (210 articles), 2017 (221 articles) and 2016 (94 articles).



began to take root.

The sudden rise of sharing economy received a boost from the business community. Some considered it as a welcome 'disruptive innovation'<sup>5</sup> that has great potential to generate business with increased revenues that could exceed 20 fold in the next decade (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2015). Still, some remained unimpressed as they saw it as another gimmick to exploit workers further and create deeper inequalities (Scholz, 2016b; Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017).

The debate, however, did not stop the notion gaining wider popularity. In the US, it was reported that 44% of the adult population were familiar with sharing economy and 77% would become its consumers within two years (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2015). In Hong Kong, a survey indicated 30% of the informants had participated in sharing economy activities and 80% were active consumers (Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited, 2015).

## Defining sharing economy

Despite its wide acceptance, however, sharing economy in academia remains an 'essentially contested concept' (Acquier et al., 2017), and, according to Cohen (2016), it is still in a pre-paradigmatic condition in that not only the concept but the epistemology also lacks consensus (Nicholls, 2010), an agreed definition (Codagnone & Martens, 2016; Frenken, Meelen, Arets, & van de Glind, 2015; Sundararajan, 2016). Richardson (2015) saw it as a paradox and contradiction as it is framed both as a part

---

<sup>5</sup> Disruptive innovation means innovation that creates new values and markets which eventually disrupts the original ones. For more detail, see Christensen, Raynor, and McDonald (2015)

of capitalist economy and as alternative. This hybrid nature has led to greatly varied interpretations, especially in terms of its activities as well as the boundaries drawn by the participants (Schor, 2014, p. 2). For example, at least three approaches have been used to define the concept – from the perspective of seeing it as under-utilized resources, seeing it as a new business practice, and an economy that is technologically based.

#### Under-utilized resources approach

The under-utilised resource approach can be traced back from Emile Durkheim's (1952/2002) concept of anomie on imposing external limits towards individual happiness and well-being. The unchecked of human desire causes individual 'aspires to everything and is satisfied with nothing' (p. 234), which is an important driver of hyper-consumption. Similarly, Botsman and Rogers' (2010) criticism on the superfluous nature of the throw-away culture that leads individuals unconsciously to consume excessively, fuelled by an endless desire to own (Leonard, 2010; Martin, 2016), which in turn creates huge waste. Hence, Botsman and Rogers believed that once people become aware, they should fully utilize the resources they own, and hence, their desire for ownership and waste could be reduced. According to Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012), however, another way to reduce consumption and waste would be through sharing, especially with under-utilized resources. In either case, the major focus is that 'access trumps ownership' or discourages ownership (Gansky, 2010; Hartl, Hofmann, & Kirchler, 2016; Miralles, Dentoni, & Pascucci, 2017). As Botsman (2013) suggested, this should be "an economic model based on sharing, swapping, trading, or renting products and services, enabling access over ownership". This is similar to the ideas shared by Hamari, Sjöklint, and Ukkonen (2016) who explicitly argued that such sharing is a form of collaborative consumption that they expected

to alleviate the problem of hyper-consumption. Stephany (2015, p. 9) and others likewise concurred that a sharing economy could reduce the need for people to own things by making underutilized resources accessible to people in a community (Shaheen, Mallery, & Kingsley, 2012). In other words, this is also about sustainable consumption (Albescu & Maniu, 2017; Roos & Hahn, 2017).

Other aspects within this approach, however, need to be noted. For example, Wahyuningtyas (2016) questioned if this approach is effective to stop hyper-consumption if behavioural change among consumers is targeted (Wahyuningtyas, 2016). Frenken et al. (2015) also felt that from a consumer perspective it is not easy for consumers to grant one another access to their under-utilized physical assets or their idle capacity as renting for money is common in the marketplace (Kovács, Morris, Polese, & Imami, 2017; Paundra, Rook, van Dalen, & Ketter, 2017). Muñoz and Cohen (2017), on the other hand, pointed out that consumption is an intermediated set of exchanges of goods and services between individuals and organization. Thus, to increase the efficiency and optimization of utilization of idle resources in society, changes in social organizations or structures need to be explored.

### Business approach

Another way of looking at the sharing economy is the business approach. Here the focus is not on consumption, but on seeing sharing economy as a result of the inefficiency of the current economy. According to this perspective, the current economy has not allowed the full use of resources and hence, the rise of sharing economy is indicative of new economic opportunities to make the best use of under-utilized resources (Martin, 2016; Ravenelle, 2019). More specifically, the

emphasis is to see sharing as a new economic phenomenon, or a new form of transaction following the logic and ideology of capitalism. Collaborative consumption therefore, is another way to acquire and distribute resources for a fee or another form of compensation (Belk, 2014b; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2015) such as borrowing, rental or barter exchange (Boyko et al., 2017; Han & Kwon, 2016; Taihagh, 2017). Another way of describing sharing economy is collective consumption in the form of 'peer-providers' and peer-consumers' (von Hoffen, Hagge, Betzing, & Chasin, 2017). Through different forms of consumption, it is able to acquire resources more efficiently.

For other researchers, sharing economy is simply another model for doing business. Horn and Merante (2017), for example, saw it as a host of firms operating on a peer-to-peer business principle, connecting the buyer and seller using a 'sharing' platform (Breibach & Brodie, 2017) bypassing the middlemen (Zuleta Ferrari, 2016). Hence, the sharing is only about fostering demand and supply. Milanova and Maas (2017, p. 161) were even more explicit by using the term 'sharing economy' interchangeably with 'commercial sharing' to indicate the hybrid nature of such exchange, combining economic gain and a prosocial mindset. In sum, sharing economy, to researchers and practitioners under this perspective, is another way of operating a more efficient business by more directly linking up consumers and providers (Cockayne, 2016; Netter, Pedersen, & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019).

According to Sundararajan (2016, p. 27), sharing economy can be seen as a new type of capitalism which he termed 'crowd-based capitalism'. Through the crowd-based participation, the capitalization and relation of production has been transformed into one new form of economy with five major characteristics, i.e., with a large market,

high-impact capital, crowd-based networks, a mode of operation between the personal and professional, and employing casual labour.

#### Technological approach

Given that most transactions in sharing economy are reliant on digital technology, especially in linking up the different groups of participants to share and exchange resources, Rifkin (2014) argued what made sharing economy significant is its digital platform/technology. Technology, Rifkin argues has made it possible to not only reduce much of the transaction cost to nearly zero, but also has transformed the current business model into a new one that allows people to access almost everything freely and without paying for it. Other authors have also found that in addition to enlarging crowd participation in buying and selling or exchanging, the willingness people exhibited to accept such technology (Deloitte Access Economics, 2015) has also contributed to engagement with and the co-creation of new ways to reduce transaction costs (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Munger, 2018; Selsky, Ramírez, & Babürolu, 2013).

By placing digital technology in the limelight, Mair and Reischauer (2017, p. 12) thus saw sharing economy as “a web of markets in which individuals use various forms of compensation to transact the redistribution of and access to resources, mediated by a digital platform operated by an organization”. According to Barnes and Mattsson (2016, p. 200), however, what is important about the technology is its networking potential, without which sharing economy cannot function properly.

In general, the understanding on the definition of sharing economy can at least have three different perspectives, including sharing under-utilized resources with or

without coping with hyper-consumption, a more business-oriented approach, and a technologically based perspective.

## Literature on sharing economy

Given the different approaches researchers employed in defining sharing economy, the literature in the field is diverse and confounding, full of paradoxes and contested views. e.g., sharing Vs. selling, for-profit Vs. not-profit, alternative Vs. reinforcing neoliberalism (Acquier et al., 2017; Scaraboto, 2015). Furthermore, because of its novelty, sharing economy has also attracted attention from academia as well as a wide range of businesses including tourism, energy and transportation, (Heinrichs, 2013). Since its rise in 2008, however, academic interest only started to grow in 2015, along the major themes of business model, consumption behaviour and impact.

### Business model

Understandably sharing economy attracted much interests from the business field and according to Cheng (2016), not only it has become a major focus, the business perspective has also become a dominant way of framing the studies of sharing economy, especially in terms of producing case studies to illustrate new potential for increasing business efficiency and profits. Sharing economy's widespread use of digital technology, has likewise become a favourite topic, referred to as a 'disruptive innovation' for changing completely how businesses are run (B. Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014; Dreyer, Lüdeke-Freund, Hamann, & Faccar, 2017; Guttentag, 2015; Hira & Reilly, 2017; Muñoz & Cohen, 2017); setting new principles for traditional businesses to remodel themselves and for fitting in the 'new trend' as exemplified by the

'supremacy' of Airbnb, Uber and several large sharing economy projects.

### *Conceptual debates*

In addition to the business-oriented literature, the literature devoted to a better model under the concept or conceptualization is also growing. For example, Gansky (2010) and Sundararajan (2016) saw that the future of business is sharing. Since the enabling power of digital technology not only allows physical resources to be used more efficiently, the 'sharing' or service/transaction process can also become more transparent. In turn, this transparency could offer big opportunities for re-inventing or creating new businesses and renewing old ones.

This idea about sharing economy being intimately linked with, or even dependent on digital technology, has been supported by Rifkin (2014) who saw that the technology could make businesses easier to expand their productivity while incurring little or near zero marginal cost. Hira and Reilly (2017, p. 175), similarly felt that the technology could generate new relationships between 'workers' and 'employers' and between 'regulators' and 'companies'. These advantages would ultimately enable people to freely share knowledge or products that established or traditional business considered impossible or inappropriate. On this, Rifkin (2014) even argued that the rise of such 'collaborative commons' could eventually lead to the eclipse of capitalism.

One important question researchers raised, however, despite technology affording sharing economy a new mode of operation, is whether or not such an alternative economy actually works to stop over-consumerism (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010) or, rather, because it encourages people to fully utilize resources which have been

under-used, only the need for ownership among people is reduced (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Stephany, 2015). Speaking from a more critical stance, Slee (2015) did not think that sharing economy is much of a 'disruptive platform' because projects like Airbnb and Uber essentially inherit the same capitalist spirit and do not remove, but in fact have reinforced, neoliberalism in continuing with its exploitation of workers and practice what Belk (2014a) called 'pseudo sharing'. Scholz (2016a) likewise concurred that the 'sharing' activities performed through platform and venture capital has not been able to transform the face of capitalism unless these platforms are turned into 'cooperativism' which is operated through democratic governance steered by its participants.

#### *Empirical cases*

A proliferation of empirical case studies on sharing economy projects is also visible in the field in the past decade. Muñoz and Cohen (2017) typologized cases along seven dimensions and five ideal-types that cover different fields. It is, however, the peer-to-peer accommodation and shared mobility (e.g., car-sharing and ride-sharing) types that are most noticeable, perhaps most influenced by the emergence of Airbnb and Uber.

#### Shared mobility

Studies on shared mobility focus more on comparing themselves with the existing business of the taxi industry. For instance, Bălan (2016) conceptualized four models of car-sharing and ride-sharing in Romania (classified in terms of for-profit and non-profit) and argued that they had already challenged both the taxi and the car manufacturing industry. Münzel, Boon, Frenken, and Vaskelainen (2018) saw both types of business equally competitive despite their differences and they felt that



such competition would remain, and that they would co-exist until the Internet of Things becomes more mature. Teubner and Flath (2015, p. 311) and Masoud and Jayakrishnan (2017), however, using the example of emerging multi-hop ride-sharing, suggested the contribution of the new 'sharing' projects was not so much about competition but more on optimizing efficiency and ride availability and in turn, improved connectedness in the city.

In this sense, in studying taxi-ride sharing in New York, Barann, Beverungen, and Müller (2017) found that such practices had created new benefits traditional taxis could not offer: environmental savings in terms of travel distance, gas consumption and reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emission. Dudley, Banister, and Schwanen (2017), came to a similar conclusion, citing Uber as a successful case of 'disruptive innovator' in London because it had received good public support and challenged the taxi industry head-on despite the concerns over regulation matters.

Other researchers, however, believe that the current status of sharing economy remains uncertain because most users or participants in these car/ride-sharing projects are limited to those who are young, with higher levels of education and higher income, and they are typically the ones who have the knowledge and thus acceptance of the Internet, and the corresponding willingness to attempt new ideas (Bálint & Trócsányi, 2016; Prieto, Baltas, & Stan, 2017; Shaheen, Chan, & Gaynor, 2016; Shaheen & Nelson, 2016; Tyndall, 2017).

#### Peer-to-peer accommodation

In studying the sector of peer-to-peer accommodation, a significant number of works have focused on AirBnb. Mikhalkina and Cabantous (2015), for example, considered

Airbnb as icon when it established the prototypical sharing economy project in the field of tourism and peer-to-peer accommodation. Guttentag (2015) likewise treated it as an innovative disruption of the hotel industry and the housing market by using the Internet as the marketplace for introducing lower prices, and new customer experiences. Guttentag argued that even though it may not have displaced the old market, it had forced the hotels to initiate new business strategies.

There are, however, some dissenting voices. Varma, Jukic, Pestek, Shultz, and Nestorov (2016) held that the currently introduced model cannot be considered as a major disruption of the hotel industry, especially when the major players in the industry remain dominant, and the newly created competition impacted more on the budgeting and operation of small hotels. Others highlighted that although the new Airbnb model may outperform the hotels especially in terms of price positioning (Blal, Singal, & Templin, 2018; Xie & Kwok, 2017; Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2017), and customer experiences (M. A. Mody, Suess, & Lehto, 2017), it has yet to affect the profitability and occupancy rates of the major hotel players (Aznar, Sayeras, Rocafort, & Galiana, 2017; Choi, Jung, Ryu, Kim, & Yoon, 2015; Dogru, Mody, & Suess, 2019; Ginindza & Tichaawa, 2017).

The impact of Airbnb is not, however, limited to only the hotel industry but has extended into the urban housing market, especially in terms of rent increases (DiNatale, Lewis, & Parker, 2018; Gulyani, Talukdar, & Bassett, 2018; Horn & Merante, 2017; Jordan & Moore, 2017; Lambea Llop, 2017; Schäfer & Braun, 2016; Wachsmuth & Weisler, 2018). If the new model can generate large profits, rents generally increase, especially when the properties are suited for Airbnb arrangements targeting tourists (Gurran & Phibbs, 2017). D. Lee (2016) analysed the

development of Airbnb in Los Angeles and found it created an affordable housing crisis. It was observed that 7,316 units of affordable accommodation had been removed from the city's rental market and one-eighth of these apartments were put on Airbnb listings, which further drove up rents in the sector. He concluded that this had accelerated the process of gentrification and 'collective displacement', leading to the reproduction of vacant flats exclusively for tourists and the 'substitution of residents life by tourism' (Gant, 2016, p. 1), or what Schäfer and Braun (2016) called, a 'misuse' of affordable housing. These studies challenge the positive imagination of sharing economy by providing a realistic empirical picture of the harm, even if unintentional, inflicted on the local disadvantaged sector of the community participants and their livelihood.

The actual operation of this new business model also caught the attention of researchers. One aspect is the pricing of Airbnb, including its physical attributes, and host characteristics (Chattopadhyay & Mitra, 2019; Y. Chen & Xie, 2017; Gibbs, Guttentag, Gretzel, Morton, & Goodwill, 2017; Lorde, Jacob, & Weekes, 2019; D. Wang & Nicolau, 2017). Reputation (a major characteristic of the review system) was observed to have only a weak relationship by Y. Chen and Xie (2017) and Gibbs et al. (2017) with pricing. Several strategies, however, may affect the reputation including the profile picture (and facial expression) of the host in the picture, storytelling, and the 'Superhost' badge system in Airbnb (Ert, Fleischer, & Magen, 2016; Fagerstrøm, Pawar, Sigurdsson, Foxall, & Yani-de-Soriano, 2017; Gunter, 2018; S. Liang, Schuckert, Law, & Chen, 2017; Pera, Viglia, & Furlan, 2016; Roelofsen & Minca, 2018; Sun, Liu, Zhu, Chen, & Yuan, 2019) as they may enhance the interaction, reputation and trust for potential users (Abrahamo, Parigi, Gupta, & Cook, 2017).

## Energy sector

In the energy sector, electricity storage and usage have also been influenced by the philosophy of sharing economy. Fuentes-Bracamontes (2016) and Saintier (2017) observed that by better connecting each small consumer, the current electricity system can be made more useful, profitable and more sustainable as financial benefits can be generated from this business model which emphasizes better checking and auditing of the transaction costs. Moreover, energy storage can also be more efficient with the assistance of digital technology. The development of cloud energy storage and the multi-agent-based power hub have become new types of sharing economy models for electricity distribution, and have the potential to supplement, if not replace, the centralized and single grid models used currently (Chakraborty, Baeyens, Poolla, Khargonekar, & Varaiya, 2018; Fuentes-Bracamontes, 2016; Khalid et al., 2018; Liu, Zhang, Kang, Kirschen, & Xia, 2017; Lombardi & Schwabe, 2017; Müller & Welpé, 2018). These new models have been also identified as the 'sharing power economy' (Mahmood et al., 2017).

## *Controversies and law regulation*

The emergence of sharing economy has also sparked a series of publications focusing on criticizing the for-profit platform economy, i.e., 'gig economy' or 'on-demand economy' which operates on the ideologies and strengths of neoliberal capitalism (Buckley, 2018; Cockayne, 2016; Malin & Chandler, 2017; Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017; Waite & Lewis, 2017; Zwick, 2018). Some argued that both consumers and producers can have more freedom in determining the demand and supply side and work towards a more efficient market through 'evasive entrepreneurship' or disruptive innovation (Elert & Henrekson, 2016), while others claimed that in reality, this is nothing but an extension of what is currently in place, that is, flexible

accumulation<sup>6</sup> to exploit workers in a new way (Fairweather, 2017; Harvey, 1989; Schoenberger, 1988). Fairweather even argued that sharing economy is merely a form of primitive accumulation<sup>7</sup>(Fairweather, 2017).

Nonetheless, Malin & Chandler, (2017) and Thorne & Quinn (2017) considered that in this new sharing framework, workers are treated as independent contractors rather than dependent employees, and that this could be good for the employees' welfare materially and psychologically. Yet Fabo, Karanovic, and Dukova (2017, pp. 171-172) disagreed and saw this perspective as 'reminiscing the 19<sup>th</sup> century's laissez-faire capitalism', which was a despotic factory regime<sup>8</sup> where workers seemed to have repossessed their means of production, but were controlled in the relation of production. Through a form of 'soft control', the unequal relation of production was exemplified by the rating system and surveillance based on asymmetric relations and access of information employers and workers had (Cockayne, 2016; Ravenelle, 2017; Rosenblat, Levy, Barocas, & Hwang, 2017; Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017; Slee, 2015). Furthermore, among the 'workers', there are increasing class inequalities. Those individuals who are highly educated with higher income are able to participate in the sharing economy, and use the platform to earn even more income, while at

---

<sup>6</sup> Flexible accumulation is a term explained by David Harvey to confront the rigidity of Fordism. It consists of flexibility in labour process, products and markets. Through this process, the labour market is in radical restructuring which divides the core group (more stable) from the periphery groups (part time, casual) through sub-contracting, outsourcing. For further understanding, please refer to Harvey (1989), Chapter Nine.

<sup>7</sup> Primitive accumulation, in Fairweather's article (2017), is not only the transition from pre-capitalist society to capitalist society (as Marx's understanding in Capital Vol.1 for historical perspective), but also refers to when the means of subsistence (minimal resources needed for survival) has been transformed to means of production which the capitalist can obtain surplus value.

<sup>8</sup> Despotic factory regime explains the exploitative relation of production which factory owners forced child and female workers to work with extremely long hours with very low salary level.

the bottom, those with less education and opportunity are becoming more crowded out (Schor, 2017; Waite & Lewis, 2017).

In other words, the sharing economy allows diminishing and exploitation of labour rights, through a lack of appropriate regulation for how this new economy should operate. Hence for some, this sharing or 'platform' economy promises big returns, but delivers a reality that is grim (Fabo et al., 2017, p. 172). Unless there are better regulations through changes in law (McKee, 2017; Miller, 2016; Todolí-Signes, 2017) including regulatory impact assessment, legal variation and compensation (Doménech-Pascual, 2016), according to this dystopian view, exploitation and disadvantage are likely to become a new norm in the sharing economy. Miller (2016) likewise suggested regulation of the short-term rental market is necessary, especially in terms of 'transferable sharing rights'. Munkøe (2017), however, considered that the issues of relationship of production (i.e., whether employees should be treated as contractors or not), insurance, externalities and legal entities are not always clear and debatable.

### Consumer behaviour

Another major theme of sharing economy literature is consumer behaviour. As a subject of investigation, consumer behaviour is nothing new. This 'study of the processes involving how individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences in satisfying their needs and desires' started in the 1950s (Solomon, 2017, p. 28) as a sub-field in marketing. Its scope also covers not only buyers' behaviour but the entire consumption process including why they consume, what affects their consumption and what motivates them to consume again (MacInnis & Folkes, 2010). The study of consumer behaviour in sharing

economy mirrors the same traditional approaches, although the topic of 'sharing' is also highlighted in understanding what it is and how it affects consumption behaviour.

#### *Nature of sharing*

As a foundation concept in sharing economy, the meaning and nature of 'sharing' has not attracted much attention (Kennedy, 2016). Wittel (2011, p. 5) felt that this could be because sharing is often considered 'gift exchange', a long-term influence by anthropological thinking (Mauss, 1925/2001). This contribution of anthropological thinking in studying sharing economy should not be ignored as underlying sharing economy is the notion of mutual obligation (to give, receive and repay) (Belk, 2010) or reciprocity. (Sahlins, 1988, as cited in Widlok, 2013) even though after the millennium, the meaning of sharing has become quite different due to the development of digital technology (Wittel, 2011).

In general, there are two major perspectives for defining sharing. The first emphasizes the defining of terms of what is and is not sharing (John, 2017). This perspective sets up the boundaries differentiating sharing from other modes of resources management such as buying, which is more like commodity exchange and gift-giving (Belk, 2010), while sharing is 'the act and process of distributing what is ours to others for their use and/or the act and process of receiving or taking something from others for our use' (Belk, 2007, p. 126). Hence, It is non-reciprocal rather than reciprocal like gift-giving, or commodity exchange which is only 'pseudo-sharing' (Belk, 2014a). There are, however, different forms of sharing, such as the sharing with neighbours and relatives, termed 'sharing in', as well as giving to strangers outside the boundaries, or 'sharing out' (Belk, 2010). In sum, Belk's works

have inspired many scholars probing into this field on the identification of the meaning and boundaries of sharing (Albinsson & Perera, 2012; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010).

The second 'non-prescriptive' perspective is not interested in differentiating what is and is not sharing. Instead it asks what actions or phenomenon are called sharing across a wide range of contexts (Couldry, 2004, p. 119). This perspective was inspired by communication and media studies, especially with the increasing popularity of digital technology (Wittel, 2011, pp. 4-5). Traditionally, study of sharing has been object-centred and focused on examining the quality of sharing of material objects. With the rise of digital technology, however, the nature and quality of giving has been transformed (Wittel, 2011). Benkler, Leadbeater, Tapscott and Williams concurred that technology had changed the social and economic production of things because technology does not only allow, but encourages co-production and sharing (Benkler, 2004; Leadbeater, 2009; Tapscott & Williams, 2006). Cammaerts (2011) saw sharing in digital context as disruptive because commodity exchange now involves three new different practices of sharing: sharing code (e.g. open sources), sharing digital content (e.g. filesharing) and sharing access (e.g. public accessed Wi-fi), all of which involve a level of reciprocity.

Kennedy also adopts practice theory to conceptualize sharing. She argued the constructed nature of sharing and highlighted the importance of social media platforms by associating the predated activities to understand sharing (Kennedy, 2013). According to Kennedy (2013) '[The] ubiquity and everydayness of the term sharing belies the diverse and complex social, cultural, economic, and political processes it is employed to describe'(p. 135). Such sharing in the digital culture is



defined by her as the 'sharing turn' which included three major narratives, including sharing as an economy (access resources without ownership), sharing as scaled distribution (extension of ownership to larger volume) and sharing as social intensity (communicative practices to intensify social bonds).

Similarly, John (2017) also conceptualized sharing from the non-prescriptive approach. He argued for the construction of the changing meaning of 'sharing' in a different context. John (2017) explained historically for the concept 'sharing' in early days as zero-sum distribution or act of communication distinctively, which these understandings are lack of technological and social conditions and lack of explanation of social constraints of sharing (John, 2012a, 2013b). In the digital age, the concept of sharing is both a set of values and practices, while practice can achieve value. The activity of Web 2.0 highlights sharing as the incorporation of both distribution and communication via the social network site (John, 2013a, 2016). Distribution on social network sites is no longer zero-sum but productive (John, 2013b); while communication is emotive that consists of interpersonal relationship based on honesty, caring, trust and fairness (John, 2017). John (2017) explained three spheres of sharing including sharing as the constitutive activity of social media, sharing as a model of economic behaviour and the sharing as a category of speech. The spheres are similar to Kennedy's conception, but he treated the construction of sharing as metaphorical, as they co-construct each other and themselves (John, 2017, p. 4).

#### *Motivation in participation*

A major concern in sharing economy is why people are motivated to participate in it (Böcker & Meelen, 2017; Hamari et al., 2016), or why people behave the way they do

(Solomon, 2017, p. 173) or consume. Traditionally it is common to explain consumer behaviour in terms of needs and wants, reflecting utilitarian and hedonic reasons towards consumption. Böcker & Meelen (2017) believe however, that participation in sharing economy is more complex and multi-faceted, covering social, economic, and environmental intentions (Bucher, Fieseler, & Lutz, 2016; Gullstrand Edbring, Lehner, & Mont, 2016; Möhlmann, 2015; McArthur, 2015; Schor, 2014), intrinsically and extrinsically (Hamari et al., 2016; Li & Wen, 2019; Tussyadiah, 2016; Yang & Ahn, 2016), as well as utilitarian, hedonic and/or social/symbolic purposes (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Codagnone & Martens, 2016; Decrop, Del Chiappa, Mallargé, & Zidda, 2018; Forno & Garibaldi, 2015; Ketter, 2019; Möhlmann, 2015; Milanova & Maas, 2017; Shaheen & Bansal, 2015).

Utilitarian explanations are most commonly employed to explain people's participation in sharing economy. As Hwang and Griffiths (2017) suggested, this is because this type of explanation is rational, functional and highlights the economic value with which most people can immediately identify (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Gullstrand Edbring et al., 2016; Kathan, Matzler, & Veider, 2016; Kim, Lee, Koo, & Yang, 2018; Lambertson & Rose, 2012; Shaheen & Bansal, 2015; Widlok, 2017). John (2012b, p. 49), however, saw this explanation as tainted by liberal individualism, as consumption is considered as a personal and individual free choice and has nothing to do with 'socialist' values such as collaboration. Hamari et al. (2016, p. 2052) regarded sharing as an alternative as it is both rational and utilitarian but "replaces exclusive ownership of goods with lower-cost options". In this consideration, cost-saving is still held as a primary and indispensable reason for users to participate in sharing while at the time from the producers' view, it still provides a good opportunity to make profit on their otherwise under-utilized resources. Bucher et

al. (2016, p. 318) perhaps got it right by summarising the entire situation: “I share because it is economically wise”.

This utilitarian spirit is likewise observed in car sharing and the peer-to-peer accommodation sector (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Boateng, Kosiba, & Okoe, 2019; Hamari et al., 2016; Hawlitschek, Teubner, & Gimpel, 2018; Hwang & Griffiths, 2017; Lamberton & Rose, 2012; Prettenthaler & Steininger, 1999; Roos & Hahn, in press; Shaheen et al., 2016; Shaheen et al., 2012). Shaheen et al., in her study of carpooling in San Francisco, found that the reason people joined was because of monetary savings from expenses in public transport (Shaheen et al., 2016). Joo (2017), reckoned that convenience was a more important reason. This view is also supported by others on why they joined car sharing (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Schaeffers, 2013; Shaheen et al., 2016). Similar observations were found in studies in the peer-to-peer accommodation sector (Forno & Garibaldi, 2015; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2015) – that financial savings were primary incentives for travellers to join home-swapping or time-sharing schemes (Stors & Kagermeier, 2015).

Despite utilitarian motives playing a major role in participating in sharing economy projects, it is not to say that hedonism is insignificant. Many authors found the search for authenticity or authentic experiences rather than monetary savings to be a main factor for using shared accommodation such as Airbnb (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2014; Forno & Garibaldi, 2015; Hamari et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2018; Paulauskaite, Powell, Coca-Stefaniak, & Morrison, 2017; Stors & Kagermeier, 2015; Tussyadiah, 2015, 2016; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2015).

There are also social and symbolic reasons for people to participate in sharing

economy projects – e.g., meeting or connecting with like-minded new friends (Böcker & Meelen, 2017; Belarmino, Whalen, Koh, & Bowen, 2019; Guttentag, Smith, Potwarka, & Havitz, 2018; Habibi, Kim, & Laroche, 2016; Kim et al., 2018; McArthur, 2015; Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010; Sthapit & Jiménez-Barreto, 2018; Stors & Kagermeier, 2015; Sundararajan, 2016; Tussyadiah, 2015; C. R. Wang & Jeong, 2018). This is best summarized by the statement made by Bucher et al. (2016) -- ‘I share to connect with others’. McArthur (2015), using a netnography approach, also found collaboration accommodation schemes were set up to respond to the needs of people wanting to re-connect and reinforce social bonding and sense of belonging in community; while Botsman and Rogers (2010) noted that sharing accommodation was considered by users as convenient to meeting new friends (see also Piscicelli, Cooper, & Fisher, 2015).

Environmental reasons were cited as another important incentive for people to join sharing economy projects, but surprisingly studies on this are few (Shaheen et al., 2012). Still, the notable findings are that the ideology of sustainability and the feeling of doing the right thing as a moral duty are common themes (Bucher et al., 2016; Hartl, Sabitzer, Hofmann, & Penz, 2018; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015), especially in terms of how they saw their sharing behaviour as a way out for solving environmental problems (Akbar & Hoffmann, 2018; Lamberton & Rose, 2012). Philip, Ozanne, and Ballantine (2015), however, found that sustainability sometimes could only be a ‘bonus’ factor when the real reason was more about personal gain. This view was also supported by Devinney, Auger, and Eckhardt (2010), who found that additional self-interests, such as price, convenience, and having conservational topics, were quite common. Some even went further to argue that very few people were actually driven by environmental concerns when they purchased second-hand

products on online platforms such as eBay (Clausen, Blättel-Mink, Erdmann, & Henseling, 2010), indicating that practical and economic reasons rather than environmental reasons were at work.

#### *Changing consumption behaviour*

So far underlying the literature on sharing economy has been the assumption that sharing is a different kind of consumption behaviour but only associated with people of specific socio-economic status. For example, those who are highly educated (Prieto et al., 2017; Schor, 2017; Tyndall, 2017), young (Bálint & Trócsányi, 2016; A. Lindblom & Lindblom, 2017; Tyndall, 2017), white (Schor, Fitzmaurice, Carfagna, Attwood-Charles, & Poteat, 2016; Shaheen et al., 2016), and economically well-off were said to be more likely to use sharing economy platforms like Airbnb and Zipcar in their daily lives (Fremstad, 2017). Many of these users later became providers as they found out how to share resources and get more people to participate to start their own project to generate income. This has led to the spread of a 'crowding out effect' that may displace traditional jobs frequently occupied by the working class. As a result, it has produced greater income inequality (Schor, 2017) and excluded them from being part of the sharing economy, especially when they had only limited Internet access (Fremstad, 2017).

Digital technology is highly significant in consumption behaviour. In sharing economy (like shared cars or car-pool) (Lyons, Mokhtarian, Dijst, & Böcker, 2018) or the peer production of sharing services and activities (Bauwens, 2009; Benkler, 2006; Leadbeater, 2009), it utilizes the Internet to renovate organizational setups to facilitate free cooperation for non and pro-profit markets in taking control the means of production among the producers (Bauwens, 2006; Benkler, 2006; Siefkes, 2008). It

also offers open and free access and contribution for the public to the sharing economy (Benkler & Nissenbaum, 2006). Nevertheless, there are still rules and norms and limits to ownership in these 'commons-oriented' platforms (Kazman & Chen, 2009).

#### *Re-consumption*

In the field of sharing economy, there is also the view that unless people are satisfied, the sustainability and development of sharing economy would become uncertain as people decide to leave. Airbnb, not surprisingly, has attracted much attention from researchers. Scholars found that utilitarian considerations in terms of saved costs was of utmost importance for Airbnb to compete with hotels (L. J. Liang, Choi, & Joppe, 2018; Möhlmann, 2015; So, Oh, & Min, 2018; Tussyadiah, 2016). User experience, however, in terms of service quality was another major concern. In these contexts, participant loyalty thus becomes crucial (Tussyadiah, 2016; Yang & Ahn, 2016), as L. J. Liang et al. (2018) pointed out, loyalty is trust, and that is the basis for people to go back to the same service providers like Airbnb again (Mao & Lyu, 2017). This means that rating and review, and the availability of a system to ensure the quality of the service, makes it more reliable. This reliability also becomes an additional bonus (Belk, 2014b; Sundararajan, 2016), especially in this digital age when electronic word-of-mouth with rating systems has become the basis of public confidence and reputation of the service provider (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; C. C. Chen & Chang, 2018; Ju, Back, Choi, & Lee, 2019; L. J. Liang et al., 2018; Mauri, Minazzi, Nieto-García, & Viglia, 2018; M. Mody, Hanks, & Dogru, 2019; Newlands, Lutz, & Fieseler, 2019; Tussyadiah, 2015).

## Impact of sharing economy

Given the attention sharing economy has received, the interests in assessing its impacts has increased tremendous. Social, economic and environmental impacts, are keen and growing, attempt to prove much on the effectiveness of the sharing economy projects.

### *Economic Impact*

Many studies on the economic impacts of sharing economy are focused on the savings of transaction costs (Henten & Windekilde, 2016; Jiang & Tian, 2018; Rifkin, 2014) and earnings that can be generated from under-utilized resources (Benkler, 2004; Stephany, 2015). However, literature is increasing that examines how sharing economy could harm labour rights and intensify inequalities of access and income., Such literature draws attention to how sharing economy platforms use neoliberal strategies to recruit workers, but classify them as self-employed or micro-entrepreneurs to bypass legal laws, reduce costs and exploit workers by avoiding paying them minimum wages and providing benefits (Dubal, 2017; Frenken & Schor, 2017; Hill, 2015; Malin & Chandler, 2017; Scholz, 2016a, 2016b; Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017; Slee, 2015; Todolí-Signes, 2017; Zwick, 2018).

### *Social Impact*

One of the major social impacts identified by researchers in sharing economy is how trust was established among strangers and how networks or social capital were built up among users and participants from different socio-economic backgrounds (Albinsson & Perera, 2012; Belk, 2014b; Codagnone & Martens, 2016; Frenken & Schor, 2017; Y. B. Wang & C.W., 2017). Zuleta Ferrari (2016, p. 674) found sharing economy “enables a shift in trust, from institutions to individuals”, even among

strangers, and continued to form bonding and bridging social capital. This view, however, has been challenged by others because of the inequalities created and turned it into 'paradoxes of openness and distinction' that causing inconsistency between articulated goals and actual practices (Schor et al., 2016). For example, bank platforms mainly catered to the higher educated, those earning higher income and of white ethnic backgrounds, making the claim that sharing economy platforms are open and highly interactive among people of different backgrounds highly suspicious (Fremstad, 2017; Tyndall, 2017). Edelman, Luca, and Svirsky (2017), for instance, in their experimental study on Airbnb found serious racial discrimination in that applicants with distinct Afro-American names, were less likely to be accepted as opposed to those who are white. Schor and Attwood-Charles (2017) likewise found that applicants of ethnic minority background often had rooms assigned to undesirable locations and were given less price discounts than white people. In ride-sharing, Tjaden, Schwemmer, and Khadjavi (2018) had similar findings on the discrimination in price towards Arab or Turkish users in Germany. Parigi and State (2014) revealed that the review system on the digital platform of Couchsurfing, contrary to its original aim, it actually discouraged people from forming friendships. In summary, as Belk (2017, p. 258) commented, when the 'sharing out' in sharing economy is done without the spirit of caring, any possibility of building trust, sharing and community will be dissolved.

### *Environmental Impact*

Sharing economy emphasizes the re-use of under-utilized resources, reducing waste and carbon footprints through sharing and less ownership. Researchers have found that sharing economy's environmental impact seems more visible in the energy sector (Fuentes-Bracamontes, 2016; Liu et al., 2017; Lombardi & Schwabe, 2017),



and ride-sharing (Cai, Wang, Adriaens, & Xu, 2019). Frenken and Schor (2017), however, disagreed, finding there was insufficient empirical evidence to support the claim. It is also common among the providers or hosts to purchase new products, or use more resources as their income increases, creating a 'rebound effect' towards sustainability (Bocken, Short, Rana, & Evans, 2014; Frenken, 2017; Verboven & Vanherck, 2016).

### Sharing economy in Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, the introduction of sharing economy began in 2013. Three major activists (Ms. Ada Wog, Dr. Chow Sung Ming and Dr. Terence Yuen) gained insights from sharing city in Seoul and applied this in the Hong Kong context (Chow, Wong, & Yuen, 2014). Chow, Wong and Yuen have categorized the sharing attempts in Hong Kong according to the division of Botsman and Rogers (2010) with product service systems, redistribution markets, and collaborative lifestyles; identifying over 100 cases in 2014 (Chow, Wong, & Y.K., 2014). A large proportion of these cases are mixed categorization with social economy and social enterprise projects, including time banks and second-hand markets. In the meantime, some iconic sharing economy projects into Hong Kong, including Airbnb in 2012 and Uber in 2014 were introduced. Since the entry of these companies into the market, development accelerated with various major types of activities emerging such as bike-sharing<sup>9</sup>, ride-sharing<sup>10</sup>, second-hand goods sharing<sup>11</sup>, co-working space, and recently, social housing.

---

<sup>9</sup> For example, Gobeer Bike, Hobabike, and Ketch'up bike in 2017

<sup>10</sup> Kai Fong Lai Mang in 2015, ToGetCar in 2016

<sup>11</sup> JupYeah in 2011, Gaifong in 2014, Waste-no-mall (Yuen Long) in 2016

The discussion on sharing economy has spread into other fields with growing attention from practitioners and government as an innovative business model, while it was included into Social Enterprise Summit in 2016 to be a part of possible solutions towards community development for poverty alleviation. Funding of 'Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund' has also subsidized some sharing economy projects. Despite its rapid development in Hong Kong, several major criticisms were also key in pointing out the current problems of sharing has created. Apart from the central accusation of Uber and Airbnb of illegal operation, the invasion of public parking spaces<sup>12</sup>, acceleration of sub-divided flats<sup>13</sup>, and the exploitation of drivers are commonly identified serious issues.

Despite the emerging trend and controversies, there is little interest by academics to study sharing economy in Hong Kong. Current discussion on sharing economy in Hong Kong includes only three articles<sup>14</sup>. While two of them are illustrated as case studies to the discussion on construction via IoT platform(Xu, Li, Chen, & Wei, 2018) and Superhost system in Airbnb(S. Liang et al., 2017). The only research paper examines the reasons and motivations of participating in Uber through a self-administered online survey (Z. W. Y. Lee, Chan, Balaji, & Chong, 2018). This study highlighted the importance of utilitarian approaches on perceived benefit, as well as the risks and level of trust towards platforms that affect the intention of participation.

---

<sup>12</sup> Many bike-sharing companies were criticized to use the free public parking space for their own private business. For more detail, please see

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201706/21/P2017062100604.htm>

<sup>13</sup> A news report in a local digital media 'HK01' found out that some owners operated as a corporation to rent the subdivided flats as Airbnb listings without proper license and evading tax. For detail, please see <https://theinitium.com/article/20151019-hongkong-shareeconomy01/>

<sup>14</sup> Two databases including Scopus and Web of Science were searched on 12 April 2019 as latest.

Apart from this attempt, there is a profound lack of empirical studies exploring sharing economy in the Hong Kong context.

### Gaps in sharing economy literatures

As indicated in the earlier sections, the current literature on sharing economy is growing, but only along several core themes. Most noticeable is that it is treated as a new business model, challenging the traditional ways of doing business. A second theme is the corresponding new consumer behaviour sharing economy has produced, especially regarding it as a disruptive innovation through the use and convenience of digital technology. Understandably because of these changes, researchers are also beginning to monitor and examine the impacts of the new philosophy and practices of sharing economy, centring on the economic, social and environmental impacts. While the literature surveyed are most helpful, present study focuses on whether it is possible for sharing economy in Hong Kong to transform consumers' behaviour through reducing people's consumption as a way to avoid over-consumption. This, in turn, should make an impact on waste reduction and environmental protection using the action of sharing, or a more efficient use of under-utilized resources. However, there are gaps in the current literature on examining the above parts.

First, in most current literature, sharing economy has been framed as an emerging new business opportunity and the case studies as well as participants are treated mainly as micro phenomenon that are represented as innovative businesses and smart consumers, while the original purpose of using sharing to combat the problem of hyper-consumption proposed by Botsman and Rogers (2010) is forgotten. In doing

so, the concern on sharing economy, including the structure of the capitalist economic system that is based on the production of wants and desire is not a major consideration. As a result, the 'need' for hyper-consumption and the value of endless ownership – a critical social science perspective – somehow has been relegated to almost afterthought. Even with Botsman and Rogers' (2010) proposal of collaborative consumption, the concept itself does little to highlight the relationship between structure and agency in promoting sharing as a way for the re-structuring of the current economic system and environmental crisis.

This lack of clear explanation is particularly noticeable with all the case studies of sharing economy projects when they are being portrayed as new promising business for generating greater profits. The focus is usually on the consumers and participants and their consuming behaviour, highlighting all the economic positivity associated with convenience, better service, and savings in prices without exploring the social missions and values project founders upheld that inspired them to start their socially-based projects. From this perspective, all 'successful' sharing economy projects have become examples of the triumph of 'entrepreneurship' and business innovation rather than attempts for re-building or transforming participants and structures of communities, organizations and institutions.

The empirical case studies, in addition, have underplayed the predicaments as well as limitations sharing economy projects have faced, especially speaking very little about the difficulties they encountered in attempting to change participant's and the public's values towards ownership and over-consumption. Changing individual's and the public's values on ownership, especially associated with wants and desires, is not a simple individual act but involves ultimately a transformation of collective mindset

that people take for granted. Here, the gap in the field is that while consumption remains a major focus, the approach examining it continues to conceptualize it along the same business/management framework, while the participants and consumers remain to be regarded as passive consumers rather than possessing any agency for change. Here, a more in-depth understanding of the participants in these projects and their perception of their own role and the projects they join would help to theorize them as possible social changers. Furthermore, the strategies and activities employed by sharing economy projects in balancing their business operation and social missions, as well as their role in influencing their participants, are likewise crucial for developing a more complex, layered and sophisticated picture of the current and future state of sharing economy. This is another gap that needs to be filled.

One of the reasons why sharing economy has attracted so much attention, is due to the interest people have on its various impacts, social, business, and environmental or otherwise. However, as Frenken and Schor (2017) pointed out, the literature available on this remains scant, with few publications explaining the causal mechanisms and path towards the impact on participants' behaviour and change. Moreover, even in studies that have attempted to assess the potential of sharing economy as agent of change, fewer still probe into the broader question of its feasibility for effecting change, either on a micro or macro level. This is one major gap that requires more attention, especially in using Erik Wright's works (2010) on social transformation to provide better insights for the analysis. How Wright's works and other concepts in social science have guided this research will be detailed in the following section.

## Emancipatory understanding towards social transformation: Theory of Erik Olin Wright

In order to understand if sharing economy can work towards transforming hyper-consumption and consumer behaviour, it is useful here to borrow Erik Olin Wright's idea of "Real Utopias" which he derived from the social science-based emancipatory approach for exploring possible alternative trajectories towards transcending Capitalism (Wright, 2010, 2013).

Inspired by Marxism, Wright severely criticized the problem of capitalism as having a 'systematic bias towards consumerism' (Wright, 2010, p. 65). He follows Marx's argument on the estranged labour, argues the alienation of workers hinders them from working towards actualizing themselves towards a natural and spiritual species. In capitalism, they are relegated into a labour working without soul, seeking for existence without any conscious of their own life-activities. They become an animal-like species (Marx & Engels, 1988). Wright argued that in capitalism, labour only focuses on productivity (work) while free activities are replaced by consumption (Wright, 2010)<sup>15</sup>. This notion of consumption leads individual satisfaction in the bias towards consumerism. Under this bias, Wright criticized consumerism for leading to severe environmental damage in three major ways, including the ignorance of environmental costs by the corporation, over-consumption of resources and the destruction of the environment on a global level (pp. 69-70).

---

<sup>15</sup> For more detail in alienation of labour from nature and his spiritual species, see Marx and Engels (1988). Also, similar argument can also refer to Hannah Arendt's book 'The Human Condition' (1958) discussing about the differentiation between labour, work and action, and also the relationship with consumption.

Wright sees emancipation as the foundation of social transformation, but feels 'bourgeois social science' should also be included as part of his emancipatory social theory (Wright, 1994). Wright's rationale for this perspective is that the social science foundation could offer an 'analytical' core for reconstructing Marxism by not only highlighting the causal mechanisms that generated the social phenomena, but also providing a systematic clarification of concepts, and methodological pluralism that links individuals on a micro-level to the problems they face on a macro level (Duvoux, 2012; Wright, 1994). Wright first translated the traditional Marxist elements into the languages of causes, mechanisms and effects that are not only theory-based (Wright, 1994; Wright, Levine, & Sober, 1992) but also methodologically pluralistic to address the fatal flaw most traditional Marxists commit, that is, reducing their explanation of structural problems by methodological individualism. In Wright's view, the connection between macro phenomena and micro-individual foundation must be examined through reality, a point which Bhaskar (1975) emphasized strongly in deliberating his concept of critical realism, which integrates ontological and epistemological principles (Wright, 1994). In these contexts, Wright proposes that in building a framework for exploring and building a utopia, two main elements must be incorporated: a critical and theoretical basis that raises not only critical questions but also emancipatory possibilities or aspirations (Wright, 2013). Wright believes, therefore, in both the role of Marxism and its possibilities of 'socialism', which is understood as capitalist exploitation and domination transcended'(Wright, 1994, p. 193). For Wright, while the Marxist normative value of freedom and equality remains as the core, his framework also makes it clear that a realistic understanding of how social science could inform radical social transformation is equally desirable.

More specifically, Wright sees that the critical social science approach makes it possible to appreciate that emerging social problems and human suffering are not cases of mysterious human action but are the consequences of complex social incompatibilities among social structure, cultural values and institutional set ups as widely and commonly recognized by Marx, Weber and Foucault. Wright also believes, however, that problem analysis alone is insufficient. Without providing alternatives or real solutions towards emancipatory systematization of scientific knowledge to eliminate oppression and create new institutional designs towards better human conditions, 'utopia' will remain elusive (Souza, 2017, p. 183; Wright, 2010).

For these reasons, Wright (2013, p. 3) proposes four basic tasks for working towards transformation:

1. Specifying the moral principles for judging social institutions
2. Using these moral principles as the standards for diagnosis and critique of existing institutions
3. Developing an account of viable alternatives in response to the critique
4. Proposing a theory of transformation for realizing those alternatives

Hence it is possible to see Wright's framework is readily optimistic as he advocates possible future trajectories for developing alternative movement to 'neutralize harm', 'reform and transcend the entire capitalist system', and the importance of 'getting from here to there', which he terms the 'Real Utopia' (Wright, 2010, 2013). For Wright, the 'Real Utopia' is not a fantasy that exists in imagination, but is based on realistically working towards possible transformation of the system and institutions –



it is the 'sociology of possible', which mediates constantly and continually the tension between dreams and practice in the establishing a vision of the future. In short, Wright's 'Real Utopia' is about working towards an ideal while remaining grounded in reality (Wright, 2010, 2011, 2013) to build and strengthen the moral principles or social values of equality and fairness, democracy and freedom and community and solidarity for long-term social transformation and transcendence (Wright, 2010).

Once again, Wright's emphasis on the dynamic structural possibility of alternatives in his framework marks a most important departure from the traditional Marxist analysis of the problems of capitalism. Instead of seeing capitalism as self-destruction and leading to socialism as traditional Marxists insist in a deterministic fashion, Wright, sees distinctively the "possibilities for institutional changes under different social conditions" (Wright, 2010, p. 107). Guided by Wright's framework, it makes sense that this research will highlight, describe, analyse and assess the efforts made by community participants to search for viable alternatives to reform and transform their institutional and individual practices through sharing economy towards a more sustainable environment.

This rationale is consistent with what has been found in the current literature on the development of alternatives. It is a common conclusion among many scholars that the existing system of capitalism is unsustainable, especially in environmental terms as the consumption and production of products continue to go to waste, causing rapid resource depletion and environmental degradation (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Leonard, 2010). Many authors also agree that it is not only the poor and working class are increasingly being deprived from accessing resources necessary for survival, but people from the middle class are also quickly becoming sufferers from the

runaway unsustainable and injustice economy. Little of the current literature, however, has displayed strong interests in tracking how efforts made by the general public are contributing to constructing a sharing economy through projects aimed at taking steps to get them from 'here' (problem) to 'there' (transformation). It is common that many remain sceptical about the prospect of sharing economy and regard it as a myth (Martin, 2016). However, Wright's effort in drawing attention to the emancipatory nature of social transformation is inspiring and hence it is fitting for this research to focus on whether or not sharing economy initiatives would be viable pathways for community participants to effect changes in altering hyper-consumption in capitalism. Some scholars are, however, very critical of some of the platforms of sharing economy and see them merely as a trend where neoliberalism continues to adopt to employ workers on an even more casual basis to create a "new form of oppressive, exploitative domination of labour that makes it much harder for workers to form collective organization for struggle" (Sacchetto, 2017, p. 5). For these reasons, this study raises questions on how effective sharing economy projects are in achieving social transformation both in terms of sharing of underused resources with the aim to cut down on impulsive consumption and overconsumption in the current capitalist climate.

Nevertheless, there is an additional dimension of transformation that warrants closer inspection. Wright's emancipatory approach implies that social transformation is possible. He did not, however, highlight explicitly the different possible levels of change that could be altered. On a micro level, the changes of an individual's mindset, awareness, and behaviour of consumption could be changed through practicing sharing underused resources, and in turn, this could heighten their appreciation of the environmental and social consequences of hyper-consumption.

This could help them to cut down on unnecessary purchase and consumption of goods. At the same time, when individuals begin to launch their projects and recruit participants to achieve their goals of sharing, they are also effecting change on an institutional level, especially when they start advocating policies to encourage and build a sharing practice conducive to altering the general public's patterns of consumption. Ideally, when that happens, the economic structure towards economic democracy may also be transformed in that people could gain some control of their production and consumption process. The implication of this is that it is essential for this study to explore the nature and orientation of, as well as the strategies that have been adopted in, achieving goals to build a sharing economy in Hong Kong. It is not, however, the purpose of this study to evaluate the effectiveness or their strategies, rather, it is more important to illustrate how they have been adopted in the existing context, and to provide insights on how effective these strategies are, as a whole, in fostering the above-mentioned social transformation in different levels. It is, important therefore, to understand the logic of the strategies and actions, and their impact on Hong Kong's subsequent quest for building a sharing economy.

### **The strategy of taking small steps: Creating changes through projects**

According to Elder-Vass (2014), one of Wright's major contributions to advancing traditional Marxist views on how to transform capitalism is his unambiguous view that in mediating the dream of achieving 'utopia' and the reality of what steps to take to reach the destination, one needs to focus both on the emancipatory values and vision of the projects as well as the pragmatic practices of steps that are necessary to move towards the goal (Sacchetto, 2017; Wright, 2006, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016b, 2017c). These elements should be seen as complementary and the

search for alternatives, according to Wright, is comparable to working with an ecosystem within which different species are interdependent and their existence cannot be reduced to that of a 'social machine'. In other words, Wright argues the species are diverse and their relationship with the eco-system is full of possibilities that are not considered by the 'social system' as deliberated by functionalist scholars. In this ecosystem, for example, an 'alien species' could be introduced and the system would be affected and impacts would be felt in the long run. What is important however, is that gradually the 'alien' will find a niche to sustain and expands itself to reach a point where the system is transformed (Wright, 2010). This is not a one-off process of sharp changes, but a gradual accumulation of social power carefully accumulated to reach a tipping point for a long-term transformation.

For this reason, it is important to examine the pathways sharing economy projects are taking even they are diverse. What this means is that one needs to find out if they are heading towards the same destination: the emancipatory social transformation of institutions and social structures causing problems. It is critical therefore, to understand the normative foundation of these projects before examining their transformational strategies. As Wright put it, the road to socialism is not only about power, but is also about whether or not there is a road map with a strong moral base that could guide and ensure the attempts taken are feasible and are moving towards transcendence (Barnes & Mattsson, 2016; Wright, 2006, 2010, 2017a). For Wright, 'power' is essential from the agent's perspective as people can use their 'capacity to do things in the world and to produce effects' (Hahnel & Wright, 2016, p. 79). There are different spheres of power, including capitalistic state, social and cultural power. These different forms of power can be coercive, and persuasive, but can also be hybrid (Hahnel & Wright, 2016; Sacchetto, 2017; Wright, 2017a). The

possibility for the final transcendence, according to Wright, is also about the deepening of social power that weakens economic power, reconfiguring structural elements through 'social empowerment' (Wright, 2012a; 2013, p. 13). Social empowerment, according to Wright (YEAR) is, the social power people own in communities and employ to take control of production to work towards egalitarian society and democracy. This involves three elements: 1) social empowerment over the state power affecting economic activities, 2) social empowerment over the economic power shaping economic activities, and 3) directly taking over economic activities. These elements, in turn, lead to new pathways for building transformative social configurations necessary for building new alternatives (or real utopias) such as socialist, social democracy or social economy (p. 129) for subordinating capitalism and statism.

In this context, sharing economy can be seen as an 'alien species' introduced to transform the unsustainable hyper-consumption in capitalism through the value and spirit of 'sharing'. Using digital technology to build, strengthen and expand peer-to-peer social power moves economic activity towards an economy that is based on egalitarianism and democracy (Frenken et al., 2015). To be specific, this would work through the removal of middlemen and reaching individuals through the Internet, allowing them to set their own terms of sharing their own goods and resources with others directly or through online platforms (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Ma, Zhang, Sun, & Cai, 2016; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015). Wikipedia, for example, is a good example of co-production, which in turn has inspired many other similar projects that discourage individual possession or ownership while encouraging social and cooperative power that is necessary in paving ways for changing consumption values and behaviours that fuel hyper-consumption.

Guided by Wright's framework, this study probes into the following: a) how significant the vision of a sharing economy project is, especially in leading it to realize its objectives and vision of destination in transforming people's consumption behaviour through sharing, b) what role and importance of the project founder's motivation and values in initiating and guiding the strategies and activities of the project, c) how such vision, strategies and activities have impacted the participants of the project, particularly in relation to their perception of their own involvement in it, and in helping to tackle the problem of hyper-consumption through changing their habits of consumption.

This also involves investigating the normative foundation of the sharing economy project. If a project's vision and objective of social transformation is explicitly intended or unintended sequentially from the idea of Wright (2016a), It should be focused on how they have been reproduced, and how possible future transformative trajectories could be developed for dealing with predicaments that may emerge (Wright, 2010, p. 273). In sum, this is not only about finding out how to get 'there' from here, but more importantly, it is also about understanding the logic behind the intended transformation aimed – that is, if transformation is a 'game', what 'game' is it? As Wright would ask, whether the 'game' is revolutionary or counter-revolutionary, reformist or reactionary, resistance or struggles, advocacy of policy or resisting state intervention, or relying on the system's own self-healing market mechanism. In sum, what are the 'rules' of the 'game' that determine how project and its participants function, interact and take concrete actions?

For Wright (2010), this means it is necessary to identify if the strategies or 'game plans' are 'ruptural', 'interstitial' or 'symbiotic'. Ruptural is to 'destroy and replace' based on the logic of revolution to build a better future. Interstitial, on the other hand, is about searching for all possibilities of niches and margins within capitalism for establishing alternatives to move 'the game' with every identifiable opportunity. An interstitial strategy does not seek for immediate overthrow of the existing social institution but makes attempts to develop alternative practices and forms of capitalism within the framework of capitalism. By gradual expansion of empowerment, interstitial strategies try to erode the system towards emancipatory social transformation. In particular, interstitial strategies aim to maximize social empowerment, without involving the state while focusing on civil societal activities to explore possible roadmaps and directions to make changes and solving problems. In this context, symbiotic transformation is likewise not interested in making immediate departure from capitalism, but instead going for step-by-step accumulation of power collaborating with the system to find solutions towards realization of final social transformation. This is a long-term metamorphosis of social transformation through social empowerment by advocating for policy to address social inequalities and related practical social problems. It is the 'non-reformist reform' that focuses on bottom-up social movement aiming at building up and expanding capacities for innovative institutional change.

In any event, the logic for coping with the problems of capitalism is two-fold: neutralizing harms and transcending structure. The former suggests finding alternatives that could respond to problems of capitalism through efforts specifically focusing on reducing and neutralizing negative impacts. The latter asserts more on

future transformation of the structures when it is clear that harm-neutralizing measures will not work and require an ultimate change of social structure.

In summary, for Wright (2017b), in order to make social transformation and achieve emancipation and overcome the problems of capitalism, there are only five logical strategies: a) smashing capitalism, b) taming capitalism c) dismantling capitalism d) resisting capitalism and e) escaping capitalism (see Table 2.1).

	<b>Neutralizing harms</b>	<b>Transcending Structure</b>
<b>What Game to play</b>		Smashing Capitalism
<b>Rules of the game</b>	Taming Capitalism	Dismantling Capitalism
<b>Moves in the game</b>	Resisting Capitalism	Escaping Capitalism

Table 2.1 Strategic Logics

Smashing capitalism is the traditional strategy of revolution, treating capitalism as completely failing, thus requiring ‘a mass mobilization to seize state power’. Dismantling capitalism likewise is about transforming structure, but is sceptical on revolution. Rather, it attempts to change the rules of the game, through electoral democracy, and introduces socialism via state-led reform. Dismantling capitalism takes a reformist approach working to develop an alternative form of capitalism in the long term. If however, the strategy is merely for neutralizing the harm of capitalism instead of changing the structure, the best outcome would only be taming the rules of capitalism with no aspiration of replacing it. Typically this is done through well-planned policy and regulation collaborating with the state, hoping to change



capitalism towards a 'less rapacious form' (Wright, 2017b, p. 5). Another attempt is by 'moving in the game' in the form of resisting it through organizing protests and social movements with civil societies. Otherwise, it would ultimately find new ways to escape capitalism with new alternatives for production (e.g., cooperatives or peer production), or practicing voluntary simplicity<sup>16</sup> which Wright himself admits as difficult to achieve even on a micro-individual level.

According to Wright, these strategic forms of logic are not, and should not, be mutually exclusive. For example, mixed strategies could be simultaneously used for 'eroding capitalism'. According to Wright, the important point is to erode the system in all possible directions, gaining strength inch by inch, "introducing the most vigorous varieties of emancipatory species of non-capitalist economic activity into the ecosystem of capitalism, nurturing their development by protecting their niches, and figuring out ways of expanding their habitats" (Wright, 2017b, p. 10). In short, Wright (2013) believes that interacting both interstitial and symbiotic transformation is the best strategic vision to achieve the final emancipation incorporating both top-down (symbiotic) and bottom-up(interstitial) approaches. Apart from smashing capitalism, for Wright, all forms of strategic logic, including taming, dismantling, resisting and escaping should be mixed and adopted flexibly according to different contexts to maximize the chances of transformation (Wright, 2017b).

---

<sup>16</sup> Voluntary simplicity is the conscious action towards simple life by reducing consumption voluntarily. it is defined as a 'choice out of free will to limit expenditures on consumer goods and services and to cultivate nonmaterialistic sources of satisfaction and meaning'(Etzioni, 2003, p. 7).

Informed and guided by Wright's theories, this research makes it a focus to study the sharing economy 'projects' as they reflect the major practical bases upon which their goals of finding alternative ways to addressing consumption and environment issues via sharing (Wright, 2013, p. 9). In many ways, these projects are not 'institutions' as they may not have developed a formal organizational structure and bureaucratic procedure for making decisions. What is more important about them is that they both try to find their own alternative to transform both their internal structure and external condition that would lead them to reach their goals that are explicitly transformative and liberational (Wright, 2010) through strategic logic that helps them to achieve symbiotic and interstitial transformation. In this context, this study is not an evaluation of their strategies, nor is it a critical assessment of their performance in making social emancipation or transformation, rather, it is to document, understand and analyse what practical insights can be gained from experiments in changing the consumption values, behaviour and future prospects of environment protection via a new mode of sharing under-utilized or resources.

In this investigation, as suggested by Sacchetto (2017, p. 3), questions like 'how these institutions work, what dilemmas they face, and what changes in their conditions of existence would facilitate their expansion' would be probed to appreciate the steps, processes and trade-offs these projects have taken in advancing their causes. At the same time, Wright also highlights that it is of equal significance to study the 'networks of networks' of these projects as collaborative efforts and mutual influence could likewise contribute to the development of new forms of alternatives (Wright, 2012b).

## Analysing transformation: A multi-level analysis

Informed and assisted by Wright's insights on strategic logics and the logic of transformation for emancipation, a multi-level framework has been developed and introduced for analysing the sharing economy projects in Hong Kong. More specifically, the multi-level analysis will focus on not only the individual participants and practitioners involved with these projects, including their perceptions and beliefs, consumption values and behaviour, but also the mission and vision of the projects, their norms and culture they have established for devising their subsequent strategies for action towards creating changes and transformation. In turn, the project's effects on the nature and level of transformation or changes intended, that is, whether or not the activities and outcomes produced are passive (e.g., resisting or neutralizing harm), or active or radical, aiming at initiating long-term transcendence of structure (e.g., struggles, education campaigns, or regular/frequent protests), will also be examined. Changes on these various levels, will reflect on how these projects have moved in on the 'game', how they define or redefine the 'game', and what rules of the 'game' they could change or have changed (see Figure 2.1 below). This framework will largely set the tone for this research and its analysis.

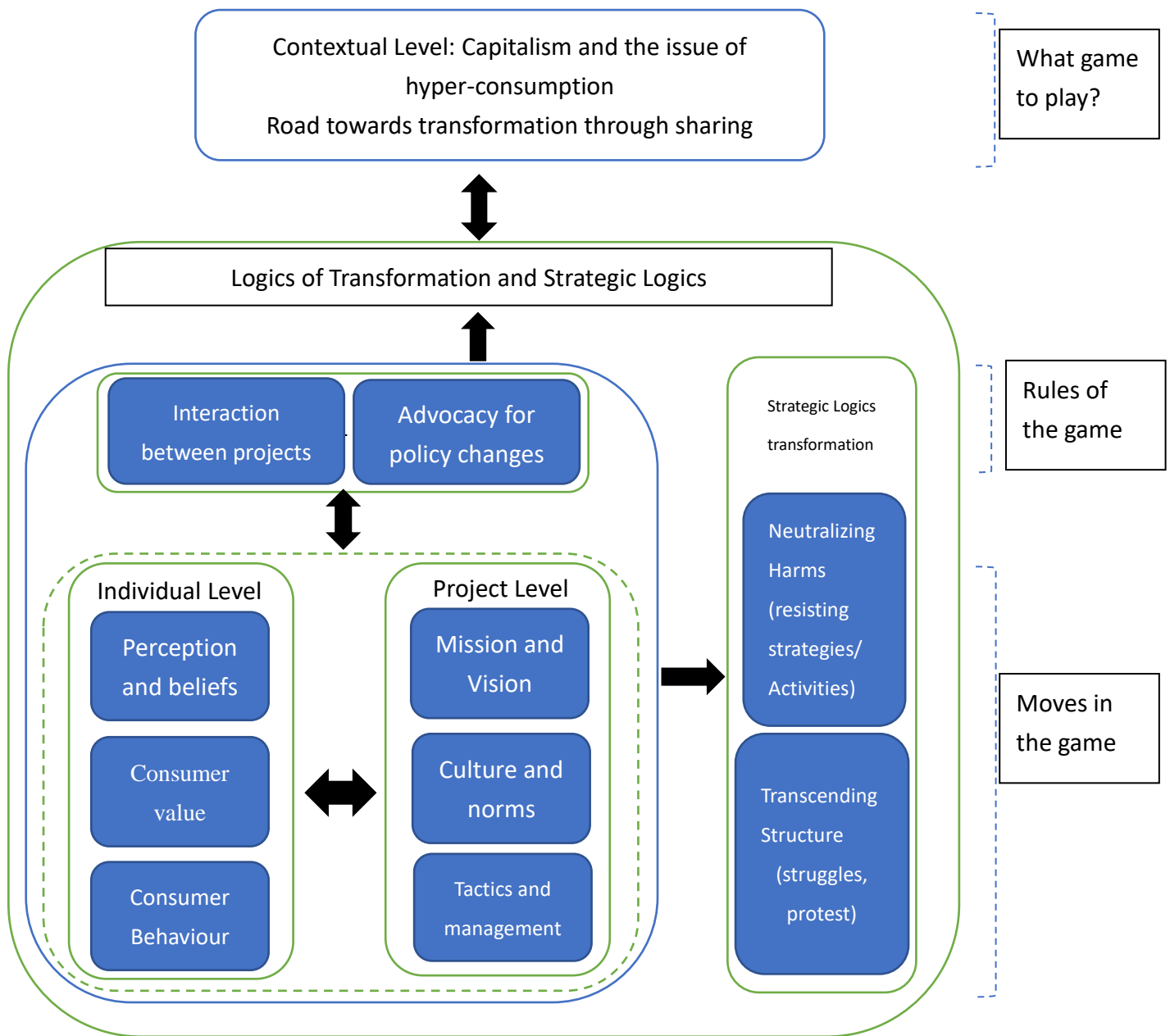


Figure 2.1 First version of theoretical framework

A few more points, however, deserve further clarification.

First, is that one should see that there can be close connections among the various levels of individuals, projects, and macro-institution such as the government (especially in the form of policy making). However, one should also note that in

most cases, the relationships are left to the individuals, particularly the founders of the projects, or sometimes, even some participants to decide on what level of transformation and what process they would like to put their energy into for changing the larger social structure and its social relations (Wright, 1994, p. 190). Hence, in analysing change, Wright (1994) argued the best position one should take is a methodological pluralist, rejecting pure methodological individualism while paying close attention to understand the greater picture of the relationships between individual and society, or linking up the macro phenomena and micro-foundation rather than simply focused on the micro-individual level (Souza, 2017). This dual emphasis on studying agency and structure is also known as critical realism where the existence of society is inseparable from human via activities. According to Archer (1995, pp. 1-2), these relationships requiring reconciliation as structure governs agency's action, but agency may in return reinforce or transform structure. Giddens (1984) argued similarly on the duality of structure and agency, pointing out that while structure sets up rules that may restrict the access of resources by individuals, the agent nonetheless has the capability to obey but also rebel against behaviour that has been prescribed by the structure. This is in line with Sewell (1992, p. 21) who insisted that in understanding agency, one should not limit one's attention only on individuals, but also on what they could do on the collective level, such as their ability to 'coordinate people's actions to form collective projects to "persuade, to coerce, and to monitor the simultaneous effects of one's own and others' activities".

In summary, what this study analyses the individual-project-contexts of unsustainable consumption patterns in capitalism, in particular exploring the interactions between individual participants (between and among founders and

project participants) and project vision and mission, culture and norms, and the strategies and activities chosen to shape the direction and the behaviour of both individuals and projects or structure Vs. agency. A second point that needs clarification is that in exploring such a relationship, one also needs to find out if both the individuals and the projects themselves have the room and structure, and the knowledge and ability for reflexion on the strategic logic and logic of transformation they have employed for advancing their “cause” or “game”. A further critical point that should be emphasized here is also that in examining their strategic logic and transformative activities, one needs to see that there is no reason why these forms of strategic logic should not be used concurrently or chronologically to maximize the progress and expansion of individual or project outcome. In short, the strategic logic and logic of transformation may be working in a hybrid form.

Empirically, this means paying attention to understanding of the ‘ontological map’ as suggested by Bhaskar – i.e., examining and analysing three ontological domains of reality, including empirical, actual and the real, what is experienced, what actually happens and the causal mechanisms behind the project activities (Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2006). In particular the strategies that were adopted by participants (Wright, 2017b), as well as the vision and mission, and norms of these projects should be examined simultaneously.

Putting all the elements together, the framework of this study, will involve various levels of analysis (individual-project-context), mechanisms within the project (individual consumption, mindset and action, project vision, culture and operation tactics), and the theory of transformation that conceptualizes strategies based on the above-mentioned elements (as illustrated in Figure 2.1). In addition, it will focus on

analysing the interaction between the contextual level and project level, especially those contributing to their capability of transforming consumption values, behaviour and outcomes. It is equally important however, to analyse the limitations faced on these levels, including institutional isomorphism, logic of transformation and the strategic logic adopted.

For example, on the individual level, the values of project founders, which are rarely studied, especially in terms of their roles in starting and shaping the direction of the projects, finding their mission, strategies and activities, should be investigated and analysed. Likewise, on the project level, the scope of the project (how far the project intends to go), its target population (who will be included or excluded, and why), how participants are recruited and connected, what types of sharing are being offered, should also be clarified and delineated. Furthermore, whether the project has or can develop a new culture and behaviour pattern that could eventually lead the project to a tipping point for greater transformation, is another point that needs to be examined.

Of course, conflicts among participants, founders and various projects, particularly in terms of their preferences on strategic logic and the strategies adopted could also impact on the outcomes of projects. For this reason, assessing transformation of the projects involves assessing the effectiveness of the project on multiple levels. For individual level, it includes the awareness of sharing and consuming resources, whether they oscillate between sustainable or compulsive consumption, and changes of people's attitudes on consumption and eventual consumption behaviour since becoming part of the projects (individual level). In project level, it is also significant to document and see how and whether the sharing culture has been

established, facilitating sharing among participants; or in community and societal level the extent of network and coalition building based on the projects, and how the projects can lead to policy and structural changes. These outcomes are interconnected with the extent of transformation. Transformation is the complex in the process, it is not a unilinear progression, but as a forward-backward or even stagnant state of affairs, especially if there were instances of reflexion and reflection. In summing up, the framework introduced earlier in this chapter could be further refined as follows:



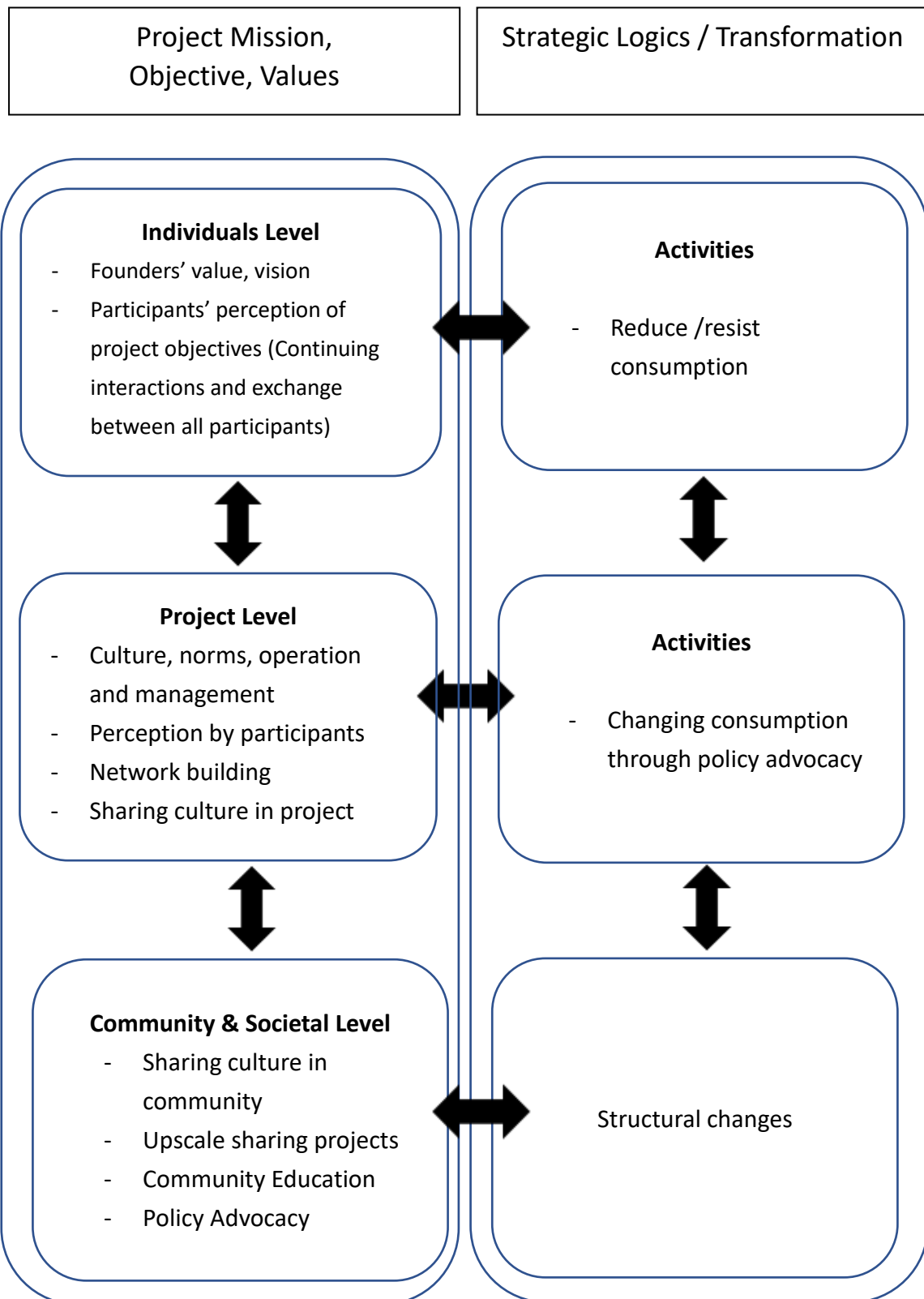


Figure 2.2 Final version of theoretical framework

## Chapter Three      Methodology

### Research paradigm

This chapter begins with a brief explanation of the research paradigm used in this study. Ontology is the perspective held by a researcher on the nature of reality and the substance of empirical world (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012a). Ontological questions are concerned with whether or not reality can be physically observed (as material-based) or cannot be observed (as in mind) (Woodiwiss, 2005). Epistemological questions focus on how society should be investigated to explain the ontological perspective (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Ontological and epistemological assumptions hence determine what specific research methods could be used for understanding a social phenomenon under examination.

As indicated in the last chapter, critical realism was adopted to guide this study. According to Archer, Decoteau, Gorski, Little, and Porpora (2016), critical realism has a unique position when compared to interpretivism and positivism. It combines ontological realism and epistemic relativism in that here reality is treated as objectively existing but it also sees our knowledge of it as theory-dependent and theory-laden (Danermark et al., 2006). The benefit of using this approach is that when studying organizations, people and relationships, it focuses on analysing the fundamental nature of reality rather than just measuring the individual variables (Easton, 2010; Wright, 1979). This coincides with what Bhaskar (1975, p. 13) believed is important, that is, that out of the three domains of reality, empirical (what we experience), actual (event happened) and real (underlying mechanisms that

produced the events), it is the last domain that is most crucial in allowing us to understand what reality is as it provides us not the descriptive events (actual) but an explanation of the causal mechanisms (Danermark et al., 2006).

In addition, critical realism also proposes the idea of 'stratified ontologies'. As Sayer (2000) explained that the world is characterized by the nature of emergence. For Sayer, (2000) emergence is the view that the emergence of a new phenomenon can only occur when two or more components join together, but not when they are on their own. In this framework, entities are structured, and the causal factors involve both the social and individual, i.e., agency, structure, and relations, or the conflation between two (Archer, 1995; Archer et al., 2016; Sayer, 2000). This parallels with Wright's approach and views on understanding reality. In this context, Wright is a methodological pluralist who simultaneously emphasises that the understanding of reality should involve knowing the mechanisms of both macro-phenomena and micro-foundations (Souza, 2017; Wright, 1979). Easton (2010) likewise saw that critical realism is more than just a research method for case study but is also useful in analysing complex phenomena with theoretical development (Easton, 2010; Wynn & Williams, 2012). Therefore, what this study has attempted is to move from description of empirical event to provide some ideas as to what the potential causal mechanisms are in sharing economy by determining what makes it happen, and what produces, generates, creates, determines or hinders it. (Mingers, Mutch, & Willcocks, 2013; Peter & Park, 2018; Sayer, 1992).

## Research design

Research design is “the logic that links the data to be collected to the initial questions of the study” (Yin, 2014, p. 26). The major function of research design is to ensure that the data collected can clearly and solidly answer the proposed questions (de Vaus, 2001). Simply put, research design focuses on the logical problem but not logistical problem (Yin, 2014). It shows the research logic and determines how to collect the data. The research design of this study is based on a case study method.

### Case study

Case study is a commonly used design in social sciences research involving intensive observation and interviews in single or multiple cases for exploring and in-depth studies of issues dealing with specific individuals, organizations, social bodies or events (Cresswell, 2013; Gerring, 2017; Macpherson, Brooker, & Ainsworth, 2000; Yin, 2014) that require further detailed knowledge (Ashley, 2017; Yin, 2014). A case study approach is appropriate for this study, with its interest in finding out the causal mechanisms in implementing sharing economy projects and identifying whether transformation has taken place in individuals and their society.

As Flyvbjerg (2006) pointed out, case study, especially single or small-n cases, should not and be used for making generalization because they are not representative of the diverse population and thus cannot claim that findings from the cases are applicable to others in the population (George & Bennett, 2005). Because of the influence of the positivist approach and its focus on the “transferability of result to other situations” (Flick, 2015, p. 268), mainly though using quantitative methods, many would hold that this is an intrinsic limitation of the case study approach. However, as

Yin (2013) aptly commented, what case study can do is *not* statistical generalization but analytical generalization, i.e., the “extraction of a more abstract level of ideas” from a set of sample cases (Yin, 2013, p. 325), and its contribution is for modifying, or rejecting theoretical notions, or making new insights for establishing new concepts (Yin, 2009).

For these reasons, the research design here is multiple-case (holistic) study adapted from Yin (2014, p. 50). The study will examine the vision and implementation of two selected leading sharing economy projects in Hong Kong that are known to have some influence in making changes in altering people’s perception and consumption behaviour to rebuild local communities through sharing, and ultimately doing their part in halting over-consumption. These cases are compared to highlight the possible causes of their achievements and limitations, not only in empirical terms, but also in the context of reality in Wright’s theory of transformation for bringing changes and alternatives to society.

### Case selection

Three major criteria for defining what sharing economy is have wide acceptance: First, it must share under-utilized resources. Second, its mode of operation must be based on peer-to-peer relationship, with the platform as coordinator, sharing among the resource providers and receivers are both individuals (Kane, 2016). Finally, sharing economy projects must employ digital technology as a means of enabling sharing among their participants (Stephany, 2015).

Given these three elements are recognised as the basis of sharing economy projects, any cases that do not meet these criteria were excluded from this study. For example,

bike-sharing projects are not included because the project is not using under-utilized resources to share. Uber, at the same time, is not considered appropriate because it is not based on peer-to-peer relationships but is operated on a C2B2C (customer-to-business-to customer) model involving the business as the central intermediate instead of peer-to-peer relationship.

One other important case selection criterion is included for selection of cases is the objective of the project – i.e., that the project selected, especially in terms of its mission, objective and value, must be related to addressing the hyper-consumption problem in Hong Kong. Although multi-nationals also claim themselves to involve in discouraging their patrons in waste, at the same time, they also encourage people to continue their role as consumers, with little attempt to change their behaviour to sharing. Hence, projects such as Airbnb, Uber and Kickstarter were also excluded from this study.

Apart from the above criteria, the absence of a sampling frame for the list of sharing economy projects in Hong Kong also hindered the selection of cases. While most of the potential cases were selected through news, Facebook and referrals, Practical limitation also occurred when some projects approached refused to be interviewed.

Based on the above, two cases, KFLM (Kai Fong Lai Mang 街坊泥錘) Ride Sharing Community (hereafter 'KFLM') and Waste-no-mall (不是垃圾站) (hereafter 'WnM') were selected. KFLM was originally conceptualized as a ride-sharing platform and has now been developed as a sharing community through organizing shared rides (or car-pools), group buying and other activities within Tai Po, a suburb in Hong Kong's New Territories. WnM, is focused explicitly on environmental protection through

down-cycling and free-cycling, but also as sharing activities to encourage people in the local community not to throw things away, but instead send things they consider useless to the local refuse collection points. WnM aims to set up a community resource sharing centre to show people how to reduce consumption through sharing and maximize the use of resources. Both projects do not only meet the criteria set out above, they are well-known locally and have prompted others to replicate similar projects in several communities in Hong Kong.

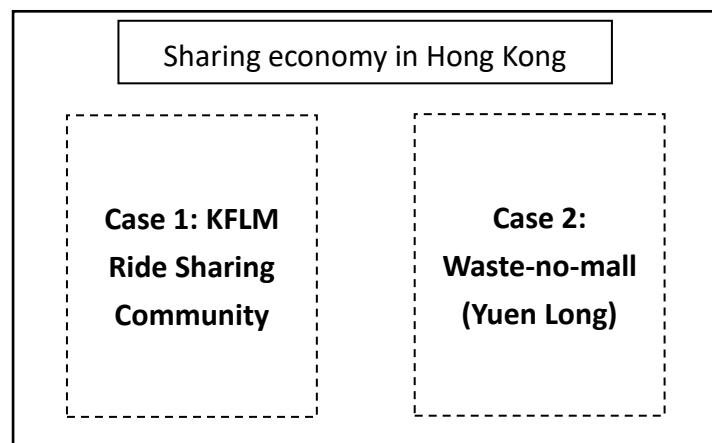


Figure 3.1 Case design and selection, adapted from Yin (2014, p. 50)

### Research strategy

Research strategy refers to the process of empirical investigation conducted on the basis of a set of assumptions as to what sort of thing society is (ontological assumptions) and how one should go about gaining knowledge of it (epistemological assumptions) (Woodiwiss, 2005, p. 9). A research strategy sets out the goals, questions, and methods for collecting data. In this study, the main goal is to find out how sharing economy projects are faring, especially in terms of their achievements and limitations in realizing their stated missions, through their strategies and

activities for changing the values and consumers' behaviour as ways to transform community spirit contributing to environmental protection by reducing consumption and waste. To fill the gaps of the current literature, a main focus of the study is to look into the role, values, beliefs and expectations of the project founders and participants to see if they are crucial in making any individual and social transformation.

### Qualitative research methodology

Qualitative research is adopted in this study. It 'emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data'(Bryman, 2016, p. 380). Many researchers believe its strength lies in its ability to "understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour, and interactions" (Pathak, Jena, & Kalra, 2013, p. 192). It is, according to Mason (2002, p. 67), like a 'conversation with a purpose'. Through qualitative research, participants are expected to share their ideas, experiences, their subjective meaning and the rationale of social practices(Flick, 2015). Qualitative research generates rich and in-depth subjective meanings from participants in specific contexts. Qualitative research is an inductive process while the general understanding of the topic is based on a series of specific data and cases(Hesse-Biber, 2017). Qualitative research's relationship with the interpretive ontological and epistemological assumptions understands changes from the individual perspective, and the interaction among individuals in context (Cresswell, 2014).

### Recruitment of participants

Participants are essential in any research, especially in qualitative research. It is important to have proper selection of participants with detailed examination, especially before the initiation of research data collection. A proper and suitable



participant selection method is good justification of research objective and questions (Light, Singer, & Willett, 1990).

In qualitative research, sample size for generalization is not the major concern. It focuses more on in-depth, complex and ever-changing context, and the values of participants respondents rather than a statistical expression and generalization of data (Byrne, 2012; Flick, 2015). In this study, probability sampling for quantitative research is not applicable due to the unidentifiable sampling frame for both cases. WnM, is an open group with fluid participants, and does not have any membership or list of participants. KFLM also started from an open group, and despite the changing practice towards closer groups, many are only observers that do not participate in the project. A clear sampling frame, therefore, is not clear. Given probability sampling is not applicable, purposive selection (normally named purposive sampling) and chain referral (or called snowball sampling) have been widely adopted in qualitative research (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). These are also the two methods employed for recruiting participants in this study.

Purposive selection, sometimes called judgement sampling, was adopted in this study. Purposive selection is based on purpose and research questions and the resources available to the researcher for participant selection (Patton, 2002). For this study, potential participants who are known to be knowledgeable or experienced towards Hong Kong's sharing economy projects were first targeted. Then ten people were approached, and each was invited to take part in an in-depth interview. A total of 20 people were interviewed by the end of the study.

Although the participant pool is relatively small, based on the principle of 'less is

more' (McCracken, 1988, p. 17), and since having quality responses is more important than numbers, this is a number above what McCracken (1988) considered minimally sufficient (eight). In addition, to achieve internal validity and maximum variations (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), different types of interviewees were interviewed. The participant pool included the founders, administrators, and participants of the two projects to ensure the diversity of the participants and result (See table 3.1 below for the detail distribution of the interviewees in each case).

	KFLM Ride Sharing Community	Waste-no-Mall (Yuen Long)
<b>Founder</b>	1	3
<b>Active participants / Administrators</b>	4	3
<b>Other participants</b>	5	4

Table 3.1 Distribution of the interviewees in this study

Founders of sharing economy projects are the most important as the projects reflected their visions, values, expectations and determination that shaped how their projects proceeded and how participants were recruited and organized. Both active and inactive participants of these projects were also interviewed. Some of these participants were also administrators of the projects. In order to avoid selection bias by the researcher, efforts were made to discourage the informants from

communicating to one another about this study and they were interviewed in a private setting not known by others.

Chain referral was also employed to supplement the recruitment of informants. This was done by asking the informants already interviewed to refer others they knew in their network and whom they thought were familiar and experienced with the projects. This method is most useful when some participants are less visible or hard to reach (Bernard, 2006). This method also minimized the bias of relying on referrals made by the founders.

The backgrounds of the participants are appended in Appendix A.

## **Data collection**

### **In-depth Interview**

In-depth interview is most commonly used in qualitative research for extracting rich information from informants (Hesse-Biber, 2017) by asking situational questions to understand their views, experiences, beliefs, values and thoughts and look for a thick description of their behaviour (Byrne, 2012; Hesse-Biber, 2017). In-depth interviews also focus more on setting open-ended questions that induce better, more detailed responses from the participants in illustrating the above experience with their own words.

In setting up the in-depth interview, two different sets of interview guides were created: the first for the founders and the second for participants. For the founders, the focus was on their views of hyper-consumption and environmental issues, and

how they imagine sharing economy and their projects could make a difference through sharing under-utilized resources and changing consumption patterns. The questions also probed into their plans, roadmaps for promoting activities and actions that would help them to achieve and realize their goals and aims, as well as meeting their own expectations. For participants, the interview questions focused on the impacts the projects had had on them, especially in terms of values, behaviour changes in consumption and environment protection, since taking part in the project activities. Questions about their views on the vision, current practices, perception of the role of founder and the core values within the projects, their limitations, and their expectations for the projects' and community's future were also included. The same interview-guides were used for informants from both projects.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured fashion, that is, the questions were organized with a general structure based on the analytical framework but left greater flexibility for the participants to express their experience more naturally and allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1995). Given that conceptually and in practice, sharing economy is highly diverse, a structured interview was not deemed appropriate. An unstructured interview approach, was deemed equally problematic as without directions or a framework, the researcher was likely to get lost and side-tracked (Britten, 1995). The semi-structured approach, in these contexts, allowed both flexibility and focus in exploring the dynamic processes and structures of the projects effectively.

To prepare the interviews, a pilot study was first conducted so that flaws and inadequacies of the interview questions and interview-guide could be identified and

remedied before the real interviews commenced. The construction of questions and interview-guide was based on the insights gained from the literature review and the subsequent analytical framework. Whether or not the questions and guide were appropriate, logical, overly general or specific, interviewee-friendly, too sensitive or difficult, relevant and restrictive in practice was the task of the pilot test to determine. Whether or not specific skills were required in interviews, such as body language, verbal and facial expressions, time management, politeness, grooming, the pilot test also provided useful insight. The pilot test also provided useful reflections and suggestions on whether or not there should be follow-up questions, as well as questions that ought to be deleted or excluded.

Detailed interview guides are attached in Appendix B.

### **Data analysis**

Data analysis is the analysis of data collected, categorizing and interpreting the substantive (descriptive) and theoretical information that emerged from the responses to the research questions (Maxwell, 2005). The data analysis process allows researcher to change the objectives and questions if necessary, and make appropriate adjustments. Data analysis therefore, can start when data collection begins. In qualitative research data, analysis is not analysing the data in terms of frequency but is to find similarity of meaning and themes. In this study, thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the operation of the project, values and visions of the project, founders and participants, and the impact towards transformation (in different levels mentioned in Chapter two (Figure 2.2)).

## Thematic analysis

Data collected from qualitative interviews requires a systematic data management system for analysis and one of the useful steps is to generate common themes for thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79), thematic analysis “is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data”. In thematic analysis, themes are identified through searching and identifying codes with repeated patterns of meaning. Coding, therefore, is a major process in thematic analysis where different categories are created within its bounds (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007). Braun and Clarke (2006) introduced six phases for thematic analysis: 1) familiarising with the data (or raw data review); 2) generating initial codes (coding); 3) searching for themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and 6) producing the report. Data analysis contains transcription, coding, analysis, and written report. Data analysis of this study follows closely these steps.

### *Data familiarization*

Data for this study was recorded using a digital recorder. Before and after each interview, the digital recorders were checked properly to prevent errors and unexpected break down. Prior to each interview, informants were briefed on ethical issues and the procedures of the interview.

At the end of the data collection process and before thematic analysis began, the researcher went through each informant’s interview thoroughly to refamiliarize himself with the interview contexts and situation. Notes kept during the interviews were also reviewed to ensure important points of observation were taken into consideration.

### *Transcription of recorded interviews*

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 131), verbatim transcription of recorded interviews provides the best database for data analysis. Each of the recorded interviews therefore, was transcribed and typed out by the researcher, giving a complete and 'truthful' account of the informant's responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The transcription was then reviewed and proofread in order to maintain its accuracy.

### *Coding*

Patton (2002) held that the development of a coding scheme is the first step of data analysis as it helps to categorize the primary pattern from the data collected. Two levels of coding were adopted in this research (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2009). The first is the cycle coding method for initial coding. This method is an 'open coding' for breaking down qualitative data gathered from participants to form specific themes and for comparison. Line-by-line coding then was used for reviewing transcripts, identifying the founders' initiation, motivation and reflection (Charmaz, 2006). In the first cycle, descriptive coding, process coding and casual coding were also employed to summarize the data collected in the interviews. Pattern Coding, a second kind of cycle coding method, was conducted after initial coding. In the second cycle, codes from the first stage were clustered together for new categories through identifying similarities, differences and sequences.

### *Generating themes*

After identifying and reviewing the themes, it is also necessary to define and re-define each theme. The re-checking is necessary to ensure no overlap between the themes and subthemes. When the themes were identified, such as perception of effectiveness of the project, participants' behaviour and limitations of the projects, it

was easier to compare the projects and founders across the projects as well as the different groups of participants within the projects.

#### Within-case and cross-case analysis

In identifying causal factors in qualitative data, within-case and cross-case analysis is normally conducted (Rohlfing, 2012), especially when the sample size is small (Collier, 1993; Goertz & Mahoney, 2012b). In within-case analysis, the focus is on identifying the central narrative of the conversation that reveals the relationships between the events (activities) and mechanisms (reactions and responses) through line-by-line coding, developing descriptive themes and analytical themes to synthesize the findings (Thomas & Harden, 2008). In cross-case analysis the commonalities and differences for each question in different cases are carefully highlighted and compared (Cruzes, Dybå, Runeson, & Höst, 2015) and synthesized before insights are extracted (Miles and Huberman (1994). This study has followed these procedures to obtain its findings based on the theoretical framework.

#### Quality management

Ensuring the research result is trustworthy is an important task (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To produce good quality in research, it is necessary to assure research accurately states the facts, uses a standardized procedure for replicating each interview, and provides a persuasive and logical analysis of the relationships among variables without researcher bias manipulating the findings. In this study, the enhancement of internal validity and members check is essential to ensure the quality.



## Internal validity

The degree of internal validity in this study was enhanced through a systematic examination of the outcomes and summarizing in terms of 1) impact on consumption behaviour; 2) common themes and criteria for participants' perception of the project; 3) the limitations of causal transformation. For example, if the vision and founder's role determined the changes of people's mind on consumption towards social transformation, then it may be argued that those are the causal mechanisms towards transformation. The causal relationship can thus be established with good internal validity.

### *Member checks*

A major threat towards internal validity is social desirability bias. This form of bias is a respondent-related bias where "the tendency of some respondents to report an answer in a way they deem to be more socially acceptable than would be their 'true' answer" (Callegaro, 2008, p. 826). Since a major focus of this study is personal consumption behaviour, interviewees commonly present themselves in a positive manner while deliberating their responses (Neeley & Cronley, 2004). Consistency checks were employed to minimize this threat of social desirability bias.

Member checks, or respondent validation and participant feedback, is a common strategy to ensure the internal validity or credibility of the research (Johnson, 1997; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Employing this strategy, "data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with participants of those stakeholder groups from whom the data were originally collected" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). This is the most important technique to establish validity to prevent researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researchers are easily biased towards their preference in the result and undermine the credibility by selecting specific citation, or by their own

interpretation. To achieve this, in this study, the original participants in the research analysed, interpreted and categorized the collected data. The participants reviewed their own data and interpretation after the analysis was completed. Member checks are useful in terms of two major areas. First, it is to reconfirm that what the respondent said is accurate (both content and interpretation, by providing one more check from the participants). Also, if the interview content requires clarification, this method can also be an appropriate way out of the problem (Johnson, 1997).

In this study, the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and typed for thematic analysis. When there were possible multiple interpretations of the data, they were sent to the interviewees to ensure the interpretations were accurate and whether or not the informants would accept the interpretations and amendments.

In summary, three levels of analysis of the findings were conducted to help establishing analytical generalization. First, the thematic analysis in within-case analysis helped to identify the major themes, mechanisms and processes. The cross-case comparison then helped to establish the similarities of the projects. These analyses also helped the researcher to connect the findings back with the research framework and literature review to generate ideas for theoretical consideration before generalization proceeded.

### **Ethical consideration**

Several major ethical issues needed attention. These were informed consent and privacy, confidentiality and data protection (Ali & Kelly, 2012; Bryman, 2016; Flick, 2014; Ryen, 2011). By involving human subjects in research focusing on participants' experiences and values, it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that

sensitive inquiry does not cause psychological harmful or stress to the informant. In addition, the researcher should also ensure the privacy of the informant, both in terms of information collected, and that his/her identity is well-protected without any fear or worry of the possible consequences that they may have to face should their views become known.

### Informed consent

According to the Declaration of Helsinki, informed consent is one of the major principles in any research ethics (World Medical Association, 2013). Allmark (2003, p. 13) provided three criteria for the informed consent for children, which is also applicable to all informants:

- The consent should be given by someone competent to do so;
- The person giving consent should be adequately informed;
- The consent is given voluntarily.

Participants should know clearly what their participation in the research involves, and that they are willing to participate. For this purpose, the researcher applied and obtained ethical clearance from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University's Human Subjects Ethics Sub-committee before interviews commenced.

At the start of each interview, a formal project brief and information sheet were first handed to the informant, and the details, including background, objectives of the research as well as privacy issues were also verbally explained to gain their consent. Further explanation was also provided if they had questions before accepting to do the interview. Participants likewise were briefed about their liberty to withdraw from

the research in anytime without prejudice before they were asked to sign a consent form indicating their acknowledgement of the responsibility and terms of reference taking part in the research. (see Appendix C for the consent form format).

### Limitations of the study

A major limitation the researcher faced was related to the selection of the interviewees, especially from KFLM. The founder of the project made it explicitly clear that the researcher should only contact other participants in the project privately. This made it difficult to recruit others who were not recommended and potentially this meant the research could have a biased sample. As a way to minimize this risk, the researcher sought a variety of the participants from the recommended pool in terms of their backgrounds and experience – that is, including informants who were active and inactive, those who had served positions in the projects and those who had not. In addition, the researcher also employed snowball sampling by asking the informants to refer participants they knew to take part in the interviews rather than just relying on the pool as ‘suggested’ by the founder. This This helped to minimize the sampling bias as much as possible.

### Conclusion

The study was guided by the philosophical assumption of critical realism and Erik Wright’s theory of transformation in making sense of the two sharing economy projects selected. The two projects, KFLM and Waste-no-mall are both well-known, but had never been ‘studied’ before. Using a case study approach, this study employed in-depth semi-structured interviews for its data collection, with samples recruited through purposive and snowball referral methods. The data collected then

went through thematic analysis involving within and cross-case analysis to generate the common themes that helped answering the research questions. This research encountered limitation relating to sampling constraints but appropriate strategies were employed to manage them and were able to maintain the quality the findings, especially in terms of validity, ethical considerations and accuracy.

The findings of the research are presented in the following two chapters.

## Chapter Four      KFLM Ride Sharing Community

### Origin and development

KFLM, a ride-sharing community, was established in October 2015. The founder first posted in Facebook group called 'Taipo', announcing a new sharing ride to get residents living in Taipo to provide free rides for residents who otherwise have to spend hours on public transport on their way to work. The post immediately struck a chord among locals who recognized the problems they faced, and the founder was urged by many who signed in, to start a new Facebook group dedicated to ride-sharing. After the group was established, it quickly expanded to hold other 'sharing' activities other than sharing rides. Not surprisingly, the overwhelming responses from locals (their Facebook membership now exceeds 26,000) and its popularity caught the attention of the media and it has now become one of the most well-known sharing economy projects in Hong Kong promoting the concept of 'sharing'.

According to its Facebook page <sup>17</sup>, KFLM does not see itself as a group providing only shared-rides, but is also aiming to create a community held together by the spirit of sharing, which in turn will lead to building a strong sense of social cohesion and solidarity in the community, bringing harmony, joy, warmth and happiness to all participants and locals.

For KFLM, the idea is simple – as one of the interviewees (A) explained: “when you have a group of similar mindset people together, you can develop a sense of mission

---

<sup>17</sup> The official Facebook page of KFLM: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Taipo.KFLM/>

and culture based on reciprocity and harmony to share or help one another". Although it first started to offer shared rides (#KFLMHOST), it quickly inspired others in the group to expand embracing other activities. This includes the mutual help activities like traffic condition exchange, mutual help actions (in Chinese: #KFLM 漁夫之寶, #KFLM 泥鯁互助), and volunteer services including gift donation, visits to social service organizations for disadvantaged groups (in Chinese: #KFLM 泥鯁義行). It also involves the sports activities like holding yoga and basketball classes (in Chinese: #KFLM 泥鯁活動). Apart from this, two major activities in sharing resources, including sharing under-utilized resources (in Chinese: #KFLM 環保分享); and bulk/group purchase (in Chinese: #KFLM 泥鯁市集). These activities aim to promote reciprocity, convenience and building community spirit.

### **Founder's vision, values and beliefs**

There is no doubt that the development of KFLM reflects much of the values and beliefs of its founder, Roger. Although these beliefs may not have been very clear when it all began, they became much clearer and explicit as the project continued to develop.

According to Roger, initially the vision and core value of KFLM had little to do with hyper-consumption, but more with ride-sharing, so that people could travel from point A to point B more easily. Given that rides are an under-utilized resource, gradually he realized that in helping people to share rides, the group was encouraging people to reducing their consumption of fuel and car emissions. In this context, sharing became the core value for other later actions, especially reducing unnecessary consumption in the long run.

According to Roger, the sharing culture is far from mature in Hong Kong and people are not socially conscious to 'share'. For this reason, running campaigns is not very effective in changing the way people think and behave unless they experience directly what it is like to 'share' through participation. This is the same with trying to discourage people from unnecessary consumption, until one realizes that one does not need to buy anything, as sharing has already met one's need.

Hence, Roger has a vision how he should proceed. He believes that with the first stage of making sharing accepted, the most important consideration had to be getting people involved in the operation process to bridge the cognitive-behavioural gap people have that hindered their decision start sharing. Roger is very clear in his mind that there are three stages of connecting people to make them share:

*The first stage is to recognize 'I have lots of under-utilized resources and I think other people are the same'. The second is to make people to overcome the thought of 'I do have those things, but it doesn't mean I'll have to share them' and answer their question of 'give me reasons why I should do that'. The third is to show people after they know the reasons, there is an answer to their doubt whether it is really easy to share through a platform or a certain way?*

For Roger, to get people into the first stage is not difficult, but the obstacles are in the second and third stages which involves understanding people's unwillingness and motivation for not sharing their resources, which in turn leads people to not being motivated enough to participate.



According to Roger, getting people into the second stage has a lot to do with not only convincing people of the importance of sharing, but also that it is the norm or culture of the project. Once people know why and are motivated to participate, according to Roger, they will follow the norm and become part of the culture. This also means people can develop trust, not just for the project, but also for other participants in the group. As he emphatically pointed out:

*When people feel that they are not isolated and they see that sharing can bring them benefits or satisfaction, they will continue to share without having others advocating them to do so, and they will also persuade others to follow.*

To get people into the third stage, in Roger's view, there has to be a platform to facilitate participants to continue building and strengthening what they have established and achieved, be it the norm or values of the project, incentive or gratification (financial or otherwise), trust and relations and connections. A platform was therefore, established on Facebook not only for encouraging participants to see sharing as a pathway to build a sharing community, but also to make the direction of the project clear to the new and continuing participants, to achieve what they could to stop excessive consumption through the stages of sharing.

The meaning of sharing

Central to his ride-sharing project is the value of sharing. As mentioned earlier, Roger saw it as fundamental to get people to understand what sharing is about and how it is related to consumption. For him, most people consider sharing as giving away unwanted items to others, sometimes for free (as gifts) or for a small price (selling or

to earn something in return). Underlying this motivation are two issues: 'what to share' And 'how to share?'

Roger's understanding of 'what to share' is that people commonly want to share under-utilized tangible resources. Although it is debatable if this is true sharing, Roger argues that what is important is that once it is given away or 'shared', the under-utilized object creates and releases a social value and better outcome. This outcome includes the extension of the product's use value, which could help reduce waste and contribute to a cleaner environment. At the same time, a new social value could also emerge. For example, ride-sharing is an act of making available vacant seats in a car on a specific journey that otherwise would have been under-utilized. Once these empty seats are shared, the outcomes are multiple: cutting of fuel consumption, exhaust emissions and traffic congestion, as well as convenience and saving time. Most important of all however, this encourages people to think about sharing as a positive social value, the willingness to give something back to people in the community, and this is the basis for behavioural change. As Roger explained, it makes people think about the necessity of consumption or making purchases in the long run.

In this project, Roger set his view on four types of under-utilized resources that can be shared: First, the under-utilized tangible goods and share-rides. The second type is information, knowledge and skills. Sharing these is similar to what was done by Wikipedia, and Roger sees much potential in making them widely available to people to make their lives and community better. For example, sharing information on traffic conditions has made driving more pleasant, getting to their destinations more efficiently and most significantly, has also encouraged like-minded people to connect

and increase their social capital.

The third type of under-utilized resources is 'collaboration'. Roger believes that individuals' talents or skills are often under-used and if they are shared, especially in the form of collaboration, the full potentials of these skills, information, and knowledge can be released. For example, having a group of people organizing and running a language class, would save people's money from paying full commercial prices for learning languages. Likewise getting a large group of people together to do bulk buying, is a form of sharing – i.e., sharing information and sharing the group purchasing power to take advantage of bulk-buying prices – is a form of collaboration as well. As Roger explained:

*Group buying is also a kind of sharing... sharing people's consumption power. When people act as an individual, be it one or ten, they will hardly get any discount; but you get a large group of over 100 people, that is power... I believe group-purchasing is a grey area people don't think much of it. I think it is an under-utilized resource/power that could be shared and bring benefits to people.*

Roger insisted that sharing is about both access and ownership, as sharing is an extension of ownership. In his view, simply put, when people realize that they have many things they no longer need and use, they are happy to give them away without compensation. This is the most common way of sharing and extending the lifespan of the object.

Sharing however, also requires a platform, because people are embarrassed about

giving things as well as receiving things from people they do not know. The emergence of the Internet and many virtual platforms facilitated this new form of sharing. The platform acts as a broker, and makes people feel more comfortable in the sharing process. Moreover, the platform makes the sharing process much more efficient and effective as people can browse and seek out items and activities that match their needs with little transaction costs involved. This is how group-buying becomes a 'shared' activity.

For Roger, sharing is something more – the basis of community cohesion. At least, this is what he ultimately hopes to establish according to his vision. In his mind, people can be motivated to participate in a sharing initiative, and start to appreciate what their actions have contributed to make a better community, both in terms of giving something back to the locals as well as getting gratification for their own contributions. If they are able to do so, they are more likely to get involved again to share what they have and build a community that is characterized by a sharing culture.

Roger admitted that building a sharing culture and a sharing community is not as easy as he had expected and that using the social media platform of Facebook to promote his project and its goals does have its limitations. Roger recognized that while Facebook is useful for sharing ride-sharing information and maintaining a group presence, much more is needed for building a community with sharing networks. Nevertheless, he believes that by having a Facebook group it has helped to build a 'stickiness' or bond for participants in the network that has been essential in keeping the project going with more sharing. As he commented:

*The bonds people have for one another is also the willingness they have to continuously participate in the group as well as the trust they have developed for the project.*

## Strategies for operation

Although Roger has the vision, value and sense of mission in terms of what he wants to accomplish, one of the major impediments he initially faced was that he could not find any previous pathfinder or advocate who could give him advice or assistance. Nevertheless, he treasured the opportunity to take up his role as a project initiator and persisted with finding his own way, trying to find direction and resources to steer the group and ultimately change people's behaviour through participating in the project's activities.

*I am the founder, and I hope to be a role model to influence other's action through my enthusiasm, organizing activities and systematically advocating the message. I think if I put more effort to promote, then the impact will be bigger.....*

Given that he had little help in becoming a pathfinder, he could only rely on his own instinct to run his project. Due to his belief that mass media still has influence on people, his first strategy was to assert and promote his project and role through TV and radio interviews to encourage people to participate. He also felt that as a project leader and an organization, a clear direction for action is equally important because people will not join anything without seeing direction from both the leader and activities. Unless people see this happening, the group will not grow, and people will

not feel it would have any influence. It was not however, his intention to do everything himself. Instead, he would very much like to see others take up his vision and create their influence as well.

*I really hope to see the project continues to operate effectively without having me around all the time. Therefore I really want more people to join and take responsibility for the group. This is the only way to make the group more powerful... What I really want to see is to become a backup support for the organization if this group continues to grow as big as having around 20,000 members, this means the group will definitely be more influential.*

His other strategy was to promote the vision of the project as a sharing economy initiative, emphasizing that “nothing can’t be shared, and there is great power in the community”. Roger wants to make people see that it is possible to build and have a sharing community with people agreeing that sharing is the core value, and that the activities and norms are guided through this key principle. The best way to describe his overall strategy of operating his project therefore, is to build both sharing and community as a unity, insisting on building and changing community with fraternal relationship and an environment of harmony.

For him, ride-sharing was an ideal starting point for his project because it is simple, direct and close to people’s daily lives in the community. Most importantly it is also easy for people to commit themselves, because all the project asked them to do was to share rides and traffic information, involving very little cost except for reciprocity. In his view, if people cannot even do this, there is no hope that they would change

their ideas about consumption and environment in the long-run.

Finding the right project to get people into KFLM was certainly important, but to Roger, the project would not go anywhere if the people involved did not feel they were part of it. In other words, there has to be some kind of camaraderie, or 'stickiness' as he called it, among the key group participant. At the same time, this bonding is not a result of just having individuals connecting to one another, but is the outcome of a community solidarity that could only come from the participants' identification with their own neighbourhood or locality. This means that the group participants do not only see themselves as participants in the project but also residents belonging to their neighbourhood, a kind of social capital that provide the basis for developing a sharing culture and a sharing community. This fraternal relationship, according to Tony and Annie, two of the key administrators in KFLM, is what has made the project special.

More specifically, this 'bonding among neighbourhood' (街坊情), for most participants, is not just the momentary sentiment they obtain through taking part in the project's activities. Rather, this is the accumulated outcome from numerous interactions in the form of conversations, organizing and planning activities, discussing personal feelings about common interests and issues. For example, one of the participants, Ross [Interviewee D], admitted that his previous perception of the project and people proved to be wrong because people were so open and approachable even when they attended the meeting for the first time. Other group participants like Tony and Winnie also concurred:

*I found that sharing free rides is not just good behaviour, but it also*

*allows bonding to other participants develop and grow into a spirited community rather than providing a mere service [interviewee B]*

*The bonding relationship has also blossomed into a willing to help others in the larger community [interviewee I]*

This larger community is also based on their identification of being a resident of Taipo and the special feeling of natural fraternity they have with the local community. That they have an 'insider' affiliation with one another, real or imagined, and makes them feel connected with one another, giving them a sense of local sentiment, positivity and readiness to help each other. The cleverness of KFLM is that the project can capture this neighbourhood fraternity and turn it into a base for its operation. As Rachel [interviewee E], one of the project participants, recalled:

*The wonderful thing about having the chance to chat with the other ride-sharing participants is that you are able to find out more about Taipo and realized that it is a very special community with strong local identity...*

*The neighbourhood fraternity reminded me of the cohesiveness people had in a small community like in the movie 'House of 72 Tenants'<sup>18</sup>. It*

---

<sup>18</sup> 'House of 72 Tenants' is a Hong Kong movie box-office hit in 1973 depicting the daily lives of the residents living in an old building sharing rooms and public amenities which often created conflicts among themselves and between them and the greedy landlady. However, the residents also learned to help one another in times of difficulties and stand against the unreasonable exploitation imposed on them by the landlady through solidarity, mutual trust and shared resources in their own community.



*is terrific that we can use this to develop some concrete social sharing project not only in Taipo but also showcase Taipo as a sharing hub.*

[interviewee B]

Keenly aware of the importance of neighbourhood fraternity, one of the strategies Roger, as a founder, decided to adopt is to ensure KFLM to develop and maintain an environment that is truly harmonious, that is, people in the group should respect one another even when they are in disagreement so as to keep the group operating in a positive, open and sustainable manner. This principle is highlighted in the guidelines of the Facebook group for new-comers: “if the post causes conflicts or arguments, the post should be deleted, and people should not leave further messages inciting more conflicts”. In other words, group participants should act respectfully, inclusively and should not create disputes or personal attacks or use foul or indecent language, so as to maintain the group’s positive energy to work together achieving what the group aims to accomplish. As he commented further:

*The culture in this group is good that people don’t abuse one another verbally with foul language. Many other groups are much more aggressive and online bullying is common... But this group is different.*

Although KFLM has a strong founder and leader, according to the informants, participants in the project are not all passive participants. Rather participants also tried to initiate activities for the organization as they have been encouraged by Roger to do so using their skills, knowledge and resources. Roger stated that this helped the growth of the project:

*The structural framework is there, and people can just follow it to initiate new activities... to allow the project to grow and operate organically. It is just not healthy for me to dictate everything as I already play an important role...*

Participants follow some basic guidelines if they want to organize new activities with little intervention from the administrators. For Roger, new input from participants contributes to expanding the scope of the project beyond ride-sharing. At the same time, the administrators were equally happy as they could off-load some of their workload, especially in organizing activities.

Most group participants interviewed in this study agreed that so far the strategies adopted by Roger seemed to work well. Many informants have indicated that one of the special features about KFLM is the fraternity and connectedness they have developed, with one participant stating that what surprised him was that “people are so gentle here... they don’t verbally attack people and you will follow the example they have set”[interviewee I] Others also indicated with little reservation that they enjoyed being in the group because of this positive setting. Interviewee F once mentioned how she believes this,

*It is KFLM let me believe that fraternal relationship can develop into a community.*

Despite initial success, a small crisis emerged in the previous year when Roger introduced group-purchase as the project’s ‘sharing’ or ‘collaborating’ activity. Roger

felt that in order to keep the participants together, he should run another activity that would bring more tangible 'benefits' to them, i.e., getting cheaper prices. He did not realise that the initiative would end up polarizing people in the group and cause massive arguments and disagreements. Some participants were quite sceptical about the appropriateness of the activity and began to question if KFLM was moving in the right direction by getting into group buying.

Some, for example, complained that group-buying events were held too frequently, which seemed to blur KFLM's original vision for ride-sharing. They also questioned the nature of group purchase, expressing the view that it was more about making profit (saving money for those who participated) than building a community. Subsequently those opposed group purchase activities were branded as troublemakers because they were seen as destroying the harmony of the group with little intention of resolving the controversial issue. As some informants remarked:

*If you disagree with the group, just leave... There's no need to argue and quarrel all the time. Do they (only 20 people) realize that their bickering is being unfair to the rest of the 24,000 people in the group?*

[interviewee F]

Others concurred. Mary (Interviewee G), for instance, felt that those who picked the 'fight' should quit the group:

*If they don't pick up the fight, no one would blacklist them and ask them to leave [interviewee G]*

Another two informants (J and E) similarly stated:

*Every group has its rules and idea. If you don't agree then shut up. You have to respect others. You should not disagree and create conflicts and undermine the group ...which I think is meaningless and hurt the bonds people have developed. This is really a pity. [interviewee J]*

*I'm afraid they are the ones who are making troubles... we should kick them out of the group... some of our administrators have already criticized them for being negative all the time. They can affect the morale of the group [interviewee E]*

In many ways, while participants seemed to remain quite positive about how KFLM is developing, the crisis has reflected some of the dilemmas the project had to face in its operation. As a sharing economy project, KFLM started as a very simple sharing project with a single activity (ride-sharing). The rules were simply related to how best to facilitate the ride-sharing, and its style of operation was also undeniably and uniquely people-centred. The structure or organization of the project was similarly simple, with Roger taking on the leading role, assisted by a few administrators managing the day-to-day problems by trial and error and in a step by step fashion. They did not develop any master plan for project development or specific developmental strategy. It was instead, close to a muddling through process of operation. As two of the administrators stated:

*Normally we just adjust our operation if things don't work too well*

*[interviewee B]*

*When we received some negative feedback on group-buying, things became quite chaotic. We just had to discuss things with our founder and decided that regulation is a better way to handle the matter. Then we just waited to see how things turned out, observing and running the project simultaneously, to keep moving forward.*

*[ interviewee J]*

In appearance, some may think that the way Roger was running the project was quite dictatorial. What most participants did not see however, was the inherent difficulties the project had inherited, that is, that after the initial success of the ride-sharing element, the project began to face the problem of declining volunteer drivers. Suddenly, as leader of the project, Roger had to think about how to keep the project going. Diversifying its activities was one of the options he came up with. He discussed the matter with his administrators and they all agreed the change was necessary to sustain the operation:

*If the drivers are gone, we will not able to keep the ride-sharing alive.*

*Therefore, something must be done to attract more people to join the group... I don't want to see the project discontinued, there'll be nothing left... organizing other activities seemed necessary.*

*[Interviewee J]*

*The vitality of the group should be paramount. [Interviewee B]*

The new activity of group-purchase helped to attract new participants who also knew something about ride-sharing. There might be worries that the new initiative could make ride-sharing seem less important and secondary. However, informants perceived that this had made a greater impact on the participants than before, outranking the sports and social gatherings the project had organized for their participants in terms of participation.

*The change is really an effort to expand ride-sharing to something which concerns the whole community – other than ride-sharing, resources sharing and bonding with the community, this could bring some benefit for the working class, helping them to get a share of the resources that they find it increasingly difficult to access as they are too expensive... I think the impact is far greater than sharing rides.*

*[Informant E]*

For Roger, this diversification into group buying is a pragmatic consideration to get people to join and motivate them to understand the meaning of 'sharing'. He found that over time, people became less motivated to share in the group. As he said, "people still feel they may lose something if they share things with others." When he found that participants in the project were all predisposed to a receiving incentive, especially in terms of saving money, he felt certain he should be introducing group buying as an incentive. Many informants agreed:

*It is nothing special but to help people to get some things cheaper, like fruits, through group buying is attractive enough because they don't*

*have to travel far ... we got almost three hundred new people to join.*

*[interviewee E]*

*Given we have other activities other than ride-sharing, I don't see why we should not try group buying... there is nothing to lose by trying*

*[interviewee I]*

The group-buying process worked as follows. Roger first went to the Yau Ma Tei Wholesale Fruit Market and bought the high-quality fruits locals wanted and then transported them to Taipo to distribute them to the 200 plus participants who had expressed their desire to buy. One of the informants commented that this was by far the most effective way to recruit new participants for KFLM.

*Every time when we deliver the products we bought through group purchase, there are many non-participants call and ask us how to buy them. We are always flooded with new applications to join the group after each group buying activity [interviewee E].*

According to Interviewee H, this reflects how locals behave and perceive KFLM:

*People are selfish. They will only join the group if they get benefits.*

However, for KFLM, this had to be repackaged as altruism to convince people that group-buying activities are not just about getting benefits but are also about 'doing good', and giving people incentive to share and keep the project sustainable. When participants take part in the group purchase, they are also required to donate a small

sum of money to certain charity organizations in Hong Kong. In doing so, KFLM can live up to its promise of 'sharing' while at the same time making its group buying slogan "buying for humanity" persuasive. As the following informants commented:

*This keeps people happy... they are happy to get cheaper products, but they are also happy because they know they have done 'good'.*

*[interviewee J]*

*They just add five dollars to the price at cost for charity, and this is not going to hurt people's pockets, but the money collected will benefit organizations like Children's Cancer Foundation, Doctors Without Borders, and those caring for homeless pets. [interviewee F]*

*I think this is a good way to create and strengthen the group culture of KFLM because it is a win-win situation – we get cheaper goods, but we are also able to help those who are in need. [interviewee I]*

## Operation and management

When the project first began, management was very simple. There was not much of a formal structure but just some basic 'guidelines' and 'regulations', or some would even call them 'reminders', for participants to deliver their shared rides. When the work of coordinating rides got too busy and heavy, Roger decided to recruit seven 'administrators' (non-paid volunteers) to help him, in particular managing the Facebook page, designing hashtags for indexing the posts by participants and screening out posts using violent or foul language.



This became the core group for making decisions and they communicated mainly using the WhatsApp platform. The decisions were made more like a process of collaborating as ideas were exchanged and discussed within the group and agreements were sought if there were different views. There was very little in terms of a formal division of labour in management.

This came to an end, however, after group-buying was challenged by some participants. The core group decided that maintaining an amiable setting for group participants was paramount, and to keep them cohesive, the dissenting participants had to be silenced. In addition, it was also agreed that the project should exercise more restraint in recruiting new participants and limit the number of group buying activities to prevent the project from being overwhelmed by such 'commercial' activities in order to protect the project's image in the local community.

To achieve this, screening and approval by the administrators was deemed necessary. At the same time, all posts on Facebook regarding the group purchase activities needed to be approved by an administrator. Once accepted, the posts would be scheduled for posting for all group participants. One of the administrators, Ada [interviewee J] explained in detail:

*When we didn't have any regulation and allow participants to do anything they wanted online without any filtering, they ended up messing things up... I mean if you want to sell something to benefit people in your neighbourhood, you can talk to our administrators so that we can schedule one these things one at a time and publish them*

*publicly with approval.*

*This is particularly important for our group-buying activities because it would prevent abuse by people who kept complaining about our prices being more expensive than in the shops and we feel we should have the responsibility to monitor if these complaints are legitimate or if they were just made up.*

Similarly, if participants wanted to join the Facebook group, they also needed to be approved. The administrators explained:

*We certainly don't want to have open conflicts to appear on Facebook again [Interviewee E]*

*Nor do we want to be falsely accused by people and take the blame for no reason... we know we did not have any regulation in the beginning but now we think it would work better if regulation is exercised.  
[interviewee J]*

This means that when recruiting new participants, all applicants would be checked and assessed if they were potential troublemakers, usually by reviewing their previous shared posts on Facebook. Rachel, another administrator admitted it was a hard decision but for her, but it would be too much of a price to pay if the project was destroyed by irresponsible participants.

*I am not saying that I don't want them to join, but the problem is real.*

*In fact, it is not easy to access their Facebook account because of privacy issues... but at least this is better than having no control and no assessment. [interviewee E]*

*We would normally ask some basic questions to screen the applicants – like if they have any ‘ghost account’ with no content. We would reject those because we are sceptical and don’t know what they would do in the group if they became a participant. [interviewee B]*

As a newly established and pragmatically run project, KFLM wanted to focus more on its core operation of shared-rides and began to collaborate with other similar but smaller groups to advocate for policy changes. KFLM is trying to link up with the nearby Ma On Shan and Shatin groups. Unfortunately, the outcome for some of these connections have had limited success with some becoming inactive as a result of lack of resources and ineffective strategies in promoting their project.

If collaboration proved to be harder than expected, advocating for policy change is even more difficult for KFLM because it requires greater efforts and much more resources, including time, and human resources for policy advocacy. Roger feels that his and other similar groups must perform well before they can proceed further to enter the policy arena.

This created a Catch 22 situation<sup>19</sup>. As Roger elaborated, all share-ride organizations

---

<sup>19</sup> A Catch 22 situation is a paradox with the contradiction of rules that traps individuals who cannot escape from it. In Cambridge Dictionary, it means ‘an impossible situation where you are prevented from doing one thing until you have done another thing that you cannot do until you have done the

would develop and expand much faster if they received some government support, such as loosening up current restrictions on transportation to facilitate share-rides as in Singapore. For example, Roger tried to arrange shuttle buses for commuters to get to the ride-sharing points but was hamstrung by the existing regulation prohibiting more than one license being granted to run the same route more than twice a month. This means that he had to find many different companies to run the shuttle to meet the current regulation, which cost too much time and effort for a sharing economy project like KFLM.

### Experiences of participants

So far the picture being portrayed here is more from the founder and administration perspective. The views and experiences of participants and members will now be presented.

Novelty was always one of the most general reasons for joining KFLM, as revealed by most of the participants in interviews. Ride-sharing had not been considered a common practice in Hong Kong before KFLM was established because of either the fear of 'stranger danger' or the 'self-reliance' ethos of most Hong Kongers. It was no surprise that people were interested to find out how the project would fare, especially in terms of experiencing the benefits it claimed for individuals and the community. The comments expressed by the informants are illustrative of the public interest and their anticipation of a novel experience:

*Many people thought it was something novel, and so were the drivers...*

*They joined the project because of a sense of adventure [interviewee B]*

*From what I observed, the innovativeness and novelty were so attractive and appealing. Many also felt it was fun to give it a try [interviewee J]*

*I think some participated not only because of novelty but also because of the convenience it offered... Besides, if people know more people were joining, they will too join in [interviewee H]*

Other than novelty and the curiosity factor, people were attracted by a utilitarian reason; the project offers immediate convenience and economic savings. For example, interviewee I confessed she decided to give it a try because the savings the project offered were not limited to lower transportation cost, but also extended to group purchase of fruits.

*You don't really lose much just having a try – if the quality of the fruits is not good, you don't buy the next time ... the most I would lose is around \$100. [interviewee I]*

*I was not sure what it really meant by sharing. I joined because I could get to the city central in Kowloon for free ... that was my initial thought, and I was going to see if it actually continues to offer free rides. [interviewee G]*

*The reason why I joined KFLM was that I was studying in The Education University of Hong Kong and most of my activities were in the Taipo area. It was really convenient having rides that take you from Wanchai or MongKok and back to Taipo in no time rather than taking public transport. [interviewee H]*

*The biggest draw was group purchase -- it attracted hundreds of people because of convenience and non-participants always asked how to join the group to take advantage of it every time when they saw me delivering the fruits [interviewee E]*

One informant [interviewee H] was a bit put off by this, but she also concluded that it's human nature that people are selfish and that people are motivated only when they obtain benefits.

It is noteworthy however, that those who volunteered to be the drivers are really motivated by the idea of sharing. Interviewee D, for example, was one of these people who was motivated simply by good will. In his words:

*When my car stopped at the intersection, I saw people who were so tired when taking buses and yet I still had seats unoccupied in my car ... I thought this was ridiculous ... Then I saw Roger's work (KFLM), and I said to myself, "why don't I offer my vacant seats? I really feel OK about that.*

Interviewee B expressed similar feelings:

*When I saw people waiting for buses in rainy or scorching conditions I felt I could simply offer them the vacant seats and ask them to travel with me. It's a shame that people drive to work alone in their cars and I really appreciate what KFLM is trying to do and I hope I change, or be part of this ride-sharing culture. [interviewee B]*

Ultimately they joined KFLM and were very comfortable with the mission and vision of the project, accepting sharing as the core value, and trying to build a sharing community as envisioned by Roger, the founder. Interviewee B, for instance, was enthusiastic about his new role as a driver:

*The concept of KFLM to fully utilized empty seats in cars is great and I would not have joined if I did not believe in it [interviewee B]*

*It makes you feel good knowing that you and KFLM can help people to improve their quality of life, and it gives you reasons to continue to participate. [interviewee I]*

Some eventually became quite committed to push forward and try to build a community as envisioned by Roger that is characterised by fraternity, bonds and solidarity as they also realized that ride-sharing has its limitations. As Interviewee F explained, ride-sharing benefits only the commuters, but there are others who are not commuters who seem excluded by KFLM. From her point of view and this limitation would not help the project to go further building a caring and sharing

community. As Interviewee F remarked:

*Ride-sharing only benefited mainly those who go to work but what about those who must do shopping but don't have the resources to go very far? [interviewee F]*

She went on to explain:

*To share and bond with the local community, especially with the working class, is about revitalizing resources, extending their life and circulation and share them with more people. Like tossing out a shirt – can we circulate it or share it with others in the community when some find it still useful? [interviewee F]*

Interviewee B agreed and held that KFLM needed more than just ride-sharing activities:

*If this group is to encourage sharing in community, it can't rely on offering shared rides along. We need to widen to include different elements of sharing to encourage more willingness to share and receive [interviewee B]*

For Interviewee J, the key is to work more with community and for Interviewee I, new community-based activities must be introduced to encourage more participants to join and develop the sharing and community spirit.



Interviewee F, however, believed that if KFLM aims to enhance local community's solidarity and trust, resource sharing is not only for making profit but also helping people nearby. Interviewee B agreed that if the project aims to establish a sharing and caring community, its activities should not focus only on ride-sharing but should also "actively promote [sharing and harmony]". (Interviewee F)

The acceptance of the vision and norms of the project that Roger professed by many participants, surprisingly made it difficult to contain dissenting voices when the group purchase activity was introduced. The new initiative was opposed by those who believed that KFLM was getting into commercial dealings and did not think it complied with its original mission. These dissenting voices were fiercely attacked by participants who thought otherwise and labelled them as 'troublemakers' and 'deviants' who had undermined the good will and harmony established within the project. While some (Interviewee E, for example) did not understand why the conflicts flared up in the open, others were equally condemning. Interviewee H thought those who had opposed the group-buying project were "old-fashioned" and did not want to bring changes which were good for the project as a whole. Interviewee C commented that these opposers were "making troubles to ruin all others who had been enjoying the harmony in the group". Some, like Interviewee J, argued that the 'troublemakers' should be "kicked out" from the project in order to prevent more publicized dissent.

The open "quarrel", as some participants would call it, in many ways did reflect that while people were fine with the sharing concept, not everyone perceived the project as being focused on curbing hyper-consumption through sharing and extending the lifespan of consumer products through giving things away (or disowning things). This

was the point where the arguments became openly heated. Those who opposed group-buying felt that the activity was encouraging people to spend and buy more; defeating its original purpose of discouraging hyper-consumption. Many of the interviewees who did not like to see group-buying events as part of the project felt their opposition was justified. For example, Interviewee G admitted,

*I don't know what he (Roger) wanted do, or didn't want to do. I just don't see the project is keeping its original purpose this since I joined.*

*[interviewee G]*

Interviewee D similarly observed that: *“He (Roger) is not helping people to reduce unnecessary consumption.”* In other words, he saw KFLM was more into building good relationships and networks with people than dealing with the problem of hyper-consumption. Both Interviewee J and E were also quite critical about this. From their perspective, there was no activities that encouraged people to stop impulsive buying and there was no education campaign focusing on this either. This does not seem to be on its development agenda, as Interviewee E remarked,

*It is not coping with this (hyper-consumption) as he hasn't launched this.*

Despite the hard words, most interviewees considered Roger a leader with great influence in shaping KFLM. There was little disagreement that he had done a lot for KFLM and many people confessed that the main reason for them to join the group was because of him and his idea about KFLM. In the eyes of Interviewee B, Roger is a leader with personal charisma, which makes people feel good about his friendliness,

and ease of developing an affinity with him. As Interviewee B said, “when he calls for support, people will just follow.” For Interviewee E, Roger is also a pioneer who is responsible for getting KFLM to what it is today. His comment about Roger was direct: “without him, where would KFLM be?” For Interviewee I, and Rachel, one of the administrators, Roger’s strength was his ability to bring resources to benefit participants of the group. According to participants, this strength stems from his positive presentation, both within the group and in public media.

Interviewee C, for example, noted that the frequent interview appearances he made in newspapers, magazines and TV programmes elevated him to becoming a public figure who has “talent and authority,” and represents being “a good person” worthy of trust and “worship”. Interviewee J also saw that the more well-known Roger becomes, the more people want to be a part of KFLM. As Interviewee E summarized, “he has become an idol in Taipo, famous and well-known.”

Image aside, informants in this study also found his enthusiasm and commitment most admirable. The administrators, Ada, Tony and Cliff, were all impressed by the committed effort he had invested in generating resources for charity drives, answering questions from participants, and organizing events.

*For example, he replied every message received or anyone who found him, whether he knew them or not, just to get to know them and to get them familiar with KFLM so that it would grow... He also actively cultivates changes and does not want to travel passively on the same path. [interviewee C]*

*Whether you like it or not, he is the one who instigated the group buying idea. You can say that. But one must know that he is not getting things cheaper for himself but he would share them widely. He also tried to establish a free shuttle, but the other shuttle bus operators complained and forced him to suspend the move... It's easy to criticize him but only few people would know how hard it has been to generate more resources for people in the group and the community. [interviewee J]*

*Ride-sharing is not a new thing in foreign countries... but in Hong Kong, if you don't know who you are picking up, it is hard to motivate to get enthusiastic about the whole idea. People are willing to give it a chance simply because of Roger. [interviewee I]*

There are participants, however, who appreciated more of his idea about fully utilizing idle resources. While Interviewee I praised him for considering empty seats as idle resources that ought to be shared as a way to use resources more efficiently and making traffic less congested, Interviewee G was very much impressed by his generosity for meeting a real need of the local people and simultaneously doing environmental good for the community (decongesting traffic and saving fuel). Both Interviewees B and D were inspired by KFLM, because it (and Roger) had reminded them once again that things they had in surplus did not have to end up in waste if only new ways of sharing are found. As B said, "if things are under-utilized or not used, it's better them who may be able to make them useful again." For Interviewees D and J, what they had learned from KFLM was a new meaning of sharing. As D commented, "you used to feel embarrassed to give unwanted things to

people but did not realize that you could actually share them around.” Interviewee J similarly felt that now she is more aware of the needs of others before she disposes of things in the rubbish bin.

What Interviewee C found particularly interesting from KFLM is that the idea of sharing could be extended to collective or group-buying. He was one of many who were for the introduction of the activity because “cost-saving and time saving is the result of sharing efforts”. In response to criticisms that group-buying led to increased consumption, Interviewee C stated: “If it is not for profit-making but to share the savings, it’s still within the domain of sharing economy because it is sharing consumer power.”

Certainly whether consumer power could be considered as under-utilized resource is controversial as indicated by the “open quarrel” described earlier. Nonetheless, this idea seems to receive most support from the informants interviewed, and many saw this more practical than sharing other services. The reasons were many, ranging from “benefitting more people other than commuters” (Interviewee G), “a good way to get connected more to local community and people” (Interviewee J), “making the best use of group power to meet people’s need” (Interviewee B), and “cost-savings can only be shared when people get together and collaborate” (Interviewee J). In summary, they all agreed that sharing such benefits would lead to a “win-win situation for all”.

## Impacts on participants and values

Judging from the responses from the informants, it is clear that Roger as a founder

and the leader of KFLM has had great influence in not only shaping the project, both in terms of its vision and values, but also in generating its growth and expansion, and getting wide support from its participants. However, it must be examined whether or not the project has achieved the building of sharing culture through bonding, trust and fraternity and ultimately building a caring community. It is also necessary to explore whether the idea of sharing rather than ownership contributes to solving the escalating problem of environmental misery because of hyper-consumption and individual consumption changes.

In terms of its growth in number of participants and word-of-mouth reputation, KFLM is one of the most successful projects of its kind in Hong Kong. Its popularity among its participants speaks loudly of what it has accomplished, but as a sharing economy project, whether or not it has been able to make value and behavioural transformation in its participants, which in turn leading to greater changes in the local community will need closer inspection. It is essential that this examination is not about assessing if the project has done well or has been disappointing, but rather, the focus should be on how a sharing economy project initiated solely through personal enthusiasm and commitment but with little resources and no sponsors, could arrive at a stage where it becomes a local icon. Likewise, this examination is not about putting a judgement on its tactics in operation but is more about highlighting the enormity of the environmental problem, and how a small project such as KFLM prepared itself to make a difference despite its limitations.

In identifying the impacts of the project, it is important to look into how on the project level and on the individual level, if participants have or have not been transformed, with possible examination on the broader structural and policy impacts.

At project level, according to Roger, the development and growth of KFLM has outperformed what he initially expected, especially in successfully establishing sharing culture among the participants. He admitted honestly that from the beginning, he had no formal plan for KFLM except that it was a service provision project with a sharing economy outlook that is based on the notion of sharing. There was a lot of 'muddling through' in terms of trying out various tactics in starting up, recruiting participants and operating the car-pools. There was no formal structure, no master plans, nor boundless resources and hence everything was experimental. The impetus came mainly from his own belief and persistence or commitment. As Roger stated:

*Many people became curious and interested and were attracted by the project's novelty and boldness [not fearing it might fall flatly on its face]. People started talking through word-of-mouth... and generated so much support simply because share-riding was never done before. Then the media got interested and started to report what we do and things began to snowball. This was not planned, and we had no strategy, but just lots of coincidence, doing the right things at the right time.*

Similarly, people's overwhelming response to his calls for shared rides was unexpected. Their eagerness to participate, desire to become fraternal with one another and their taking on of the responsibility to help organizing a variety of activities also took him by surprise. Despite the few dissenting voices, overall KFLM in Roger's eyes, has been quite successful in cultivating a friendly and accepting setting

towards a sharing culture, allowing strong and extensive social capital to be formed. This too is something he did not imagine when he first started out to lead the project. In this context, he is very pleased and he hopes that it will become a positive platform for creating bigger and better change for building a different kind of community. Roger hopes for a community that is based not on how much material possession one has, but on how much one could share what they have around to help one another to get a better quality of life while curbing the worsening problem of environmental misery.

Despite most participants feel quite good about the activities it has held, as a sharing economy project, the changes remains in a small scale. In terms of participants active in participating in KFLM activities, the number is still small, although it has attracted some to become the core. For example, Interviewee C reported that around a hundred people could be considered as key participants who are genuinely active and reliable and dependable. Most other participants, however, remain as 'CD-ROM' participants – meaning they only read messages but do not really join in the activities.

On this, Roger seemed to agree and stated further that perhaps most participants are still lacking a sense of awareness of what sharing could do in transforming a community. In his view, the group-buying activities are only a means to draw participants' attention to how sharing could be done even with buying and consumption. In other words, a sharing culture must be cultivated before the project could move into a different level to influence people to curb their excessive consumption pattern. Roger believes that as a founder and leader, he has an important role to play, but that he is also regrettably constrained heavily by resources,



time and energy in orchestrating activities other than the routinized shared rides and group-purchase. In summary, there is a real danger that the project as a whole remains stagnant.

On a brighter note, Roger and the core participants still believed that the project has cultivated a spirit of fraternity and mutual concern among group participants that is fast becoming the foundation of a sharing culture that increasingly impresses most other participants and the local community.

*What I hope to see is after joining the project, our participants would become more inclusive, understanding, and accept our core value of sharing... In fact, I have observed some noticeable changes in some participants, they have become more inclusive in their communication, developing greater mutual respect for one another (even when there are different views) because they want to see harmony and positivity in this project... Once people realize that this the norm of KFLM and when people started and liked behaving this way, they'll change from their hearts gradually.*

However, most importantly, for Roger, the most significant outcome of KFLM is that:

*We have done a lot of good things and charity work that helps us to impress people not only about having a positive image but also to spread the sharing culture to a wider circle in community.*

For Roger, this is the beginning of a positive cycle – as people know more about

KFLM and developing positive impressions about it, this makes it easy for it to build social capital, fraternity and solidarity through its activities and operation which in turn, also reinforces its message about building a sharing culture. This sentiment is, according to the informants interviewed, also quite widespread among the informants in this study. For example, Interviewee F has developed friendships with his passengers after just several rides. As she recalled:

*At one time I was in hurry getting on a ride-sharing, and found out the driver actually was living within the same estate; yet we just never met or greeted one another. Now we have lots of conversations during the ride and we couldn't stop. I didn't expect this could connect me with people living in the area – I just thought it would be something impersonal, like just traveling to work together and not having to greet and make small talks. Now I would be more likely to get to know people and help one another. [interviewee F]*

Another informant told us that she became friendly with her driver so much that she can trust her to discuss her future plans. Similarly, Interviewee E became such good friends with her “driver” that she celebrated birthdays with her and that they now get together frequently. Connections or networks made through activities such as badminton or basketball gatherings organized by KFLM are also appreciated by the informants. Interviewee B, for example, took over the coordinating role for a badminton group and found it helped him to develop great relationships with others because of “deeper understanding”. He felt strongly that there is a strong bonding among participants in this group. Interviewees D and E likewise indicated that usually it would take time for people to develop friendship but in KFLM, because of the social

activities like ballgames, trips and charity efforts, teams were developed and teammates became close.

An interesting case of people bonding and sharing for KFLM participants is the case of a mothers' group for babies. According to Interviewee I, the group was formed by six mothers whose babies were less than six-months old, a period when all mothers found it too stressful to care for their babies alone:

*We had no idea we had participants having babies born in the same month until we became participants and then we found we were experiencing the same problems – not knowing how to burp or massage our babies to make them feel better after feeding. We decided to get together to learn from one another and we became really cohesive while supporting each other. [interviewee I]*

Interviewee H, however, felt that the ride-sharing initiative acted as some kind of self-screening because “you have to start with a certain basic level of trust or otherwise, you would not have taken rides with strangers at all.” Without this basic trust, further interaction would simply be impossible. That said, Interviewee C believed that even with a low-level of trust at the beginning, it provided a starting point for further development albeit in a gradual fashion.

The key question is, however, whether or not the project been able to change the value and behaviour of its participants towards sharing and curbing hyper-consumption. On an Individual level, when asked whether or not being part of KFLM had helped them to do more in terms of sharing under-utilized resources to

support environmentalism, most interviewees seemed positive because they all tend to give away goods they do not need to friends and relatives as a first priority before they put them into recycling bins or through online groups. Interviewees I, F and H, however, held that they started to “share” more with people in the local community rather than just their friends and relative after becoming part of KFLM. For them, this is an important and significant change because they did not even think about giving things away to people they did not know and now they really appreciate the new awareness and willingness they have gained through KFLM.

*I share rarely share with people I do not know but when you tried once and saw how people appreciated your action, you felt elated.  
[interviewee I]*

*I now learn how to share things I have no use, like cinema tickets, with people I may not know because I realize that they might need and use it. [interviewee A]*

*Sharing things you don't need with people in your neighbourhood was something I wouldn't do but now I am happy to do it. [interviewee F]*

*When I can share to those who are in needs after I have collected a bunch of items. [interviewee D]*

However, how people “share” their under-used resources in recent time has changed. When people intend to give away their under-utilized items, they used to go through

KFLM. This practice is now less frequent. After group buying or “sharing consumption power” was introduced, people seemed to give away free things less often according to Interviewee I. However, as observed by Interviewee B, the sharing culture in the group had not been affected. For Roger, this could also be because people now have different needs, especially the need for a bit of luxury in times of festivity such as traditional foods people think they must have in Mid-Autumn or Dragon Boat Festival, that is, moon cakes or dumplings. To help these people who could not afford them, Roger would obtain a limited number of discount coupons or discounted products and distribute them as an expression of sharing his privileges and group consumer power.

It is debatable whether or not this is genuine sharing economy practice but for Interviewees I and E, getting people to save money by using group purchasing power is ultimately a form of sharing and if it benefits everyone, it really would not hurt the mission at all. As Roger also reflected:

*I often thought about why some groups are more privileged than others and what I could do to make up the difference. I concluded that if only I could share what I could get for them, at least that is something that would make things a bit better.*

Now that participants are more willing and ready to share with people they do not know personally, and they are happy with Roger’s idea of sharing of consumer power, even though they could also benefit from it, it is arguable that the project is on track and is alive after two years, which is indicative of its appeal, strength and potential for further growth. What pleases Roger is also that people are not just giving things

that are old and used, but items which are new and not used before. For him, this may be a sign that “people are getting a set of new values that they take into their hearts – sharing.”

Meanwhile, when asked about their habits of shopping or consumption pattern, most interviewees responded quite defensively that they are rational buyers who only make purchases based on their needs rather than desire. Some characterise themselves as “practical”, that is, unless something is broken, they do not buy a new one to replace it. If the product is not needed they may not buy. Practical, meeting needs, buying after previous one has broken are most common immediate responses towards the question, with only one interviewee stating that he buys when he has needs and desire.

Upon further examination, it has become clear that there is a catch in what participants said earlier. Some participants noted that in some cases, when they made the purchase, it felt like a real need, but soon after the purchase was made, they realized that they did not have to buy it after all. According to Interviewees A and C:

*Indeed you feel there is a real need when you are buying but once you reach home you realize it is not the case. Later we often find out we never notice very much what we have bought and some have never been used either. [interviewee A]*

*The way we look at things before and after buying something is just different. [interviewee C]*

They agreed that the most common justification people make when they make purchases that are not necessarily needed is that “someday it will become useful”. As Interviewee D stated:

*Like buying shirts, you know somehow you can wear that later although you have already bought so many new clothes that perhaps you'll never get to wear it.*

When it comes to food, people use a similar justification:

*This happens so often when you go to the supermarket, thinking that the things we buy can be consumed later... then you'll end up buying a lot. [interviewee C]*

The informants were honest about their shopping buying behaviour during festive times. They knew they would have time and they would shop a lot to stock up for the festivity, but ended up wasting a lot of their purchases because of passing expiring dates. As some informants commented,

*When you have more time, especially on vacation, you just want to spend money and buy everything you can afford. [interviewee D]*

*When you have the urge to buy, every product you look at is beautiful. [interviewee E]*

Not surprisingly most informants before they joined KFLM, had accumulated stocks of goods that were under-utilized, such as shirts and garments. Roger admitted that most of the shirts were worn fewer than 10 times, with many not even unwrapped. Interviewee E tried to overcome that by immediately wearing her new garment and washing it to ensure it would be worn again, but failed because she had far too many. Other informants confessed that they were once fashion victims and bought clothes because they only wanted to catch up with the latest trends. Sometimes things could become ridiculous, as Interviewee C indicated:

*Sometimes when you get home suddenly you realize how much you have already and you want to think about giving things away.*  
*[interviewee C]*

Many informants reported they did not make any changes in their consumption pattern even after they became part of KFLM (Interviewees E, J, and C, for example). Interviewee E indicated that she would just keep buying if the product was not too expensive. Interviewee J likewise continues to buy new things when she finds them interesting and suitable:

*I don't think I have changed my buying pattern... normally I will buy something new one if the product is not too expensive. [interviewee E]*

*Any changes? No changes and no difference ... I shop to find suitable items and I haven't bought less. [interviewee J]*

*No, KFLM has not changed my shopping behaviour. If anything, I*



*now think about how I could share with others extra stuffs I have.*

*[interviewee C]*

This is one of the most common responses, that people are maintaining their original behaviour. Reducing consumption or changes in buying behaviour is not an option in their perspective, as most of them still believed that they are buying products according to needs. Rachel stated clearly that there is no problem with shopping if people have money. According to Rachel, affordability is the most important element and that it is OK if people can buy with no regrets. She further expressed the importance of using the product rather than leaving it unused to avoid hyper-consumption. She does not, therefore, believe that she may be over-consuming as she has used bought items immediately after buying. There was generally not much reflection on buying behaviour if their attitude remained unchanged towards consumption.

Some may even experience a rebound effect that they buy more after participating in KFLM. Cliff is a typical example. He admitted that sharing can be an excuse to buy more new items to replace those old ones which shared to others. From his perspective, the receiving of shared products to have a trial also leads to his consumption of the same product, but with a new one. As he reflected:

*If the resources can share to others, I feel better. Then I may even buy more. [interviewee C]*

*When you clear those products, you will have places to buy new things back [interviewee C]*

All of the administrators still agreed that a lack of reduction of consumptive behaviour is not necessarily a problem as people were getting good quality fruit and other items and they had every intention of consuming. Roger did, however, provide examples of a few participants who, after finding out more about sharing as a way to refrain from impulsive buying from KFLM, they reported buying less and donating more, like garments and shoes, to charity events. There were also others who indicated that while their shopping behaviour has not changed drastically, some did make slight changes, like thinking more before buying and taking a more “wait and see” attitude to find out if there are free shared items they could get from KFLM’s ‘share’ or ‘swap’ activities. As Interviewee B remarked:

*I have become more cautious and not buying things on a whim, especially knowing they are not something I urgently need. I used to buy things because they are cheap but now I would wait and see if people would share them in KFLM. [interviewee B]*

For those who have reported they bought less and are more conscious of waste, may have other reasons for their changing behaviour. For example, two informants bought less for themselves, because they got married and became mothers, instead shifting the priority of their purchasing to their babies. There were also reports that new groups had formed within KFLM to promote the use of second hand items for babies, which they may also start sharing because of the similar backgrounds of the participants.

At the same time, there are signs that the sharing spirit for environmentalism is

beginning to catch on as a few participants such as Interviewees D and E began to share unused items in the group activities. Others were curious why they donated new shirts or items. They explained:

*I picked these new shirts to give away because I don't want to be wasteful anymore and if I mean what I say, I should give them away while they are new so that they can be used fully. I can just keep wearing my old shirts until they are completely worn out... In doing so I know I am also saving money...*

To put things into perspective, Roger believed that KFLM is still far from being able to have any major influence on changing people's consumption pattern and lifestyle because it is not an easy task. Nevertheless, he remains hopeful:

*Habits and awareness don't converge, but given the platform and opportunity, people may change. When people find out how sharing can work to reduce buying and mindless consumption, they are already on the right track to transformation.*

At a societal and policy level, as suggested earlier, KFLM is still far from making possible progress on changing the environmental degradation and hyper-consumption, even though the founder holds this agenda in the long run. On this, Roger holds the view that it is not feasible to advocate for a macro level change at this stage. He argued instead that perhaps it is more important first to lay the foundation for getting people to think about sharing and consumption awareness. It will be a long and arduous journey for the advocacy in this stage as the current

development is far from a readily step. Roger believes that being able to make the step in generating awareness among the project participants perhaps already is an achievement, but whether or not it would be possible to convince its participants to alter their consumption pattern by dismissing ownership altogether is difficult to know at present. He therefore rarely promotes a clear message on societal and policy level change to the participants until a suitable time despite agreeing that this should be an agenda in long run.

## Summary

KFLM is a relatively new sharing economy project aiming to curb the worsening environmental problems in Hong Kong using the concept of sharing under-utilized resources to discourage people from excessive consumption. KFLM started out by organizing car pools and shared rides for local commuters in Taipo and met with great success because it was novel, noble and generous. The founder and leader of the project, Roger, has a broader and greater vision, and believes not only in sharing but also in building harmony through his project before extending it to the larger community.

As an entirely independent, under-resourced and sponsor-free project, the journey taken by KFLM has been sustained by enthusiasm and commitment, as well as support from like-minded volunteers. Its limitations are obvious, and how to maintain group morale, create fraternity, cohesiveness, growth and keeping it spirited has been a challenge. To move the project forward and reach a wider community, the project started to move into organizing group purchase events to take advantage of greater discounts and cheaper prices as a way to “share collective consumer power” or using “collaborative consumption” to promote its ideal of

sharing and spreading benefits beyond its original commuter groups. The initiative backfired, however, and created dissenting voices from within, criticizing it for 'selling out' and misdirecting the project into more consumption, a clear deviation from its original mission. The aftermath of the open and public debate has seen the project grow, because more people were attracted by the group-buying discounts, and the project has also tightened up its control over admission of participants and posts on social media in the name of maintaining its internal harmony and positive public image. The move has been criticized as unhelpful, but from the angle of project survival and growth, the concerns for building social capital and broadening community support override the issue of ideological value.

At present this project remains more on utilitarian reasons for building community networks for participants than for changing people's consumption behaviour or value in environmental protection. Given its limited resources and short history however, while the outcomes are not ground breaking, its contributions to generating community awareness of the importance of sharing, rethinking on ownership and consumption and the possibility of garnering mutual help, have been maintained despite setbacks. This has also highlighted the leading role and the personal charisma of the founder.

## Chapter Five Waste-no-mall (Yuen Long)

### Origin and development

The project Waste-no-mall (WnM) was launched in November 2016 by a group of young people, Matthew, Jess and Esther, who had worked for Chu Hoi Dick<sup>20</sup> on his election campaign for a seat in Hong Kong's Legislative Council. After winning the election, they brainstormed about how community recycling could be started in their local community as this was one of the key issues that was raised during the election campaign. They were also enthused by it because during the 79 days of the Occupy Central (also known as the Umbrella Movement) in 2014 when thousands of students took over the CBD area of Admiralty, environmental concerns became a huge issue until some groups introduced community recycling in the occupied area. The idea immediately drew much praise and attention from the media and the public, including the three young people who decided to replicate the project in their local community, aiming at integrating recycling, resource sharing, free-cycling and education to reduce waste as a way to tackle the problem of hyper-consumption. Up until now, the project has attracted 8,500 members in its Facebook group and has also 15 affiliated projects in other communities in Hong Kong<sup>21</sup>.

---

<sup>20</sup> Chu Hoi Dick is currently Legislative Councillor (New Territories West). He has a long history of active participation in Hong Kong's social movements – he was involved in the protests of the demolition of Star Ferry Pier and Queen's Pier in 2006 and was also a leading figure in the protest against the construction of High Speed Rail in 2010. In addition, he established the 'Land Justice League' in 2011 to oppose Hong Kong's continual speculation-driven property development, and to promote green economy and green development via 'democratic self-determination', and strategies of Rural-Urban Symbiosis through revitalizing agricultural production.

<sup>21</sup> All of them use Waste-no-mall as their name, with different region in differentiation.

The mission of Waste-no-mall is most interesting. Although recycling is one of its main goals, rather than advocating the mere reduction of consumption, it also calls for a new imagination for turning the current public refuse collection points into Community Resources Sharing Centres as a way to give the public more incentive to recycle and reuse as much as possible the things people tossed out so that every piece of material discarded could be reused by those who are in need and hence, waste is avoided. This would include recycling, upcycling, food sharing and roof-top gardening. The project participants however, also recognised that this is not an easy task because to begin with, according to one participant:

*The current refuse collection points are so dirty and disgusting that no-one wants to hang around. This means they all need to be transformed if they were to serve as a recycling centre encouraging people to come and pick up whatever they want to recycle*  
[Interviewee K]

The participants also believed, however, that more could be done to encourage people to recycle or upcycle by sharing their idle or unused resources in their community. They decided to designate a public space in Yuen Long in Hong Kong's New Territories every Saturday afternoon to promote three major activities. The first was down-cycling, focusing on recycling the unused materials that they had rescued from the rubbish tips. Initially participants were not entirely clear what could be salvaged, so developed a list of 10 items, including different types of plastics, papers, and metals they could share with recyclers and scavengers in the local community. These discarded items had grown so rapidly from 10 kilograms per day when the project started, to over 300 kilograms in a short span of two years. The second

activity was free-cycling, allowing those in need to pick and choose from a variety of under-utilized materials they had collected, and reuse them in whatever way they could. Finally, the participants also want to conduct education work, or what they call collaborative learning, in the form of environmental tours and posts on their Facebook page, to generate public awareness of their mission.

### **Mission, values and beliefs**

The activities reflect very much the values of the founders of the project; that they are not only into reducing waste through recycling, down-cycling or upcycling, but also free cycling by cultivating a culture of sharing within a community. At the same time, these activities also emphasize that their project does not aim at dominating anyone, but instead, see all participants as ‘comrades’<sup>22</sup> or equals, having their own capability and responsibility towards solving the environmental problems facing their community. They see sharing, therefore, both in terms of materials and beliefs, as well as networking with like-minded groups, as the cornerstone for addressing hyper-consumption. The project insists that without consensus from its participants, transformation will not be possible.

Because of the insistence on equality, the project does not have a clear, formal, hierarchical structure, nor do the founders want to take a dominant role in steering the operation. As Jess, one of the ‘founders’, put it, people are equal Hong Kong. They are citizens and users of the Earth, and they all have independent mind-sets. Moreover, she also insisted that: “I only want to be a user, a simple user [in the project]”. From the founders’ point of view, they only saw themselves one step

---

<sup>22</sup> To them, they are not volunteer but as a participant who are in a side to fight for the war on environmental degradation, which they have used the term comrades.



ahead of other participants in terms of having environmental awareness and therefore they should not be treated as particularly important, or as 'leaders'. They believed that it was more important for them to be effective communicators to provide a foundation to build links with other participants and encourage their participation rather than 'commanding' what the participants should do. In this context, the project almost has no leaders, but only coordinators, because their rights, participation and power in making decisions are equal. As such, the role of the founders is seen as insignificant and is expected to gradually disappear. As Matthew, another one of the founders, commented, he and the founders should not be shouldering all the responsibility of the project's operation because everyone should have a part in it. In his words, this is about 'collective responsibility'. The other founders agreed that the responsibility should be shared so that people can help one another. In Matthew's own words:

*Collective responsibility is indispensable in sharing. A provider of sharing economy can't solve all problems.*

Jess, another founder, concurred that sharing is also collaboration and it should be a collective process. For her, this is particularly relevant to collaborative learning which is one of the aims of the project. Here, teaching is not dominated from top-down but involves a mutual responsibility to collaborate among people who want to learn. This is, therefore, a form of 'peer-to-peer sharing' for educating people about consumption and sharing economy. In summary, mutual help and collaboration is the key. As she aptly remarked: "it's similar to farming. If labour is not shared, there will be no harvest".

All three founders had a clear consensus about the meaning of sharing. For them, sharing is about making the best use of under-utilized resources, while the scope of sharing should involve both free-cycling and down-cycling. Where the founders differed was their individual understanding of whether or not sharing should only be for non-profit purposes. At the same time, sharing to them is also not just about making available idle-resources for people who may need them, but the important point is to prevent these items being sent to landfill, slowing down the disposal process of reaching the upper limit of landfill. To them, the basic belief is that to give away to others who in need if people don't use it anymore. As Jess stated,

*It is not like seeing your assets being confiscated -- If you want to dispose something, why not think about giving it to others? Isn't that what sharing economy being all about, sharing?*

Esther, the third founder, felt that WnM is like a public library. In her eyes, sharing is not donation, and it should not have any specific target group defined as needy, because 'needs' are different and should not be confined to certain socio-economic groups. She contended "it's like borrowing books. If you need a book, get it from the library because it is not about whether you can afford to buy it". To her, if a book is not wanted, the best result is to have it given away so others can enjoy it.

For the founders, however, sharing under-utilized resources is only the first step towards reducing waste as they all realized the core issue in environmental problems is hyper-consumption, which is closely tied to the current unsustainable life style emphasizing impulsive buying and consumption. In their minds, while it is not possible to ask people to make drastic changes, what they hope WnM can do is to

ask people to take the first step of reducing waste by sharing with others what they have, which remains under-used or lying idle. In doing so, it may make people more aware of their wastefulness and begin to cut back on buying more. On this, Jess explained:

*I think there are several stages people can take. First, share with others whenever you have underused or idle resources. Share or give away goods you want to dispose. Second, share with others resources you currently have and in use, just ask people to return them to you later. Finally, make what you have publicly accessible so more people can use them.*

For these reasons, most of WnM's activities are sharing activities aimed at down-cycling and free-cycling, re-distributing idle resources to those who in need. To Esther, free-cycling is about collecting and making available used but useful resources to people without calling them second-hand goods. Similarly, down-cycling is also about sharing. Jess believed that it is often sharing these recycled materials with recycler and scavengers because they can be upcycled most of the time – like plastic or glass bottles, or wood or leather pieces. Down-cycling therefore, should also work with sharing information that encourages people to upcycle. As Jess stated:

*Normally people believe they could only share 'useable' goods with no knowledge of free-cycling. I was the same until I met some of the traders who told me they could make good use of them. Then I became quite aware of it and made sure when I collected 'rubbish', I would turn them over to the traders freely. So now free-cycle*

*and down-cycle are the same to me.*

Because the founders believe that sharing should be free and not for making monetary gain, they hold a very specific view that sharing economy should not be involved in making money, but only in sharing under-utilized resources to cut down on waste. Not surprisingly they became very critical about the 'community bike' (or 'shared bike' programmes) that had been promoted heavily as part of the sharing economy. For them, the bikes were not under-utilized but brought in. They were then rented out at a commercial rate to make a profit. To them it was a business rather than sharing, although they also realized that for some people, paying to access a service could be considered as sharing.

The founders expressed their unwillingness to impose their view on participants based on the principle of self-determination they proposed – that is, participants should not be dominated by their views should they have their own principles. In this context, their vision for WnM is that they would like to take steps to promote the consumption behaviour of the participants and ultimately, the public in local community. The first step is to provide direct experience rather than education or talks for whoever is involved in WnM so that they know they can make a difference. The second step is to establish close relationships or social networks in community to strengthen the motivation for people to share and in turn, enhance the feasibility of the works of WnM. As Matthew recalled, he had the awareness about hyper-consumption and he wanted to make changes, yet he could only work as an individual because he did not have a wide network of friends who were equally passionate about the issue. This limitation delayed his move to start WnM. Matthew also found that without knowing a group of recyclers who are willing to be involved,

it was not possible for WnM to work. Jess agreed that without such connections with the recyclers, they simply could not cope with the resources collected. As Matthew stated:

*We need the connections or networks not only for comrades but also for connecting ourselves to a wider society. Imagine if you were only a recycler or scavenger, you just don't know what else you could do to benefit society... it would be just difficult.*

Jess concurred:

*You don't need a lot of people, even six to eight, would give you the feeling that you have comrades standing with you side by side and that you are ready or could make a change. But if you are acting alone, you just feel bad about people throwing things away. Now when you know people who are alike, when you want to get rid of something you can ask them if others could make use of it, and hope that they would make similar efforts. This is very supportive.*

There was another reason why Matthew wanted to widen his network. He found that it would be far more effective in influencing people around him to take on recycling and sharing to curb the problem of environmental waste. According to Matthew:

*Before I started WnM, I thought I could persuade and educate people by talking to them, but they turned out to be totally ineffective because they just listened and you just talked and*

*nothing happened. Now I believe that action is absolutely necessary to make an impact if you want people to change. Get them to do something and discuss with them afterwards. That would be more useful.*

Jess felt the same way on this because of her own training in drama education and communication. She stated:

*I learned from the drama teacher that communication is more than talks and words, but involves also sight, hearing, perception, contrast and shocks which people tend to overlook. When our participants are shocked to see what is in the bag we give them, it means they have communicated with that bag. They get their own insights from that experience, and this can't be achieved by listening to a presentation or reading a leaflet/pamphlet.*

Jess also found that the more their participants began to do things, the more enthusiastic they became and the more often they came to participate in the project activities. As a result she came to see in them greater changes, both in terms of their behaviour and values, through a process of reflection that gave them not only the awareness but also the motivation to commit themselves to change. Esther added:

*If people hold on week after week the things they want to dispose, soon they will see how wasteful they have become, and then will begin to ask question about how they could create so much waste. The accumulation of these things and the subsequent questions*

*they ask will eventually change the way they live and consume...*

Here, one can see the consensus among the founders, that a) changes will take time; b) changes will be gradual; c) changes will happen only through action (direct participation and experiences in down-cycling or free-cycling) → reflection (insights developed) → commitment to change.

### Core values and participants' perceptions

Given WnM had its origin in the Umbrella Movement, especially in terms of its spirit of self-determination or self-resolution<sup>23</sup>, the key value it holds is that people should try to save themselves and deal with their problems directly through their own efforts. During the Movement, the founders observed how the problem of environmental waste was solved by the protesters and were, therefore, convinced that the reason the problem was solved so quickly was because of 'equality'. The founders therefore maintained that they wanted to downplay their role as leaders and insist that everyone being equal in the group was paramount, not only in their rights to participate, make decisions, but also to take on responsibility.

When probed further about what this really means, the founders all agreed that this refers to two things. The first is the rights of participants to be involved and that whatever they think is correct in the project. Participants are also free not to participate in activities they are not interested because freedom rather than compulsory participation is important. The second is that participants should take

---

<sup>23</sup> Self-determination originally refers to finding out a way to resolve the political quandary Hong Kong people are facing for not having universal suffrage but later was transformed into a more general feeling on resolving one's own problem through own efforts (in Chinese: 自己問題自己救).

responsibility for the environment when they exercise their freedom to do whatever they like. For the founders, this would allow a diversity of activities to take place and safeguard the principle of self-determination within the group. As Matthew reiterated, “I don’t want to force others to follow a single direction, which is not possible.” Esther also believed that given people have the same idea about the environment, they can do different things and achieve the same goals.

This idea of ‘self-determination’ seems to have gone down quite well among the participants. Interviewee P, for instance, was most appreciative of the freedom WnM had given to individual participants while emphasizing also their responsibility for their own action. He felt that this was commonly understood by most others in the project. Interviewee R, however, had a different but broader interpretation, that ‘self-determination’ was not limited to activities within the project, but also about their “own way of living – their lifestyle should not be interfered by any external regulation.” It was not necessary therefore, for participants to obtain a ‘group consensus’. If participants wanted to organize certain activities, provided the project’s objectives and principles are not violated, they were encouraged to do so.

Nonetheless, some participants were less certain about the whole notion of ‘self-determination’ because they were never explicitly told about it. Rather, they only heard from other participants about the principle of freedom to participate. As Interviewee Q commented, “I was not told about self-determination but only the freedom to participate – that is, if I am not available I could be absent.” Interviewee S also had the same idea, because she was told many times to “come if you have time and participate only if you want to”.



For many participants, perhaps what ‘self-determination’ means is the ‘founders’ reluctance to operate on a top-down basis. For Matthew, however, this actually goes beyond the vertical operation of the project because self-determination is also concerned with the horizontal practices linking people. Matthew is very much worried that the loss of horizontal connections might undermine the future of the project. As Esther summarized:

*[Most people expect an organization is led by a leader], then it will have a leader, and people would only follow the leader, wait for the leader to provide ideas instead of having their own thinking or ideas, and this is not self-determination.*

## Organization and strategies of operation

As a self-confessed Taoist, Matthew made it clear that the kind of organization he preferred was one that would evolve beyond class and hierarchy so that it could develop freely. Some participants admitted that this took them a while to get used to. For example, Interviewee N stated:

*I feel that they don't like 'organization', which means they don't want to intervene to 'organize' you. This is not the type of organization people think it is.*

Interviewee Q felt the same, but that after discussing the issue with the ‘leaders’, she began to see their point:

*It seems they don't see it necessary to have organization. Some people have proposed it should be more organized, but after discussing with the leaders, they too agreed that the existing practice about freedom to participate is already sufficient.*

For outsiders, WnM does not seem to have a clear organizational structure for management and operation, as there is no division of labour in the project, especially since the founders regard themselves as normal responsible users and participants. Most decisions were made on the basis of broad consensus reached through discussions, but it must be noted that this was done not through voting but by intense interactions and negotiations until people were convinced by the decision(s) rather than by majority numbers. Interviewee O felt that the process usually took a long time for a consensus to be reached, even when it was a small matter. She considered it time consuming and inefficient but, she could also understand how domination would affect an organization. She recalled that when she first joined the group, she asked for the responsible person, but was surprised by being told “there is no responsible person” and “you could be the responsible person”. She became quite curious how the project participants had no division of labour or specific roles and people act autonomously rather than having any ‘pre-arrangement’. Interviewee P also found this strange, while R was amazed that there is no specific person responsible for developing outside connections. Interviewee R’s first impression was: “There is no model for management... people just do things according to their preference without any specific model in mind.” Interviewee Q thought the project was “loosely organized” while N was taken aback by how reluctant the founders were to nominate any one to act as a PR person when inquiries were made by many other organizations for information.

In many ways, given its loose structure, it would be difficult for WnM to recruit participants, especially when it came to its objective of curbing excessive consumption through down-cycling or free-cycling. As Esther recognized as well, had their participants not had any awareness of environmental problems, it would not be possible at all for WnM to continue to exist. Esther felt that this was because it is difficult to persuade people to recycle and share their idle or underused resources as many are too addicted to the convenience of throwing things away and buying new things. Interviewee P admitted frankly that if she had not found others recycling things, she would have gone along and remained as wasteful and not become part of WnM. In this context, the strategy WnM employed to attract and target people with awareness and willingness to recycle had been accurate. As Matthew put it, "I don't think shopaholics would come and join us." Likewise, Esther agreed that it was their intention to recruit those who were caught in-between the wasteful and the deeply committed. According to Esther, ideally participants were "those who might think they had done enough recycling but wanted to do more when given encouragement and commandries.

Many participants thought the tactic worked well, especially when it also insisted that participants could have the freedom to try different things and at their own pace. Interviewee O was quite happy about this and commented that the project made her feel she was a 'comrade' rather than a volunteer when no one was trying to 'teach' or 'lecture' on her how to do recycling but just let her use a process of trial and error to find the most appropriate method. To her, the trial and error approach motivated her to participate more actively and developed greater awareness as well as enthusiasm and passion.

This does not, however, mean that education is unimportant, especially for children who are the next generation of 'transformers'. It must be noted that education to WnM is not the usual top-down, spoon-feeding approach of telling people what they should do, but is more about the encouragement of parents to take their children to join in the projects to raise and consolidate their awareness through experience and active-learning. For Matthew, "Action is a must... because talks make little impact on people when they are only listening." Esther agreed, stating: "we are not teaching like primary school teachers and students need to learn through action". According to Jess: "You can only find out what the problem is and learn how to solve it yourself through active learning and not being a passive learner."

Initially some participants were sceptical about WnM's approach, but gradually became quite convinced of how learning and education should be done. Interviewee N, for instance, now found herself quite attracted to the experiential approach and began to reject the traditional way of teaching based on authority. According to her: "It is more interesting to try to learn through action rather than through new information because action can spark things off." Likewise, Interviewee O was convinced that she would not have endured an hour's talk and would feel like withdrawing. Instead, she now preferred to learn through real action because it would allow her to understand more and learn at her own pace. She stated: "there's a common saying, 'those who can't do, teach', and I am very sceptical about those who just talk."

Interviewee Q, thought that while experiential learning is important, collaborating with other like-minded people and organizations is equally helpful to make people

see what the real issues are underlying the disposal of under-utilized resources. On this, Interviewees P and S concurred, and felt that collaboration involves sharing experiences and insights, and that this inspires participants to reflect more on the issues involved. Interviewee P stated:

*Rapid expansion is not WnM's goal. I think they are more towards making people to reflect and be inspired ... And they always try to work directly on the core ideas not understood by people. They don't work on a wide range of issues but they do want us to work on understanding more, the depth of things.*

Jess, one of the founders, was very pleased with the outcomes and saw this as their strength in creating change in people. She felt that experiential learning is more inspiring because it allows people to touch, not just to hear words, and that this is much more effective than talk. Jess also felt she had the capacity to impress people through steering them via action, giving participants personal attention so that they could begin to reflect on matters dealing with excessive consumption and make links with broader issues such as social structure and social policy.

Esther, however, felt that WnM could recruit new participants and work with children, which requires persistence. In her words:

*We have people who live nearby and they walked passed by us like 10 times [without exhibiting any interest in what we do], but who knows, may be on the 11<sup>th</sup> time, they would get curious and stop and ask us what we are doing. If we could explain to them what*

*we do, they could discover a whole new world for themselves and start doing something...*

Esther also had the idea that the government in Hong Kong should make it a policy for people in Hong Kong to serve a compulsory annual two-week recycling service to help recycling or collecting garbage so they could learn through experience the adverse impacts of excessive consumption and waste on the environment. The view of Interviewee S, was that at present there is simply not enough people in Hong Kong who are interested or know enough of up-, down- or re-cycling and more should be done to reach out to them. She therefore favoured the strategy of setting up information boards to organize experiential workshops for schools and of using WnM participants as 'receptionists' (in Chinese 知客)<sup>24</sup> to answer questions from people in the neighbourhood or community. This suggestion was positively received by Interviewee N and K as both agreed that this would help people who wanted to know more, and it was also good to enable WnM to become more visible and have a presence, which in turn, could motivate people to join. In summary, the idea was to engage people and open them up for dialogues or conversations. To do this, for Interviewee N, the plan should have clear targets:

*WnM could target different groups of people. For secondary school students, the focus could be on the possibilities other than using recycling bins. For adults, activities could target possibilities of transforming the current refuse collection points into multi-purpose community resource centres to prevent sending*

---

<sup>24</sup> Receptionist usually refers to the staff in restaurants navigating people to get to their seats but in this case they are the ones who answer enquiries from outsiders for information concerning WnM.

*everything people disposed to the landfill.*

Interviewee S agreed and suggested students were the easiest to persuade, but that universities are also important venues for promotion. Several activities were therefore, held in schools to display and distribute information to students. Others however, including Matthew, felt that more had to be done in terms of offering incentives to recruit participants. Using monetary incentive was considered, but Matthew decided that giving them free materials from free-cycling would be a good start before taking them down to sites for down-cycling. As Matthew explained:

*In the early days, we didn't tell the people walking pass us about our idea to transform the refuse collection points. We just told them free stuffs are available for free if they want to take home with no obligations. This attracted many middle-aged women and domestic helpers from the Philippines to stop by and take a look.*

Some might still feel embarrassed to pick up items thrown out by others, but the founders believed strongly that the only way to change their mindset was to emphasize how much money they could save with free-cycling. This was particularly appealing to homemakers with a tight budget. As Esther recalled:

*First, I approached them and asked them to take a look and most seemed quite responsive and began to see closely if they were still working well. By stressing that they can save money without spending money to meet their needs is a way to promote free-cycling.*

There were issues, however. People from WnM had to wrestle with, especially trying to do free-cycling; a combination of sharing and recycling. For example, safety and security were great concerns when some items like knives and cutters are potentially dangerous. People were also worried about problems of personal conflicts when the usual 2-hour free-cycling events got overcrowded with many people coming not from the local neighbourhood, making locals feeling they were being crowded out. Interviewee P relayed some of his experiences:

*Free-cycle events are ever-changing from the time when it was first started to now. We all have to think about how such events can be improved – like, can we classify the free-cycling items better? Should we display the items in locations to provide better safety? These are the problems that they faced during the operation, as most of them are merely operation arrangements.*

For Q, her concern was how personal conflicts could be minimized when the events were on:

*One of our comrades told us that there was one person who always volunteered to help in such events but ended up taking many items himself which caused people to quarrel with him. Hence we had to set up a procedure to exclude that person from participating in these events further. Others suggested that newcomers should be screened by asking them to complete an application form.*



Such decisions were usually made informally, sometimes through online chat groups or in face-to-face meetings after the events were held (usually on weekends and over dinner) where long discussions were conducted and consensus was reached. Founder Matthew always maintained that such discussions were social gathering or conversations, but Interviewee R insisted that frequently, the weekend dinners were 'business' meetings:

*Usually around would gather up for dinner and then discuss on how WnM could operate better, like keeping things under order in free-cycle events, or minimising problems through developing practical norms...*

However, in the long-run, the goal of WnM is to curb hyper-consumption by reducing waste through sharing (free-cycling) and recycling, and to turn the current refuse collection points into centres for free, up- and down-cycling. As Matthew reiterated:

*We can't stay on the same level and we'll need to make good better use of the public support we have to make the establishment to change the current system for treating refuse.*

The idea had support from participants. Interviewee R, for instance, admitted that as a participant, he had just as much responsibility as the founders to negotiate with the government to make changes, especially in re-allocating land use and devote more resources for recycling. Interviewee P also wants WnM to expand its projects beyond its current geographical base in Yuen Long into other districts. She believes that an alliance with collaboration, sharing information and learning from one another is

essential to make a bigger impact in policy advocacy.

## Experiences of participants

One of the special features of WnM is that many of its participants are quite familiar with the significance of environmental issues awareness before they became part of the project. Interviewees P and Q, for example, were very much followers of Chau Siu Cheung<sup>25</sup> who is regarded as Hong Kong's earliest environmentalist in the early 1980s, and is well-known for his commitment to green living, such as growing his own food, saving energy, reducing waste through recycling and up-cycling. It was no surprise when they learned that WnM holds similar values and beliefs that they decided to join up immediately. Other interviewees, S and T, likewise had over three years of previous involvements in recycling and up-cycling. Interviewee R was experienced in doing evaluation for environmental groups. For them, WnM has provided a perfect outlet not only to practice what they believe in, but also to learn more about environmental issues and how they could be promoted to make changes to halt increasing waste and pollution. As Interviewee N summed it up succinctly:

*After I joined the project I began to realize how one can be innovative in dealing with waste and environment – the idea of transforming the refuse collection points is really impressive and*

---

<sup>25</sup>Chau Siu Cheung has been known in Hong Kong as the 'father' of green living since the early 1980s when he returned to Hong Kong after completing his higher degree in the US. He was considered most 'radical' then because he refused to have air-conditioning at home, began growing his own vegetables and crops organically and used only soap rather than washing powder for his laundry. As a lecturer in translation at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, he had great influence to an entire generation of young environmentalist.

*this has kept me in the project and not wanting to leave.*

Another common attribute shared by many participants in WnM is their distrust of current environment policies made by the Hong Kong Government. These participants felt quite strongly that not only are the policies ineffective, more importantly, they are not appropriate to deal with the core problem of waste. For Interviewee P, while it is good to set up recycling bins for plastics, when the cleaners clean out the bins, they simply put all refuse in one heap without separating the plastics for recycling. For Interviewee P, separating plastics from other rubbish is not just a matter of regulation but education, meaning that the provision of bins is simply not addressing to the core issue of environmental education.

Interviewee O, was furious about the authority Owners' Corporation<sup>26</sup> banning processing food waste for recycling purpose in the Estate where she lived. Similarly, Interviewee Q was most disappointed to find out that despite bins for different types of rubbish being provided for recycling purposes, ultimately they were sent to the same landfill. For these reasons, to them, WnM at least represents a trustworthy group who is committed and serious about what they preach; not only to reduce waste and help the environment, but also to do it in a transparent and appropriate way. This gave the participants real motivation to stay with the project. As Q summed it up, "I prefer to let WnM handle the items being thrown out by people because I don't trust the current government action." O's comment was also directly appropriate, "At least what WnM is doing is real recycling, not fake".

---

<sup>26</sup> Owners' Corporation is under the legal framework of The Building Management Ordinance (Cap.344) to manage the Estates for a better environment. More information can be retrieved from [https://www.buildingmgt.gov.hk/en/formation\\_of\\_owners\\_corporation/4.htm](https://www.buildingmgt.gov.hk/en/formation_of_owners_corporation/4.htm)

Still, despite the strong ideological beliefs some participants hold, there are others who have more instrumental motives, such as using WnM as a convenient place to rid themselves of their unwanted items such as garments and other unused items while others saw it as a place to pick up freebies which otherwise they would have to pay to purchase. Still others were attracted by the free meals WnM offered.

In hindsight, according to some interviewees, WnM seems to be meeting a need they all found it difficult to fill, that is, it offers a perfect solution to clean out the clutter that has collected at home. By donating this clutter to WnM as items for sharing, it made them feel that they have done something noble, but also that they had contributed to the reduction of harmful waste in the environment. More importantly, the comments above also reflect how WnM has provided a new meaning for the participants for understanding sharing.

To many participants, sharing simply means giving gifts or giving things away so that others can enjoy the benefits the object they are given. Since their contact with WnM, however, they found 'sharing' could be done through the giving under-utilized resources away to those who are in need and at the same time making things less wasteful when the lifespan of the resources are expanded. Interviewees P, Q, N and T were all very happy discovering what they could do with free-cycling, especially in terms of reducing waste and helping those who are in need.

They also saw this as a first step towards better utilizing resources, with the next being to cut down on consumption or excessive buying. Interviewees O and Q were particularly interested in popularizing the whole idea of free-cycling that ownership

is not only 'self-centred' and 'sometimes not necessary'. It is also a way to encourage capacity building among ordinary people to make contributions to the everyday lives of others and holds back the idea of sharing as 'selfishness'. They believed that the new interpretation of sharing will give make people more motivation to share and recycle. Interviewee N thought that this is also important to make down-cycling easier for people to accept. As she stated:

*Down-cycle is also sharing – sharing materials we have collected from landfill with those wanting to do recycling. They are the ones making these materials re-usable.*

Interviewee Q agreed that these recyclers were key to waste reduction, but whether or not they would be helpful to keep hyper-consumption in check remains uncertain, because consumption often becomes a habitual coping mechanism to deal with anxiety. Interviewee T made a similar observation and concurred that consumption is a complex personal issue. For example, some may feel lonely and “don't know what they want to do as well as not having any understanding of the nature and value of consumption”. It would be hard to tell these people not to consume. Likewise, P admitted that consumption is gratifying because some people found it relaxing especially when one experiences emotional pressure. Interviewee N blamed it on our social system for encouraging people to spend and consume persistently. For instance, “schools force students to buy new books and stationeries every time when school starts”. Moreover she added, “ads and TV programmes are also promoting consumption all the time”, making it hard for people to resist and inducing guilt or a sense of failure when they could not afford to consume. Interviewee S was even more critical about people throwing out their furniture when they are still functional

and usable. Interviewee R added that the “sheep mentality” among people “to keep up with the Jones’s” as well as having credit cards in their hands had not helped to stop hyper-consumption either. The consensus among the informants was that although they all accept that sharing, or free-cycling, and even down-cycling are good ways to reduce waste, whether or not it can persuade people to cut down on consumption, especially impulsive buying, remains uncertain, because of the complexities involved in behavioural changes.

Participants were, nevertheless, more optimistic about WnM’s idea of transforming the current refuse collection points into community resource centres as they found the idea more feasible, especially if participants could get together and work more closely to make it happen. There were, however, some dissenting voices. For example, Interviewee R felt that promoting recycling in general should be the government’s responsibility. For Interviewee R, although sharing economy organizations or projects could also take the lead, still it is the government who has the resources and authority to promote and foster behavioural changes in consumption among people, especially through the introduction of appropriate and effective policies.

*It is a lot easier for government to influence producers and consumers than small projects like WnM. They have the political role but they also need the political will.*

Interviewee S agreed and insisted that what WnM should do is to continue to its work and put pressure on the government to put up policies for promoting sharing and all forms of recycling. As to how this could be done, two different paths were

identified by the informants. The first was to maintain the current scale by continuing the direction of self-determination as its core value. This view was favoured by Interviewee Q as she felt that most participants had concluded that at this point a tight organizational structure and authority was not necessary, and anything deviating from that would only devalue the merits of WnM. This attitude was supported by Interviewee N as she preferred a non-spoon-feeding approach in getting things done, even if this could slow things down due to the time it would take to obtain group consensus.

Interviewees O and R, however, felt otherwise. They held strongly to the view that WnM should not stay small if it is serious about its aim to become a leader in sharing economy, specialized in the different forms of re-cycling for halting hyper-consumption. They also argued that should it choose to become effective in policy advocacy, in the future, it would have to grow and expand to become bigger before it could have a solid influence in policy making. As R insisted:

*As a small project it is OK to allow participants to do things freely but if WnM intends to become influential in the future, it must become a solid model institution for others to aspire to. Then rules and regulations and structures are necessary to keep things in order because it will be under constant scrutiny and subject to assessment. So, it can't remain as loosely organized as it is.*

Interviewee O was more concessional and suggested that while self-determination is necessary, WnM needs to have a 'host' – someone to co-ordinate and hold the project together; and already the founders had been identified as 'hosts' anyway

even though they insisted they were not. The founders evidently felt that their role had been one that is closer to a facilitator rather than a decision-maker, and that was how self-determination was maintained. On this, Interviewee R reflected, “the host does not have to give opinion, but to make sure there are outcomes; and while they do not decide, they can steer to obtain consensus.” For this reason, both agreed that should WnM aim at upscaling itself to become more effective in recycling and sharing, a more formal division of labour among its participants would be essential – i.e., becoming more organized or organizational.

While for some, it may be a good thing for the founders not to identify themselves as such, others felt a bit lost not knowing whom the founders or the ‘leaders’ were. Half of the informants interviewed indicated that they actually did not know who the founders were. Nonetheless, when being asked who the most important people in the project were, most informants were able to identify one or two of the founders without knowing that they were. These participants had observed the founders taking on major roles in upholding the vision and values of WnM, and ensuring that more participants in the project would gain a better understanding before they promoted them in the local district. As N observed:

*The ‘founders’ are most important because they are the figures representing the vision and ideas of WnM... Sometimes we may find ourselves a bit lost when we are uncertain some of the ideas and ideals of the project and they are the ones who could remind us. The core founders also provide a focus for all of us; otherwise we may drift and shift.*



Some interviewee similarly agreed and thought the founders may have under-estimated how important they could be for participants. For example, according to Interviewee P, "they really are much clearer about the project values and vision than us, and they can explain better." Interviewee O and Q likewise believed that the founders were most essential in giving support to the education work they carried out, because "in comparison, we are new beginners."

### Impacts on participants and the project

Given that the vision and values of WnM put so much emphasis on making its participants reflect on waste reduction, environmental problems and the core issue of excessive consumption, it would be appropriate to gauge if participants, after becoming part of the project, changed their views on things and their behaviour in both recycling and consumption. At the same time, the effectiveness on establishing sharing culture in WnM and in larger community, with the possible policy changes on structural problems of environmental degradation are also essential to be examined.

For individual consumption mindset and behavioural changes, Interviewee K felt that she now has a better sense of responsibility in doing recycling since joining WnM, because she understands more about the broader issues of recycling, including the needs of recyclers and knowledge on environmental issues. She was aware, however, that there were others who did not feel the same way, perhaps because they only saw themselves as volunteers who only wanted to do 'good', but were not willing to take on more responsibility to practice recycling in their own daily lives or take action to think about the broader issues involved, such as impulsive consumption and waste production. Worse still, she said that while these people could claim that they were feeling sad about seeing animals abused and people exploited, they were not

worried or didn't even care about "farmlands or the environment got contaminated by rubbish." Interviewee K was astounded at her own apathy.

Despite criticisms, most informants seemed to learn to reflect more since joining WnM and started to think more about their own consumption behaviour in different ways. Some believed they were quite wasteful before joining the project and now have devised ways to reduce waste. For instance, Interviewee N admitted that she now thought about recycling the beverage cartons and the contamination they would bring if they were not reused. In hindsight, she said she was like most people when shopping, she only looked at the price but would not think about the consequences of the production process, our consumption, and how we disposed the used or unused items have on our environment. Interviewee S, on the other hand, determined to change her consumption behaviour:

*I am a lazy person and now I try to balance between convenience and environment. Like, I started eating in instead of ordering take away... I started asking myself, why don't I change my behaviour if I can?*

Most informants, nonetheless, felt that if there were changes in their behaviour, the main reason was really because they had much better knowledge about recycling, not just in terms of practice, but also in terms of knowing what could be recycled and what cannot. For example, Interviewee R said that he knew nothing about how buying or circulating second-hand goods is a good way of recycling. Interviewee K also did not know that the potato chip bags are not recyclable because they had a plastic or metal lining. Likewise, Interviewees O and P learned more about different

types of plastics, and that not all could be recycled, making them realize that their previous perception of 'plastics are plastics' was really 'naïve and simple'. Interviewee O's, biggest discovery was that:

*I had no idea that only 10% of the garbage in the landfill we threw out is truly rubbish, you know, unusable and not recyclable. Can you imagine that 90% of the things buried in the landfill are re-usable?*

Co-founder Esther was really pleased that most participants in WnM have increased their understanding of the issues of recycling, especially in terms of their knowledge on how to classify items for recycling, including food scraps, papers and plastics of which they had only had superficial impressions. The significance of this change is that it has affected their way of thinking about what constitutes 'waste' and in turn, their perception and behaviour about impulsive consumption, and the whole notion of 'instant gratification' being very environmentally unfriendly. As Interviewees T and N noted:

*It made me realized how 'greedy' I was – you know, buying everything just because they are cheap. Now I select to buy only things I really need [Interviewee T.]*

*Shopping had been my way to entertain myself but now I realize it is really giving me a lot of pressure rather than pleasure because you feel you need to plan what you should buy as I think about how many people are there over-buying in the shopping mall. They*

*may think they are not doing anything to harm the environment but I think they are [Interviewee N].*

Moreover, Interviewee N became careful with her purchase. She stated:

*Now I'd try not to buy anything by asking myself if I really needed them. Then I'll find out if I can get around it with what I have already – if there is an item serving similar function, I'd choose not to get it.*

Other informants also used different tactics to discourage themselves from impulsive buying. Interviewee R, for example, tried to imagine all the negative implications like some animals might get slaughtered, or the beaches were littered with plastics containers and rubbish.

Another major change informants made in the way they consume was reflected by their deliberate attempt to refrain from purchasing items with excessive packaging, or going to eating places where one-off cutlery and tableware were used. Some also made sure the tools they bought were intended for frequent rather than occasional use. Still others tried to identify the stores which are notorious for overpacking. Some even called up restaurants they planned to eat out at, to find out if they had any environmentally friendly practice like penalizing customers who waste a lot of food, particularly among those restaurants advertising buffet lunch or dinner with unlimited supply of food.

Based on the responses of the informants, it seemed that in WnM, the more active

the participants, the more likely they would alter their consumption behaviour. According to Jess, the co-founder, this happened to even those who came because of free-cycling to pick up 'freebies', while she believes such events could get people out of their daily comfort zone. In her view, the comfort zone for most people was their daily routines they never had time to think about or reflect on. Once people moved one step outside their comfort zone however, small changes might occur although it may take some time. On this, Interviewee S and N also agreed, but As Jess observed:

*The more they involved in the project activities, the more enthusiastic they became and the bigger change also happened in the way they consume and shop.*

At project level, WnM has established sharing culture among the participants in encouraging them to share more with strangers. According to the participants, WnM had made them more willing to share since they joined up with WnM. Previously, many were only willing to share with people they knew, such as relatives or friends. Now they recognize, that just keeping things unused at home only makes things worse. Hoarding becomes clutter and soon items become mouldy and smelly. Now with the help of WnM individuals could do a lot more sharing through free-cycling activities normally held on weekends. It gave the participants a sense of satisfaction when they saw the things they shared became useful and valued again.

Participants came to believe that sharing is a deliberate action of redistributing resources to those who are in need, while they could also pick up those shared items when they found some goods useful. Katherine saved some resources in the office of

the refuse collection point that were still useful, brought them back to WnM and shared them to those who were in need but unable to buy. Sarah explained:

*There were so many things.....no matter me and my maid, which couldn't add more and also those are no use for me. Now I can share it to others while pick up those I really need.*

Sharing in WnM, however, may become an excuse for disposing unused resources in the name of sharing without real participation. Interviewee R had strong feelings about people who are, in his estimation, 'hypocritical' about sharing and recycling. He felt that while they would praise what WnM and the participants did, they remained uninvolved on the side-line; continuing to discard unused items and treating WnM as yet another rubbish bin without offering any contribution to the project. Interviewee N had similar sentiments and indicated that while she appreciated the supports people had given her, what most people did was to leave WnM things they did not want to keep and "left us paying their bills for processing their rubbish as if they had no responsibility at all'. In her view, "this is simply not fair".

In more macro changes, the informants saw themselves becoming a lot clearer about the missing role of government in dealing with waste issues in Hong Kong after they joined the project. Co-founder Jess, for example, admitted she became more disappointed by the ineffectiveness of government policy and the actions they had taken to promote recycling. A case in point is they could spend \$50,000 to make exhibition boards for education campaigns, but were reluctant to subsidize the logistics for recycling the materials used. Other informants such as O, P and R shared

similar feelings, complaining that the government has not done enough to enact policies for giving recycling a more important role in reducing waste and cleaning up the environment. Interviewee R, very accurate when he and Interviewee O both criticized the government for having done nothing to make producers refrain from producing excessive waste, such as over-packaging and using non-biodegradable plastics in packaging their products. Interviewee R's words were particularly harsh.

He stated:

*All the government knows is to contract out the recycling activities to the businesses with the lowest bids without doing their job in monitoring the outcomes. Indeed money was spent but most of the materials collected ended up in landfill, and these stories are frequently reported in the media... In addition, the government never asked who had produced so much waste in the first place ... If you can stop the manufacturers to stop making so much waste, especially in packaging, would make recycling in WnM much more effective.*

Interviewee O was equally critical:

*From the start I know I have my share of responsibility and I'll need to do more. But learning from WnM, now I realized that while I can do more, the government also has its responsibility but it hasn't done more. So, if the environment gets worse, it is not just my problem.*

Interviewee P's view was that government actions could inspire people to do more, but they were slow and indecisive and ultimately failed to achieve their goal:

*I keep reflecting on why I join WnM ... it was because the Government in had started to formulate a policy for charging household garbage in 2019. It prompted me to re-ignite my passion for participating in recycling activities. The government should have done that much earlier and change the regulations<sup>27</sup> so as to inspire more people to take action but it hasn't.*

They did have some impact on government, despite it only being on a small scale. WnM has become a model promoted by the governmental department and committee to environmental protection movements. Esther shared an experience that there was a group of foreigners asking the Environmental Protection Department on ways to initiate community recycling. The Department told them the case of WnM and asked them to take reference and contact WnM. Esther further indicated that even the official 'Community Green Stations' supported by the Department had received insight from WnM, boosting their effectiveness on the amount of recycling. She stated:

We do have a bit effectiveness in inspiring them and pushing for new government measures

Despite this progress, WnM is still in the early stages of advocating structural

---

<sup>27</sup> The policy on only recycling three types of papers and two types of plastic. See [https://www.wastereduction.gov.hk/wrp/recycling/paper\\_plastic\\_poster.html](https://www.wastereduction.gov.hk/wrp/recycling/paper_plastic_poster.html) for more information.



transformation, especially in real policy changes from transforming refuse collection points to community resources sharing centers. Matthew believes that WnM could not work for the whole movement on their own, but required collaboration with all related projects. They formed, therefore, an informal coalition with other WnM similar projects that were inspired by WnM through Whatsapp group. In the coalition, the projects shared information such as news on recycling issues in Hong Kong, experiences of each project, and to discuss the possible direction towards future policy advocacy. Matthew believed that the coalition “can sublimate the existing power to bargain with the government” for structural change. He also believed however, that this would be a long-term social movement and so remained aware of this to accumulate enough power for future changes.

## Future development

Although WnM in general is considered to be one of the most successful sharing economy projects specialized in recycling in Hong Kong, to most informants, the current achievements they have made remain local. They also saw many challenges it would face in its future development. For example, in terms of the number of participants, it is comparatively small although most seemed committed and enthusiastic. While this is its strength, it is also its weakness or limitation, because the participants became a group of insiders – a clique – and as a result, the group as a whole is not expanding fast enough to give the project the growth it needs to become more effective in achieving social transformation. Even on a practical level, given the volume and numbers of items local residents are bringing to its site during events, there are indications that WnM is stretched to its limits in classifying them into appropriate groups and types for free-cycling and recycling purposes. As

Matthew explained, only one-fifth of WnM's members are active and are only participating voluntarily. He seemed uncertain as to how to confront this challenge:

*How to motivate our participants to come and help us more in our work by just using a social media platform like WhatsApp, especially to perform some labouring work? It's hard... Two weeks ago we tried to get people to help our project activities. Although they came in the end but only those in the WhatsApp group stayed on but those who came and not in the group did not. I don't understand what they are thinking, especially not joining as participants.*

As Interviewee T commented, "we only see familiar faces but almost no new participants in our activities, and this affects our education and promotion campaigns a lot."

This lack of newcomers in turn, makes it more difficult for WnM to attract new people to join. Both Interviewees R and S admitted that this is by far the biggest problem WnM has to overcome:

*Our human resources are not stable because they are not paid and are volunteers who just come and go freely... This makes down-cycling even more difficult to carry out because we don't have enough people to help.*

Interviewee R made another important observation that seemed to strike at the core

of WnM; the self-determination principle and lack of organization. To him, WnM seemed to run well, but only as a small project. When the government decided to change its recycle policy to limit what people can bring to local collection points, (e.g., computers and bigger electrical appliances like washing machines and refrigerators, must be collected by government approved or appointed agency) WnM simply did not know how this would affect their recycling work, nor did they know how to respond to such a policy change because there is no one who specializes in policy advocacy. As he observed,

*It is fortunate that WnM still has a small but dedicated number of core people and the turn overs are mostly happening in free-cycling. Down-cycling is still running OK as most participants are remaining active. But in the future, I don't know because we need better organization to explore a feasible way to solve the problem.*

Given the limited human resources, necessarily education campaigns and activities are becoming less important or even overlooked, especially when everyone is too busy with their own life. As a result, the frequency of educating and discussing with local neighbours to encourage them to join the project has decreased. Interviewee S argued that this is important and a specialized person should be appointed or recruited to take this on because this work cannot be done by those who are too busy in practicing recycling. As Interviewee P complained:

*I work in free-cycle and I need help to assist me in operation and venue management. Not that I don't want to interact with neighbours, but I have less time and less chances to do so.*

For some, this could be the beginning of a vicious cycle that makes it more difficult for WnM to attract new participants. Some informants, however, did propose that WnM should target the local middle class to join the project, rather than older people or domestic-helpers, who are the main current source of assistants in down-cycling. Interviewee N, for example, thought that the current operation of down-cycling is in chaos and seldom worked well according to plans, as many of those who came were just 'robbers', that is, takers and not contributors.

*Ideally we want free-cycling to run like a mall (that's why it's called 'Waste-no-mall') to attract shoppers who would come to us before they head off buying something new. However, it is such a chaos now because all those who come are just wanting to take things away for free, and they are no different from robbers because they have not promoted sharing or recycling.*

Interviewee R was more accepting, pointing out that perhaps these 'robbers' should be the targets for WnM's education campaign:

*We should not blame that so harshly because we don't know their aims of getting those items. Moreover, they probably don't understand what we want them to do and we should find out how to educate them.*

On this, the founders Matthew and Jess were more philosophical:

*What can we do? Keep talking to them? But the result is that some, including the older people, would not understand what we are talking about because they only think that we are volunteers.*

*[Matthew]*

*If we don't get them into some concrete activities, they will not change at all. [Jess]*

In the end, WnM seems to have worked itself into a stalemate. The faithful members remain loyal and devoted, and continue to do their best in their recycling arena with their own priorities, but have been unable to make collective plans or achieve consensus for future development. Meanwhile, social transformation perhaps will have to be put on the backburner.

## Summary

Waste-no-mall is a small sharing economy project started by a few young people who share the same idea about making environmental and social transformation through various forms of recycling (free-, down-, and up-cycling) reimagined as sharing activities. The project is operated under the principle of self-determination, a vague form of democratic centralism in that participants can do whatever they feel appropriate to advance the aim of converting rubbish into useable resources, in turn cutting down on waste and discouraging impulsive consumption and preventing adverse environmental consequences. The unique feature of this enterprise is that it has no formal organization or structure, and its founders are reluctant to be identified as such in order to maintain a democratic and egalitarian spirit for

operating the project. It holds weekly educational campaigns, free-cycling and down-cycling activities aimed at promoting the reuse of used, under-used or unused items brought to their sites for sharing or redistribution to those who are in need. WnM eschews spoon-feeding, top-down approaches to promoting recycling and sharing but focuses on an experiential pathway involving people in recycling and sharing actions to learn to reflect on their consumption and disposal behaviour and their connection to environmental degradation. The ultimate goal of the project is to convince the government that local refuse collection points should be transformed into community resource centres where people can make the best use of what has been discarded as re-useable resources by giving them a new or extended lifespan.

The project has special appeal to people who already have a sense of environmental awareness and has attracted a core devoted and committed group of participants working mainly in free-, down- and recycling as well as in environmental education. This core is its strength, but also presents an inherent weakness in that homogeneity does not necessarily bring diversity and growth. As a consequence, WnM has faced tremendous problems in human resources in operation, especially in education work, and puts itself in danger of perpetuating a vicious cycle of no- or slow-growth, making its long-term goals of becoming a force in environmental or sharing policy advocacy, and the hope of transforming local refuse collection points into community resource centre more distant. For those who are actively involved however, WnM has provided opportunities for reflection and inspiration for modifying their thinking and behaviour on sharing, consumption and environmental protection.

There have been criticisms about its rejection of structure and organization because of the insistence on 'self-determinism' principle, which is considered only workable

when the project is small and personal but inappropriate for growth and expansion. WnM's targets are also problematic, in that participants in free-cycling activities are mainly people who are older, and those who are working as domestic helpers looking for 'freebies', making little contribution to advance the works of WnM. There are plans for targeting a more middle-class base for future participant recruitment and development, but the lack of a formal organizational structure has made it difficult to come together and make plans. In its current state, WnM is at a crossroads.

## Chapter Six Discussion and conclusion

Two sharing economy projects were selected for this study. In many ways, they are very different from one another.

### Vision, mission, goals and objectives

For one thing, the founders of these projects had very different ideas about their mission, vision, goals and objectives. For KFLM, the original intention for starting the project as proclaimed by its founder was about making the best use of empty seats in private vehicles by encouraging car-owners to share them through a car-pool service to benefit those who needed the rides. The founder believed that in this act of sharing, not only the idle resources (empty seats) could be better utilized to benefit people who were in need in the local community. In the long run, this could also help to ease the current traffic jams and deteriorating air pollution problem in Hong Kong. In these contexts, although some may find the idea less than novel as car-pooling is nothing new elsewhere, its implementation in Hong Kong especially on a coordinated, community-based basis, proved to be refreshing as it had never been done before. Perhaps this is also the reason why it has been a resounding success since it got off the ground two years ago, and attracted mostly favourable reception and enthusiastic response from locals in joining and participating in the activities.

In terms of its long-term goals however, the founder has a much broader, grander and more ambitious vision – that through sharing vacant seats with other commuters, perhaps a more civil, fraternal, harmonious and collaborative culture could emerge to transform the mindset of the local community of Tai Po from being



individual-ownership with more collective-based, altruistic, sharing and caring-focused.

WnM, on the other hand, has its mission, vision, goals and objectives more specifically focused on dealing with the problem of waste and environment than KFLM. Unlike KFLM, the project was started by a few individuals who share similar views on waste as a problem of excessive consumption and set their minds to making the project reduce waste through encouraging and demonstrating how items discarded by people can be recycled, upcycled, and free-cycled to extend their use and lifespan. In the process, recycling, upcycling, and free-cycling are seen as sharing, because the discarded items are not 'rubbish', but idle or under-utilized resources since they can be reused again. For WnM, the reason these items have not been fully-used again is because they are constructed as 'refuse' and hence, one of their main goals is to re-define and transform all the refuse collection points in Hong Kong into community resource centres.

In this regard, WnM is different from KFLM also in terms of its understanding of sharing. KFLM tends to see service as a kind of shared resource while WnM mainly limits its sharing activities to material objects as it has a more specific concrete concept of objects as resources. KFLM emphasizes encouraging people to give away ownership, such as giving their empty seats to other commuters so they do not have to purchase a car, while ownership to WnM is never an issue as the items they share with others are discarded. These two projects therefore, hold very different values in relation to ownership of objects.

Another value that sets apart these two projects is leadership. To the founder and

participants of KFLM, leadership has played a prominent role. The founder himself as well as participants who joined the project believe that the founder is one of the reasons the project has been successful. The leadership style of the founder has been important as he is seen as personable, friendly, approachable, charismatic and has mass appeal. That the simple concept of shared rides has been able to establish further admiration by the local residents to the founders and strengthen his role of charismatic leadership. Not surprisingly the project diversified to take advantage of the discounts offered by group-purchase events. Despite some disquieting voices criticizing him for sending the wrong message to its participants, his idea about sharing group-purchase power to generate benefits for all received overwhelming support. This idea has not only attracted existing participants, but also new ones who were eager to join, albeit perhaps for the wrong reason of reaping a good, cheap deal, to his move to pre-screen applicants intending to join. His instinct and pragmatic outlook for both halting participant turnover and growing community presence has to be acknowledged.

The role of leadership in WnM has been consistently downplayed by the founders who insist on describing themselves as participants (or user) in the project they helped started. They do so because they strongly believe in the principle of 'self-determination' which means that everyone involved in the project is free to do whatever they please to fulfil the goals and objectives, and ensure the mission and vision are not compromised or jeopardised. The founders of WnM choose to take a low-profile because they also know that most participants they have currently are already well-versed in environmental issues, and do not need a top-down approach to lecture them on what is to be done environmentally other than convincing them through experiential demonstration or collaboration to re-, free-, up- or down-cycle

to cut down on waste and consumption.

## Approach and strategies

To the founder of KFLM, the approach on changing people's behaviour and values to discourage ownership and excessive consumption is gradual and incremental, through multiple approaches, including the utilitarian benefits and community building before they could indicate new initiative towards the major objectives. In other words, mixed incentives are necessary to establish the awareness and behavioural changes in the long run. This is best illustrated in that the project began with the provision of a specific ride-sharing service, giving the provider (the drivers) not only a sense of gratifying for doing good (sharing), and the recipients (the riders) the convenience and savings (both time and money). It is also an important incentive that works well is the opportunity to develop friendship or fraternity, a real and intangible incentive that also worked well for the participants to pledge their loyalty and commitment to the project.

In addition, when the project was experiencing a plateau stage where few new participants were joining, the same strategy was employed again to increase its community presence. By redefining the power of group-purchase as a resource that could be 'shared', and allowing the discounts and financial savings group-buying could incur to be distributed among not only its current participants, new members were enticed to join up. In other words, direct incentives are used as effective means for the project to expand and grow even though they have also become targets for criticism from disagreeing participants. It is also in this instance one begins to see more clearly how the project has used 'leadership' to its best in quieting down

dissenting voices and making a move to “restore harmony and fraternity” and to increase newcomers. It was also here the project decided to install a more formal structure of decision-making to prevent further ‘challenges’ that would upset the stability and sustainability of the project.

The founders of WnM however, decided to take a different approach and strategy to run their project. Knowing that most participants in their project already have some understanding of environmental issues, they do not believe it is necessary to spend more time on ‘teaching’ or ‘preaching’ general matters on environment to the participants. Instead, their understanding is that most probably would not see free-, up- or down-cycling as sharing, nor would many know how best to do the different types of recycling. They prefer therefore, to make their project activities ‘experiential learning’, that is, when participants or the public participate in their activities, they get a chance to experience various ways that recycling can be done, and when they gain enough knowledge, skills and confidence, they can expand into free-, up- or down-cycling. This is more a ‘practice-based’ rather than a pragmatic approach as the participants are left with the responsibility of whether or not they would push on or give up.

When compared with the emphasis on leadership or the role of the founder one finds in KFLM, WnM’s approach and strategy of operation is clearly more ‘laissez-faire’ and less than structured. This is observable in their activities or events, such as weekend ‘markets’ where they display all the items they want to share with the local community. It shows that all participants had their freedom and opportunity to contribute whatever they saw fit under the major principle of self-determination, but it was also observed that such an open-ended approach in

operation had made decision-making time consuming and consensus difficult to reach.

Headed by the founders and a core of administrators, KFLM would be in a better position to grow, develop and expand while WnM probably more difficult in scaling up for further impact. In terms of participants, KFLM did do extremely well with its recruiting new participants, currently exceeding 3,000 since its humble beginning two years ago. The progress made by WnM should not be under-estimated however, because in terms of its capacity for recycling, it has also grown from a minute volume (less than 10 kilogram) to over 800 kg/week in a year. More importantly, it was also reported that within the last two years, WnM has also inspired more than 20 similar projects in Hong Kong, covering Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, the New Territories and the outlying islands (<https://hk.epochtimes.com/news/2018-10-31/624585810>.)

### Participants' perception and experiences

The development of the two sharing economy projects have indicated the perceptions of their participants – that they are generally happy with their 'leaders' and willing to remain affiliated with the project. More specifically, except for a few, most other participants of KFLM found their leader capable, generous and most suited to steering the project to new directions. Despite there being critical voices, most informants, seemed to have faith in the founder and accepted his and the core administrators' decision for screening all in-coming participant applications, because they preferred to see the project remaining harmonious; agreeing that strong leadership and determined decisions were necessary. Some questioned if such a move (screen applications) had negated the project's open-and equal-to-all spirit,

but the growth of its applicants indicates that the appeal of getting discounts, free-rides, and having a good time overrides the significance of ideological disagreements.

For WnM, most participants also seemed agreeable with the current situation of the project with the founders decidedly keeping a low profile. Some apparently felt lost at times, not knowing who oversaw the project and the events, but then, at the same time they did not object to the philosophy of the project insisting openness, equality and ‘self-determination’ (especially in terms of freedom to input, collaborate, participation and innovate). Some informants did feel confused by the less than organized free-cycling events in terms of division of tasks among volunteering participants and felt disappointed that outsiders could just come and take away whatever was offered there. In the end, however, they did not deny that the experiences they had with the project were largely positive even though group decisions took much longer to make and settle down. The less efficient way of getting things done somehow, for many participants, had also become a valuable time for them to learn and reflect at their own pace, both in terms of their knowledge in recycling, and becoming more open to other people’s ideas when everyone is free to experiment.

The style of operation of WnM is reminiscent of what C. E. Lindblom (1959) called ‘muddling through’, that is, dealing with complex situations through marginal and incremental values instead of long-term considerations which may not fit the current marginal fluid scenario (Bendor, 2015; C. E. Lindblom, 1959). Although in some ways such incrementalism is also visible in KFLM, clearly the case of WnM is much closer

to 'disjointed incrementalism'<sup>28</sup> (Flach, Feufel, Reynolds, Parker, & Kellogg, 2017; C. E. Lindblom, 1979).

### Impact on Participants: values and behavioural changes

In running its project, one of KFLM's aims is to build a sharing and caring community that is defined by local geography or boundary that emphasizes the local identity of Tai Po residents with fraternity. In this respect, according to responses from informants and participants, this has been quite successful. The major reason is the voluntary and enthusiastic action by the participants to build up social capital through ride-sharing and group-buying events, and informal social gatherings such as basketball, badminton nights. With participation from the founder and core administrators, such social occasions seemed to have paved ways for strengthening the values and vision proclaimed by the project as well as fostering further a sense of camaraderie, or 'emotional attachment, intimacy and sentiment' (Goe & Noonan, 2007, p. 457; Tönnies, 1893/2001) among the active participants. Whether or not this has helped changing the consumption behaviour of the participants in KFLM remains less than certain. Judging by the responses from informants, it seemed that most had not changed their way of consumption or buying behaviour, and many did not seem to gain better awareness about the relationship between waste and consumption. Even for those who were more aware, they frankly admitted that they were unable to turn their awareness into action and made changes to cut down on

---

<sup>28</sup> A disjointed incrementalism is a decision-making model that to make decision according to the immediate context of operation as a more rational approach, as most of the decisions are made only suitable as current context but not in advanced. Therefore, decisions made in different periods may not have connection with each other.

buying. As pointed out by the founder however, if changing values or behaviour of participants is not KFLM's current objective but only a planned, long-term goal, it is understandable why the impact was low. Nevertheless, an interesting observation is that participants had tended to 'share' more since joining the project, and this did not limit only sharing rides but also other items or resources they had accumulated yet had not used or under-used for years. Being part of the project did motivate them to give away such items, but whether this was for environmental or for personal reasons was hard to differentiate. While some scholars may be critical of this 'rebound-effect' (Frenken & Schor, 2017) as it goes against the project's environmental concern of reducing wastes and consumption, on the positive side, that participants were willing to give away their under-utilized resources to needy unknown 'strangers' rather than just friends or relatives was a big step forward. This change from 'sharing in' (focuses on extending the social network for benefits) to 'sharing out' (outside the boundaries of self and reciprocity), according to Belk, Ingold and Widlok, is sufficient to qualify them as good participants of sharing economy (Belk, 2010; Ingold, 1986; Widlok, 2004). This is also indicative of the influence of KFLM's values that have been gradually settled in them.

Given most participants in WnM are conversant with environmental issues if not converted environmentalists, with the basic awareness of the relationship between waste, consumption and environment, there seemed to be a common bond and, perhaps even a loose sense of functional community, that has allowed participants to operate steadily without a formal management structure. In this respect, the question of what impact WnM has on them in terms of changing values seems irrelevant or unimportant. More significant is that many admitted they had benefited from the project that they have learnt more about how free- or down-cycling could



give 'rubbish' a new lease of life and a new meaning of 'sharing'. This experience has convinced them to give away items they owned but seldomly or under-use to others in community (sharing out) rather than to people they already know (sharing in).

Informants from WnM seemed to admit more explicitly that one major change they experienced was that they began to think twice before they purchase anything, either because they now are more aware of whether the products are eco-friendly, or because they understand better how impulsive buying and hyper-consumption could harm the environment if they are not careful. In addition, the more active participants also tended to wait and see if the project's activities could help them to find a similar second-hand or discarded item they intend to buy from stores. For non-active participants who came to their free-cycling events, the activity did not seem to change their minds or behaviour because they were only looking for 'freebies'.

## Social transformation

A greater concern for this study is, however, whether these two sharing economy projects are capable to make social transformation according to the mission they set up for themselves.

For KFLM, their aim and mission for social transformation is focused on building sharing communities where under-utilized resources could be shared and exchanged so that the problems of waste and hyper-consumption can be addressed. Given the specific scope and based on the data gathered from informants, KFLM seemed to have achieved what it intended in terms of establishing a platform for like-minded

people to start sharing rides and other under-utilized resources. In terms of creating broader change in the local community however, especially in educating people ways of sharing, or as the project proclaims, “building a sharing culture in local community”, there is little evidence to indicate that this mission has been reached. Even its founder insisted that this is on the project agenda, it still showed little progress in waste-reduction and policy advocacy towards structural changes as little measures have been adopted.

WnM, on the other hand, although having a much smaller number of participants but tied together more by common values and interests in transforming the environment rather than a geographically defined community, has its operation quite close to what scholars (A. P. Cohen, 1985; Goe & Noonan, 2007; Gusfield, 1975; McMillan & Chavis, 1986) consider a functional community (Gamble & Hoff, 2013; Gamble & Weil, 2010, p. 174). As such, broader social issues such as social justice, developing services and tactics for overcoming negative social and environmental conditions as well as advocating policy for social transformation (Chaskin, 2013), are more commonly discussed. The project’s insistence on self-determination, reflection, and holding experiential learning workshops are indicative of their vision for attempting social transformation although they do not go as far as wanting to ‘tame the monster of capitalism’ or hyper-consumption. Ideological-based operation is a suitable strategy emphasising on the environmental aspirations. Here, the vision WnM holds is different to KFLM and its emphasis on innovation through ‘self-determination’ as well as recycle-education has validated their capability and potential in making social transformation. Participants have grouped together to have a clear goal with solidarity networks based on similar values and environmental awareness under the dominant value of self-determination instead of geographical

community (as KFLM is), which also leads to the direct focus on more policy and structural agendas. At present, while the participant group of its original project in Yuen Long remains relatively small (especially when compared to KFLM), the influences it has on other districts in Hong Kong has grown extensively as similar projects have sprung up in over 20 suburbs all over Hong Kong (See Map 1), illustrating not only the inspiration it has emanated to others but also the coalition it has established, paving ways to advocate government for rethinking and redesigning ways of treating refuse in Hong Kong.



Map 1: WnM Collection Points in Hong Kong

Source: <https://hk.epochtimes.com/news/2018-10-31/62458581>

### Some cautionary notes

The different paths of development and growth as well as achievements of the two

selected sharing economy projects are easily observed as highlighted above. Yet what they have in common, especially in terms of the hardship and obstacles they have faced are less readily seen and discussed.

Heroic leadership, which emphasizes the personality traits of the founder and his indispensable role, capacity and legitimacy to act as a role model by using personal charisma, authority and self-sacrifice to encourage followers to take action (Mumford, Antes, Caughron, & Friedrich, 2008; Yorges, Weiss, & Strickland, 1999). Nevertheless, the founder in KFLM (with this kind of leadership) fails to inspire empowerment and engagement with participants for long-term social transformation. On this, one could also fault him for goal shifting or drifting (from maximizing the use of under-utilized resources to taking part in group-purchase for the sake of gaining group discounts) as well as using authoritative measures (screening applicants and expelling dissenting participants in the project) as unacceptable. However, one should also be more sympathetic to the real difficulties he has confronted – that the project has no sponsor or funding, with limited resources and time. As such, perhaps survival of the project warrants the tactics he chose.

On the other hand, one could also refer to ideological leadership theory to speculate on WnM's success in inspiring others to replicate similar projects all over Hong Kong. The WnM founders have set "explicit goals that require substantial social change" in social movements (Burns, 1978/2010), providing 'comrades' room to innovative ways to solve problems and make reformed pathways to reach higher standards (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991; Bass, 1990, 1999; Berson, Waldman, & Pearce, 2016; van Dierendonck, Stam, Boersma, de Windt, & Alkema, 2014) through mutual exchange of values and aspirations, and work together for social change (Burns,

1978/2010; Copeland, 2016; Mumford et al., 2008). In reality, one has to recognize that, despite WnM founders never saw themselves as leading a social movement and it likewise lacks financial resources or expertise in management. They have taken the role to inspire others to follow its steps in setting up similar projects elsewhere, and recognized by the participants as the major role to lead the whole social movement. They have already established the leadership role invisibly, despite their resistance towards this role, with the overwhelming value of self-determination to avoid contradiction to their principles. This kind of leadership can be a double-sword, while it works successfully with those who have similar environmental mind-sets together towards the ultimate objectives, participants have observed that consensus was hard to reach in WnM because of its less than organized management. It still remains unclear to conclude that ideological leadership is the key factor to reach a successful social transformation in a broader context, especially with policy changes.

It is also arguable that what mattered was that the leaders they have are transformative leaders who are focused and work hard on upholding their collective values and looking beyond self-interests for the well-being of their organization, especially using their charisma, inspiration, intellectual ability to motivate and mobilize individuals (Avolio et al., 1991; Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Copeland, 2016; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). The problem is, however, one could also argue that even with all the best leadership qualities in the world (Burns, 1978/2010; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; van Dierendonck et al., 2014; Yukl, 1999), when participants of these projects did not respond well and were not motivated to reflect, learn, innovate and remain committed, the projects can become stagnant and stale.

While reflexivity is important in the growth of a project, and indeed there are many theories to illustrate the point (Giddens, 1991; Guthman, 2003; Johnston & Szabo, 2011; Warde & Martens, 2000), it shows different pathways if the level of reflexivity may affect the direction and transformation of a project. A possible illustration that reflexivity among the participants may contribute to a certain degree of transformation, it may, on the contrary, also cause hindering factors as major obstacles to reach ultimate goal. WnM participants have shown clear reflection towards their behaviour and contributed to the awareness and behavioural changes. However, it also caused the over-emphasis on the idealistic value on environmental protection but lack of realistic consideration on practice. In the case of KFLM, it shows opposite development for the pragmatic strategies may only lead to superficial reflection that is not enough to reach in-depth behavioural changes, while some may even recognize the group buying activities and lead to 'rebound effect' that goes opposite to the planned goal.

Management has also been a factor that has been suggested in many studies on organizational success in the current literature, particularly in the field of business and even social enterprise. For example, Lawrence and Suddaby (2006, p. 215) suggested that management is "the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions", and hence the organization can maintain its legitimacy to motivate participants to be active and take action (Almandoz, Marquis, & Cheely, 2017; Dansou & Langley, 2012; Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2009; Mair & Reischauer, 2017; Suddaby & Viale, 2011). While this makes sense in explaining why management is an essential element of project maintenance and development, it is hard to judge which style of management in the two cases is necessarily better because the founders have very different preferred

principles according to their project objectives at the time. In the case of KFLM, when the dissenting voices were regarded as a threat to project fraternity, stability and sustainability by the founder and the administrators, the adoption of a formalized management structure for monitoring the desirability of incoming participants was certainly understandable, but it would be difficult for one to argue that this style of management would inhibit growth. At the same time, one could not say that the 'laissez-faire' style of management can lead to project inefficiency and confusion in decision-making, yet given WnM's vision and philosophy, and that they did not seem to intend to make rapid expansion or immediate social transformation (as they also know that such efforts would take time). Therefore, at best, what can be said about whether management would be a factor in shaping the development and progress of the two selected cases here is uncertain, especially when considering both are small-scale locally based projects.

Another observation is that one of the defining characteristics of sharing economy is its frequent and innovative use of digital technology, especially the Internet, for making changes and social transformation. Yet the experiences as reported by founders and participants of the two selected cases indicated another stories. Other than using social media platform like WhatsApp or Facebook for communicating or notification of events, many activities they organized in fact were more face-to-face events, emphasizing interactions among people (ride-sharing and delivery of goods from group-purchase for KFLM, and weekly free-cycling street markets for WnM, for example). The vast potential for educational campaigns using digital media seemed overlooked or ignored. In the Hong Kong context, when compared to those in other countries such as the US or UK, these projects appear to be quite unique in their continual reliance on personal networks and connections for building growth and

maintaining sustainability

## Discussing with Wright's theory of transformation

The research gap in unravelling sharing economy or its projects is that not only most of the current literature or previous studies are pre-occupied by an orientation of business, or more accurately, seeing it as an 'innovative disruption' of the current business practices. In examining these two sharing economy projects in the context of Hong Kong, they are still in early stage towards social movement but only aims to do their best to realize their ideas on using sharing to build a better community/environment in current development. Neither of the projects is interested in profit-making, nor are they big or organized enough to the scale as an NGO. This means that they have very limited financial or human resources and virtually no funder or sponsor. In this context, they are not like the sharing economy as portrayed in the current theories surveyed, nor do they resemble any social enterprise (or enterprise with a social conscience) or as some sort of social movement which has had a lengthier history or grander ambition. Even if they do have in mind that one day they could develop some influence in policy advocacy through broadening their networks to form coalition with others through education as some current theories suggested as essential for sharing economy (Bond, 2015; Cheng, 2016; M. Cohen & Sundararajan, 2017; Koopman, Mitchell, & Thierer, 2015), in their current situation as beginners with only a two-year history, one should not fault that for their lack of progress in these arenas.

Therefore, in scrutinizing if their experiences of "getting here to there" are successful within the short time span seems a bit unfair, and a re-visit of Wright's theory of



transformation seems appropriate to yield more insights.

In Wright's theory of transformation to reach a Real Utopia, both idealism and pragmatism are important, and balance is the key. This includes horizontal and vertical balancing, referring to balancing the ideal and realistic in implementing actions as they are inter-dependent. Many social enterprises fail despite good intentions, because of the conflicts between different institutional logic and the neoliberal logic (Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014; Garrow & Hasenfeld, 2012, 2014; Nicholls, 2010), or the tension between practical or ideal (Battilana & Dorado, 2010). In Wright's terms, this also means that while implementing interstitial strategy, one also needs to work with symbiotic transformation tactics (Hahnel & Wright, 2016; Wright, 2010). In more concrete terms, this is about delivering an emancipatory project with vision and tactics or indulging in dreams, but also having feasible and practical achievable realities, or solutions that are desirable, viable and achievable (Wright, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2013). Therefore, it is to establish 'waystations' where 'tasks of muddling through in a world of imperfect conditions for social change' could be performed by taking small steps (J. Cohen, Wright, & Rogers, 1995, p. ix). In this process, interstitial strategies could be tried, amended, and refined to find ways to create greater space for social transformation through building coalition, or finding appropriate symbiotic strategies with established forces to facilitate social change.

In policy advocacy terms, the 'waystations' are the best set up for creating conditions and spaces that are ripe for promoting social structural change or social transformation. In policy studies terms, this is what multiple streams framework are all about (Kingdon, 1984/2014; Zahariadis, 2014). It examines the coupling of three different streams to possible policy changes: From identifying accurate problems

(problem stream), building a 'national mood', growing pressure groups to influence public opinions and policy-makers (political stream), by formulating appropriate and effective policy options to be put on policy agenda for implementing change (policy stream) (Herweg, Zahariadis, & Zohlnhöfer, 2017; Zahariadis, 2014). People advocate through educational campaigns, public forum, developing narratives for change and so on to foster the emergence of a policy window towards possible policy outcomes. Both cases are only able to fulfill the problem streams but not the other two towards agenda setting and policy changes.

Seen in these contexts, the two selected sharing economy projects could be suitably regarded as 'substations' as they are only commencing on their pathways seeking for alternatives in transforming community and environment through the development and popularizing of the practices for a sharing culture that extends from sharing rides, benefits or savings from group-buying, re-, free-, up- and down-cycling. The strategies they took to carry out their mission are markedly different and the focus and philosophical assumptions they have made about what sharing and what best to do to start making changes in people and local communities are likewise diverse.

## Conclusion

This thesis began with the aim of unravelling the experiences of two selected sharing economy projects in Hong Kong to understand how they have been confronted hyper-consumption and environmental degradation. Through analysing their vision, values, strategies and impacts, this thesis deals with challenges and limitations and find ways to advance and realize their objectives in curbing waste and excessive consumption that in turn would provide a better environment in local communities

and in Hong Kong. In more concrete terms, guided by the theory of transformation of Erik Olin Wright, this study also explores the potential these projects have in effecting change and transformation in individuals and in local communities through sharing.

This thesis attempts to fill a major gap of the current literature in the field of sharing economy which has been dominated by a business-orientation model that tends to look at sharing economy not as a way for delivering social change or transformation, but as an 'innovative disruption' that 'revolutionizes' how businesses are done especially through the use of under-utilized resources, digital technologies and virtual social platforms. Moreover, this study shows an initial attempt to analyse from a social science perspective in empirical level on vision, operation strategies, and norms and the management style to illustrate how they may affect the creation of new visions in consumption that targets a reduction of waste and improvements in environmental quality. Furthermore, this thesis is interested in gauging if the selected sharing economy projects, despite their short history, have had made any tangible impacts on participants, communities, and the environment, outcomes which most current literature tends to ignore.

As sharing economy projects, the two selected cases, KFLM and WnM are markedly different in terms of their mission, vision, values and strategies they took to deliver their work. The former is more focused on changing individual consumption behaviour first through the implementation of a ride-sharing activity to fully utilize their vacant seats in their vehicles. Through this attempt and gradually expanding activities, it aims in creating a sharing culture among individual drivers before they can further pass it on to other individuals in the community of Tai Po so that a

sharing community could be built. Its initial success was attributed to the charismatic leadership of its founder who has not only captured the imagination of a set of drivers willing to give the idea of sharing rides a chance, his strong leadership has also prompted a growing social capital among the participants through voluntarily setting up social events. However, given the limited number of drivers available, newcomers did not grow rapidly and hence a new approach of recruitment of participants was attempted through the 'sharing of collective or group-purchase', that is, taking advantage of price discount offered by group-purchasing, and sharing the costs saved among the project participants. The utilitarian tactic of ensuring people get a concrete monetary benefit proved to be most successful, seeing its number of group participants grow to over 3,000 in a short period of time. It also backfired however, as dissenting voices among some decided this is against the project's aim of discouraging impulsive or excessive consumption. Subsequently the leadership style went through a less democratic turn with the founder and administrators agreeing to pre-screen all incoming applications for joining the project.

WnM, on the other hand, has a different approach in delivering its mission and insists upon equality for all and the principle of 'self-determination', allowing participants complete freedom in devising their own strategies and tactics to discourage impulsive or excessive consumption through free-, up- or down-cycling. Here, the focus is on educating or demonstrating how recycling practices are done, believing 'experiential' learning is best rather than a reliance on founders as leaders to steer the project in realizing its goals of curbing waste and consumption and improvement of the environment through 'sharing' (or free-cycling). The insistence by the founders to keep a low profile and their refusal to adopt a formal

management structure in dealing with project matters have caused some participants to feel confused and lost, and quibble about the long time to find consensus in solutions to deal with emerging problems encountered in events. Still, it has inspired groups in other districts and suburbs to replicate similar projects and its influence hence should not be under-estimated.

In examining their progress and achievements, one certainly could find faults in what they have done, especially in terms of shifting values, style of management and leadership as well as the lack of progression in effecting individual and community social transformation. Based on the data collected, one could not see readily that individuals have made drastic changes in their consumption pattern, nor that sharing has become a growing culture that gains overwhelming support from the local community. Given the short history of the two projects however, and their complete voluntary nature, with virtual no government support or sponsor but only support from like-minded volunteers and participants, one should admit that they have achieved a positive changes towards the path while they are still going strong, receiving continuous support to cope with environmental issues in a hyper-capitalist-dominated metropolis in Hong Kong.

The case studies are also most valuable in terms of academic significance. As sharing economy projects that are entirely self-initiated, uniquely un-commercial and altruistic, yet with lofty ideals and vision, their experiences have added much new information and insights into how diverse the forms and pathways of sharing economy can be in delivering their ideas and achieving their objectives. In these cases, unlike the dominant literature discussing US and European context, we see that despite their differences, they share a definite common approach of being local,

and taking small steps in developing and reaching their targets, without the fanfare of relying on digital technology but resorting to the traditionally proven tactic of working with people face-to-face, winning their support and changing their viewpoints and behaviour. This may also challenge how one should look at whether sharing economy must be defined exclusively by the wide and frequent use of digital technology.

The case studies have also reaffirmed the validity and applicability of Wright's grand theory of social transformation, even when transposing it to the examination of smaller efforts and shorter journeys in attempting social and community change. It is arguable that Wright's idea of emancipatory transformation may be too grand for the two selected projects here as their goals are nothing as ambitious as taming the monster of capitalism. Wright suggests that in effecting social transformation and emancipation, one must remain pragmatic while upholding these ideals. In addition, the use of interstitial strategies must be balanced by symbiotic strategies, allowing horizontal and vertical balancing to complement one another in order to reach a real utopia is important with discussing the operational level in relation to the real context, as discussed in this thesis. On closer inspection, Wright's supplementary concept of 'waystation' sits well with the selected cases here, because it is also their journey searching for alternatives and change as necessarily fluid and transitional, with many potential and open possibilities yet to be discovered and tried before something more substantial and tangible crystalizes. In other words, in the constellation of 'waystation', like KFLM and WnM, not only there is much room for experimenting and making unconventional moves, given their short history, one should not be surprised to find their own development pathways could also metamorphosize in different directions.

In reviewing the findings of the two selected cases, one could be disappointed by the fact that there is nothing truly 'conclusive' about their outcomes as their history is short and the number of case studies is limited to two. One cannot really conclude if their operation or management, or the strategies they have employed, or the impacts generated in effecting change in people and communities are good or bad because they are still feeling their ways in their own pace. As pointed out at the outset, the aim of this study was not focused on judging or evaluating if they are successful or failed, but on unravelling the old and exploring the new.

This study has provided fertile ground for raising new research agendas for sharing economy, . For example, the role of digital technology in social transformation is an important direction that is currently understudied. From the digital sociological perspective, there are already intense interactions between participants, digital activism and digital technologies (Lupton, 2015). It is important to study how, and to what extent, does it affect the nature, strategies and effectiveness of the sharing economy, or other transformative practices towards real utopia. At the same time, this study shows great potentials in further integrating organizational theories, social movement theories, digital sociology and policy studies to conceptualize social transformation from a more complex and comprehensive perspective.

In terms of social capital in sharing economy, current discussion emphasizes the inter-mediated connection between users. However, this kind of relationship building is still inadequate to point out the complex situation of building social networks. For example, face-to-face interaction is still valuable in this study, and the new development of human-machine relationship in digital era (Suchman, 2007) is

essential but not appeared in current discussion.

In the end, the quest for change and transformation as well as searching for alternatives, be it sharing economy or the possibility of building a better society and environment through sharing, always begins with questions instead of answers. For questions are about imagination as well as hope and optimism, the essential ingredients that lay the foundation for advancing knowledge, motivates enthusiasm and brings forward determination to keep searching for and building utopia, especially real utopia. Perhaps this is the real significant spirit one should learn from Wright (2010) after all.



## Appendix A

### Background information of KFLM Ride Sharing Community

Interviewee	Name	Gender	Role
A	Roger	M	Founder
B	Tony	M	Administrator
C	Cliff	M	Participant
D	Ross	M	Participant
E	Rachel	F	Administrator
F	Annie	F	Participant
G	Mary	F	Administrator
H	Winnie	F	Participant
I	Grace	F	Participant
J	Ada	F	Administrator

### Background information of Waste-no-mall

Interviewee	Name	Gender	Role
K	Esther	F	Founder
L	Jess	F	Founder
M	Matthew	M	Founder
N	Becky	F	Participant
O	Sarah	F	Participant
P	Mabel	F	Participant
Q	Sue	F	Participant
R	Alan	M	Participant
S	Katherine	F	Participant
T	Phoebe	F	Participant

## Appendix B

Questions for founders:

### **Consumption pattern before initiation**

- 1) What do you consume most? How frequent do you consume on those items? How you consume (through what means and where)?
- 2) How frequent are you using those products? Are there anything that haven't been used after buying?
- 3) What motivates you to consume? How do you consider on consuming products?
- 4) What does consumption mean to you?

### **Initiation**

- 1) Why did you initiate the sharing economy project? What is the story and background? What are the mission, vision and objectives of the projects? What problems do you want to tackle from the beginning, and why? Have you thought about the reduction of consumption / reduce needs for ownership at that time?
- 2) How is the project developed? What have they considered in setting the project on different stages?
- 3) What is the role of sharing in this project?

### **Operation**

- 1) How is the project operating now (what are the activities? How many participants join the project? What is the existing operating mechanism?) How the project shares? (access the goods / services, or transferring ownership) Why they decide to share in this form? What are the considerations? Are there any difficulties on such sharing mechanism, if yes then how to cope with it?
- 2) What does the project share? Are they idle resources? Why choose (or not) to share idle resources? Where are the resources from? Do participants share their own resources? What kind of resources do they share, and why?
- 3) How do they apply technology and platform into the project? Why use such a method? How important is the role of technology and platform in the project? Do they frequently adopt technology in sharing?
- 4) What is your role in the sharing economy project? What is the sharing pattern, is it based on sharing between participants, or they provide the resources for sharing? (founders as leader, facilitator, participants or receivers?) Who are the participants? What will they share and who to share with from their observation?

- 5) Does your project encourage the reduction of consumption? If yes, what kinds of strategies that you have adopted? What are the strategies to encourage sharing?
- 6) After operating the project, how do you think of the problems that the project wants to cope with, are there differences since your initiation? Why? Do you think the project copes with hyper-consumption now?
- 7) What kind of strategies they are adopting / will adopt to make the project sustainable?
- 8) What kind of difficulties they encountered in the operation? How they cope with the problems?

#### Dynamics

- 1) How do you attract people to join? How to promote the idea of sharing? How frequent do the participants join?
- 2) How do you disseminate the ideas / objectives of sharing economy project to the participants? How do they respond?
- 3) To what extent, do you think the participants are with similar thoughts (towards the objectives and ideas) when joining the projects? Are there examples or stories sharing? Are there changes you can observe for the participants joining the projects?
- 4) How is your relationship with participants? Are there changes from the beginning to now, for example becoming good friends?
- 5) What is the profile of the participants? Are you having good relationship with each other?

#### Impact

- 1) Are there changes of consumption behaviour after initiating and operating the sharing economy projects?
  - A. If yes, then what kind of changes (and in what level) comparing with before, and why? Are there examples?
  - B. If no, then why not?
- 2) How do you perceive consumption now? How do you perceive hyper-consumption? How are the differences between now and before initiating the project?
- 3) How they perceive sharing?
- 4) To what extent do you share more? Example?
- 5) What kind of messages that they have created and promoted during the operation of the projects? Do you advocate for reducing ownership?
- 6) From your point of view, how, and to what extent the participants' consumption

mindset and behaviour change after joining the project?

Questions for participants:

**Consumption pattern before participation**

- 5) How frequent do you consume? How you consume (through what means?)? What do you consume? When do you consume? Have you bought something that are not used at all, or only used for very few times?
- 6) What motivates you to consume? Why do the motivations encourage you to consume?
- 7) How do you perceive consumption? What does consumption mean to you?

**Motivation for participation**

- 4) What motivates you to participate in sharing economy project, and why? What is the story?
- 5) How did you know the project? Have you participated in other projects as well?

**How are they participating?**

- 9) How frequent are you participating in the project? Can you share the experience of participating? Are you joining alone or with friends?
- 10) Do you share resources in the projects? What are you sharing, and why (are they under-utilized resources)? What is your experience in sharing? Do you get things from the project? What are they? Why are you taking those resources? If not, then why not taking?
- 11) How frequent are you adopting technology in participation? How do you receive the information from the project that you are participating?
- 12) Who are the participants that you think you are sharing with? Do you think you are having similar socio-economic status?

**Dynamics**

- 6) How well do you know the objectives of the project? Do you agree, why? Are there any conflicts happened in the project? How did you perceive and cope with them?
- 7) How you perceive your role in the sharing economy project?
- 8) What is the role of the founder? How did the founder affect you?
- 9) How is your relationship with other participants and the founders? Are there changes from the beginning to now?
- 10) How is your understanding of the core value of the projects? To what extent you

agree with that?

11) What are the major norms or regulations in the project? How are these norms affecting you?

### **Impact**

- 7) How do you understand your own consumption behaviour after joining the project? Is there reflection on your consumption behaviour, including buying, sharing or using? Why?
- 8) Have you shared your under-utilized resources to other people after joining the project?
- 9) Are there changes of consumption behaviour after participating in the sharing economy projects?
  - A. If yes, then what kind of changes (and in what level) comparing with before, and why? Are there examples?
  - B. If no, then why not?
- 10) How do you perceive consumption now? Are there any differences comparing with before? How do you comment on overconsumption on stuff?
- 11) To what extent the project affects your changing behaviour or mind-set?

## Appendix C



### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

#### Unravelling Sharing Economy: Experiences from Hong Kong

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby consent to participate in the captioned research conducted by \_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that information obtained from this research may be used in future research and published. However, my right to privacy will be retained, i.e. my personal details will not be revealed.

The procedure as set out in the attached information sheet has been fully explained. I understand the benefit and risks involved. My participation in the project is voluntary.

I acknowledge that I have the right to question any part of the procedure and can withdraw at any time without penalty of any kind.

Name of participant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent or Guardian (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent or Guardian (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of researcher \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Reference

- Abrahao, B., Parigi, P., Gupta, A., & Cook, K. S. (2017). Reputation offsets trust judgments based on social biases among Airbnb users. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, *114*(37), 9848-9853.
- Acquier, A., Daudigeos, T., & Pinkse, J. (2017). Promises and paradoxes of the sharing economy: an organizing framework. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *125*, 1-10.
- Akbar, P., & Hoffmann, S. (2018). Under which circumstances do consumers choose a product service system (PSS)? Consumer benefits and costs of sharing in PSS. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *201*, 416-427.
- Albescu, O., & Maniu, M. (2017). *Sharing economy: evaluating its structural dimensions for policy design purposes* (Vol. 22).
- Albinsson, P. A., & Perera, B. Y. (2012). Alternative marketplaces in the 21st century: building community through sharing events. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *11*(4), 303.
- Ali, S., & Kelly, M. (2012). Ethics and social research. In C. Seale (Ed.), *Researching Society and Culture* (3rd ed.). London: SAGE.
- Allmark, P. (2003). The ethics of research with children. *Nurse Researcher*, *10*(2), 7-19.
- Almandoz, J., Marquis, C., & Cheely, M. (2017). Drivers of community strength: an institutional logics perspective on geographical and affiliation-based communities. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, T. B. Lawrence, & R. E. Meyer (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism* (2 ed., pp. 190-213). London: SAGE Publications.
- Andriotis, K., & Agiomirgianakis, G. (2014). Market escape through exchange: home swap as a form of non-commercial hospitality. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *17*(7), 576-591.
- Archer, M. (1995). *Realist social theory : the morphogenetic approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, M., Decoteau, C., Gorski, P., Little, D., & Porpora, D. (2016). What is critical realism? *Perspectives*, *38*(2), 4-9.
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The human condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ashley, L. D. (2017). Research methods and methodologies in education. In R. Coe, M. Waring, L. V. Hedges, & J. Arthur (Eds.), *Research Methods and Methodologies in Education* (2 ed., pp. 114-121). London: SAGE.

- Avolio, B. J., Waldman, D. A., & Yammarino, F. J. (1991). Leading in the 1990s: the four I's of transformational leadership. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 15(4), 9-16.
- Aznar, J. P., Sayeras, J. M., Rocafort, A., & Galiana, J. (2017). The irruption of Airbnb and its effects on hotel profitability: an analysis of Barcelona's hotel sector. *Intangible Capital*, 13(1), 147-159.
- Böcker, L., & Meelen, T. (2017). Sharing for people, planet or profit? Analysing motivations for intended sharing economy participation. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 23, 28-39.
- Bălan, C. (2016). Ride-sharing and car-sharing in Romania: what choice do potential users have? *Calitatea*, 17(S4), 103-122
- Barann, B., Beverungen, D., & Müller, O. (2017). An open-data approach for quantifying the potential of taxi ridesharing. *Decision Support Systems*, 99, 86-95.
- Bardhi, F., & Eckhardt, G. M. (2012). Access-based consumption: the case of car sharing. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(4), 881-898.
- Barnes, S. J., & Mattsson, J. (2016). Understanding current and future issues in collaborative consumption: a four-stage delphi study. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 104, 200-211. doi:10.1016/j.techfore.2016.01.006
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectation*. New York: Free Press.
- Bass, B. M. (1990). From transactional to transformational leadership: learning to share the vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, 18(3), 19-31.
- Bass, B. M. (1999). Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 8(1), 9-32.
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1993). Transformational leadership and organizational culture. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 17(1), 112-121.
- Battilana, J., & Dorado, S. (2010). Building sustainable hybrid organization: the case of commercial microfinance organizations. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 53(6), 1419-1440.
- Baudrillard, J. (1970/1998). *The consumer society: myths & structures*. London: SAGE Publication.
- Bauman, Z. (2005). *Work, consumerism and the new poor*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Bauwens, M. (2006). The political economy of peer production. *post-autistic economics review*, 37, 33-44.



- Bauwens, M. (2009). Class and capital in peer production. *Capital & Class*, 33, 121-141.
- Belarmino, A., Whalen, E., Koh, Y., & Bowen, J. T. (2019). Comparing guests' key attributes of peer-to-peer accommodations and hotels: mixed-methods approach. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(1), 1-7.
- Belk, R. (2007). Why not share rather than own? *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 611 (May), 126-140.
- Belk, R. (2010). Sharing. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(5), 715-734.
- Belk, R. (2014a). Sharing versus pseudo-sharing in web 2.0. *Anthropologist*, 18(1), 7-23. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-84905159275&partnerID=40&md5=397d335352b75608530f39c61399043e>
- Belk, R. (2014b). You are what you can access: sharing and collaborative consumption online. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(8), 1595-1600.
- Belk, R. (2017). Sharing without caring. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 10, 249-261.
- Bendor, J. (2015). Incrementalism: dead yet flourishing. *Public Administration Review*, 75(2), 194-205.
- Benkler, Y. (2004). Sharing nicely: on shareable goods and the emergence of sharing as a modality of economic production. *The Yale Law Journal*, 114(2), 273-358.
- Benkler, Y. (2006). *The wealth of networks: How social production transforms markets and freedom*. US: Yale University Press.
- Benkler, Y., & Nissenbaum, H. (2006). Commons-based peer production and virtue. *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 14(4), 394-419.
- Bernard, H. R. (2006). *Research methods in anthropology: qualitative and quantitative approaches* (4th ed. Vol. Lanham): AltaMira Press.
- Berson, Y., Waldman, D. A., & Pearce, C. L. (2016). Enhancing our understanding of vision in organizations: toward an integration of leader and follower processes. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 6(2), 171-191.
- Bhaskar, R. (1975). *A realist theory of science*. Leeds: Books.
- Biernacki, P., & Waldorf, D. (1981). Snowball sampling: problems and techniques of chain referral sampling *Sociological Methods & Research*, 10(2), 141-163.
- Blal, I., Singal, M., & Templin, J. (2018). Airbnb's effect on hotel sales growth. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 73, 85-92.
- Bálint, D., & Trócsányi, A. (2016). New ways of mobility: the birth of ridesharing. A case study from Hungary. *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin*, 65(4), 391-405.
- Boateng, H., Kosiba, J. P. B., & Okoe, A. F. (2019). Determinants of consumers' participation in the sharing economy: A social exchange perspective within an

- emerging economy context. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(2), 718-733. doi:10.1108/IJCHM-11-2017-0731
- Bocken, N., Short, N., Rana, P., & Evans, S. (2014). A literature and practice review to develop sustainable business model archetypes. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 65, 42-56.
- Bond, A. T. (2015). An app for that: local governments and the rise of the sharing economy. *Norte Dame Law Review*, 90(2), 77-96.
- Botsman, R. (2013). The sharing economy lacks a shared definition. Retrieved from <https://www.fastcompany.com/3022028/the-sharing-economy-lacks-a-shared-definition>
- Botsman, R., & Rogers, R. (2010). *What's mine is yours: the rise of collaborative consumption*. New York: Harper Business.
- Boyko, C., Clune, S., Cooper, R., Coulton, C., Dunn, N., Pollastri, S., . . . Tyler, N. (2017). How sharing can contribute to more sustainable cities. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 9(5), 701. Retrieved from <http://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/9/5/701>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Breidbach, C. F., & Brodie, R. J. (2017). Engagement platforms in the sharing economy: conceptual foundations and research directions. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 27(4), 761-777.
- Britten, N. (1995). Qualitative interviews in medical research. *British Medical Journal*, 311, 251-253.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Bucher, E., Fieseler, C., & Lutz, C. (2016). What's mine is yours (for a nominal fee) - exploring the spectrum of utilitarian to altruistic motives for Internet-mediated sharing. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 62, 316-326.
- Buckley, M. (2018). Labour and the city: some notes across theory and research. *Geography Compass*, 12(10).
- Burchardt, T., Le Grand, J., & Piachaud, D. (1999). "Social exclusion in Britain 1991-1995". *Social Policy and Administration*, 33(3), 227-244.
- Burns, J. (1978/2010). *Leadership*. New York: HarperPerennial.
- Byrne, B. (2012). Qualitative interviewing. In C. Seale (Ed.), *Researching Society and Culture* (3rd ed.). London: SAGE.
- Cai, H., Wang, X., Adriaens, P., & Xu, M. (2019). Environmental benefits of taxi ride sharing in Beijing. *Energy*, 174, 503-508. doi:10.1016/j.energy.2019.02.166
- Callegaro, M. (2008). Social desirability. In P. J. Lavrakas (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Survey*

- Research Methods* (pp. 825-826). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Cammaerts, B. (2011). Disruptive sharing in a digital age: rejecting neoliberalism? *Continuum: Journal of media and cultural studies*, 25(1), 47-62.
- Caplovitz, D. (1963). *The poor pay more: consumer practices of low-income families*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Chakraborty, P., Baeyens, E., Poolla, K., Khargonekar, P. P., & Varaiya, P. (2018). Sharing storage in a smart grid: A coalitional game approach. *IEEE Transactions on Smart Grid*. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85050380132&doi=10.1109%2fTSG.2018.2858206&partnerID=40&md5=20c0f22e545ef6ed8f9368c9631a28ae>
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Chaskin, R. J. (2013). Theories of community. In M. Weil, M. Reisch, & M. L. Ohmer (Eds.), *The Handbook of Community Practice* (pp. 105-122). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Chattopadhyay, M., & Mitra, S. K. (2019). Do airbnb host listing attributes influence room pricing homogenously? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 81, 54-64. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.03.008
- Chen, C. C., & Chang, Y. C. (2018). What drives purchase intention on Airbnb? Perspectives of consumer reviews, information quality, and media richness. *Telematics and Informatics*, 35(5), 1512-1523. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85047845257&doi=10.1016%2fj.tele.2018.03.019&partnerID=40&md5=5e58666e2fa3145f5a4aa61ec419b9ec>
- Chen, Y., & Xie, K. (2017). Consumer valuation of Airbnb listings: a hedonic pricing approach. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(9), 2405-2424.
- Cheng, M. (2016). Sharing economy: a review and agenda for future research. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 57, 60-70.
- Choi, K. H., Jung, J., Ryu, S., Kim, S. D., & Yoon, S. M. (2015). The relationship between Airbnb and the hotel revenue: In the case of Korea. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 8(26).
- Chow, S. M., Wong, Y. K., & Y.K., T. (Eds.). (2014). *Sharing cities: from social enterprise, fair trade, ethical consumption to sharing economy(II)*. Hong Kong: InPress Books.
- Chow, S. M., Wong, Y. K., & Yuen, Y. K. (Eds.). (2014). *Sharing cities: from social enterprise, fair trade, ethical consumption to sharing economy (I)*. Hong Kong:

InPress Books.

- Christensen, C. M., Raynor, M. E., & McDonald, R. (2015). What is disruptive innovation? *Harvard business review : HBR*, *93*(12), 44-53.
- Clausen, J., Blättel-Mink, B., Erdmann, L., & Henseling, C. (2010). Contribution of online trading of used goods to resource efficiency: an empirical study of eBay users. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *2*(6), 1810-1830.
- Cockayne, D. G. (2016). Sharing and neoliberal discourse: the economic function of sharing in the digital on-demand economy. *Geoforum*, *77*, 73-82. doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2016.10.005
- Codagnone, C., & Martens, B. (2016). *Scoping the sharing economy: origins, definitions, impact and regulatory issues*. Retrieved from
- Cohen, A. P. (1985). *The symbolic construction of community*. London: Ellis Horwood Ltd. and Tavistock Publications Ltd. .
- Cohen, B., & Kietzmann, J. (2014). Ride on! Mobility business models for the sharing economy. *Organization and Environment*, *27*(3), 279-296. doi:10.1177/1086026614546199
- Cohen, J., Wright, E. O., & Rogers, J. (1995). *Associations and democracy*. London: Verso.
- Cohen, M., & Sundararajan, A. (2017). Self-regulation and innovation in the peer-to-peer sharing economy. *University of Chicago Law Review Online*, *82*(1), 116-133.
- Colic-Peisker, V., & Flitney, A. (2018). *The age of post-rationality: limits of economic reasoning in the 21st century*. Singapore: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Collier, D. (1993). The comparative method. In A. W. Finifter (Ed.), *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II* (pp. 105-119). Washington, D. C.: American Political Science Association.
- Copeland, M. K. (2016). The impact of authentic, ethical, transformational leadership on leader effectiveness. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics*, *13*(3), 79-97.
- Couldry, N. (2004). Theorising media as practice. *Social Semiotics*, *14*(2), 115-132.
- Crate, S. A., & Nuttall, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Anthropology and climate change: from encounters to actions*. New York: Routledge.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and social design: choosing among five approaches* (3 ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design : qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Cruzes, D. S., Dybå, T., Runeson, P., & Höst, P. (2015). Case studies synthesis: a thematic, cross-case, and narrative synthesis worked example. *Empirical*

- Software Engineering*, 20(6), 1634-1665.
- Danermark, B., Ekström, M., Jakobsen, L., & Karlsson, J. C. (2006). *Explaining society: critical realism in the social sciences*. London: Routledge.
- Dansou, K., & Langley, A. (2012). Institutional work and the notion of test. *Management*, 15(5), 502-527.
- Darley, W. K., & Johnson, D. M. (1985). A contemporary analysis of the low income consumer: an international perspective. In C. T. Tan & J. N. Sheth (Eds.), *Historical Perspectives in Consumer Research: National and International Perspectives* (pp. 206-210). Provo, Utah: Association for Consumer Research.
- De Botton, A. (2004). *Status anxiety*. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- de Vaus, D. (2001). *Research design in social research*. London: SAGE.
- Decrop, A., Del Chiappa, G., Mallargé, J., & Zidda, P. (2018). "Couchsurfing has made me a better person and the world a better place": the transformative power of collaborative tourism experiences. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 35(1), 57-72.
- Deloitte Access Economics. (2015). *The sharing economy and the competition and consumer act: Australian competition and consumer commission*. Retrieved from <https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/Sharing%20Economy%20-%20Deloitte%20Report%20-%202015.pdf>
- Devinney, T. M., Auger, P., & Eckhardt, G. (2010). *The myth of the ethical consumer*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- DiNatale, S., Lewis, R., & Parker, R. (2018). Short-term rentals in small cities in Oregon: impacts and regulations. *Land Use Policy*, 79, 407-423. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2018.08.023>
- Dogru, T., Mody, M., & Suess, C. (2019). Adding evidence to the debate: quantifying Airbnb's disruptive impact on ten key hotel markets. *Tourism Management*, 72, 27-38.
- Doherty, B., Haugh, H., & Lyon, F. (2014). Social enterprises as hybrid organizations: a review and research agenda. *International Journal of Management Review* 16, 4(417-436).
- Doménech-Pascual, G. (2016). Sharing economy and regulatory strategies towards legal change. *European Journal of Risk Regulation*, 7(4), 717-727.
- Dreyer, B., Lüdeke-Freund, F., Hamann, R., & Faccar, K. (2017). Upsides and downsides of the sharing economy: collaborative consumption business models' stakeholder value impacts and their relationship to context. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 125, 87-104.
- Dubal, V. B. (2017). Wage slave or entrepreneur?: Contesting the dualism of legal

- worker identities. *California Law Review*, 105(1), 101-1159.
- Dudley, G., Banister, D., & Schwanen, T. (2017). The rise of Uber and regulating the disruptive innovator. *The Political Quarterly*, 88(3), 492-499.
- Durkheim, É. (1952/2002). *Suicide : a study in sociology*. London New York: Routledge.
- Duvoux, N. (2012). Analytic marxism and real utopias: an interview with Erik Olin Wright. Retrieved from <http://www.booksandideas.net/Analytic-Marxism-and-Real-Utopias.html>
- Easton, G. (2010). Critical realism in case study research. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39, 118-128.
- Edelman, B., Luca, M., & Svirsky, D. (2017). Racial discrimination in the sharing economy: evidence from a field experiment. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 9(2), 1-22.
- Edwards, T. (2000). *Contradictions of consumption: concepts, practices, and politics in consumer society*. Philadelphia, US: Open University Press.
- Elder-Vass, D. J. (2014). Giving and social transformation. *Journal of Critical Realism*, 13(3), 261-285.
- Elert, N., & Henrekson, M. (2016). Evasive entrepreneurship. *Small Business Economics*, 47(1), 95-113. doi:10.1007/s11187-016-9725-x
- Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2007). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(1), 107-115.
- Environment Bureau. (2013). *Hong Kong blueprint for sustainable use of resources: 2013-2022*. Retrieved from <https://www.enb.gov.hk/en/files/WastePlan-E.pdf>
- Ert, E., Fleischer, A., & Magen, N. (2016). Trust and reputation in the sharing economy: the role of personal photos in Airbnb. *Tourism Management*, 55, 62-73. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2016.01.013
- Etzioni, A. (2003). Introduction: voluntary simplicity - psychological Implications, societal Consequences. In D. Doherty & A. Etzioni (Eds.), *Voluntary Simplicity: Responding to Consumer Culture* (pp. 1-28). Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Fabo, B., Karanovic, J., & Dukova, K. (2017). In search of an adequate European policy response to the platform economy. *Transfer*, 23(2), 163-175.
- Fagerstrøm, A., Pawar, S., Sigurdsson, V., Foxall, G. R., & Yani-de-Soriano, M. (2017). That personal profile image might jeopardize your rental opportunity! On the relative impact of the seller's facial expressions upon buying behavior on Airbnb™. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 72, 123-131. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.02.029>
- Fairweather, C. (2017). The sharing economy as primitive accumulation: locating the

- political-economic position of the capital-extractive sharing economy. *HPS: The Journal of History & Political Science*, 5, 51-63.
- Flach, J. M., Feufel, M. A., Reynolds, P. L., Parker, S. H., & Kellogg, K. M. (2017). Decisionmaking in practice: the dynamics of muddling through. *Applied Ergonomics*, 63, 133-141.
- Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Flick, U. (2015). *Introducing research methodology* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 219-245.
- Forno, F., & Garibaldi, R. (2015). Sharing economy in travel and tourism: the case of home-swapping in Italy. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism*, 16(2), 202-220. doi:10.1080/1528008X.2015.1013409
- Fremstad, A. (2017). Is there a future for sharing? A comparison of traditional and new institutions. *Journal of Institutional Economics*.
- Frenken, K. (2017). Political economies and environmental futures for the sharing economy. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A*, 375(2095).
- Frenken, K., Meelen, T., Arets, M., & van de Glind, P. (2015). Smarter regulation for the sharing economy. *the Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2015/may/20/smart-er-regulation-for-the-sharing-economy>
- Frenken, K., & Schor, J. B. (2017). Putting the sharing economy into perspective. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 23, 3-10.
- Freudenberg, N. (2014). *Lethal but legal: corporations, consumption, and protecting public health*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fuentes-Bracamontes, R. (2016). Is unbundling electricity services the way forward for the power sector? *The Electricity Journal*, 29.
- Gamble, D. N., & Hoff, M. D. (2013). Sustainable community development. In M. Weil, M. Reisch, & M. L. Ohmer (Eds.), *The Handbook of Community Practice* (2 ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Gamble, D. N., & Weil, M. (2010). *Community practice skills: local to global perspectives*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gansky, L. (2010). *The mesh*. US: Portfolio Penguin.
- Gant, A. C. (2016). Holiday rentals: the new gentrification battlefield. *Sociological Research Online*, 21(3), 1-9. doi:10.5153/sro.4071
- Garrow, E. E., & Hasenfeld, Y. (2012). Managing conflicting institutional logics: social service versus market. In B. Gidron & Y. Hasenfeld (Eds.), *Social Enterprises* (pp. 121-143). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Garrow, E. E., & Hasenfeld, Y. (2014). Institutional logics, moral frames, and advocacy:

- explaining the purpose of advocacy among nonprofit human-service organizations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 43(1), 80-98.
- George, A., & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Gerring, J. (2017). *Case study research: principles and practices* (2 ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gibbs, C., Guttentag, D., Gretzel, U., Morton, J., & Goodwill, A. (2017). Pricing in the sharing economy: a hedonic pricing model applied to Airbnb listings. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity self and society in the late modern age*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Ginindza, S., & Tichaawa, T. M. (2017). The impact of sharing accommodation on the hotel occupancy rate in the kingdom of Swaziland. *Current Issues in Tourism*.
- Goe, W. R., & Noonan, S. (2007). The sociology of community. In C. D. Bryant & D. L. Peck (Eds.), *21st Century Sociology: A Reference Handbook Volume 1* (pp. 455-464). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Goertz, G., & Mahoney, J. (2012a). Concepts and measurement: ontology and epistemology. *Social Science Information*, 51(2), 205-216.
- Goertz, G., & Mahoney, J. (2012b). *A tale of two cultures: qualitative and quantitative research in the social sciences*. UK: Princeton University Press.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.
- Gullstrand Edbring, E., Lehner, M., & Mont, O. (2016). Exploring consumer attitudes to alternative models of consumption: motivations and barriers. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 123, 5-15. doi:10.1016/j.jclepro.2015.10.107
- Gulyani, S., Talukdar, D., & Bassett, E. M. (2018). A sharing economy? Unpacking demand and living conditions in the urban housing market in Kenya. *World Development*, 109, 57-72. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85046359438&doi=10.1016%2fj.worlddev.2018.04.007&partnerID=40&md5=039764ccf335c6083fbb8b2c36e9d70b>
- Gunter, U. (2018). What makes an Airbnb host a superhost? Empirical evidence from San Francisco and the Bay Area. *Tourism Management*, 66, 26-37. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85034257721&doi=10.1016%2fj.tourman.2017.11.003&partnerID=40&md5=edcfa925c4ba2e2c27>



[d3a1e2cfe67a9c](#)

- Gurran, N., & Phibbs, P. (2017). When tourists move in: how should urban planners respond to Airbnb? *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 83(1), 80-92.
- Gusfield, J. R. (1975). *Community: a critical response*. Oxford: B. Blackwell.
- Guthman, J. (2003). Fast food/organic food: reflexive tastes and the making of 'yuppie chow'. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 4(1), 45-58.
- Guttentag, D. (2015). Airbnb: disruptive innovation and the rise of an informal tourism accommodation sector. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 18(12), 1192-1217.
- Guttentag, D., Smith, S., Potwarka, L., & Havitz, M. (2018). Why tourists choose Airbnb: a motivation-based segmentation study. *Journal of Travel Research*, 57(3), 342-359. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85041618179&doi=10.1177%2f0047287517696980&partnerID=40&md5=f66df5a0d27fc92b0459b5cc0d79e9db>
- Habibi, M. R., Kim, A., & Laroche, M. (2016). From sharing to exchange: an extended framework of dual modes of collaborative nonownership consumption. *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 1(2), 277-294. Retrieved from <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/684685>
- Hahnel, R., & Wright, E. O. (2016). *Alternatives to capitalism: proposals for a democratic economy*. London, New York: Verso.
- Hamari, J., Sjöklint, M., & Ukkonen, A. (2016). The sharing economy: why people participate in collaborative consumption. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 67(9), 2047-2059.
- Hamilton, C. (2009). Low-income families: experiences and responses to consumer exclusion. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 29(9/10), 543-557.
- Hamilton, K., & Catterall, M. (2004). Towards a better understanding of the low-income consumer. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 32, 627-632.
- Han, Y. S., & Kwon, C. H. (2016). A study on the sharing economy apartments and it's ubiquitous monitoring system. *International Journal of Smart Home*, 10(10), 249-258.
- Hartl, B., Hofmann, E., & Kirchler, E. (2016). Do we need rules for "what's mine is yours"? Governance in collaborative consumption communities. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(8), 2756-2763.
- Hartl, B., Sabitzer, T., Hofmann, E., & Penz, E. (2018). "Sustainability is a nice bonus": the role of sustainability in carsharing from a consumer perspective. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 202, 88-100.

doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.08.138>

- Harvey, D. (1989). *The condition of postmodernity : an enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Oxford; New York: Blackwell.
- Hawlitschek, F., Teubner, T., & Gimpel, H. (2018). Consumer motives for peer-to-peer sharing. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 204, 144-157. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.08.326>
- Heinrichs, H. (2013). Sharing economy: a potential new pathway to sustainability. *Gaia*, 22(4), 228-231.
- Henten, A. H., & Windekilde, I. M. (2016). Transaction costs and the sharing economy. *Info*, 18(1), 1-15.
- Herweg, N., Zahariadis, N., & Zohlnhöfer, R. (2017). The multiple streams framework: foundations, refinements, and empirical applications. In C. Weible & P. Sabatier (Eds.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (4 ed., pp. 17-54). New York: Routledge.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2017). *The practice of qualitative research: engaging students in the research process* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE publication.
- Hill, S. (2015). *Raw deal: how the "Uber economy" and runaway capitalism are screwing American workers*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Hira, A., & Reilly, K. (2017). The emergence of the sharing economy: implications for development. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 33(2), 175-190.
- Honda, S., Khetriwal, D. S., & Kuehr, R. (2016). *Regional e-waste monitor: East and Southeast Asia*. Bonn: United Nations University and Japanese Ministry of the Environment.
- Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited. (2015). *"Sharing economy- is Hong Kong ready?"*. Paper presented at the 2015 Digital Marketplace Seminar. [https://www.hkirc.hk/dmp/2015/eventFile/2015\\_hk\\_Online\\_Survey.pdf](https://www.hkirc.hk/dmp/2015/eventFile/2015_hk_Online_Survey.pdf)
- Horn, K., & Merante, M. (2017). Is home sharing driving up rents? Evidence from Airbnb in Boston. *Journal of Housing Economics*, 38, 14-24.
- Hwang, J., & Griffiths, M. A. (2017). Share more, drive less: millennials value perception and behavioral intent in using collaborative consumption services. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 34(2), 132-146.
- Ingold, T. (1986). *The appropriation of nature: essays on human ecology and social relations*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Jacobs, A. (2006). Helping people is difficult: growth and performance in social enterprises working for international relief and development. In A. Nicholls (Ed.), *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Change*. New York: Oxford Univeristy Press.
- Jiang, B., & Tian, L. (2018). Collaborative consumption: strategic and economic

- implications of product sharing. *Management Science*, 64(3), 1171-1188.
- John, N. A. (2012a). Sharing and web 2.0: the emergence of a keyword. *New Media & Society*, 15(2), 167-182.
- John, N. A. (2012b). Some of the social logics of sharing. In W. Sütz, F. Stalder, R. Maier, & T. Hug (Eds.), *Media, Knowledge and Education: Cultures and Ethics of Sharing*. Innsbruck: innsbruck university press.
- John, N. A. (2013a). Sharing, collaborative consumption and web 2.0. *LSE Electronic Working Papers*, No. 26. Retrieved from <http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/mediaWorkingPapers/pdf/EWP26-FINAL.pdf>
- John, N. A. (2013b). The social logics of sharing. *Communication Review*, 16(3), 113-131. doi:10.1080/10714421.2013.807119
- John, N. A. (2016). Sharing. In B. Peters (Ed.), *Digital Keywords : A Vocabulary of Information Society and Culture* (pp. 269-277). New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- John, N. A. (2017). *The age of sharing*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Johnson, R. B. (1997). Examining the validity structure of qualitative research. *Education*, 118(2), 282-292.
- Johnston, J., & Szabo, M. (2011). Reflexivity and the whole foods market consumer: the lived experience of shopping for change. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 28(3), 303-319.
- Joo, J. H. (2017). Motives for participating in sharing economy: intentions to use car sharing services. *Journal of Distribution Science*, 15(2), 21-26.
- Jordan, E. J., & Moore, J. (2017). An in-depth exploration of residents' perceived impacts of transient vacation rentals. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 1-12.
- Ju, Y., Back, K. J., Choi, Y., & Lee, J. S. (2019). Exploring Airbnb service quality attributes and their asymmetric effects on customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 77, 342-352. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.07.014
- Kane, G. C. (2016). Crowd-based capitalism? empowering entrepreneurs in the sharing economy. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 57(3). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1778453874?accountid=16210>  
[http://erlinking.lib.polyu.edu.hk/sfxlcl41?url\\_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft\\_val\\_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&genre=article&sid=ProQ:ProQ%3Aabiglobal&title=Crowd-Based+Capitalism%3F+Empowering+Entrepreneurs+in+the+Sharing+Economy&title=MIT+Sloan+Management+Review&issn=15329194&date=2016-04-01&volume=57&issue=3&spage=&au=Kane%2C+Gerald+C&isbn=&jtitle=MIT](http://erlinking.lib.polyu.edu.hk/sfxlcl41?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&genre=article&sid=ProQ:ProQ%3Aabiglobal&title=Crowd-Based+Capitalism%3F+Empowering+Entrepreneurs+in+the+Sharing+Economy&title=MIT+Sloan+Management+Review&issn=15329194&date=2016-04-01&volume=57&issue=3&spage=&au=Kane%2C+Gerald+C&isbn=&jtitle=MIT)

- Kathan, W., Matzler, K., & Veider, V. (2016). The sharing economy: your business model's friend or foe? *Business Horizons*, 59, 663-672.
- Kazman, R., & Chen, H.-m. (2009). The metropolis model: a new logic for development of crowdsourced systems. *Communications of the ACM*, 52(7), 76-84.
- Kennedy, J. (2013). Rhetorics of sharing: data, imagination, and desire. In G. Lovink & M. Rasch (Eds.), *Unlike Us Reader: Social Media Monopolies and Their Alternative* (pp. 127-136). Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures.
- Kennedy, J. (2016). Conceptual boundaries of sharing. *Information Communication and Society*, 19(4), 461-474. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2015.1046894
- Ketter, E. (2019). Eating with EatWith: analysing tourism-sharing economy consumers. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(9), 1062-1075. doi:10.1080/13683500.2017.1357682
- Khalid, A., Aslam, S., Aurangzeb, K., Haider, S. I., Ashraf, M., & Javaid, N. (2018). An efficient energy management approach using fog-as-a-service for sharing economy in a smart grid. *Energies*, 11(12). doi:10.3390/en11123500
- Kharas, H., & Gertz, G. (2010). The new global middle class: a crossover from West to East. In L. Cheng (Ed.), *China's Emerging Middle Class beyond Economic Transformation*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Kim, S., Lee, K. Y., Koo, C., & Yang, S. (2018). Examining the influencing factors of intention to share accommodations in online hospitality exchange networks. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*.
- Kingdon, J. W. (1984/2014). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. Essex, UK: Pearson Education Limited.
- Koopman, C., Mitchell, M., & Thierer, A. (2015). The sharing economy and consumer protection regulation: the case for policy change. *The Journal of Business, Entrepreneurship & the Law*, 8(2), 529-545.
- Koutsobinas, T. (2014). *The political economy of status: superstars, markets and culture change*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Kovács, B., Morris, J., Polese, A., & Imami, D. (2017). Looking at the 'sharing' economies concept through the prism of informality. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 10, 365-378.
- Kuhnert, K. W., & Lewis, P. (1987). Transactional and transformational leadership: a constructive/developmental analysis. *The Academy of Management Review*, 12(4), 648-657.
- Lambea Llop, N. (2017). A policy approach to the impact of tourist dwellings in condominiums and neighbourhoods in Barcelona. *Urban Research and*

- Practice*, 10(1), 120-129.
- Lamberton, C. P., & Rose, R. L. (2012). When is ours better than mine? A framework for understanding and altering participation in commercial sharing systems. *Journal of Marketing*, 76, 109-125.
- Lawrence, T. B., & Suddaby, R. (2006). Institutions and institutional work. In S. R. Clegg, C. Hardy, T. B. Lawrence, & W. R. Nord (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organization Studies* (2 ed., pp. 215-254). London: SAGE Publications.
- Lawrence, T. B., Suddaby, R., & Leca, B. (2009). Institutional work: actors and agency in institutional studies of organizations. In T. B. Lawrence, R. Suddaby, & B. Leca (Eds.), *Institutional work: Actors and agency in institutional studies of organizations* (pp. 1-27). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Leadbeater, C. (2009). *We think: mass innovation, not mass production*. London: Profile Book.
- Lee, D. (2016). How Airbnb short-term rentals exacerbate Los Angeles's affordable housing crisis: analysis and policy recommendations. *Harvard Law & Policy Review*, 10, 229-253.
- Lee, Z. W. Y., Chan, T. K. H., Balaji, M. S., & Chong, A. Y. L. (2018). Why people participate in the sharing economy: an empirical investigation of Uber. *Internet Research*, 28(3), 829-850. doi:10.1108/IntR-01-2017-0037
- Leonard, A. (2010). *The story of stuff : How our obsession with stuff is trashing the planet, our communities, and our health--and a vision for change*. New York: Free Press.
- Lessig, L. (2008). *Remix: making art and commerce thrive in the hybrid economy*. New York: Penguin.
- Li, H., & Wen, H. (2019). How is motivation generated in collaborative consumption: Mediation effect in extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 11(3). doi:10.3390/su11030640
- Liang, L. J., Choi, H. S. C., & Joppe, M. (2018). Understanding repurchase intention of Airbnb consumers: perceived authenticity, electronic word-of-mouth, and price sensitivity. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 31(1), 73-89.
- Liang, S., Schuckert, M., Law, R., & Chen, C. C. (2017). Be a "Superhost": the importance of badge systems for peer-to-peer rental accommodations. *Tourism Management*, 60, 454-465.
- Light, R. J., Singer, J. D., & Willett, J. B. (1990). *By design: planning research on higher education*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, California: SAGE.

- Lindblom, A., & Lindblom, T. (2017). De-ownership orientation and collaborative consumption during turbulent economic times. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 41, 431-438.
- Lindblom, C. E. (1959). The science of "muddling through". *Public Administration Review*, 19(2), 79-88.
- Lindblom, C. E. (1979). Still muddling, not yet through. *Public Administration Review*, 39(6), 517-526.
- Lipovetsky, G. (2011). The hyperconsumption society. In K. Ekström, M. & K. Glans (Eds.), *Beyond the Consumption Bubble* (pp. 25-36). New York: Routledge.
- Liu, J. K., Zhang, N., Kang, C. Q., Kirschen, D., & Xia, Q. (2017). Cloud energy storage for residential and small commercial consumers: a business case study. *Applied Energy*, 188, 226-236.
- Lombardi, P., & Schwabe, F. (2017). Sharing economy as a new business model for energy storage systems. *Applied Energy*, 188, 485-496.
- Lorde, T., Jacob, J., & Weekes, Q. (2019). Price-setting behavior in a tourism sharing economy accommodation market: A hedonic price analysis of AirBnB hosts in the caribbean. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 30, 251-261. doi:10.1016/j.tmp.2019.03.006
- Lupton, D. (2015). *Digital sociology*. Abingdon, Oxon & New York: Routledge.
- Lyons, G., Mokhtarian, P., Dijst, M., & Böcker, L. (2018). The dynamics of urban metabolism in the face of digitalization and changing lifestyles: Understanding and influencing our cities. *Resources, Conservation & Recycling*, 132, 246-257.
- Möhlmann, M. (2015). Collaborative consumption: determinants of satisfaction and the likelihood of using a sharing economy option again. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 14, 193-207.
- Müller, S. C., & Welp, I. M. (2018). Sharing electricity storage at the community level: An empirical analysis of potential business models and barriers. *Energy Policy*, 118, 492-503.
- Münzel, K., Boon, W., Frenken, K., & Vaskelainen, T. (2018). Carsharing business models in Germany: characteristics, success and future prospects. *Information Systems and e-Business Management*, 16(2), 271-291.
- Ma, H. T., Zhang, X. R., Sun, Y., & Cai, X. S. (2016). *Fen xiang jing ji: gong gei ce gai ge de xin jing ji fang an [Sharing economy: new economy plan for the supply-side reform]*. Beijing, China: China CITIC Press.
- MacInnis, D. J., & Folkes, V. S. (2010). The disciplinary status of consumer behaviour: a sociology of science perspective on key controversies. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(6), 899-914.
- Macpherson, I., Brooker, R., & Ainsworth, P. (2000). Case study in the contemporary

- world of research: using notion of purpose, place, process and product to develop some principles for practice. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 3(1), 49-61.
- Mahmood, D., Javaid, N., Ahmed, I., Alrajeh, N., Niaz, I. A., & Ali Khan, K. (2017). Multi-agent-based sharing power economy for a smart community. *International Journal of Energy Research*, 41(14), 2074-2090.
- Mair, J., & Reischauer, G. (2017). Capturing the dynamics of the sharing economy: institutional research on the plural forms and practices of sharing economy organizations. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 125, 11-20.
- Malin, B. J., & Chandler, C. (2017). Free to work anxiously: splintering precarity among drivers for Uber and Lyft. *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 10(2), 382-400.
- Mao, Z., & Lyu, J. (2017). Why travelers use Airbnb again?: An integrative approach to understanding travelers' repurchase intention. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(9), 2464-2482.
- Martin, C. J. (2016). The sharing economy: a pathway to sustainability or a nightmarish form of neoliberal capitalism? *Ecological Economics*, 121, 149-159.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1988). *Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844*. Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative researching* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE.
- Masoud, N., & Jayakrishnan, R. (2017). A decomposition algorithm to solve the multi-hop peer-to-peer ride-matching problem. *Transportation Research Part B*, 99, 1-29.
- Mathews, G., & Lui, T. L. (2001). *Consuming Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Mauri, A. G., Minazzi, R., Nieto-García, M., & Viglia, G. (2018). Humanize your business. The role of personal reputation in the sharing economy. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 73, 36-43. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85041400539&doi=10.1016%2fj.ijhm.2018.01.017&partnerID=40&md5=616a2f4a799730c0af01f73ab4fe4f22>
- Mauss, M. (1925/2001). *The gift : the form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*. London: London : Routledge.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design* (2 ed.). California, US: SAGE.
- McArthur, E. (2015). Many-to-many exchange without money: why people share their resources. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 18(3), 239-256.
- McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview*. Newbury Park, California SAGE.

- McKee, D. (2017). Neoliberalism and the legality of peer platform markets. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 23, 105-113.
- McMillan, D. W., & Chavis, D. M. (1986). Sense of community: a definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14(1), 6-23.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco: Joosey-Bass.
- Mikhalkina, T., & Cabantous, L. (2015) Business model innovation: how iconic business models emerge. In: *Vol. 33. Advances in Strategic Management* (pp. 59-95): Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.
- Milanova, V., & Maas, P. (2017). Sharing intangibles: uncovering individual motives for engagement in a sharing service setting. *Journal of Business Research*, 75, 159-171.
- Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis : an expanded sourcebook* (2 ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications.
- Miller, S. R. (2016). First principles for regulating the sharing economy. *Harvard Journal on Legislation*, 53(1), 147-202.
- Mingers, J., Mutch, A., & Willcocks, L. (2013). Critical realism in information systems research. *MIS Quarterly*, 37(3), 795-802.
- Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E., & Alexander, L. (1995). *In-depth interviewing: principles, techniques, analysis* (2nd ed.). Melbourne: Longman.
- Miralles, I., Dentoni, D., & Pascucci, S. (2017). Understanding the organization of sharing economy in agri-food systems: evidence from alternative food networks in Valencia. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 34(4), 833-854.
- Mody, M., Hanks, L., & Dogru, T. (2019). Parallel pathways to brand loyalty: Mapping the consequences of authentic consumption experiences for hotels and Airbnb. *Tourism Management*, 74, 65-80. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2019.02.013
- Mody, M. A., Suess, C., & Lehto, X. (2017). The accommodation experiencescape: a comparative assessment of hotels and Airbnb. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(9), 2377-2404. doi:doi:10.1108/IJCHM-09-2016-0501
- Muñoz, P., & Cohen, B. (2017). Mapping out the sharing economy: a configurational approach to sharing business modeling. *Technological Forecasting & Social Change*, 125(21-37).
- Mumford, M. D., Antes, A. L., Caughron, J. J., & Friedrich, T. L. (2008). Charismatic, ideological, and pragmatic leadership: multi-level influences on emergence and performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19(2), 144-160.
- Munger, M. C. (2018). *Tomorrow 3.0 : transaction costs and the sharing economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



- Munkøe, M. M. (2017). Regulating the European sharing economy: state of play and challenges. *Intereconomics*, 52(1), 38-44.
- Murillo, D., Buckland, H., & Val, E. (2017). When the sharing economy becomes neoliberalism on steroids: Unravelling the controversies. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 125(C), 66-76.
- Neeley, S. M., & Cronley, M., L. (2004). When research participants don't tell it like it is: pinpointing the effects of social desirability bias using self Vs. indirect-questioning. In B. E. Kahn & M. F. Luce (Eds.), *NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 3* (pp. 432-433). Valdosta, GA: Association for Consumer Research.
- Netter, S., Pedersen, E. R. G., & Lüdeke-Freund, F. (2019). Sharing economy revisited: Towards a new framework for understanding sharing models. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 221, 224-233. doi:10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.02.225
- Newlands, G., Lutz, C., & Fieseler, C. (2019). The conditioning function of rating mechanisms for consumers in the sharing economy. *Internet Research*. doi:10.1108/INTR-03-2018-0134
- Nicholls, A. (2010). The legitimacy of social entrepreneurship: reflexive isomorphism in a pre-paradigmatic field. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 34(4), 611-633.
- Ozanne, L. K., & Ballantine, P. W. (2010). Sharing as a form of anti-consumption? An examination of toy library users. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 9, 485-498.
- Pang, C., & AFP. (2017, 28 February 2017). Nokia dials back the years with revamped mobile. *The Standard*. Retrieved from <http://www.thestandard.com.hk/section-news.php?id=180174>
- Parigi, P., & State, B. (2014). Disenchanted the world: the impact of technology on relationships. In L. M. Aiello & D. McFarland (Eds.), *Social informatics : 6th International Conference, SocInfo 2014, Barcelona, Spain, November 11-13, 2014. Proceedings (Lecture notes in computer science ; 8851)* (pp. 166-182). Cham: Springer.
- Parker, G. (2016). *Platform revolution : how networked markets are transforming the economy and how to make them work for you* (First edition.. ed.). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Pathak, V., Jena, B., & Kalra, S. (2013). Qualitative research. *Perspectives in Clinical Research*, 4(3), 192.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Clifornia: SAGE.
- Paulauskaite, D., Powell, R., Coca-Stefaniak, J. A., & Morrison, A. M. (2017). Living like a local: authentic tourism experiences and the sharing economy. *International*

- Journal of Tourism Research*, 19(6), 619-628.
- Paundra, J., Rook, L., van Dalen, J., & Ketter, W. (2017). Preferences for car sharing services: effects of instrumental attributes and psychological ownership. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 53, 121-130.
- Pera, R., Viglia, G., & Furlan, R. (2016). Who Am I? How Compelling Self-storytelling Builds Digital Personal Reputation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 35, 44-55. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2015.11.002
- Peter, S., & Park, L. S. C. (2018). Theoretical research: Changing research methodology: Two case studies of critical realism informing social work doctoral research. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 30(1), 65-70.
- Philip, H. E., Ozanne, L. K., & Ballantine, P. W. (2015). Examining temporary disposition and acquisition in peer-to-peer renting. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31(11-12), 1310-1332. doi:10.1080/0267257X.2015.1013490
- Piscicelli, L., Cooper, T., & Fisher, T. (2015). The role of values in collaborative consumption: insights from a product-service system for lending and borrowing in the UK. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 97, 21-29. doi:10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.07.032
- Prettenthaler, F. E., & Steininger, K. W. (1999). From ownership to service use lifestyle: the potential of car sharing. *Ecological Economics*, 28, 443-453.
- Pricewaterhouse Coopers. (2015). *Consumer intelligence series: the sharing economy*. Retrieved from <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/technology/publications/assets/pwc-consumer-intelligence-series-the-sharing-economy.pdf>
- Prieto, M., Baltas, G., & Stan, V. (2017). Car sharing adoption intention in urban areas: what are the key sociodemographic drivers? *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 101, 218-227.
- Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, M. A. (2004). Dimensions of transformational leadership: conceptual and empirical extensions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15(3), 329-354.
- Ravenelle, A. J. (2017). Sharing economy workers: selling, not sharing. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 10(281-295).
- Ravenelle, A. J. (2019). *Hustle and gig : struggling and surviving in the sharing economy*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.
- Richardson, L. (2015). Performing the sharing economy. *Geoforum*, 67, 121-129. doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.11.004
- Rifkin, J. (2014). *The zero marginal cost society: the Internet of things, the collaborative commons, and the eclipse of capitalism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Ritzer, G. (2001). *Explorations in the sociology of consumption: fast food, credit cards and casinos*. London: SAGE.
- Ritzer, G. (2012). "Hyperconsumption" and "hyperdebt": a "hypercritical" analysis. In R. Brubaker, R. M. Lawless, & C. J. Tabb (Eds.), *A Debtor World: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Debt*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ritzer, G., Goodman, D., & Wiedenhof-Murphy, W. (2001). Theories of consumption. In G. Ritzer & B. Smart (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Theory* (pp. 410-427). London: SAGE publications.
- Roelofsen, M., & Minca, C. (2018). The Superhost. Biopolitics, home and community in the Airbnb dream-world of global hospitality. *Geoforum*, 91, 170-181. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85043389216&doi=10.1016%2fj.geoforum.2018.02.021&partnerID=40&md5=c8a29a01d7e8430a94c315b509f113d0>
- Rohlfing, I. (2012). *Case studies and causal inference: an integrative framework*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Roos, D., & Hahn, R. (2017). Does shared consumption affect consumers' values, attitudes, and norms? A panel study. *Journal of Business Research*, 77, 113-123.
- Roos, D., & Hahn, R. (in press). Understanding collaborative consumption: An extension of the theory of planned behavior with value-based personal norms. *Journal of Business Ethics*.
- Rosenblat, A., Levy, K. E. C., Barocas, S., & Hwang, T. (2017). Discriminating tastes: Uber's customer ratings as vehicles for workplace discrimination. *Policy and Internet*, 9(3), 256-279.
- Ryen, A. (2011). Ethics and qualitative research. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research: Issues of Theory, Method and Practice* (3rd ed., pp. 416-438).
- Sacchetto, D. (2017). *An interview with Erik Olin Wright*. Retrieved from <http://www.autonomyinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Interview-1-v2.pdf>
- Saintier, S. (2017). Community energy companies in the UK: a potential model for sustainable development in "local" energy? *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 9(8), 1325.
- Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. London: SAGE.
- Sayer, A. (1992). *Method in social science: a realist approach*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Sayer, A. (2000). *Realism and social science*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Scaraboto, D. (2015). Selling, sharing, and everything in between: the hybrid

- economies of collaborative networks. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42(1), 152-176. doi:10.1093/jcr/ucv004
- Schaefers, T. (2013). Exploring carsharing usage motives: a hierarchical means-end chain analysis. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 47, 69-77.
- Schluchter, W. (1989). *Rationalism, religion, and domination : a Weberian perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schoenberger, E. (1988). From Fordism to flexible accumulation: technology, competitive strategies, and international location. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 6, 245-262.
- Schäfer, P., & Braun, N. (2016). Misuse through short-term rentals on the Berlin housing market. *International Journal of Housing Markets and Analysis*, 9(2), 287-311.
- Scholz, T. (2016a). *Platform cooperativism: challenging the corporate social enterprise*. Retrieved from New York: [http://www.rosalux-nyc.org/wp-content/files\\_mf/scholz\\_platformcoop\\_5.9.2\\_016.pdf](http://www.rosalux-nyc.org/wp-content/files_mf/scholz_platformcoop_5.9.2_016.pdf)
- Scholz, T. (2016b). *Uberworked and underpaid: how workers are disrupting the digital economy*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Schor, J. B. (1998). *The overspent American: Why we want what we don't need*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schor, J. B. (1999). The new politics of consumption: Why Americans want so much more than they need. *Boston Review*, 3-4.
- Schor, J. B. (2014). Debating the sharing economy. Retrieved from <http://www.greattransition.org/publication/debating-the-sharing-economy>
- Schor, J. B. (2017). Does the sharing economy increase inequality within the eighty percent?: findings from a qualitative study of platform providers. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 10, 263-279.
- Schor, J. B., & Attwood-Charles, W. (2017). The “sharing” economy: labor, inequality, and social connection on for-profit platforms. *Sociology Compass*, 11(8).
- Schor, J. B., & Fitzmaurice, C. (2015). Collaborating and connecting: the emergence of the sharing economy. In L. A. Reisch & T. J. (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Sustainable Consumption* (pp. 410-425). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Schor, J. B., Fitzmaurice, C., Carfagna, L. B., Attwood-Charles, W., & Poteat, E. D. (2016). Paradoxes of openness and distinction in the sharing economy. *Poetics*, 54, 66-81. doi:10.1016/j.poetic.2015.11.001
- Selsky, J. W., Ramírez, R., & Babürolu, O. N. (2013). Collaborative capability design: redundancy of potentialities. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 26(5),

- 377-395. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11213-012-9257-5>
- Sewell, W. H. J. (1992). Structure: duality, agency, and transformation. *American Journal of Sociology*, 98(1), 1-29.
- Shaheen, S. A., & Bansal, A. E. I. T. (2015). Perceptions of peer-to-peer carsharing in the San Francisco Bay Area, CA, USA. *Institute of Transportation Engineers. ITE Journal*, 85(5), 39-42. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1682435559?accountid=16210>  
[http://erlinking.lib.polyu.edu.hk/sfxlcl41?url\\_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft\\_val\\_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&genre=article&sid=ProQ:ProQ%3Aabiglobal&atitle=Perceptions+of+Peer-to-Peer+Carsharing+in+the+San+Francisco+Bay+Area%2C+CA%2C+USA&title=Institute+of+Transportation+Engineers.+ITE+Journal&issn=01628178&date=2015-05-01&volume=85&issue=5&spage=39&au=Shaheen%2C+Susan+A%2C+PHD%3BBansal%2C+Apaar%2C+EIT&isbn=&jtitle=Institute+of+Transportation+Engineers.+ITE+Journal&btitle=&rft\\_id=info:eric/&rft\\_id=info:doi/](http://erlinking.lib.polyu.edu.hk/sfxlcl41?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&genre=article&sid=ProQ:ProQ%3Aabiglobal&atitle=Perceptions+of+Peer-to-Peer+Carsharing+in+the+San+Francisco+Bay+Area%2C+CA%2C+USA&title=Institute+of+Transportation+Engineers.+ITE+Journal&issn=01628178&date=2015-05-01&volume=85&issue=5&spage=39&au=Shaheen%2C+Susan+A%2C+PHD%3BBansal%2C+Apaar%2C+EIT&isbn=&jtitle=Institute+of+Transportation+Engineers.+ITE+Journal&btitle=&rft_id=info:eric/&rft_id=info:doi/)
- Shaheen, S. A., Chan, N. D., & Gaynor, T. (2016). Casual carpooling in the San Francisco Bay Area: understanding user characteristics, behaviors, and motivations. *Transport Policy*, 51, 165-173.
- Shaheen, S. A., Mallery, M. A., & Kingsley, K. J. (2012). Personal vehicle sharing services in North America. *Research in Transportation Business and Management*, 3, 71-81. doi:10.1016/j.rtbm.2012.04.005
- Shaheen, S. A., & Nelson, C. (2016). Mobility and the sharing economy: potential to facilitate the first- and last-mile public transit connections. *Built Environment*, 42(4), 573-588.
- Siefkes, C. (2008). *From exchange to contribution: generalizing peer production into the physical world*. Berlin.
- Slee, T. (2015). *What's yours is mine: against the sharing economy*. New York & London: OR Books.
- So, K. K. F., Oh, H., & Min, S. (2018). Motivations and constraints of Airbnb consumers: Findings from a mixed-methods approach. *Tourism Management*, 67, 224-236. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85044371293&doi=10.1016%2fj.tourman.2018.01.009&partnerID=40&md5=5c0e3f5c74ddd7ca860e4161a562c21f>
- Solomon, M. (2017). *Consumer behavior : buying, having, and being* (12 ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Souza, M. F. d. P. d. (2017). Remarks on the real-utopia project: the contribution of an emancipatory social science. *Interações (Campo Grande)*, 18(3), 183-189.

- Stephany, A. (2015). *The business of sharing: making it in the new sharing economy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Sthapit, E., & Jiménez-Barreto, J. (2018). Exploring tourists' memorable hospitality experiences: An Airbnb perspective. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 28, 83-92. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85051644025&doi=10.1016%2fj.tmp.2018.08.006&partnerID=40&md5=512a89060be4b10c07e438afab352eea>
- Stors, N., & Kagermeier, A. (2015). Motives for using Airbnb in metropolitan tourism—why do people sleep in the bed of a stranger? *Regions Magazine*, 299(1), 17-19.
- Sturken, M., & Cartwright, L. (2009). *Practices of looking: an introduction to visual culture* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Suchman, L. A. (2007). *Human-machine reconfigurations : plans and situated actions* (2nd ed.. ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Suddaby, R., & Viale, T. (2011). Professionals and field-level change: institutional work and the professional project. *Current Sociology*, 59(4), 423-442.
- Sun, N., Liu, D., Zhu, A., Chen, Y., & Yuan, Y. (2019). Do Airbnb's "Superhosts" deserve the badge? An empirical study from China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 24(4), 296-313. doi:10.1080/10941665.2018.1564342
- Sundararajan, A. (2016). *The sharing economy: the end of employment and the rise of crowd-based capitalism*. London, England: The MIT Press.
- Tönnies, F. (1893/2001). *Community and civil society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taeihagh, A. (2017). Crowdsourcing, sharing economies and development. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 33(2), 191-222.
- Tapscott, D., & Williams, A. (2006). *Wikinomics: How mass collaboration changes everything*. New York: Portfolio.
- Teubner, T., & Flath, C. M. (2015). The economics of multi-hop ride sharing: creating new mobility networks through IS. *Business and Information Systems Engineering*, 57(5), 311-324.
- The Green Earth. (n.d.). Green bottle charter. Retrieved from <http://greenearth-hk.org/en/greenbottle/>
- The World Bank. (n.d.). Households and NPISHs final consumption expenditure per capita (constant 2010 US\$). Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.CON.PRVT.PC.KD?locations=HK>
- Thomas, J., & Harden, A. (2008). Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 8(45).

- Tjaden, J. D., Schwemmer, C., & Khadjavi, M. (2018). Ride with me - Ethnic discrimination, social markets, and the sharing economy. *European Sociological Review*, 34(4), 418-432. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85056824097&doi=10.1093%2fesor%2fjcy024&partnerID=40&md5=413c374567c79648f30c128ff91b15a6>
- Todolí-Signes, A. (2017). The 'gig economy': employee, self-employed or the need for a special employment regulation? *Transfer*, 23(2), 193-205.
- Tussyadiah, I. P. (2015). An exploratory study on drivers and deterrents of collaborative consumption in travel. In I. P. Tussyadiah & A. Inversini (Eds.), *Information & Communication Technologies in Tourism 2015*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Tussyadiah, I. P. (2016). Factors of satisfaction and intention to use peer-to-peer accommodation. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 55, 70-80. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.03.005
- Tussyadiah, I. P., & Pesonen, J. (2015). Impacts of peer-to-peer accommodation use on travel patterns. *Journal of Travel Research*, 55(8), 1022-1040.
- Tyndall, J. (2017). Where no cars go: free-floating carshare and inequality of access. *International Journal of Sustainable Transportation*, 11(6), 433-442.
- van Dierendonck, D., Stam, D., Boersma, P., de Windt, N., & Alkema, J. (2014). Same difference? Exploring the differential mechanisms linking servant leadership and transformational leadership to follower outcomes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25(3), 544-562.
- Varma, A., Jukic, N., Pestek, A., Shultz, C. J., & Nestorov, S. (2016). Airbnb: exciting innovation or passing fad? *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 20, 228-237.
- Verboven, H., & Vanherck, L. (2016). The sustainability paradox of the sharing economy. *Umwelt Wirtschafts Forum*, 24(4), 303-314.
- von Hoffen, M., Hagge, M., Betzing, J. H., & Chasin, F. (2017). Leveraging social media to gain insights into service delivery: a study on Airbnb. *Information Systems and e-Business Management*.
- Wachsmuth, D., & Weisler, A. (2018). Airbnb and the rent gap: Gentrification through the sharing economy. *Environment and Planning A*, 50(6), 1147-1170. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85049011288&doi=10.1177%2f0308518X18778038&partnerID=40&md5=e8db95a3f9afa803baa1e0bc6a984453>
- Wahyuningtyas, S. Y. (2016). The online transportation network in Indonesia: a pendulum between the sharing economy and ex ante regulation. *Competition*

- and Regulation in Network Industries*, 17(3-4), 260-280.
- Waite, L., & Lewis, H. (2017). Precarious irregular migrants and their sharing economies: a spectrum of transactional laboring experiences. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 107(4), 964-978.
- Walsh, B. (2011). Today's smart choice: Don't own. Share. *TIME*. Retrieved from [http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2059521\\_2\\_059717\\_2059710,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2059521_2_059717_2059710,00.html)
- Wang, C. R., & Jeong, M. (2018). What makes you choose Airbnb again? An examination of users' perceptions toward the website and their stay. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 74, 162-170. Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85047066026&doi=10.1016%2fj.ijhm.2018.04.006&partnerID=40&md5=81b7c227fa24f5ae6955e39805f16d67>
- Wang, D., & Nicolau, J. L. (2017). Price determinants of sharing economy based accommodation rental: a study of listings from 33 cities on Airbnb.com. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 67, 120-131.
- Wang, Y. B., & C.W., H. (2017). No money? No problem! The value of sustainability: social capital drives the relationship among customer identification and citizenship behavior in sharing economy. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 9(8).
- Warde, A., & Martens, L. (2000). *Eating out: social differentiation, consumption and pleasure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Widlok, T. (2004). Sharing by default? Outline of an anthropology of virtue. *Anthropological Theory*, 4(1), 53-70.
- Widlok, T. (2013). Sharing: allowing others to take what is valued. *Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 3(2), 11-31.
- Widlok, T. (2017). *Anthropology and the economy of sharing*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.
- Wittel, A. (2011). Qualities of sharing and their transformations in the digital age. *International Review of Information Ethics*, 15(9), 3-8.
- Woodiwiss, A. (2005). *Scoping thr social: an introduction to the practice of social theory*. UK: Open University Press.
- World Medical Association. (2013). World Medical Association declaration of Helsinki: ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects. *Journal of American Medical Association*, 310(20), 2191-2194.
- World Wildlife Fund Hong Kong. (2016). *The sustainable seafood movement in Hong Kong: progress, prospects and challenges*. Retrieved from [https://d3q9070b7kewus.cloudfront.net/downloads/wwf\\_seafood\\_industry](https://d3q9070b7kewus.cloudfront.net/downloads/wwf_seafood_industry)



[report\\_june8\\_2\\_1.pdf](#)

- World Wildlife Fund Hong Kong. (2017). *Earth 3.9*. Retrieved from [http://awsassets.wwfhk.panda.org/downloads/wwf footprint leaflet eng 2 Ooct.pdf](http://awsassets.wwfhk.panda.org/downloads/wwf_footprint_leaflet_eng_2_Ooct.pdf)
- Wright, E. O. (1979). *Class, crisis and the state*. London: Verso.
- Wright, E. O. (1994). *Interrogating inequality : essays on class analysis, Socialism and Marxism*. London: Verso.
- Wright, E. O. (2006). Compass points: towards a socialist alternative. *New Left Review*, 41, 93-124.
- Wright, E. O. (2007). Guidelines of envisioning real utopias. *Soundings*, 36, 26-39.
- Wright, E. O. (2010). *Envisioning real utopias*. London: Verso.
- Wright, E. O. (2011). Real utopias. *Contexts*, 10(2), 36-42.
- Wright, E. O. (2012a). On Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias*, London and New York, NY, Verso, 2010: Taking the social in socialism seriously. *Socio-Economic Review*, 10(2), 369-402. doi:10.1093/ser/mwr032
- Wright, E. O. (2012b). Reply to comments on envisioning real utopias. *New Political Science*, 34(3), 395-404.
- Wright, E. O. (2013). Transforming capitalism through real utopias. *American Sociological Review*, 78(1), 1-25.
- Wright, E. O. (2016a). How to be an anti-capitalist for the 21st century. *The Journal of Australian Political Economy*(77), 5-23. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1796235225?accountid=16210>  
[http://erlinking.lib.polyu.edu.hk/sfxlcl41?url\\_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft\\_val\\_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&genre=article&sid=ProQ:ProQ%3Aabiglobal&atitle=HOW+TO+BE+AN+ANTI-CAPITALIST+FOR+THE+21ST+CENTURY&title=The+Journal+of+Australian+Political+Economy&issn=01565826&date=2016-01-01&volume=&issue=77&spage=5&au=Wright%2C+Erik+Olin&isbn=&jtitle=The+Journal+of+Australian+Political+Economy&bttitle=&rft\\_id=info:eric/&rft\\_id=info:doi/](http://erlinking.lib.polyu.edu.hk/sfxlcl41?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&genre=article&sid=ProQ:ProQ%3Aabiglobal&atitle=HOW+TO+BE+AN+ANTI-CAPITALIST+FOR+THE+21ST+CENTURY&title=The+Journal+of+Australian+Political+Economy&issn=01565826&date=2016-01-01&volume=&issue=77&spage=5&au=Wright%2C+Erik+Olin&isbn=&jtitle=The+Journal+of+Australian+Political+Economy&bttitle=&rft_id=info:eric/&rft_id=info:doi/)
- Wright, E. O. (2016b). Real utopias and dilemmas of institutional transformation. *Justice, Power and Resistance, Foundation Volume*, 33-52.
- Wright, E. O. (2017a). The destination beyond capitalism: socialism as economic democracy. Retrieved from [https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/How%20to%20be%20an%20anticapitalis/Chapter%204.%20Socialism%20as%20economic%20democracy%20--%20v%202.1%20\(November%202017\).pdf](https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/How%20to%20be%20an%20anticapitalis/Chapter%204.%20Socialism%20as%20economic%20democracy%20--%20v%202.1%20(November%202017).pdf)
- Wright, E. O. (2017b). Varieties of anti-capitalism. Retrieved from [https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/How%20to%20be%20an%20anticapitalis/Chapter%203.%20Varieties%20of%20Anti-capitalism%20--%20v.8.1%20\(Dece](https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/How%20to%20be%20an%20anticapitalis/Chapter%203.%20Varieties%20of%20Anti-capitalism%20--%20v.8.1%20(Dece)

[mber%202017\).pdf](#)

- Wright, E. O. (2017c). Why be an anti-capitalist. Retrieved from [https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/How%20to%20be%20an%20anticapitalis/Chapter%201.%20Why%20be%20an%20anticapitalist%20-%20draft%202.1.2%20\(October%202017\).pdf](https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/How%20to%20be%20an%20anticapitalis/Chapter%201.%20Why%20be%20an%20anticapitalist%20-%20draft%202.1.2%20(October%202017).pdf)
- Wright, E. O., Levine, A., & Sober, E. (1992). *Reconstructing Marxism : essays on explanation and the theory of history*. London ; New York: Verso.
- Wright, E. O., & Rogers, J. (2011). *American society : How it really works*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Wynn, D., & Williams, C. K. (2012). Principles for conducting critical realist case study research in information systems. *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, 36(3), 787-810.
- Xie, K. L., & Kwok, L. (2017). The effects of Airbnb's price positioning on hotel performance. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 67, 174-184.
- Xu, G., Li, M., Chen, C. H., & Wei, Y. (2018). Cloud asset-enabled integrated IoT platform for lean prefabricated construction. *Automation in Construction*, 93, 123-134. doi:10.1016/j.autcon.2018.05.012
- Yang, S., & Ahn, S. (2016). Impact of motivation in the sharing economy and perceived security in attitude and loyalty toward Airbnb. *Advanced Science and Technology Letters*, 129, 180-184.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Yin, R. K. (2013). Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations. *Evaluation*, 19(3), 312-332.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Yorges, S. L., Weiss, H. M., & Strickland, O. J. (1999). The effect of leader outcome of influence, attributions, and perceptions of charisma. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84(3), 428-436.
- Yukl, G. (1999). An evaluation of conceptual weaknesses in transformational and charismatic leadership theories. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 10(2), 285-305.
- Zahariadis, N. (2014). Ambiguity and multiple streams. In C. Weible & P. Sabatier (Eds.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (4 ed., pp. 25-58). US: Westview Press.
- Zervas, G., Proserpio, D., & Byers, J. W. (2017). The rise of the sharing economy: estimating the impact of airbnb on the hotel industry. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 54(5), 687-705.
- Zhu, Y. (2013). *Lost in transition : Hong Kong culture in the age of China*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Zuleta Ferrari, M. (2016). Beyond uncertainties in the sharing economy: opportunities for social capital. *European Journal of Risk Regulation*, 7(4), 664-674.

Zwick, A. (2018). Welcome to the gig economy: neoliberal industrial relations and the case of Uber. *GeoJournal*, 83(4), 679-691.