

# Ps2Share: Participation, Privacy, and Power in the Sharing Economy

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## Why did we select this report?

The report provides an inclusive and all-around approach on the varied mechanisms for leveraging power over other parties in the dynamic peer-to-peer sharing economy. The relationship between platform and regulatory bodies is analyzed, trying to solve what is usually seen as a high-fragmented scenario.

## Key findings:

The report explored the control of the platform over its users, both as providers and as consumers. This control can take the form of algorithmic management, communication restriction, limitations on both formal and informal dispute resolution options, as well as a unilateral approach to determining the terms of exchange. In the face of these issues, it has been suggested that collective action, as well as stronger regulatory intervention, can be leveraged to equalize the current power imbalances.

In the sharing economy there also exist mechanisms for control between users, namely of consumers over providers, and of providers over consumers. In an abstract and impersonal sense, these control mechanisms can take effect through the sophisticated rating and review systems that platforms are utilizing to ensure trust between users, as well as to create an efficient matching process. However, as has been discussed in detail, these mechanisms are open to manipulation, bias, and discriminatory practices.

In addition, an under-studied topic of particular interest is the effect of ratings on enforcing a 'service mentality' onto providers. We propose that, as a field of

enquiry, the control mechanisms utilized between users should receive greater attention. Given the rhetoric of 'sharing', 'peer-to-peer', and 'collaborative', it is thus important to consider what power dynamics are at play in that purportedly positive relationship. In terms of propositions for future research, we suggest that attention should also be paid to the power of platforms and users of sharing services over passive third-parties who are not engaged in the service.



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