The Sharing Economy: Cornerstone for a Sustainability Movement or Source of Economic Benefits?

Author: Jonathan Pfaffenrot
University of Twente
P.O. Box 217, 7500AE Enschede
The Netherlands

Over the course of the last six years the term "sharing economy" has been brought up in many industries and has gained a fast growing interest on the public, governmental and organizational level. This study provides an overview of what motivational triggers influence the decision of students to participate in a P2P platform such as Bla Bla Car. Interviews were hold among 20 students at the border city Enschede, the Netherlands. The paper investigates in an explorative way the primary and additional motivations of students with the intention to investigate the impact of environmental concerns within the decision making process. Hereby similarities and differences between "users" and "non-users" and gender are taken under consideration. The results are presented in a descriptive manner. Differences in socio-demographic characteristics between male and female participants are presented. Finally the study reflects that students of both genders make their choices based on price and convenience factors.

Supervisors: Dr. M. De Visser

                    Dr. M.L. Ehrenhard

Keywords

Sharing Economy, peer-to-peer platforms, Sustainable innovation, Motivations, Collaborative Consumption, Access-based consumption

1. Problem background

Humanity has been sharing resources already from the beginning of mankind.
The Internet has brought new ways of consumption through consumers being able to interact on a global scale. So called P2P platforms are working as marketplaces bringing suppliers and consumers together.

Within the past six years the term sharing economy has been brought up in many industries and has gained a fast growing interest on the public, governmental and organizational level. Big companies from the Silicon Valley such as UBER or AIRBNB have gained constant media attention. This is mostly related to the fact that these P2P platforms heavily form a threat to existing businesses within the affected sectors (Gansky, 2010). Sources such as (PwC, 2014) state that the sharing economy has a potential volume of $335 billion by 2025 while the world wide car sharing revenue will grow to $6.2 billion by 2020 according to (Navigant Research, 2013). However those numbers vary on multiple sources but the overall message is clear; growth is expected. Besides this the sharing economy is often connected with having environmental and social effects (Botsman & Rogers, 2011). We see on a global scale that sustainability is promoted at many levels and that attitudes towards consumption have shifted in recent years bringing increasing concern over ecological, societal and developmental impact (Hamari, 2015). Being more sustainable as a single person by saving water or electricity but also together through sharing.

Car sharing services such as Bla Bla Car are used by thousands of young people on a daily base (Bla Bla Car, 2016). But what is the intention of these young people? Researchers have proposed certain motivation factors that might trigger participation in P2P platforms. In the case of the car-sharing platform Zipcar (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012) have stated that economic motivations are dominating. On the other hand authors such as (Botsman & Rogers, 2011) and (Gansky, 2010) position themselves with the environmental motivations that lead to a participation in the sharing economy. (Heinrichs, 2013) even underlines the sharing economy to be a new movement towards sustainability.

Although there is an undeniable growth in the interest for the sharing economy, there is a lack of qualitative studies on motivational factors that reflect the clear intentions, feelings or opinions of consumers towards the P2P platforms. Therefore I would like to formulate the following research question: **what are the primary motivational drivers for students to use a P2P platform such as Bla Bla Car?**

The aim of this study is to provide an answer on what triggers students to use a P2P service such as Bla Bla car. More specific the intention is to draw a conclusion that shows that in the case of students or young individuals that do not have a stable income a service like Bla Bla Car is primarily used, as it is the best service from an economic point of view and not because motivations are triggered by sustainable mindsets. Doing so environmental and economic

motivations are taken into account for car sharing. Furthermore it will be looked at what additional motivations have an impact on the decision such as efficiency or socialization. Focus will be laid on comparing possible similarities between the perceptions of male and female participants.

There are currently 66 scientific articles in which the sharing economy is being one of the main focuses and clearly contribution towards this topic has been increasing between 2010 and 2015 (Cheng, 2016 see Fig. 1.). Furthermore Google Trends show a rapid increase in the search interest towards the keyword "sharing economy" (Fig. 2.) Literature is still very scarce and at the university level there has been very few attempts on giving insight to the sharing economy. Holistic views that show the core characteristics of the sharing economy are in need to fill the scarce amount of literature. Therefore the academic value of this study is very high as it will serve as an inspiration source for future studies and contribute to the specific field of motivation studies in the sharing economy. In terms of practical relevance this study could be helpful for organizations with a sharing business model to identify around which attributes they should have to position their business to best cope with the customer base and their intentions. This will be in particular interesting in terms of the marketing strategies P2P platforms should use. As the research findings can be seen as a source for consumer research.

Fig. 1. Articles on SE from 2010 to 2015 (Cheng, 2016)
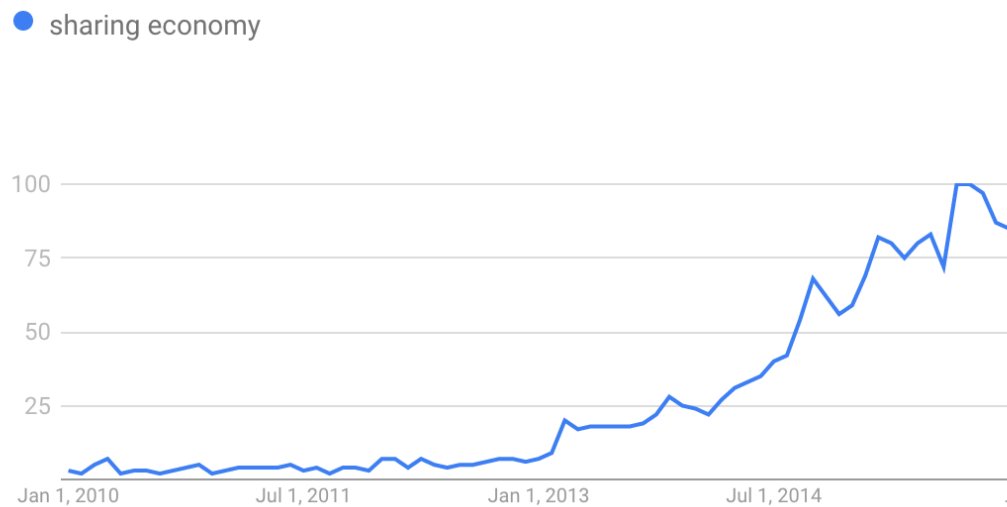
● sharing economy

Worldwide. 1/1/10 - 1/1/16.

Fig. 2. Google Trends for the keyword "Sharing Economy"

2. Theoretical background

2.1 A definition of the Sharing Economy

The term "sharing economy" has gained widely international recognition throughout the last three years. The famous Harvard economist Martin Weitzman is told to be the first person that mentioned this term in his book "the share economy" in 1984. In his book Weitzman connected the idea of sharing with the imagination that it would lead to an increase in wealth for all people (Weitzman, 1984). In a more recent attempt some go even further and state the sharing economy to be the end of capitalism (Rifkin, 2014). Currently the term "sharing economy" is used in many cases as a form of noncommercial sharing categorized by the aim of sustainable resource usage which is supported by business models which are build upon new technologies such as smartphones and applications. Examples of companies for the "classical" sharing economy, which are focused on the sharing of goods between consumers, are UBER, Bla Bla Car or AIRBNB. In fact the sharing economy concept entered wide public discourse between 2011 and 2012 with the two Silicon Valley success stories of AIRBNB and UBER (Martin C. , 2016). On the other hand (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012) use the term "access-based" consumption concentrating on large-scale business to consumer services such as Zipcar and Spotify. In his work, (Belk, 2010) separates two forms of sharing in and sharing out. The latter dissolves interpersonal boundaries, while sharing out creates no social bond

as individuals divide resources to optimize their use (Akbar, Mai, & Hoffmann, 2016). In her work (Stephany, 2015) argues that the SE is defined by the value in taking under-utilised assets and making them accessible on P2P platforms, which leads to a reduced need for ownership. Some of the recent examples of peer-to-peer platforms are crowdfunding services (e.g., Kickstarter). (Hamari et al., 2015) also argue that the phenomenon of the sharing economy emerges from a number of technological developments that have simplified sharing of both physical and nonphysical goods and services through the availability of various information systems on the Internet. However he calls the "technological phenomena" the collaborative consumption.

This review shows that there are numerous names and definitions existing around the SE phenomena and no clear image has yet been developed. However the terms "sharing economy" "peer to peer economy" "collaborative consumption are among the most popular to describe the phenomenon as peer to peer sharing of access to underutilized goods and services, which prioritizes utilization and accessibility over ownership ((Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015) (Cheng, 2016)). Focusing in this paper on the motivations that trigger consumers to join the sharing economy previous research has shown that specific factors such as sustainability and frugality motivate consumers to join (Seegebarth, Peyer, Balderjahn, & Wiedmann, 2016) while on the other hand factors like materialism dispositions make consumers prefer to possess goods rather than to participate in sharing systems (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010). In this paper we are focusing on peer - to - peer exchanges of

goods between consumers in specific the car sharing service Bla Bla Car. We therefore define the sharing economy as a state in which consumers supply each other with a short –term access to their own assets/resources, which are not used to its full capacity. The access is usually provided in exchange for money.

2.2 Extrinsic VS Intrinsic Motivations

Literature distinguishes between two forms of motivations. (Hamari et al., 2015) underline that intrinsic motivations are connected to the individual's satisfaction while extrinsic motivations emerge if outcomes are separate from the behavior. While the first form is being often related to environmental concerns and socialization that trigger participation in the sharing economy (Tussyadiah, 2016), extrinsic motivations are often mentioned together with some sort of monetary rewards (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012). The latter indicates that consumers initiate sharing economy activities to reduce their use of scarce natural resources (Böcker and Melen, 2016). Taking into account that (Tussyadiah, Ilis;, 2015) categorizes motivations mentioned in the existing sharing economy literature as part of "economic benefits", "sustainability" and "community" the focus in this paper is primarily on the two categories of economic benefits and sustainability as our intention is to prove a strong tendency towards economic benefits as a trigger for participating in the P2P platform Bla Bla Car among students. In terms of economic triggers (Gansky L. , 2010) implicates that the emergence of the sharing economy is interlinked with the financial crisis of 2008 as

consumers were more or less pushed through financial struggles and change their consumption patterns and the value they connect to ownership. At the same time, (Moeller & Wittkowski, 2010) are not able to find evidence for "price consciousness" that might trigger decision – making in their research comparing renting to ownership. However it is crucial to underline that in their study it might not always have been clear which option was cheaper (Böcker and Melen, 2016). In terms of car sharing services (Möhlmann, 2015) is able to point out a major satisfaction related to saving costs, which however does not implicate that the intention to participate again is therefore affected. As already mentioned before Zip Car is differentiating itself to a service such as Bla Bla Car in that it is a large scale B2C service. In a qualitative analysis using interviews (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012) are able to conclude that consumers' motivations to participate in Zipcar is connected to saving money. Meanwhile there is an undeniable interest in the sharing economy as a means of promoting sustainable consumption practices (Martin C. , 2016). On a global scale it is noticeable that young people are more concerned with the environment and position themselves, participating in a sustainable lifestyle (Sherinian, 2016). In some cases the sharing economy is being glorified to be a "potential pathway to sustainability" (Heinrichs H. , 2013) and the possibility of disrupting unsustainable practices of hyperconsumption, which build the global capitalist economies (Botsman & Rogers, 2011). In their article Botsman and Rogers point out what we can already see in many cases namely a shift from owning assets towards where consumers share access to assets that would otherwise be underutilized. As already mentioned in the

beginning the highly technical environment can be seen as the enabler of this shift. But what is it that actually triggers these young people to participate in the sharing economy? (Hamari et al., 2015) Underline in their findings that "perceived sustainability is an important factor in the formation of positive attitudes towards collaborative consumption, but economic benefits are a stronger motivator for intentions to participate". Furthermore (Moeller & Wittkowski, 2010) found in their qualitative research of an online peer-to-peer network no effect of environmental triggers on preferring renting instead of owning goods. On the other hand (Piscicelli, Cooper, & Fisher, 2014) found out that 32% of their respondents point out that "being green" is the main reason to join the sharing platform Ecomodo, while only 17% indicate "to save money".

It is noticeable that current research is pointing out different results in terms of the role of sharing motivations and most certainly for the environmental motivation. For this paper a focus is being hold on a specific socio-demographic group of participants, which are students. As research shows us a large fraction of young people position themselves with a "green" lifestyle. But does the participation in the sharing economy reflect this lifestyle? In order to contribute to the current sharing economy research, this paper will primarily concentrate on one sharing platform, which is the car sharing service Bla Bla Car and on a specific participant group mainly students. Furthermore the intention is to find out whether there is a difference in motivations for using the service caused by gender. (Hellwig, Morhart, & Girardin, 2015) Found out that 67% of the people that described

themselves, as being highly motivated to share were women. What literature has not addressed yet is a fundamental qualitative analysis focusing primarily on supporting the sharing economy discussion regarding economic versus environmental motivations. Furthermore no research has been conducted upon sample groups made up off students and whether gender impacted differences exist. Therefore this research will fill the gap within the motivations studies and be a possible inspiration source for further work on the academic level. Summing up the literature findings it is assumed that economic motivations dominate rather then environmental motivations among students who use peer-to-peer platforms however a qualitative analysis focusing primarily on economic versus environmental motivations is missing.

3. Methodology

For this paper a qualitative analysis methodology was chosen. The reason for this choice is embedded in the fact that this is an explorative study, which is based on the early stage of the research field on the Sharing Economy and in specific the motivation studies. In order to fill the gap of qualitative studies for motivations regarding the participation in the sharing economy this study specifies on a specific sample group, namely students. Through the power of social media, people "post" statements on their web profiles that are mostly not true in their lives outside the Internet. As we have stated in the literature review, a fair amount of young people position themselves to "be green". Furthermore we have shown that media is reporting this phenomena as well. However the real motivations cannot be observed directly but have to be discovered by

asking respondents about their core values in field observations with interviews. This helps to avoid the error, which can result through online questionnaires.

A qualitative research begins with an assumption, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2007). In this paper the basic assumption that is hold, is that in the case of students or young individuals who do not have a stable income a car sharing service like Bla Bla Car is primarily used, as it is the best choice from an economic point of view and not because motivations are triggered by sustainable mindsets.

According to (Dooley, 2009) in qualitative research the observer is able to look, listen, and flow with the social currents of the setting and therefore can acquire perceptions from different points of views. Furthermore he points out that the data of the qualitative observer may provide more detail and less distortion than data from other approaches. In the case of our sample group, which consists only of students (share a common social network) from the city of Enschede, interviews with different subjects and observations at different times and places in the same social network should defeat any effort to fake behavior in terms of environmental concerns. The research is backed up by the literature review that has been conducted and aims to add clarity within the motivations studies of the sharing economy. The qualitative research approach chosen for this paper is the ethnographical. Describing and interpreting the shared patterns of values, behaviors and beliefs of the culture-sharing group will reflect this.

Ethnography as a scientific term suggests a general term for describing a cultural group, in more detail it is understood as the particular technique of describing a social group from the group´s point of view (Dooley, 2009). In their work (Werner & Schoepfle, 1987) underline that in the case of ethnography one tries to obtain the cultural knowledge of the natives.

3.1 Car Sharing – Bla Bla Car

Sharing one's car in order to fully utilize it does at first hand also bring an economic benefit to the owner of the car. Owning a car is expensive sharing it results in financial savings for the owner. Also car sharing can be seen as the sharing service with the most apparent environmental benefits (Böcker and Melen, 2016). Research has shown that car sharing is able to contribute to reducing the negative environmental impacts of car emissions (Loose, 2009) (Martin & Shaheen, 2011).

In the case of Bla Bla Car the crucial benefit is sharing the cost of gasoline as the service is concentrating on long distance drives. Students that want to visit their parents on the weekend and do not own a car are using the service, which is often provided by other students that do own a car and want to save on the gas money. The company Bla Bla Car itself is underlining the environment supporting aspect of their business model openly on their website (Bla Bla Car. , 2015).

3.2 Samples

In order to satisfy the desire for anonymity only the participants' first names and age will be used. The interviews are hold with 20 participants in the border city Enschede, Netherlands. The choice for the sample size is based on the time frame that was given for this research and therefore to have a proper workload. The location is based on the fact that the city Enschede has two institutions of higher education namely the University of Twente and the Saxion Hogeschool, which serves as an excellent place to conduct research among students. The participants are divided into two groups (10 each with a 50/50 ratio in gender diversity) with the major difference in being that one group will include participants that have used the car sharing service Bla Bla Car and the other group will be made up of participants that do not have any prior experience with car sharing services. This is done in order to compare the actual motivations of users and the perceived motivations and opinions of non-users in regards to car sharing and environmental concerns as means of motivations. All participants are enrolled in a higher educational program during the time of the interviews.

3.3 Data Collection Process

In order to collect the relevant data, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were chosen. This allows new ideas to be brought up during the interviews as a result of what the interviewed person says. The goals of the interviews were thus to provide an answer on what triggers young people to use a P2P service such as Bla Bla car, whether there is a difference in motivations between male and female participants. More specific the intention was to draw a conclusion that shows that in the case of students or young individuals that do not have a stable income a service like Bla Bla Car is primarily used, as it is the best service from an economic point of

view and not because motivations are triggered by sustainable mindsets. Furthermore it is intended to find out about other motivational factors that trigger the choice to participate in the SE and the dimensions of their impact from a participants' point of view. According to (Denzin, 1978) and (Patton, 1999) four types of triangulation exist. In this paper the triangulation of sources is chosen. By having two sample groups that differ in their experience and perhaps knowledge with car sharing the data input is therefore made up of two different data sources. This can help to facilitate a deeper understanding of to validate the potential findings. A comparison between the actual motivations of a "user" group and the perceived motivations of a "non-user" group can help to find similarities in order to prove that economic motivations are the primary triggers. Furthermore it is aimed to analyze whether a pre experience has any influence on the participants perception of the service. It is assumed that a prior positive experience with a P2P platform might have an impact on the answers given on additional motivations such as socializing. Also it is intended to analyze what students see as major drawbacks to not participate in a P2P platform. This might be connected to the motivational findings and therefore could be used in order to work out a possible strategy that converts students that do have concerns using the platform into potential customers.

3.4 Data Analysis

The conducted interviews were recorded by an assistant with the permission of the respondents to be in line with correct methods for research. This was done in order to have the researcher focusing on the interviews itself without being distracted to transcribe right after every question. Although the identities of the respondents were kept secret, transcripts of the conversations were sent to the respondents after the interviews to ensure a correct representation of the individuals' responses. For each of the two sample groups different questions were prepared in order to be able to use comparisons when doing conclusions. Having two groups will create two sets of information that are differing based on the experience with car sharing. Apart from the difference in experience the data source is also made up off a 50/50 gender ratio in order to have comparisons based on gender. The interviews will be focused on the initial research question including whether: the interviewees implicate having environmental concerns; there is a difference in motivational triggers in gender; comparison of car sharing users vs. non-users; other (not economical/environmental) motivations have an impact. By doings so it is planned to approve the general assumption that economic factors are the main motivational triggers for young individuals (students) to participate in the sharing economy while considering different factors such as gender, user experience and other holistic impacts. Analyzing whether environmental concerns are strongly associated among students is in particular interesting as (Shen & Saijo, 2008) show in their findings that environmental concerns are also more prevalent among highly educated groups. The intention is to present data that could be used as the basis of consumer research. This paper aims to analyze the similarities and differences in the motivational behavior between male and female students in order to show important strategic aspects that have to be executed within marketing P2P

platforms. The use of two different groups is done in order to have data that shows what holds students back from participating and in order to show possible differences in the actual motivations of "users" and the perceived motivations of "non-users"

Furthermore the clustering tactic will be used, which implicates the grouping and conceptualizing of the information that have similar patterns or characteristics. The recorded data was matched according to the intended research topics and an interpretative content analysis was conducted. A content analysis is the procedure for the categorization of verbal or behavioral data for the purpose of classification, summarization and tabulation. The content is analyzed in an interpretative way in order to give assumptions on what was meant by the data.

4. Results

This section intends to summarize the key findings of the interviews hold with 20 students in the city of Enschede. Taking a descriptive approach the findings from the two sample groups are presented one after another. Strong focuses is laid on showing the existing differences and similarities in answering schemes between female and male participants and also draw a comparison between the group with prior experience with Bla Bla Car and the group without any experience with Bla Bla Car.

4.1 Group A - Prior Experience with Bla Bla Car

As mentioned before the two groups were consisting of a 50/50 gender ratio in order to find possible differences in the answers between male and female participants. Starting of with the male participants the answers towards the primary intention for using car sharing show a clear pattern. Four out of the five male participants communicate that financial savings that come with participating in Bla Bla Car is the primary motivation they use the P2P platform. However it is noticeable that two male participants also mention the social side of meeting new people as their primary intention. While Michael mentions both the financial and social factor, Joel is the only male participant in this group who does not mention economic benefits as his primary motivation. The two underline,

" I do this for financial reasons and I am a very open-minded person and I enjoy meeting new people".

"My primary intention is the social aspect of car sharing. I really love meeting new people and hearing interesting stories".

In regards to other impacts that drive the motivation to use Bla Bla Car, negative experiences with public transports and convenience (especially time efficiency) play a major role for all five participants. The three male participants that have not stated that the social aspect of car sharing is their primary intention mention it in this section.

Michael, 24: *"I hate to travel by train because trains are always late. Time efficiency is a very strong argument."*

Jan, 22: *"I think it is very interesting to meet new people and also it is not as boring as driving long*

distances alone. It also gives more flexibility and its more convenient compared to public transport."

Peter, 22: *"I personally think its very cool as you get to know new people and have interesting conversations with other students and about their subjects. The flexibility is very important to me I can get picked up anywhere and it is more reliable than the trains."*

Joel, 24: *"Convenience is always a very important factor, as I was fed up with the Deutsche Bahn because they are always late and have unfriendly staff."*

In regards to the male participants answers they show three distinct motivation sources: economic, efficiency, socializing. The follow up questions that was chosen after gaining answers on the motivations was the participants position towards the environment and whether or not they consider themselves as being environmentally concerned. Interestingly the same four participants do not consider themselves as being concerned about the environment while Joel who stated his primary intention to be socializing continues,

"Yes I would say that I am concerned about the environment, for short term distances I only use my bike."

One participant mentions not to believe in climate change while the other three such as Jan state that thinking about the environment does not play any role in their life. In regards to the male participants perception on whether or not students use Bla Bla Car for economic or environmental motivations we again have a very clear answering scheme. All five

male participants assume that the primary intention for students such as themselves, participating in Bla Bla Car is motivated by the resulting financial benefits. The opinions are always backed up by the same argument namely, "that the majority of students is sitting on a "tight" budget and they seek any opportunity to save cost". Even Joel who was the only male participant not to mention economic motivation at any time answered the following,

"As mentioned above I really love getting into conversations with people that I do not know and when using Bla Bla Car I often have the opportunity to do so. I talked with many students and most of them want to save money. They only care about the money or the efficiency."

Looking at the answers derived from the female participants we see clear differences in the answering scheme compared to those shown above from the male participants. In terms of the primary motivation all five female participants only mention financial benefits as their primary intention to participate in Bla Bla Car. It is also noticeable that when digging deeper into other possible motivations only one of the five female respondents mentions socializing as an additional impact on their decision to use the car sharing service compared to the male participants who all mentioned socializing as either their primary or one of their additional motivations to use Bla Bla Car. However all female participants underline that time efficiency is an additional factor that triggers their motivation to use Bla Bla Car. This shows a similarity to the answers of the male participants who also all mentioned time efficiency as an additional motivation to participate in the car sharing service. These are already the first findings

in gender differences, which will be further evaluated in the discussion part.

Pia, 23: *"Public transport is very unreliable and Its more convenient driving with a car."*
Alina 22, *"Using Bla Bla Car is more efficient in terms of time compared to public transport."*
Anna, 22: *"In my case if I would have to use the train it would take almost two hours longer to get to my home-town than by car. Using Bla Bla Car is just more time efficient."*

However the most interesting difference that can be observed are the answers in regards to the individuals concerns about the environment. As we have reviewed the answers of the male participants and have found only one out of five being concerned about the environment we find all five female participants stating that they see themselves being concerned about the environment. It is interesting to observe that the follow up question, which is concerning the participants perception on whether students' motivations to use Bla Bla Car is triggered by economic or environmental motivations, is getting the same results as from the male participants. Pia underlines her opinion with the following, *"in my opinion it is definitely saving money because it is important to save money as a student because you do not have a real job."* Also the other female participants state that due to small budgets students look for any opportunity to save money. As it has already been shown in some of the participants answers, the positive environmental impact car sharing has is very well noticed by the students. Alina puts it in the following perspective,

"If there is a positive economic and environmental effect I think people in general are more willing to follow that. However I think in the case for sharing the car such as it is done with Bla Bla Car, students in particular do not really think about it because they care about saving money simply because they do not have much of it and the environmental concerns vanish."

4.2 Group B – No prior experience with car sharing

In this part the interview results of the second sample group that consisted of students that have never used Bla Bla Car or any car sharing service before, will be presented. The choice for a second sample group is based on the intention to find out what non-participants think of the driving intentions of students to use such a service and to find out what holds other students back from using a P2P platform such as Bla Bla Car. Again the group is consisting of a 50/50 gender ratio in order to find possible differences in answering schemes between male and female participants.

The first interesting findings from the "user group" is that despite that none of the participants has ever used any car sharing service before, all 10 participants have heard of the P2P platform Bla Bla Car and were aware that such a service exists. In regards to the question what might possibly motivate other students to participate in Bla Bla Car we get very clear results. All ten participants mention the aspect of financial savings while eight out of ten also mention convenience (time efficiency).

This gives us the same results as in the "user group". However compared to the "user group" none of the male or female participants mentions

"socializing" as a possible motivation to participate in car sharing. When backing their assumption up, the participants also use the same argument that could be observed in the "user group", namely that students use car sharing as they are not having much money to spend. As Meike puts it into the following words, *"Students use Bla Bla Car because it is cheap. They do not have much money and an opportunity to save money is always welcomed."* We also see again as we have in the "user group" a negative perception of public transportation option such as trains. Emircan and Merle both put in the following words,

"It is cheaper than most public transports for long distance and it is faster and more reliable than trains for example."

"It is cheaper and more comfortable than using the bus or train. You do not have to switch trains and do not have to worry about missing trains or trains being late, which happens very often."

As it could be seen in the "user group" female participants showed a clear concerning position towards the environment compared to the male participants. As we have mentioned in the literature review (Hellwig, Morhart, & Girardin, 2015) found out in their quantitative studies that 67% of the people that described themselves as being highly motivated to share were women. In order to see whether a qualitative study can show the same significant results we asked the participants in the non-user group" also about their concerns on the environment. The results are even more significant than for Group A. As we had four out of five male participants stating that they are not concerned about the environment against five female and one male participant we can see in *Fig.3*. Five out of five male participants stating that they are not concerned about the environment while all five female participants state the opposite.

Male	Female
"No I do not really care much. I would say I never think about it when driving somewhere."	*"Yes I am concerned about the environment I try to not waste much energy. On the other hand I know that I could do much more."*
"No, not at all. Each decision I take I never take into consideration the impact on the environment. Best example would be transportation. I always choose the one that is cheaper."	*"I am concerned about the environment because it is obvious that we as humans have a big impact on the future of the environment. For short distances I never use the car. I use my bike to get to university and to do grocery shopping. "*

"I am not concerned about the environment at all even though I know I should be. "	*"Yes I am environmentally concerned. When I use Flixbus to visit my parents I pay an extra fee, which is offered by the bus company to support the use of alternative fuel/energy. I also pay an extra fee for my apartment that supports sustainable energy."*
"It really depends. In most cases I make decision based on what is more comfortable for me. In terms of transportation I never think about the impact on the environment."	*"Yes I am concerned about the environment because the numbers show that we are getting more and more people and there are not enough resources. I do not eat too much meat as big meat consumption is responsible for much Co2 and water waste."*
"No, I am not concerned about the environment. I have not once thought about the impact of car emissions on the environment. If I make a decision it is based on whether it will be positive for me and not for the planet for example."	*"Yes I am definitely concerned about the environment. When it comes to daily activities I never use a car when I go on short distances. Anything that is reachable by bike I do so. I know that I could do more."*

Fig. 3. *Group B: Would you position yourself as being concerned about the environment?*

As it was done with the first group a question was pointed towards the impact of environmental concerns in regards to the decision to participate in car sharing. Again as seen in the "user group" all participants male or female respond with the same opinion when it comes to whether or not students that use car sharing platforms such as Bla Bla Car are also motivated by doing something for the environment. The results derived from the "non-user" group are overlapping with those that could be observed with the "user group". None of the ten participants believes in any partial influence of environmental concern when it comes to students making the decision for using car sharing. All participants represent more precisely a general pessimistic point of view. As Marwan puts it in the following context, *"In general I think people always think about their own comfort and well being. Especially for students as mentioned before the main issue is money and they act on a short term basis and do not think about the long-term consequences of car emissions for example."*

We see the same pattern following with the female participants with Merle describing it in the following way, *"when using car sharing I assume that students do not even think that they do something good for the environment. They just see the benefits that it brings for them, in that case they pay less than for a train and are faster at the same time."*

After observing the same pattern and answering schemes between male and female and between the two groups regarding motivations, the intention was to find out what exactly holds students back from using Car sharing. Although it was observed that all participants in the "non-user" group were aware of the existing car sharing options and the economic and convenience benefits it brings with it, four out of five female participants mentioned one major argument on why they do not use car-sharing services such as Bla Bla Car. Lina puts it into the following perspective, *"I am somehow concerned or scared to use car sharing because those are people that I do not know anything about."*
This feeling of fear or "trust issues" accounted for four out of the five female participants as an argument on why they do not use car-sharing services.
Merle on the other hand is faced with a different kind of problem. *"I never used Bla Bla Car because there is nobody that offers rides from Enschede to my hometown. If there would be people that would drive that way I would use it."*
When it comes to the male participants of the "non-user" group Puya and Maurice argue that their student train tickets are the cheapest option and they do not mind that it is a more time consuming option.

Puya: "I go home every weekend and my German student train ticket therefore costs less than if I would use car sharing twice a week."

Maurice: "I have the Dutch OV train ticket, which is basically free for me to go anywhere in the Netherlands by train"

Both also mention that their choice for long distance transportation is only based on the cheapest price. Thomas and Emircan mention that both are able to use their parents car for long distance drives and therefore do not have to pay any money. Marwan as the only male participant mentions that he prefers to use a train as he enjoys travelling alone.
Concluding these findings one can observe that the major drawback that stands against the decision for female students to use car sharing are trust issues and especially an actual feeling of fear to share a car with strangers. On the other hand we see that four out of five male participants do not use Bla Bla Car as they go for the cheaper option, which in their case is either a train ticket or using the car of their parents. Only one male participant mentions he enjoys travelling alone.

5. Discussion

5.1 Implications

The results of this paper have proven the existence of a clear, strong tendency towards economic benefits as a trigger for participating in the P2P platform Bla Bla Car among students. The paper therefore contributes to the existing theory of motivational studies in the sharing economy as it provides a confirmation for financial benefits being primary motivational triggers when it comes to participating in the sharing economy and in particular car sharing.
The data from the interviews reveals three motivational triggers that can be observed among students; economic, efficiency, socializing. We have followed an explorative approach and have build our research design around semi-structured interviews in order to gain new ideas that were

brought up during the interviews as a result of what the interviewed participants said. Furthermore the use of a "user" group and a "non-user" group helped us to validate our findings concerning the primary motivation of students when making the decision to use car sharing, which is economic. Moreover our assumption that a positive prior experience might affect the answering scheme in regards to additional motivations has also been approved. As we compared both groups we could observe that the "user" group participants mentioned, "socializing" as an additional motivation that triggers their motivation to use car sharing compared to the "non-user" group that only mentioned they perceive students motivation as either of an economic or convenience nature.

In relation to the "user" group we see little to no differences in the primary motivations to participate in car sharing among male and female participants. Among ten participants nine have mentioned to be primarily motivated to participate in Bla Bla Car due to its financial benefits. Also taking into account the data derived from the "non-user" group the perception is hold that "saving money" motivates students that use car sharing. Therefore in the light of prior studies the findings of this paper can relate to the existence of both "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" motivations brought up by (Tussyadiah, 2016). In regards to "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" motivations this paper indicates an interesting difference between male and female participants in the "user" group. The "socializing" motivation is not mentioned by any of the female participants while all five male participants either mention it as a primary or additional motivation to use Bla Bla Car. We therefore see intrinsic motivations more present

among male participants. Also none of the participants mention any relation of their motivation to use car sharing to environmental concerns. We therefore can align our findings with those derived by (Hamari et al., 2015) and (Böcker and Melen, 2016) who state that extrinsic motivations have a strong relation to the motivation to participate in car sharing services. In regards to socio-demographic characteristics, the results show that women are more environmentally concerned however also like their male counterparts do not primarily take their environmental concern into consideration when making a decision to use car sharing. We therefore can only partially agree with (Hellwig, Morhart, & Girardin, 2015), who observe women being the majority when it comes to environmental concerns but also found in their studies that 67% of the people that described themselves as being highly motivated to share were women. In our case we only see the difference in perceptions towards the environment as all female participants of both groups call themselves environmentally concerned however we do not see any of the females mentioning environmental triggers when it comes to possible motivations to use car sharing. We have to consider that this study focused on one particular socio-demographic group, which were students, compared to (Hellwig, Morhart, & Girardin, 2015) who analyzed data taken from different socio-demographic groups. Moreover we see the female participants even admitting that students in general do not take the environment into consideration when it comes to using car sharing. It is remarkable that all female participants of the "user" group indicate to be environmentally concerned yet when naming motivations that trigger their decision to use car sharing they do not draw any relation to the

positive effects on the environment that result through car sharing. Also all participants from the "user" and "non-user" group indicate that students in general do not take the effects on the environment into consideration when making the decision to use car sharing as the financial situation of students, which is characterized by "tight budgets", is driving the decision to take the cheapest option at most times as well as looking for the most convenient option. In this case one could argue that users tend to participate in the sharing economy in order to satisfy "basic needs" similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). In terms of marketing activities taken by P2P platform providers one therefore could argue that the platforms should focus the marketing of their business models on the motivations that drive their customers, namely cheap prices and convenience factors. However we do see the opposite with companies like Bla Bla Car or Airbnb communicating their business more and more around the aspect of sustainability (AIRBNB Inc., 2014) (Bla Bla Car Inc., 2017).

Based on the data derived from the interviews the results indicate that although female participants do not name any environmental motivations for participating in car sharing they still see themselves as being concerned about the environment compared to their male counterparts. It can therefore be argued that the approach taken by P2P platforms like Bla Bla Car in online marketing should be differentiated when targeting male and female consumers in terms of environmental concerns. Although the female participants admit to not take the environment into account it might be possible that when making the decision to use car sharing the stimuli of knowing that the service they use, is

environmentally friendly might cause some positive feelings towards the attitude and still make a difference on a larger scale when it comes to decision making. This goes also in accordance with the findings of (Hamari et al., 2015) who observed that perceived sustainability in some cases positively influences attitude and translates into behavioral intentions.

On the other hand our results in the "user" group also suggest that the "socialization" aspect among male participants is influencing the attitude towards the intention to participate in car sharing, which could not be observed among female participants. This indicates that male participants might take more interest in interacting with other people that use car sharing. This observation could be explained by the results derived from the "non-user" group, which show that the major drawbacks that hold female participants against using Bla Bla Car are trust issues. We can see here from the data derived a connection with (Tussyadiah, Ilis;, 2015) who concludes in his explorative study that trust issues and in particular mistrust between strangers acts as a deterrent to use P2P platforms within the accommodation sector.

Female participants show a more concerned look on sharing something with people they do not know. One participant explained that her feelings of fear are based on incidents of criminal matter that are often communicated through media. Therefore it seems as a logical argument that in order to gain new customers P2P platforms have to leverage the economic benefits that are gained through using their service with clearly communicating the secure usage of their service. Bla Bla Car presents a clear picture towards the reputation scoring or regulatory measures however this should be a focus and also

included when targeting female potential customers in marketing. The data shows that all participants were aware that Bla Bla Car exists and were aware of its economic and convenience benefits. Therefore P2P platforms need to indicate that female participants usually have trust issues when they are confronted with advertising.

In terms of the male participants in the "non-user" group we get our assumption in regards to economical motivations in the case of students once more validated. The results gained from the male participants of the "non-user" group showed that four out of five male participants explained that they did not use a long distance sharing option as they used a transportation option that was cheaper for their particular situation than using Bla Bla Car. This proves that the financial savings are the leading motivation to participate in any form of transportation for students as they are looking for options that increase their own personal utility, rather than contributing to the environment. On the basis of this finding we can see a connection to (Hardin, 1968) who argues that the individual's utility is more important to the individual than any form of collective utility when resources are shared. This finding has also been approved by previous papers in the field of the sharing economy such as (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012)

Given the early stage of the research field on the sharing economy and in specific the motivation studies, an explorative study was chosen. This paper contributes to the study of the individual level in the sharing economy. A user-centric approach was chosen in order to investigate the sharing economy

5.2 Limitations and Future research

This paper has highlighted the motivations that trigger students to participate in a P2P car-sharing platform such as Bla Bla Car. The limited time frame that was given influenced the methodology used for this paper. The sample size is insufficient to allow for any empirical generalization of the findings concerning the socio-demographic group of students. However having executed interviews this gave a detailed understanding of the participants feelings and opinions towards the whole matter of the sharing economy and helped the researcher to develop an overall picture of the current perception on the sharing economy in regards to students as a socio-demographic group. Furthermore having done interviews the researcher was able to experience and possibly analyze the participant's facial expressions and behavior and therefore include it within the interpretation of the results. The usage of semi-structured interviews gave room for new ideas and new insights, which were directed by the answers given by each individual participant and therefore resulted in very interesting and honest conversations. It also has to be taken into consideration that the author as a single researcher might be a possible source of bias. As the author has started the paper with a clear goal and assumption this might affect the perception and interpretation of the data and therefore bias objective reality.

phenomena. Analyzing the users motivations and opinions helped to draw a line towards the organizational level and propose adjustments in the marketing strategies of the business models of P2P platforms. In regards to a user-centric approach literature shows a lack of in depth analysis of how

the sharing economy negatively or positively transforms individuals. Future researchers could investigate this in more detail. As we have touched slightly the organizational level with this paper by using the data of "consumers" and "potential consumers", future research could in more detail analyze how P2P platforms execute on customer data within their marketing activities. Also research could work on the response of "traditional players" to the arising new P2P companies. The rise of UBER and AIRBNB has forced many established players such as the car industry to heavily drive innovation and redefine their current models. An example hereby would be BMW's new iMobility Service (Cheng, 2016). Speaking from a governance perspective, the sharing economy has often mentioned in traditional media in relation with "negative news" such as UBER and its regulatory problems with the taxi industry in Germany. Therefore future research could also work on a community/government level analyzing the regulatory status of P2P platforms on an international scale. In relation to the example given with the taxi industry, researchers could examine the impacts of the sharing economy and its arising P2P platforms on various sectors.

In terms of the motivational studies as we have focused within this paper, future research should test and verify the propositions for different sectors such as accommodation in order to increase generalizability through a larger scale of data. In terms of the socio-demographic group (students) in this study, future research could choose alternative research designs in order to validate the findings in more detail. In relation to earlier research such as (Hamari et al., 2015) we focused on a comparison between economic and environmental motivations. In regards to future studies a broader set of motivations could be analyzed in order to have more insights into the additional motivations.

Furthermore this paper has shown some insights into what holds students back from participating in a P2P platform such as Bla Bla Car. Optionally this could be an interesting field to further investigate.

6. Conclusion

This paper has answered the research question:

what are the primary motivational drivers for students to use a P2P platform such as Bla Bla Car?

The derived findings of the "user group" show that the vast majority of students are primarily using Bla Bla Car because of its economic benefits and as assumed argue for doing so based on their weak financial situation. Also our "non-user" group has shown us that students that do not participate in any P2P platform perceive that students use car sharing due to cost savings. Moreover our data has shown

us that negative experiences with public transport are expressed within the motivations of students to use car-sharing services. We therefore conclude that both genders make their choices based on price and convenience factors.

We did not find any impact from environmental concerns in the decision taking or motivations to use car sharing even though female participants to large degrees in both groups state to be environmentally concerned. Therefore the proposition given towards P2P platforms is to generally focus communicating and positioning their business around the economic and convenience benefits it provides as this is what triggers motivations of students to participate.

Furthermore we conclude that the major deterrent for female students to the sharing economy are trust issues. We therefore propose that P2P platforms have to leverage the economic benefits that are gained through using their service with clearly communicating the secure usage of their service. Bla Bla Car presents a clear picture towards the reputation scoring or regulatory measures however this should be focused and also included when targeting female potential customers in marketing.

7. Acknowledgements

8. References

AIRBNB Inc. (2014). *A greener way to travel: The environmental impacts of home sharing*. Retrieved from airbnb.com: http://blog.airbnb.com/environmental-impacts-of-home-sharing/

Akbar, P., Mai, R., & Hoffmann, S. (2016). When do materialistic consumers join commercial sharing systems. *Journal of Business Research , 69* (10), 4215–4224.

Böcker and Melen, L. (2016). Sharing for people, planet or profit? Analysing motivations for intended sharing economy participation. *Working Paper Series , 16* (02), 1-22.

Bardhi, F., & Eckhardt, G. (2012). Access-based consumption: the case of car sharing. *39* (4), pp. 881-898.

Belk, R. (2010). Sharing. Journal of Consumer Research. pp. 39(5), 715–734.

Bla Bla Car Inc. (2017). *Reinventing Travel*. Retrieved from blablacar.co.uk: https://www.blablacar.co.uk/blablalife/reinventing-travel/environment

Bla Bla Car. . (2015, May 9). *Let's Tackle Air Pollution!* . Retrieved from https://www.blablacar.co.uk/blablalife/reinventing-travel/environment/lets-tackle-air-pollution

Botsman, R., & Rogers, R. (2011). *What's Mine is Yours: How Collaborative Consumption is Changing the Way We Live.* Harper Collins.

Cheng, M. (2016). Sharing economy: A review and agenda for future research. *International Journal of Hospitality Management , 57*, 60-70.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions (2nd Ed).* (Vol. 2). Thousand Oaks.

Denzin, N. (1978). *Sociological methods : A sourcebook*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Dooley, D. (2009). *Social Research Methods Fourth Edition* (Vol. 4). Upper Saddle
River, New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Gansky, L. (2010). *The Mesh: Why the Future of Business Is Sharing.* . Penguin.

Hamari et al. (2015). The sharing economy: why people participate in collaborative consumption. J. Assoc. Inform. Sci. Technol. 67 (9), 2047–2059.

Hardin, G. (1968). The Tragegy of the Commons. *Science , 162* (3859), 1243-1248.

Heinrichs, H. (2013). Sharing economy: a potential new pathway to sustainability. Gaia 22, 228–231. .

Hellwig, K., Morhart, F., & Girardin, F. (2015). Exploring Different Types of Sharing: A Proposed Segmentation of the Market for "Sharing" Businesses. *Psychology & Marketing , 32* (9), 891-906.

Loose, W. (2009). *Car-Sharing reduces the burden on both cities and the environment – the environmental impacts of Car-Sharing.* Retrieved from
https://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/projects/sites/iee-projects/files/projects/documents/momo_car-sharing_f03_environmental_impacts_en.pdf

Möhlmann, M. (2015, May). Collaborative consumption: determinants of satisfaction and the likelihood of using a sharing economy option again. *14* (3), pp. 193–207 .

Martin, C. (2016). The sharing economy: A pathway to sustainability or a nightmarish form of neoliberal capitalism? pp. 149-159.

Martin, E., & Shaheen, S. (2011, December). Greenhouse Gas Emission Impacts of Carsharing in North America. *12* (4), pp. 1074-1086.

Maslow, A. (1943). A theory of human Motivation. *Psychological Review , 50* (4), 370-396.

Moeller, S., & Wittkowski, K. (2010). The burdens of ownership: resons for preferring renting. *20* (2), pp. 176-1991.

Navigant Research. (2013). *Carsharing programs*. Retrieved from http://www.navigantresearch.com/research/carsharing-programs

Ozanne, L., & Ballantine, P. (2010, November). Sharing as a form of anti-consumption? An examination of toy library users. *9* (6), pp. 485–498 .

Patton, M. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *HSR: Health Services Research , 34* (5 Pt 2), 1189-1208.

Piscicelli, L., Cooper, T., & Fisher, T. (2014). 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.

PwC. (2014). *The sharing economy: How will it disrupt your business? Megatrends: The collisions.* . Retrieved from http://pwc.blogs.com/files/sharing-economy-final_0814.pdf

Rifkin, J. (2014). *The Zero Marginal Cost Society: The Internet of Things, the Collaborative Commons, and the Eclipse of Capitalism.* Macmillan.

Schor, J., & Fitzmaurice, C. (2015). Collaborating and Connecting: The emergence of the sharing economy. In L. Reisch, & J. Thogersen, *Handbook of Research on Sustainable Consumption* (pp. 410-425).

Seegebarth, B., Peyer, M., Balderjahn, I., & Wiedmann, K.-P. (2016, April). The Sustainability Roots of Anticonsumption Lifestyles and Initial Insights Regarding Their Effects on Consumers' Well-Being. *olume 50, Issue 1*, pp. 68-99.

Shen, J., & Saijo, T. (2008). Reexamining the relations between socio-demographic characteristics and individual environmental concern: Evidence from Shanghai data. *Journal of Environmental Psychology , 28* (1), 42-50.

Sherinian, A. (2016, October). *Meet 17 Young People Leading the Way on the Sustainable Development Goals*. (U. N. Foundations, Producer) Retrieved from http://unfoundationblog.org/meet-17-young-people-leading-the-way-on-the-sustainable-development-goals/

Stephany, A. (2015). *The Business of Sharing: Making it in the New Sharing Economy.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tussyadiah, I. (2016). Factors of satisfaction and intention to use peer-to-peer accommodation . pp. 55, 70–80. .

Tussyadiah, Ilis;. (2015). An exploratory study on drivers and deterrents of collaborative consumption in travel. In: Tussyadiah, I., Inversini, A. (Eds.), In *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism* (pp. 817-830). Switzerland: Springer Internatioanl Publishing.

Weitzman, M. (1984). *The share economy. Conquering staglation.* Cambridge.
Werner, O., & Schoepfle, G. (1987). *Systematic fieldwork: Foundations of ethnography and interviewing* (Vol. 1). Sage, Beverly Hills.