

Reporting as social practice: Co-designing a food sharing sustainability assessment toolkit

SCORAI 2018 - Copenhagen Business School

27-30th June 2018 - Sharing Economy I

Anna Davies, Trinity College Dublin: daviesa@tcd.ie

www.sharecity.ie

[@sharecityire](https://twitter.com/sharecityire)

Grant Agreement No: 646883



Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation



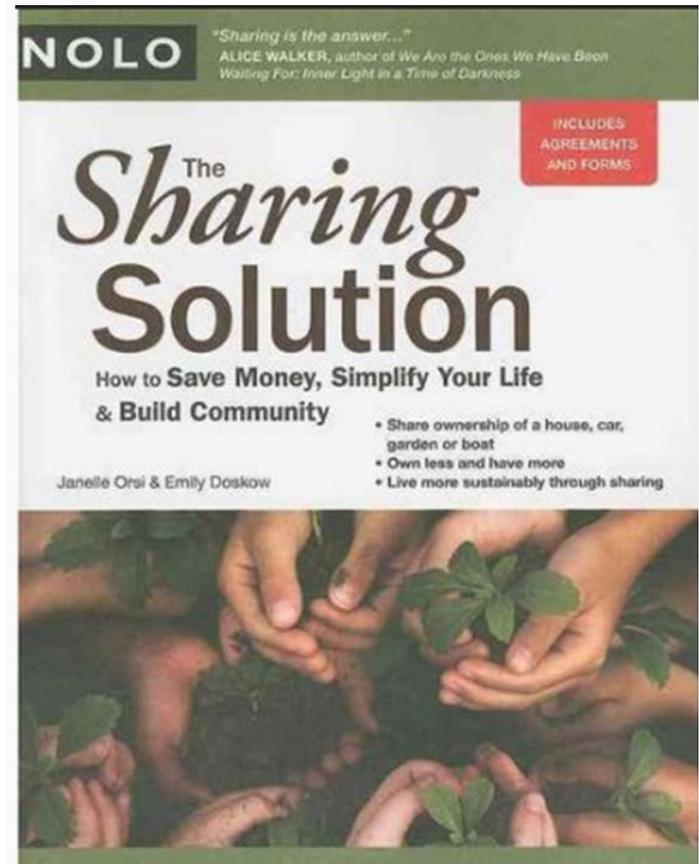
Sharing and sustainability:

(1) Early optimism

- Environmental efficiency
- Economic resilience
- Social benefits

“The Sharing Solution: How to save money, simplify your life and build community. Own less, have more. *Live more sustainably through sharing*”
(Orsi and Doskow, 2009)

“The **environmental promise** of sharing platforms holds that consumers become much less reliant and dependent on individual, private ownership ... consumers do not only save money but would also contribute to lower material demand and energy use. As such, the sharing economy can be considered, **at least potentially**, as contributing to a **sustainability transition**.” (Frenken, 2017)



Why the Sharing Economy Has a Sustainability Problem

Companies like Uber are shaking up traditional industries--but will all this disruption create more sustainable businesses?



By Matthew Yeomans *Founder, Sustainly* [@sustainly](#)

“Many SE initiatives claim to create environmental benefits – such as reduced CO² emissions – but few currently measure it in a systematic or quantifiable way. Rather, typically they focus on economic arguments (saving money, generating income) because doing so gets people more involved directly – it benefits their pocketbook today, rather than benefiting the environment over time. Unfortunately, this also means that a lot of value is left on the table, as these environmental data are lost.”

– APRIL RINNE

“SE initiatives identify new wants in society and the potential in changing values and lifestyles. Based on this, they tailor new business models, where the value created not only stems from the product or service, but from further values associated to them, such as social interaction, different consumption models, democratisation of access, etc. SE initiatives find ways of turning this into business models that generate social value and customer identification.” – CHERYL D. HICKS

“The problem of the communication of positive impact (beyond economic benefits/savings) is that the numbers quantifying the impacts are very vague.” – ALBERT CAÑIGUERAL



May 8, 2015

Sharing and sustainability:

(2) Preliminary research

“Sharing Economy: A Potential New Pathway to Sustainability” (Heinrichs, 2013)

“The sustainability paradox of the sharing economy” (Verboven & Venherck, 2016)

“The sharing economy: A pathway to sustainability or a nightmarish form of neoliberal capitalism?”
(Martin, 2016)

“How can we analytically conceptualize and empirically assess the various impacts of the current sharing economy platforms in terms of people, planet and prosperity?” (Frenken and Schor, 2017)

Sectoral focus: transport and accommodation platform economies

Sustainability focus: economic and environmental

... sustainability of food sharing?



SHARECITY

What is SHARECITY?

SHARECITY is a five-year research project funded by the European Research Council, which identifies and examines the diverse practices of urban food sharing that use **information and communication technologies** to mediate their sharing.

SHARECITY has four objectives:

1. To advance theoretical understanding of contemporary food sharing.
2. To generate a significant body of comparative and novel international empirical knowledge about urban food sharing initiatives and their governance.
3. To design and test an assessment framework for establishing the impact of urban food sharing economies.
4. To co-design scenarios for sustainable urban food sharing futures with stakeholders.

What is Food Sharing?

As there is no agreed definition of what counts as food sharing, we extend a dictionary definition of sharing:

“**having** a portion [of food] with another or others; **giving** a portion [of food] to others; **using, occupying** or **enjoying** [food and food related spaces to include the **growing, cooking** and/or **eating** of food] jointly; possessing an **interest** [in food] in common; or **telling** someone about [food]”.

(Adapted from Oxford University Press, 2014)

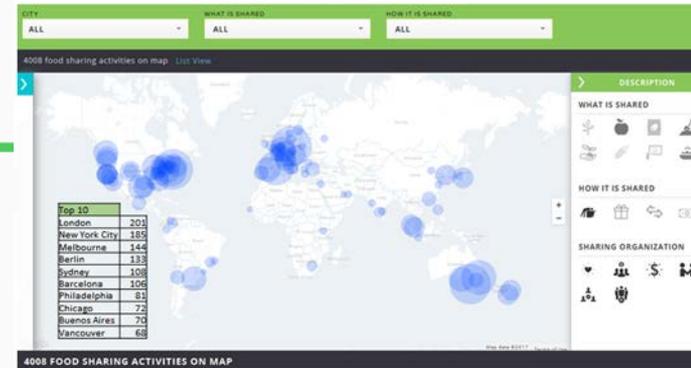
This definition emphasises the practices and experiences of **having things in common** and **doing things together** around food, including but moving beyond commensality; the practice of eating or drinking together. Such a definition includes attention to what is shared, from **raw materials** (e.g. crops) to **products** (e.g. processed food products, tools and cooking utensils) and **services**, as well as **capabilities** (knowledge and skills) and **spaces** (e.g. fields, allotments, gardens, and kitchens).



Sharing and sustainability (3) SHARECITY

- SHARECITY100 (Davies et al., 2017a)
 - 78% economic
 - 77% social
 - 61% environmental
 - 34% all three / sustainability
- In-depth ethnographies in 9 cities
- Online-communication of goals & impacts (Davies et al., 2018)
 - >30% of goals have no impact data
 - 51% of impacts expressed qualitatively
- **Co-design**

The SHARECITY100 Database



In-depth ethnographies

SHARECITY project conducted in-depth ethnographical research with food sharing initiatives in 9 cities of contrasting contexts embedding themselves in the activities of diverse food sharing initiatives in these locations.



www.sharecity.ie

SHARE CITY
Sustainability of city-based food sharing

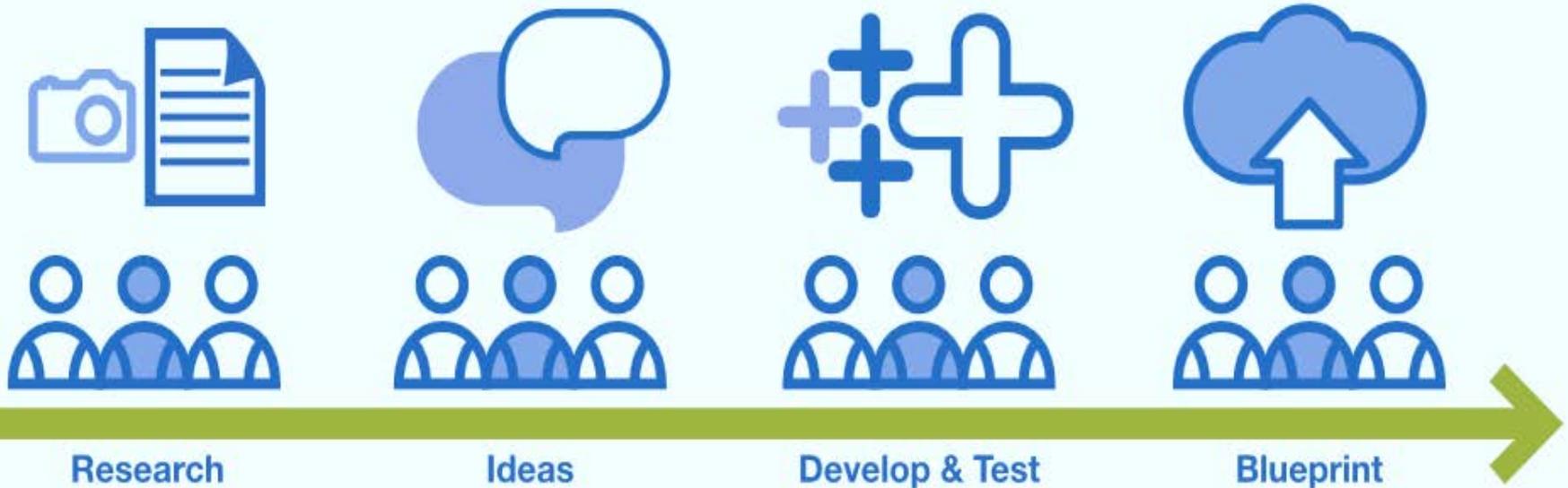
SHARECITY BRIEFING NOTE 3

GOALS & IMPACTS

Communicating goals and impacts of food sharing in online spaces



Co-designing a toolkit for identifying food sharing impacts



Co-design workshop 1: Community Kitchen

Goals, needs & challenges

Goals: “to bring people together for them to enjoy a hot meal and to reduce social isolation of people ... A **social goal** would be **reducing social isolation**, and I don’t know if it’s **environmental or sustainable** but also getting more young people to **eat vegetables** ... I do know that each, well last year anyway, each of our canteens saved three and a quarter tons of surplus food. So **reducing waste** that way but also **educating** people on how they can reduce their own domestic waste”
[Founder, CD, 1]

- Provide shared eating experiences to those who may otherwise not have them [**Social interaction**]
- Provide regular [weekly] access to balanced cooked meals using fresh ingredients for those who otherwise may not get them [**Healthy eating**]
- Provide education on food safety, nutrition, cooking skills and food budgeting for youth groups and broader audiences in the form of cooking classes and take home educational materials [**Self-efficacy**]
- Engage in activism to promote changes in food policy and increase access to healthy, affordable food for everyone through grassroots campaigns [**Right to food**]



Current reporting

Reporting requirements:

- It's totally **useless**, the information that we're being asked to report on are things like how many have benefitted from using your service? We're going to say all of them but **how do we know actually** ... it's a silly question to ask really.
- How many people have reported improved health outcomes? I'm not really sure what that means as a question, but also that doesn't also necessarily mean that they have improved their health, they just might say that they have and there's no way of really like finding that out **without following people around** ... You see the questions aren't thorough enough and they don't give us anything to work from, but I mean also **in a way it's kind of good because you can just like, you can generalise** based on your answers to questions.

Outputs:

“So, we collect data, we collect session data, that's **demographics** and things that we can make a sort of **guestimate** on, without going too in depth and asking each individual circumstances and background but general things like ... and then generalised demographics of the people that attended [we do] by eye, **otherwise we'd be asking everyone all the time and it's kind of irritating**”

Annual survey:

“and then we do an **annual** survey. We ask them questions ... about their health, how they rate their health or perceive their health and about any other support that they might need and we also do the **United Nations Food [Insecurity] Experience Scale** questions as well, to indicate like food poverty and equality.”

Case studies:

“the **qualitative** stuff that Jess has been writing up is **richer** and full of a lot more information, but if we just collected that and we didn't have any numbers to throw into the report then **we wouldn't have a full report** but ... well sometimes you can write one case study, **you can just write about one person**, like the project I'm talking to these people about later, we work with **75 people** “

Feedback forms:

“Feedback forms [are] a mixture of oral recordings, written recordings, post-it notes, just about how the session went because with the people that have come on our recent projects it would be impossible, not impossible, but **they'd find it quite hard to fill out a form**, so we had to be more **creative** with [collecting] our feedback”



Needs

Data management:

- “we've got like four year's worth of information ... only a very small part of it is in a way that we can manipulate and find out information because that is all on paper” **Researcher: Okay so you just kind of started on my next question like, how is the data that you do collect stored and managed and I think you're saying that basically it's mostly managed by paper at the moment?** Yeah, if you can say that's management, that's fine”
- “It's taken like **four years** to get it to an online sort of document and I **don't really think I understand how I can utilise the information best or better, even like YouTube video tutorials are really technical** ... we need **training**”.

New data:

- “the Mayor of London has a project called, 'Kitchen Social', which we're taking part in and they said, '**Recruit someone to do your social impact, but we'll give you training on social impact later on**'. So, I know it's something, I think it's something that we should do but **I'm not really sure how to go about it just yet.**”
- “not more collection ... our survey is already four pages long, so that's a bit too much, it's **better collection, maybe different questions**. Well it might do because things are changing, we haven't changed our questionnaire like in two or three years but you know priorities are changing, there might be things that we're not picking up on, it would be **good to know what other people are collecting** maybe as well.”

New means of data collection:

- “Some people don't speak English as a first **language** or any language and yes, those are the real issues ... form ticking boxes isn't easy for them, a lot of our people are **elderly**, they can't even **see** properly”
- “I think words and numbers are a bit **static** and they **don't bring to life** the projects ... you can't get **tone** on paper”
- “It would be helpful if I wasn't doing the creating forms for example **because it's taking me away from doing a whole bunch of other things** as well ... if we can do everything on our phones then we won't need to carry like laptops or you know filling forms up as you can go on a phone, then it's media just thinking...”



Reporting as a social practice (I)

“... assessment technologies cannot be seen from a purely *technical* perspective but instead require a deeper appreciation of **assessment as a social practice** ...” (Crossouard, 2010)

“... **counting was as much a social practice as a technical practice** ... logistical challenges of designing and operating reliable data collection systems; highly *localized variability* in underlying practices; *contestations about the legitimacy* of both counting; and methods of counting” (Dixon-Woods et al., 2012)

Social practices are:

“forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ [entities] and their use [performance], a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge” (Reckwitz, 2002: 249)

Warde (2005)	Shove (2003)	Brezet (2011)	Gram-Hanssen (2011)
Procedures	Competencies (or “skills”)	User-practice	Know-how & embodied habit
Understandings	Meanings (or “images”)	Infrastructure	Institutional knowledge
Engagement			Engagements
Items of consumption	Material artefacts (or “stuff”)	Device	Technologies



Reporting as a social practice (II)

UNDERSTANDINGS

Social meanings and rationale of reporting; knowing the theory of reporting; norms and expectations about the how, when and why of reporting; existing reporting requirements (rules) & conventions around reporting (e.g. technical knowledge of SIA frameworks, statistical techniques, impact evaluation, indicators etc.)

SKILLS

Practical know-how to accomplish reporting; competence in meeting moral, aesthetic, and normative social expectations around reporting (e.g. being able to activate understandings around impact and use reporting tools)

STUFF

The tools of reporting; devices, technologies and resources for identifying, collecting data, monitoring and managing data and calculating results (e.g. paper, forms, surveys, computers, spreadsheets)



Challenges

How can we expand our understandings and skills?

What tools are suitable for collecting data on food sharing?

What and whose understandings apply when reporting on food sharing?

How do we cope with uncertainty and ensure reporting has legitimacy?



Conclusion

“we have much to learn about which measures to target, how to collect the data, and how to promote improvement at a reasonable cost and with a minimum of unanticipated consequences” (Wachter, 2012: 40)

- Plurality & complexity
 - Constellation of various valuation logics (orders of worth) exist in and around the impacts of food sharing - e.g. market, industrial, civic, domestic, green
 - Dissonance between external requirements and internal desires
- Concerns
 - The powerful discourse of the market vs. seriously advancing social and environmental justice
 - Dominance of market/industrial agendas: cost, efficiency, professionalism
 - How to find valid indicators for social dimension of sharing in particular
- Co-design
 - Provides empirical opportunity to examine these different orders of worth
 - Dialogue prompts actors to be reflective about the moral assumptions they act upon
 - Process of justifying value positions and building compromises, enabling further refinement and testing of earlier analyses
- Hopes
 - Friction between worlds of worth may create potential for creative solutions to emerge



Thank you!

Website: www.sharecity.ie
SHARECITY100: www.sharecity.ie/research/sharecity100-database/
Blog: <http://sharecity.ie/blog/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sharecityresearch/>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sharecityire> @ShareCityIre

Anna Davies
daviesa@tcd.ie



Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation

