

PhD in Business Economics

Institutional Work in the Sharing Economy Ecosystem: The Case of Ride-Hailing and Hospitality in Brussels Capital region

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Abstract

*This doctoral thesis explores the institutional tactics developed by sharing economy platforms and incumbent firms in the sharing ecosystem. The purpose of institutional tactics is either to gain or preserve legitimacy and, accordingly, change or keep the institutional context. This research also analyses the challenges faced by governors and the views and perspectives from citizens regarding the sharing economy. The two main research questions guiding this doctoral thesis are: (1) 'What are the institutional tactics employed by actors in the ride-hailing and hospitality industries in Brussels?' and (2) 'What have those tactics implied for governance and the evolution of the sharing economy ecosystem?'. Combining content analysis and semi-structured interviews, this research reveals several key findings. First, the findings show that sharing economy platforms use tactics to highlight their uniqueness and to address regulatory concerns, while incumbents advocate for a fair level playing field. Second, the findings reveal key differences between the industries. While the ride-hailing industry has experienced intense conflicts and legal battles, the hospitality industry has known smoother institutional changes. Third, the findings show that policymakers struggle with balancing competing interests, while citizens play a role in shaping indirectly the ecosystem by expressing their acceptance or rejection of the sharing economy. This research provides theoretical and practical implications, as well as directions for future research.*