

# SHARING ECONOMY AND THE TRENDS OF PUBLICATIONS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

## *ECONOMIA DO COMPARTILHAMENTO (EC) E AS TENDÊNCIAS DAS PUBLICAÇÕES: UMA REVISÃO SISTEMÁTICA DE LITERATURA*

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This paper investigates the phenomenon of Sharing Economy (EC) and aims to propose a literary analyse of the main trends in which EC is being studied.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Literature review. The present paper was built upon a survey on the scientific data platforms Scopus, Web of Science, Science Direct and Springer databases. We selected 146 papers extracted from raw data, which were then analyzed by content.

**Findings:** In the analyzed papers, 06 main scientific biases were identified in which EC is studied, namely: business models for generating value and profit; business models that migrate from ownership orientation to access focused; sustainable business in a changing society; new ways of working; regulatory aspects and conceptual framework analyses.

**Originality:** In a diverse Field such as EC, with different scientific approaches, 02 stand out the most: the first is the one of “social change”, caused by a change in perspective, in which sharing continues to replace ownership, the second one refers to the emergence of new business models that are focused on building up organizational value and monetary profit, and don’t necessarily intend to affect positive change, neither socially nor environmentally. This paper analyzes the main scientific biases identified, under which the EC has been studied. The findings indicate paths for further investigations by future researchers interested in this scientific Field, based upon what has been studied so far.

**Keywords:** Sharing Economy (EC), EC conceptualization, business model, literature review.

**Paper type:** Literature review.

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Este artigo investiga o fenômeno da Economia do Compartilhamento (CE) e tem como objetivo identificar e discutir as principais tendências em que a CE está sendo discutida.

**Desenho / metodologia / abordagem:** Revisão da literatura. O presente artigo fez um levantamento nas bases de dados Scopus, Web of Science, Science Direct e Springer. 146 artigos foram analisados com base em uma análise de conteúdo.

**Resultados:** Nos artigos analisados, foram identificados 06 vieses principais de pesquisa em que se discute a EC, sendo: modelos de negócios para geração de valor e lucro; modelos de negócios que migram da orientação da posse para o acesso; negócios sustentáveis em uma sociedade em mudança; novas formas de trabalho; aspectos regulatórios e discussão conceitual.

**Originalidade:** Em um campo diverso como a EC, que percorre caminhos diversos, em que se destacam pelo menos 02 formas contrastantes, como: a mudança social, ocasionada por uma mudança de perspectiva, em que o compartilhamento segue em substituição à posse, ou o surgimento de novos modelos de negócios, que independem do benefício ambiental e social, mas visa o alcance do valor e lucro organizacional. Este artigo, ao identificar e discutir os vieses em que a EC tem sido trabalhada na literatura elucida os principais vieses de pesquisa seguidos pelos pesquisadores do campo. Tal elucidação se torna fundamental a fim de guiar novas pesquisas, em se levará em consideração o rumo que os estudos têm seguido.

**Palavras-chave:** Economia do Compartilhamento (EC), conceituação da EC, modelo de negócios, revisão sistemática de literatura.

**Tipo de artigo:** Revisão de literatura.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the current framework of Western modern civilization, a considerable number of studies addressed how society, currently, could be moving towards something different. Authors such as Bauman (1998) comment on the possibility that we are living in a transition between the modern age towards the unknown—a world where the social, cultural, and economic relations of the modern age would soon no longer exist.

Bauman (1998) discusses this advancement towards the unknown, indicating clues, but does not risk a more solid guess about what society would actually become in a post-modernity context. Unlike Bauman (1998), more incisive hypothesis are offered by other authors such as Rifkin (2014). The latter treats humanity, and capitalism itself, as undergoing a time of transformation, in which capitalist economic relations would be giving way to another type of relationship: that of sharing on a global level.

This sharing referred by Rifkin (2014) gets better detailed when Botsman and Rogers (2011), Schor (2014), among others, list so-called shared experiences. What was first discussed theoretically by Rifkin (2014) comes to be understood as a field of practices, consisting of experiences in society and the market, where one could observe organizations and business models supposedly based on sharing. Such experiences are now studied in a field of practice called Sharing Economy (SE).

Researchers first defined SE as more than a new business model, but a new way of living in society, in which ownership relations give way to access (Botsman & Rogers, 2011; Schor, 2014). According to the authors, unlike traditional capitalism, society is gradually changing producing new ways of relating based on the exchange of goods, products, and experiences, obtaining mutual benefits, including but not limited to financial benefits.

For Schor (2014) the act of sharing is not a new practice, being observed in societies through exchanges between neighbors, hitchhiking, garage sales, among other related actions. But these ac-

tions, which were local, became globalized. According to the author, sharing economy globalization is facilitated by the advancement of technology, the internet, and the possibility of networking. From this perspective, technology transformed sharing into a global phenomenon.

As a global phenomenon, SE practices worldwide are diverse, such as sharing workplaces (*coworking*), houses or parts of them (*colodging*), cars (*carsharing*), free seats in cars (*carpooling*), financing (*crowdfunding*) and collective knowledge construction (*crowdsourcing*). Giant players like Airbnb (*colodging*), Kickstarter (*crowdfunding*), and BlaBlaCar (*carpooling*) are examples of organizations that stand out in the market. Studies show that these experiences and, in a way, organizational models have gradually expanded over the years (Ramalho & Silva Júnior, 2016).

According to Ramalho and Silva Júnior (2016), SE studies have been expanding due to its fertile ground: globalization and the expansion of the internet. That is, SE businesses use technology and networks to market services and products, therefore finding a favorable scenario for their development.

Given the development of these types of businesses, which seek to trace a path and try to solve capitalism's regular crises, efforts were made to understand them (Schor, 2014). According to Schor (2014), these efforts initially sought to study organizations that established more sustainable businesses and ways of living and promoted a change of social perspective (from ownership to access). Aloni (2016) points out, however, that subsequent studies about SE began to cover a greater number of experiences that, at times, escaped the first sharing proposal discussed.

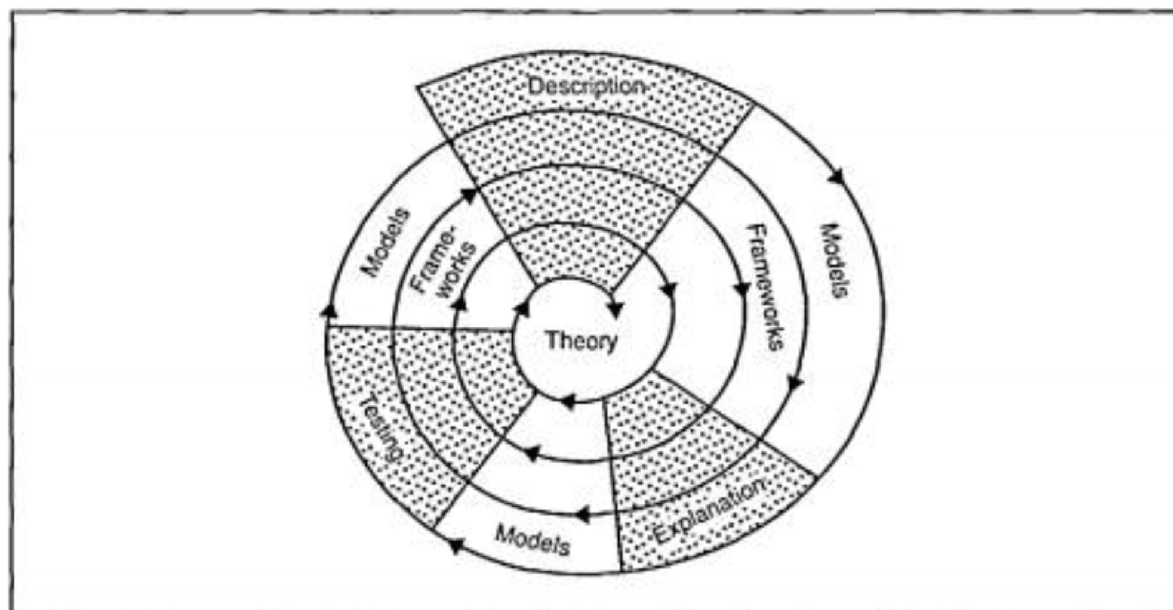
Several organizations started then to be studied under SE (Sutherland & Jahari, 2018); organizations related or not to sharing, to reaching sustainability, or promoting changes in the social perspective. Reviewing the literature, Sutherland and Jahari (2018) identified a conceptual diversity in which fundamentally different organizations, such as *Airbnb* and *couchsurfing*, are studied under the same scope.

Such conceptual diversity can be traced by comparing the published studies. In Belk (2007, 2014), for example, SE is treated as a trend of change in social perspective, that of ownership to access and the search for sustainability. Later, this approach was criticized by authors such as Villanova (2015), Cerveró *et al.* (2014), Martin (2016) and Aloni (2016), who examined practices until then understood as SE, such as *Uber* and *Airbnb*, that do not share the trends seen in Belk (2014) but are studied from this perspective.

When organizations like *Uber* and *Airbnb* are understood as SE, they mainly question the field and its real purpose of change compared to the traditional economy. Aloni (2016), for example, consider that organizations such as *Uber* guard great similarity to the traditional economy and do not represent a revolutionary proposal. Still, many of the studies on SE consider *Uber* and or similar companies as examples of organizations within the field of SE. Sutherland and Jahari (2018), for example, note that most studies on SE present *Uber* and *Airbnb* as empirical examples of SE.

The observed lack of conceptual clarity is not exclusive to SE, being common in the analysis of emerging social phenomena (Meredith, 1993). Meredith (1993) uses the "normal research cycle" to explain that every research phenomenon undergoes a cycle of interactions between phases (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The normal research cycle



Source: Meredith (1993, p.05).

As an emerging phenomenon, SE would be situated in the transitional phase between description and explanation (Acquier, Daudigeos, & Pinkse, 2017; Netter, Pedersen, & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019). Being at this stage, Acquier *et al.* (2017) indicate the need for propositions and discussion of conceptual models that reflect the knowledge built so far and suggest possible research paths for further theory building and new models (Acquier *et al.*, 2017).

To understand the SE field, this article seeks to identify the conceptualizations proposed by the studies published so far. For the field to advance theoretically to the next phase described by Meredith (1993), that of the construction of explanatory models, one must understand the directions or biases, as we call them, assumed by studies on SE.

Biases are the authors' perspectives, approaches or paths of research. To understand them is to make it possible to identify not only the authors' choices and points of view, but also to perceive some of the directions taken by a very diverse field of studies. Obviously, it is not our intention to discuss all the biases found. The very diversity of the field makes such an undertaking impossible. But it was possible to present the most frequent biases found among the studies analyzed.

We first observed two major opposing trends in the set of SE studies. On the one hand, SE is approached as a field of practice that seeks to break away from the traditional economy (Botsman & Rogers, 2011; Schor, 2014; Belk, 2014); on the other, it is understood as a new form of profitable business, independent from environmental and social benefit (Martin, 2016; Aloni, 2016; Cerveró *et al.*, 2014).

Looking to identify the possible scientific biases within these two major trends, the present study posed the following questions: What are the researchers investigating in the field of SE? What are the main biases in the published studies?

Thus, this work **presents the main scientific biases found in SE studies**. We identified two opposing poles—social disruption and a new way of doing business—, and between these poles, research biases (research approaches and trends).

Methodologically, this article employs techniques for mapping a field, namely the systematic literature review (SLR) and the *Science Mapping*, which was performed according to Aria and

Cuccurullo (2017). We used the *Bibliometrix* package run on RStudio to search for the most relevant articles in the field and extract basic raw data. After this extraction, we began a more in-depth analysis, choosing the suitable data for the final analysis portfolio.

The biases found were thus named: business models for generating value and profit; business that migrate from ownership-oriented to access-focused models; sustainable business; new forms of working; regulatory aspects; and conceptual framework analyses. The article discusses what constitutes each of these biases and how SE, based on the studies analyzed, has established itself as a field of practice. That is, what elements were discussed and the main paths of research undertaken.

## 2 METODOLOGIA

In its search to identify the main research biases and the paths treaded by SE as a field of knowledge, the present work adopted a descriptive approach based on the systematic literature review (SLR). The main difference between SLR and a common review is the adoption of data extraction and processing protocols. Based on Vries, Bekkers, and Tummers (2016), our review consisted of four stages: (1) identifying the articles by blocks of keywords; (2) screening the articles according to the research questions; (3) applying the eligibility criteria to the data extracted; (4) selecting articles for data summarization and analysis.

To contemplate the steps suggested by De Vries, Bekkers, and Tummers (2016), we conducted a search in the international databases Scopus and Web of Science using *Science Mapping*. Data extraction, in turn, was performed using the *Bibliometrix* package for *RStudio*, a software that, according to Broadus (1987), looks for the most relevant publications in a field of study—i.e., most cited, of highest impact factor—, the production in the field per year, and the clusters and research networks within it.

*Science Mapping* was performed according to Aria and Cuccurullo (2017):

1 – Generate files with raw data from papers selected in the databases according to the protocol criteria.

2 – Extract the data in raw format (meta-data). Here, the tool used for this stage was the *Bibliometrix* package for *RStudio*.

3 – Analyze bibliometrics in *browser Biblioshiny* and obtain primary bibliometric data.

4 – Import data from CSV file into *RStudio*, adjust data and sort by *Methodi Ordinatio* (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017)<sup>1</sup>.

We searched for articles published between 2008 and 2019, containing in their title, abstract or keywords the descriptors: “sharing economy” OR “collaborative economy” OR “gig economy” OR “on-demand economy.” The descriptors were chosen based on exploratory research by Sutherland and Jahari (2018), which found that the topic of SE was identified by these main terms. Since the *bibliometrix* package included only the *Scopus* and a *Web of Science* databases, we opted for manually inserting the articles found in the *Science Direct* and *Springer* databases, also used by Silveira, Petrini and Dos Santos (2016), using the same search criteria mentioned above.

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1 Equation of *Methodi Ordinatio* =  $\alpha * FI + \beta * [10 - (\text{Research Year} - \text{Publication Year})] + \gamma * Ci$

Where:

$\alpha$  = weight given to the Impact Factor. Usually 1.

FI = Impact Factor on the JCR of the journal where the paper was published.

$\beta$  = weight given to the most recent publication. Usually 1, ranging from 1 to 10.

$\gamma$  = weight given to the number of citations of the paper. Usually 1.

Ci = number of citations of the paper.

(Pagani, Kovaleski & Resende, 2015).



The search returned a total of 1371 articles. Given this extensive number and to allow for analysis, we established the following eligibility criteria: classification equal to or above B1 by QUALIS Capes; Journal Citation Reports (JCR) above 1491, used according to the CAPES equivalence table; journals related to administration, tourism and accounting. By applying the criteria and removing duplicates, 1216 articles were excluded.

From the remaining 155 articles, we also excluded nine articles that, even if published in journals related to the established areas and containing the searched descriptors, addressed topics unrelated to SE. This occurred due to the ambiguity of terms like “gig economy,” which is used by Peterson, Crittenden, and Albaum (2018), for example, to describe freelancers or self-employed workers, topic unrelated to the field of SE. At the end of this process, 146 articles remained to be analyzed.

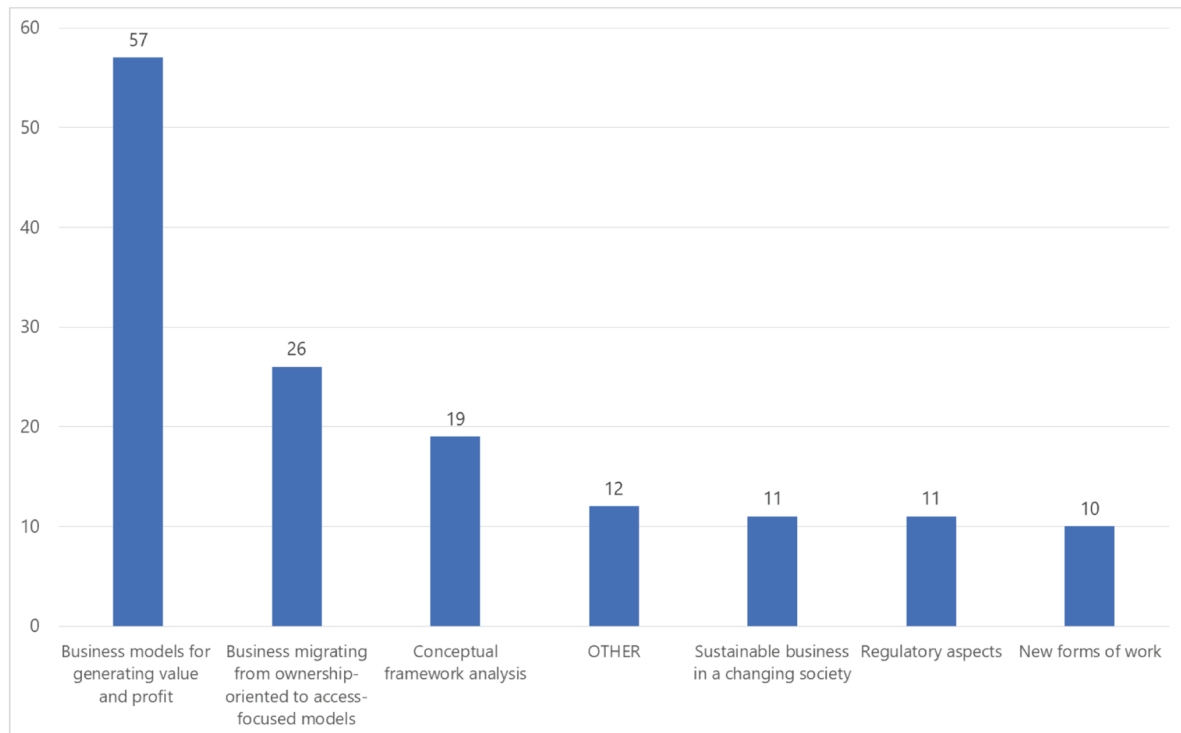
The analysis was conducted in two stages: 1) summarization of the articles and 2) content analysis (Bardin, 2006). For summarization, the selected articles were read and systematized according to: (1) study type, (2) author(s), (3) title, (4) year of study, (5) theoretical basis, (6) approaches, and (7) main conclusions of the study.

After summarization, the articles were organized based on their content and divided into groups according to research bias. Each group was analyzed according to Silverman (2006), to whom content analysis can be performed by grouping correlated topics. The analyses thus sought a general understanding of what each article discussed to identify the main research biases in the literature under study.

Six main research biases were identified: a) business models for generating value and profit; b) business that migrate from ownership-oriented to access-focused models; c) sustainable business in a changing society; d) new forms of work; e) regulatory aspects; and f) conceptual framework analyses. Studies that did not fit the above biases were classified as “other.” These addressed diverse topics such as corporate governance in SE and self-employed workers in general. Figure 2 shows the number of articles and their respective biases found in the SLR.



Figure 2: Number of articles in each research bias



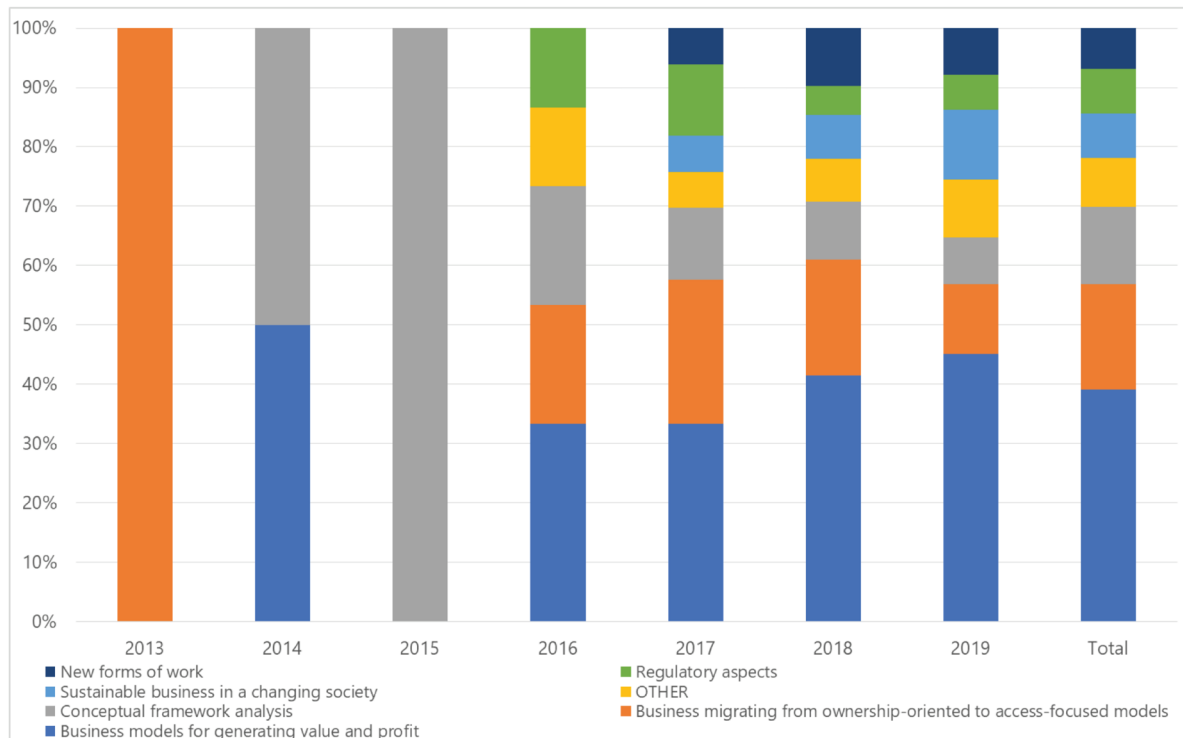
Source: Own elaboration from research data (2020)

### 3 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Distributed between 49 journals, published from 2013 to 2019, the 146 articles analyzed accounted for six research biases, presented by year of publication in Figure 3.

In our review, the first paper found about Sharing Economy was published in 2013 and addressed SE as a new lifestyle in progress (Molz, 2013). The following year, two more articles were published: one discussing the concept of sharing in relation to the act of distributing and receiving personal goods, generating own and collective benefits (Belk, 2014); and another addressing SE as a new business model, pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of eliminating an intermediary in business (Weber, 2014). In 2016 the number of publications jumps to 15 and expands in the following years.

Figure 3: Studies per year and research biases



Source: Own elaboration from research data (2020).

Table 1 shows the research biases found and the elements each of them addresses. Next, we discuss the content analysis of the identified research biases, thus presenting an overview of the SE field, albeit incomplete.



Table 1: Research biases in the field of Sharing Economy.

	Main elements addressed	Number of articles
Business models for generating value and profit	Ways to achieve competitive differential and profit using technologies and network organizations (identification of new consumption and distribution patterns; reduction of transaction costs; relational marketing).	57
Business migrating from ownership-oriented to access-focused models	New forms of living in society; consumer identity; voluntarism; peer connection; social cohesion; role of social capital in business	26
Conceptual framework analysis	Definition and characterization of SE; research agendas; theoretical review of previous articles; bibliometric studies	19
Regulatory aspects	How legislation has addressed new forms of business; principles and challenges for regulating initiatives inserted within SE.	11
Sustainable business in a changing society	Organizations and their environmental, economic and social impact	11
New forms of work	Labor relations in initiatives within SE (labor exploitation; labor flexibilization)	10
OTHER		12

Source: Own elaboration from research data (2020).

The non detailing of the topics “conceptual framework analysis” and “other”, respectively, results from the fact that both did not indicate trends in SE studies. On the first, we found articles mainly analyzed definitions and categorizations, as well as reviews of previous works. The second groups papers that address isolated topics that not refers to SE specifically, such as Chenga and Foley’s (2018), that treats about discrimination in Airbnb, and therefore does not constitute a trend.



### 3.1 Business models for generating value and profit

This research bias includes studies that approach SE from a market perspective, understood as business models (Laurell and Sandström, 2017). Although these studies consider SE as a complex social phenomenon that involves society and users in different spheres, their main focus is on analysis of the organization-market relationship and on the factors that generate competitive differential and organizational profit.

Regarding the organization-market relationship, the study by Zhang, Gu, and Jahromi (2018), conducted with *Amazon* users, identified a new consumer profile that mainly values elements such as price, social interaction, personal identification with the product or service purchased, and technical quality in commercial transactions. Given this change in customer perspective, organizations modified and adapted themselves to conform to this new market.

Most of the articles reviewed discuss this conformation to the new market and consumer profile, investigating the customer needs and their perception of value, i.e., what this new customer seeks in a business and how they connect to the service or product being consumed. These elements are discussed to understand the needs of the consumer public of SE organizations. Most studies analyzed *Uber* and *Airbnb*, notably through quantitative user surveys (Costa, Pine, & Chim-Miki, 2018; Richter, Kraus, Brem, Durst, & Giselbrecht, 2017; Huarng, 2018; Yu, Seo, & Choi, 2019; Park & Armstrong, 2017; Tussyadiah, 2016; Mody, Suess, & Lehto, 2018; Cheng, Fu, & Vreede, 2018).

Most authors understand that such initiatives are facilitated by the evolution of the internet and peer-to-peer networks (Zhu, So, & Hudson, 2017; Kumar, Lahiri, & Dogan, 2018; Kwok & Xie, 2018). As verified by Guttentag and Smith (2017) when researching *Airbnb*, through technology and the internet, networks connect consumers with each other, reducing transaction costs and making it possible to offer a product or service at lower prices (Gibbs, Guttentag, Gretzel, Yao, & Morton, 2018; Weber, 2014, 2016; Schwieterman & Bieszczat, 2017; Sun, Teunter, Babai, & Hua, 2019).

When investigating elements such as customer-organization relations and transaction costs, most authors describe how SE organizations operate and behave in a new competitive environment.

The organization-market relationship, however, is a complex one. Jin *et al.* (2018), for example, note that broader social changes, including in social relations beyond the scope of the market, influence society's way of doing business and consequently the organization-market relationship itself. But even when this complexity is recognized, studies using this approach highlight the organization-market relationship and not its complex relationship with society.

Importantly, most articles within the 'business models for generating value and profit' bias consider SE as a context of application and not as a theory; their goal therefore is to understand the researched organization and not the broader social scope in which they are situated.

### 3.2 Business that change from ownership-oriented to access-focused models

Articles within this approach address SE beyond the marketing bias—i.e., beyond the organization-market relationship—, investigating culture and social aspects linked to SE practices. These studies, therefore, see SE organizations as situated in a broader context and address different experiences and practices, inviting readers to reflect on the complexity of the phenomenon. Jin *et al.* (2018) state that such works provide greater depth to sharing economy, going beyond the organization-market relationship and considering the peer-to-peer relationship, which may or may not be related to the idea of the market itself.

This category of studies focuses on how society approaches sharing rather than on the role of organizations, and is characterized by the growing number of experiences related to sharing solutions to acquire market products and services. Under this bias, sharing economy is understood as a consequence of a society that values identity, relationships, and social cohesion (Camilleri & Neuhofer, 2017; Gupta, Esmailzadeh, Uz, & Tennant, 2019; Lindblom & Lindblom, 2019; Lindblom & Lindblom, 2017; Molz, 2013; Priporas, Stylos, Rahimi, & Vedanthachari, 2017; Roos & Hahn, 2017).

Karlsson, Kemperman, and Dolnicar (2017), for example, analyzed the shift in perspective from ownership to access. The authors point out that by participating in home sharing, people create bonds through shared experiences, with the guest and host perceiving a value beyond the financial. This value is precisely the result of shared experiences that create social bonds.

Karlsson, Kemperman, and Dolnicar (2017), however, do not ignore the financial benefit brought to both sides: those who host receive a financial reward and those who are hosted pay less for the service. But the social benefit received by means of shared experiences remains the prominent element in home sharing. According to the authors, this aspect has led many people to seek this new form of accommodation, regardless of price.

Consumer identity, based on social relations and the perceived benefits derived therein, is a recurrent topic in most articles using this approach, based on the assumption that a changing society requires new forms of consumption and new market products and services. Although these studies account for less than half (26) of the total studies with a marketing bias (57) in the present research, this is the second most representative bias. This result suggests that approaching SE from the perspective of a changing society has gained prominence in the literature.

Laamanen, Wahlen, and Lorek (2018) argue that this new way of living in society, that of sharing, has emerged from the successive capitalist crises and is gradually developing. The idea of sustainability plays a prominent role in this process of social change and migration from traditional practices to sharing practices.

### 3.3 Sustainable business in a changing society

Laamanen *et al.* (2018) point out that these new forms of consumption and trade stem in part from society's awareness over the years that its production and trade of "disposable" products is no longer adequate and will likely lead to the collapse of the planet, leading to a cultural shift towards more sustainable forms to trade.

Most studies within this SE bias discuss sustainability to a greater or lesser degree. Authors addressing the concept and practice of sustainability in the marketing of sharing products and services argue that environmental, social, and economic balance is inherent to these activities.

From this perspective, the practice of sustainability is possible for two main reasons: first, the change in society's mentality, in which sustainability has become the new way of living on the planet; and second, the new technological advances and the building of peer-to-peer networks are geared towards the pursuit of sustainability (Vith, Oberg, Höllerer, & Meyer, 2019; Harvey *et al.*, 2019; Hawlitschek, Notheisen, & Teubner, 2018).

The study by Leung, Xue, and Wen (2019), for example, discusses corporate sustainability and the very idea of a sustainable society from the perspective of ecosystems, suggesting that organizations and society operate through an exchange relationship and are constantly influenced by each other. In other words, while organizations influence how society consumes, they also adapt to society's demands. The authors argue that a socially and environmentally devastated society such as ours requires sustainable solutions that can be achieved using SE initiatives, as SE organizations adapt to social needs and can influence the emergence of more sustainable lifestyles.



As seen in the previous approach, Laamanen *et al.* (2018) attribute this new form of living and consumption to the successive capitalist crises. For Leung *et al.*, (2019), in turn, such crises bring up the discussion on sustainability, which has been gaining momentum over the past few years. Both perspectives suggests that living in society is only possible when economic, social, and environmental benefits are balanced (Laamanen *et al.*, 2018; Leung *et al.*, 2019).

For authors under the ‘sustainable business in a changing society’ bias, SE organizations make profit by balancing economic, environmental, and social aspects in their business, which, for Leung *et al.* (2019), is achieved through exchanges between organizations and society—i.e., while society demands an environmentally and socially positive solution, organizations use these demands to innovate and be profitable (Leung *et al.*, 2019). For most of the authors who defend this idea, SE itself emerged from this mutual need, in which sharing-based organizations use technology and other means to be both profitable and sustainable.

Discussing Chinese traffic and carbon dioxide emissions, Zhu *et al.* (2017) claim that car-sharing activities positively influence the reduction of carbon dioxide release into the atmosphere. SE is thus seen as a set of activities that generate environmental (by contributing to reducing air pollution) and social (by contributing to reducing local traffic) benefits while preserving the organization’s profit.

In Zhu *et al.*, (2017), the profit of the organization under analysis was obtained by innovating its business, in which sharing reduced transaction costs by eliminating intermediaries between the organization and the end customer. Such a reduction in costs makes it possible to offer environmentally and socially positive activities at a lower price (Melo, Macedo, & Baptista, 2019; Hu, Liu, Yuen, Lim, & Hu, 2019; Zhu *et al.*, 2017; Becker-Leifhol, 2018; Retamal, 2019; Fremstad, 2017).

When establishing an SE, however, the profitability of activities requires not only cost reduction, but also attention to regulatory aspects, shown by the 11 articles that discuss this topic.

### **3.4 Regulatory aspects: principles and challenges for SE regulation**

Studies within this bias, called “regulatory aspects” for short, mainly discuss how legislation approaches these new forms of business, how it applies to them, and how activities can be regulated. Most articles are descriptive studies focused on explaining how SE initiatives work in legal terms (Hong & Lee, 2018; Grimmer, Vorobjovas-Pinta, & Massey, M, 2019; Williams & Horodnic, 2017; Watanabe, Naveed, Neittaanmäki, &, 2017; Kathan, Matzler, & Veider, 2016). The study by Watanabe *et al.* (2017), for example, describes what legislation is involved in the development of the *Uber* platform.

On the other hand, we have studies with a more critical perspective, such as that of Yuana *et al.* (2019), Müller and Welpé (2018), and Querbes (2017). Yuana *et al.* (2019) argue that it is legislation that must adapt to society, based on a perspective in which the new SE businesses are the ones responsible for influencing legislative changes that conform to the changing reality.

The authors understand legislation and taxation of economic activities as a means to improve the quality of life and development, always acting in favor of society; if the legislation encompasses a set of requirements that make it impossible to offer a certain activity at an affordable price, it must be reviewed and readjusted. Similarly, Branco and Nunes (2018), when discussing car-sharing, point out that the payment of a fee to transport passengers, the taximeter (tax required from taxi drivers), the cost of mandatory courses, among other legal obligations, increase the final cost of the activity. By exempting this type of business from regulatory costs and requirements, organizations are then able to offer service at more affordable prices to customers. Legislation and taxation must therefore be relaxed and readjusted.

As benefits of offering these services, Branco and Nunes (2018) cite: reduced number of cars on the streets, contributing to reduce pollutant gas emissions; improved traffic, which contributes to improving quality of life; creation of means of income, with people generating an extra income by using their own car, without legal obstacles.

Authors investigating SE within this bias lack consensus regarding the effects that the absence of or inadequate legislation can have on the field. While Yuana *et al.* (2019) point out the benefits that SE initiatives generate for society, Müller and Welpé (2018) and Querbes (2017) argue that the greatest benefits are generated for the organizations involved, not for society at large. In this perspective, the absence of a minimum regulation ends up favoring the imposition of services and operations by the organizations. Since the regulation of SE practices impacts everyone involved—government, companies, service providers, and consumers—, governments can better regulate the sharing economy by understanding the market it serves.

Some of the potential impacts of an SE-friendly legislation discussed in the studies reviewed are: income generation from tax collection, differentiated working conditions, and safety and security for the users of sharing services (Müller & Welpé, 2018). These impacts are related to the new forms of work made possible by the sharing economy, and can be understood as another bias, given its importance in the analyzed works.

### 3.5 New forms of work

Studies within this approach focus on the world of work and labor relations, discussing the nature of work in SE businesses, such as workers who provide services autonomously using their own resources, and the elements of precariousness and exploitation underlying this supposed autonomy (Ahsan, 2018; Chai & Scully, 2019; Fleming, 2017; Ménascé *et al.*, 2017; Franco & Ferraz, 2018; Griffith *et al.*, 2018).

While Mantymaki *et al.* (2019) present a positive view of these new forms of labor relations emerging from SE, Ménascé *et al.* (2017) and Franco and Ferraz (2018) explore the notions of precariousness and exploitation contained therein. Both studies argue that work on sharing platforms offers no guarantees to workers (called partners by the organizations); rather they must bear all the expenses of their work and develop it by themselves. The promise of greater profit is also a fallacy: workers end up paying their own expenses with no guarantee of getting the invested amount back in the future (Ménascé *et al.*, 2017; Franco & Ferraz, 2018).

Another issue related to the job precariousness is the lack of safety, with studies conducted on security showing that most employees do not feel safe or protected by the company for which they provide services (Griffith *et al.*, 2018; Fleming, 2017). Griffith *et al.*'s (2018) study on how female workers in transport applications feel insecure at work, found that these workers receive support from organizations in case of need and feelings of abandonment.

Other studies, in turn, consider each worker responsible for their future, a characteristic seen as positive and linked to a changing context in the world of work, where new forms of work emerge, such as the flexibilization of labor and a new worker profile—the partner worker (Mantymaki, Baiyere, & Islam, 2019). In a study conducted with Uber and Lyft drivers, Mantymaki *et al.* (2019) proposed the concept of partner worker, i.e., workers whose profile prioritizes flexible hours and the autonomy provided by the absence of a “boss”. The authors also note that application drivers reported feeling less stressed working in this regime than in traditional organizations.



## 4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Most studies in this literature review consider SE a business proposition to generate competitive differential and profit for the company (57 articles), representing between 30% and 45% of all studies published since 2016 and discussing elements such as identification of new consumption and distribution patterns, innovation, lower transaction costs, and relational marketing.

Among the 146 studies reviewed, 26 addressed sustainability and a supposed change in the social perspective, highlighting a certain ideological aspect, as if society were moving towards a more sustainable future, one in which people would show increasingly concern about the planet. They generally argue that the “sustainability slogan” can be profitably used by organizations seeking to meet changing consumer behavior and consumption patterns. Zhang, Gu, and Jahromi (2018), for example, argue that the idea of sustainability and the shift from an ownership-oriented to an access-focused model indicate a need for traditional businesses to reinvent themselves, and that new SE businesses consider these two elements only when they are associated with generating profit and organizational value.

Besides these two biases, some studies (11) believe that the profitability of organizations is associated with the absence of specific legislation. Organizations have taken advantage of gaps in legislation to reduce operating costs, such as labor charges, by having employees work independently. By allowing this form of labor relations, absent or inadequate legislation favors another element: the flexibilization of labor.

Considered by this literature review as another research bias, ‘new forms of work’ accounted for 11 studies. Work in SE businesses is based on the notion of flexibility: each employee is independent, has no superiors, and is responsible for decisions about hours worked, among other aspects. Slogans such as “be your own boss” are often used by organizations like *Uber*. Most studies within this bias, however, understand this flexibility as precariousness, which generates negative aspects such as the lack of security and support for damages incurred during the activity (traffic accidents, for example, in the case of transport application companies), among others.

In summary, the present research identified the main biases assumed by authors in the latest and most important studies in the field of SE. Shared Economy is mainly understood as a new business proposition that organizations use to change their way of operating and entering the market, in which sustainability appears as a new way of living that provides competitive advantage and organizational profit in an ever-changing society.

A relative number of works, however, are critical of this phenomenon, exposing the labor precariousness that emerges from these supposed new organizational models, such as that of Martin (2016), entitled “*The sharing economy: A pathway to sustainability or a nightmarish form of neoliberal capitalism?*” In this article, the author contrasts the discourse of an ideal sharing economy—one that promotes sustainability and a change of social perspective in capitalist relations—with what takes place in the world of SE organizations. What Martin (2016) notes, in the end, are large organizations that use the absence of or inadequate legislation to increasingly exploit their employees—labor relations that make SE even more capitalistic than traditional organizations.

Finally, this literature review of SE studies points to the need for research that discusses SE from the perspective of society, rather than focusing on how organizations operate and their role, intentions, and closer relationships. This would require an approach that analyzes and discusses SE elements beyond its characteristics and consumer profiles. Although some studies proposed to relate the sharing economy to the notion of sustainability and to the change in society’s lifestyle, they did so from the perspective of organizations rather than society, with its cycles, fads, and utopias.



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3. Development of theoretical propositions (theoretical work)	√	√
4. Theoretical foundation / Literature review	√	
5. Definition of methodological procedures	√	√
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7. Statistical analysis	√	
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