

# THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN TOURISM AND SHARING ECONOMY FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE: THE HOME4CREATIVITY CASE STUDY

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## Abstract

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*In the last few years the so-called sharing economy has been the subject of a great deal of attention, in tourism as well, with special regard to:*

- *the effects of the Airbnb model on the tourism industry and related drivers;*
- *the transformative power of collaborative tourism experiences, especially Couchsurfing.*

*We aim to enhance this body of knowledge by taking into consideration the combined effect of a hybrid set of collaborative practices (i.e., renting, bartering, and sharing) that goes along a continuum between market exchange and shared sociality.*

*We purport to do that through a special project from Italy, i.e., a digital platform that aims to connect people who want to share their homes, working spaces, time, and skills with others and who strive to change their lives. The guests can either pay a fee for the various services or give their time, artistic skills or entrepreneurial ability in return. This case study portrays a new value creation model in tourism.*

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## **1. Introduction**

In the last few years the so-called sharing economy (Botsman and Rogers, 2010) has been the subject of a great deal of attention in several streams of literature, especially in marketing (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012; Belk, 2010; Corciolani and Dalli, 2014; Giesler, 2006; Ozanne and Ballantine, 2010; Ozanne and Ozanne, 2011). The sharing economy frame includes a wide set of practices that show different, and sometimes very limited, degrees of sharing (Belk, 2014b).

The main drivers of this new scenario are; people's rising interest in sustainability (Scaraboto and Figueiredo, 2017), the search for lifestyles based on downshifting (Huneke, 2005), and the new pursuit of happiness (Dunn, Gilbert, and Wilson, 2011; Fortezza, 2014). 'Collaborative consumers' have also been greatly helped by the development of digital platforms and other Internet resources that increase the opportunities for unknown persons to get in touch, exchange, collaborate, and share (Belk, 2014a, 2014b; Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Perren and Kozinets, 2018).

Although the sharing economy has, so far, been widely (but generically) considered to have changed the social dynamics of consumption and impacted sustainable development in a positive way (Guyader, 2018), there remains much confusion regarding the actual nature of this phenomenon. In fact, the sharing economy tends to be mostly identified with those large commercial venture capital-financed platforms that are so ubiquitous nowadays, such as Airbnb, Uber, or Deliveroo (Laamanen et al., 2018) and that are just a part of the whole and not necessarily the most significant or interesting one.

In order to grasp the more profound essence of this phenomenon, several scholars (Hofmann et al, 2017; Perren and Kozinets, 2018) suggest focusing on one prominent key-factor, i.e., people empowerment, both in value creation and value acquisition, through collaborative or "lateral" processes. Indeed, in the sharing economy perspective, people-to-people interactions are crucial to value creation. Moreover, people partake in these processes either for economic reasons or to pursue other key benefits (Belk, 2014).

In tourism, people's empowerment basically translates into:

- new job and business opportunities, for example in the following areas:
  - accommodation, especially referring to home renting, either professional (small B&B owners) or not;
  - tourism-related services (Uber or the like);
  - packaged local tourism experiences (Fortezza & Pencarelli, 2011, 2018). Here, the existing literature is mostly about the effects of the Airbnb model on the tourism industry and related drivers (Guttentag, 2013, 2015; Tussyadiah, 2015; Zhang et al., 2018). In general, as Wilhelms et al. (2017) underline, today "an increasing number of people are turn-

ing into micro-entrepreneurs, engaging in peer-to-peer (P2P) asset sharing by offering their personal possessions to others for a rental fee facilitated via online-based platforms.”

- new ways of satisfying people’s needs, that are not necessarily within the market or driven by economic factors. Here, the existing scholarly gaze is mostly focused on Couchsurfing and Home Sharing as special contexts in which to study the transformative power of collaborative tourism experiences (Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis, 2013; Decrop et al., 2018; Molz, 2013).

We argue that something important remains to be explored since the existing literature in the tourism domain only considers one collaborative practice at a time, either within the market (e.g. Airbnb) or outside the common market setting (e.g. Couchsurfing). Therefore, our research goal is to further enhance the current body of knowledge by providing a more comprehensive picture of the business opportunities which can come out of the creative combination of different practices and value regimes (Scaraboto, 2015; Scaraboto and Figueiredo, 2017) in tourism.

This is not a trivial point, because people now use a wider set of channels and ways of getting the resources they need or want (Figueiredo and Scaraboto 2016; Kozinets 2002; Scaraboto, 2015) and tend to shift from one to another based on contextual factors (Dalli and Fortezza, 2019).

This is worth exploring, in general, for a better understanding of the developments of the sharing economy, a phenomenon that cannot be considered either transitory or isolated (Guyader, 2018; Perren and Kozinets, 2018; Piscicelli et al., 2015). In fact, the new (collaborative) practices, spaces and processes will be increasingly integrated with the more traditional ones within a different value creation framework. This also means that market and non-market logics will be ever more intertwined, since people will never completely escape the market (Kozinets, 2002). Accordingly, one main point does emerge: how can non-market logics combine with market logics to lead to even higher value for all the parties involved in such innovative and complex processes? Why is that so important in tourism, in particular? In order to achieve our research goal, based on the interpretive nature of the study, we will carry out qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Siggelkow, 2007) through a highly revelatory and unique case study (Yin, 1994) from Italy, i.e., Home4Creativity, which cleverly combines aspects of sharing (Belk, 2007, 2010), renting (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012), and bartering (Dalli and Fortezza, 2016, 2019), thus revealing a completely new value creation model in tourism. We propose to accomplish our objective by means of an in-depth interview with the founder and CEO of Home4Creativity in the aim of shedding light on the following key-points:

- the nature and the extent of the collaborative mix of practices that the company relies on;

- how market-based and non-market-based features coexist;
- the effects of this combination in terms of value creation.

In the following sections of the article we will discuss how to frame the collaborative practices and their main differences. As a related aspect, we will explain the concept of hybrid economies as the fruit of the combination between practices that can even be profoundly different in nature. There will follow a discussion of the Home4Creativity case study as a special example of hybridization in tourism. Lastly, we offer some conclusions and suggest possible further research steps.

## 2. How to frame the collaborative practices and why this is important

As Wilhelms et al. (2017) point out, “the umbrella concept of the sharing economy includes a wealth of practices from sharing to bartering, as well as fee-based rental-like transactions and more.” Each of these practices shows specific features and refers to different value regimes.

From this standpoint, drawing on Corciolani et al. (2013), Fortezza (2014) suggests a possible way of framing the new collaborative practices (Fig. 1) based on the following aspects:

- ownership vs access: we can thus distinguish those practices that imply the transfer of ownership (e.g. purchases on second-hand markets like eBay, or bartering) from those that just imply the possibility to access (individually or jointly) a resource, as in the case of car sharing (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012);
- price vs non-price: here we can find practices that imply the payment of a fee in order to get a needed or wanted resource (e.g. renting services like Airbnb or Uber) and others that otherwise do not (e.g. carpooling, which only entails the sharing of travel costs between the parties involved in the travel experience).

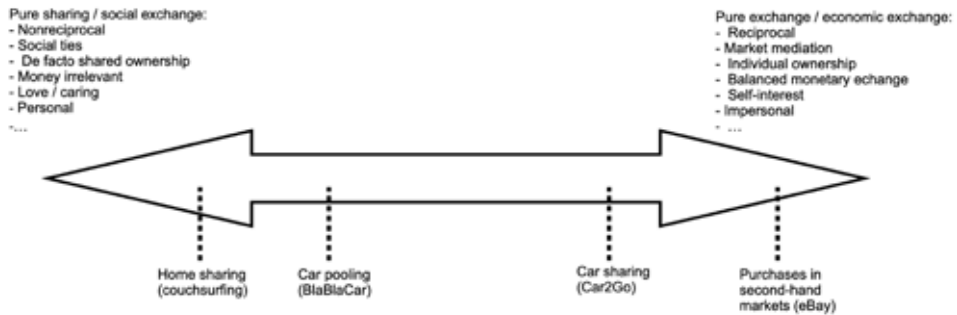
*Fig. 1 - A framework for collaborative practices*

	OWNERSHIP	ACCESS
PRICE	Purchases in second-hand markets, off-line and on-line (e.g. eBay)	New forms of renting (e.g., Car2Go, Airbnb)
NON PRICE	Donation Bartering	Borrowing Sharing, to different degrees (e.g. Couchsurfing or BlaBlaCar)

*Source: our adaptation of Fortezza 2014, p. 82.*

There are scholars like Habibi et al. (2016), for example, who go even further, putting collaborative consumption practices on a continuum whose extremes are pure sharing and pure exchange (Fig. 2). As mentioned before, these extremes can be also seen as two opposite value regime types, i.e., economic exchange and social exchange or mutuality (Dalli and Fortezza, 2019).

Fig. 2 The continuum of collaborative practices



Source: our adaptation of Habibi et al. 2016, p. 289.

As Scaraboto and Figueiredo (2017) explain, a value regime refers to the following aspects:

- specific modes of exchange;
- models of value creation and distribution, including processes of production and exchange, mechanisms of valuation, and their associated market structures and business models;
- normative and cultural values regarding the moral and social value of products, lifestyles, the natural environment, and so on;
- governance mechanisms in value creation, representing formal and informal rules, power relations, standards that are significant to the parties.

In particular, in our scheme economic exchange is mediated by the market, while social exchange occurs without monetary rewards, even if costs and benefits (either tangible or intangible) can be considered by participants when deciding whether or not to transfer or simply give access to a resource. In economic exchange, it is usually assumed that the parties tend to act in their own self-interest, while in social exchange conditions there is more room for altruism and solidarity (Giesler, 2008).

### **3. The concept of hybrid economies**

Collaborative practices are usually seen as synonymous of “alternative economies” (Scaraboto and Figueiredo, 2017) that carry a strong moral logic and represent intentional forms of resistance to the mainstream market (Marcoux 2009). Despite this (mis)perception, alternative economies are not infused with only one logic (e.g., the moral logic) (Scaraboto 2015) and are not at all separated from the more traditional modes of (market) exchange (Kozinets, 2002; Perren and Kozinets, 2018). Indeed, hybridity is one of the constitutive characteristics of the new set of consumption practices. This concept is twofold.

First of all, it stems from the combination of practices that are different in nature as a new intriguing opportunity in value creation processes. As Arcuri et al. (2018) state, “hybrid contexts that combine initiatives based on market rules, such as sharing and other forms of exchange, are increasingly common.” In a similar fashion, Schau et al. (2009) point out that new and traditional practices “can be combined in complex ways [...] end effects of interactions are at minimum additive and potentially exponential.”

As a second important point, every collaborative mode of consumption appears to be essentially dualistic in which both of the characteristics of sharing and exchange coexist to varying degrees (Habibi et al., 2016). Therefore, to reiterate what was discussed in the previous paragraph, each practice falls somewhere in between two extremes of the continuum which goes from pure sharing to pure exchange. From this standpoint, Dalli and Fortezza (2019) underline how each practice may lay closer to one extreme or another depending on various factors such as, for example, the cultural imprinting, the governance style, and /or the attitude of the infomediary (a digital platform, basically) that enables and /or boosts the exchanges (Perren and Kozinets, 2018) and users’ profiles and related attitudes and /or drivers. Taking bartering as a possible key-example (Arsel, 2015; Dalli and Fortezza, 2019), we can find (barterers and) barterers who are more oriented to economic and substantial individual benefits, and who appreciate above all exchange value, and others who are mainly oriented towards a social and collective stance. For the latter, bartering is often just a way to get in touch with like-minded people and fuel their sustainable way of life. Similarly, we can consider the example of coworking (Fortezza et al., 2016), that can be framed more as renting or more as sharing based on the comprehensive formula designed by the coworking owner, the internal atmosphere, and the daily activities promoted by the community manager. Again, the characteristics and profiles of coworkers represent a key-factor, as well. In more general terms, scholars specialized in the collaborative field strongly agree on the fact that “agents” and contextual factors dramatically influence peer-to-peer value creation processes.

Overall, the intersection of and translation between different practices and value regimes (Arnould, 2013; Scaraboto, 2015; Scaraboto and Figueiredo, 2017) is an emerging hot topic in the collaborative consumption domain. This is also related to the interplays between markets and non-markets (Kozinets, 2002; Ozanne and Ozanne, 2016) and to the interactions between market-based exchanges and social processes (Dalli and Fortezza, 2019; Scaraboto, 2015).

What appears to be clear is that the new exchange practices exist (and can thrive) alongside the dominant market exchange paradigm (Figueiredo and Scaraboto 2016), and that these practices actually go well beyond the strict anti-consumption domain (Kozinets, 2002).

#### **4. The Home4Creativity case study**

##### *4.1. The business idea and how it was generated*

The intriguing Home4Creativity's formula is based on a digital platform that aims to connect people who want to share their homes, working spaces, time and skills with others and who strive to change their lives, by means of restoring environments and experiences and getting in touch with inspiring like-minded people.

The initial idea of the company's founder was to give new life to her parents' homestead in a very green and remote area in the Calabria region, in southern Italy. At the very beginning, she just aimed at experimenting with co-living, a concept she had heard about and was fascinated by. Very soon, she realized she could go even further, by adding more offering features, such as co-working, but within a comprehensive experiential scheme.

The company's founder was also driven by the desire to promote those places that are far away from the best-known tourist destinations. "Our first site in Calabria" – she said – "is very difficult to reach, so the challenge was to make it interesting for people from all over the world to come here, stay, share, and experience the authenticity of such an inspiring place!"

##### *4.2. The value proposition and the (transformative) experience offering*

The value proposition of Home4Creativity is entirely based on typical Mediterranean features (Bartolazzi et al., 2008), such as the focus on what is local (that means, in particular, discovery and rediscovery of authentic places), on warm relationships, and on slow living as a value. The company's founder explained: "Our main goal was to create a system of opportunities in order for people to feel good, enjoy the (shared) time spent in our venues, and see life in a different manner."

From this standpoint, both the features of the venues and the host destinations are fundamental. As a rule, each venue is designed to allow for significant creative, recreational, and contemplative opportunities. Although there is no single standard to comply with, all of the venues must share some common basic features, starting from rurality. In more detail, they must be:

- independent buildings (either private homes or pre-existing touristic accommodations);
- not too close to other buildings in order to assure enough privacy and tranquility to tourists;
- equipped with no less than four rooms;
- equipped with enough outdoor green spaces based on the internal surface area of the venue<sup>1</sup>;
- equipped with a shared kitchen;
- equipped with at least one co-working space and adequate areas in which to host events and training sessions.

As for the host destinations, they must be beautiful and inspiring places, but, at the same time, not too crowded or “glamorous”. Actually, they must be somewhat underexplored, off the beaten path, and even, a little “rustic”, but potentially very rich from a cultural point of view.

Moving on to the company’s product range, it includes both services and memorable experiences which are meant to enable positive transformations (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

While the services are more stable, the experiences are more flexible based on the proactive effort of each venue’s manager who can propose specific experiential initiatives meant to make the most of local amenities.

The services offered by Home4Creativity include the following:

- rent of a private room with its own bathroom, plus breakfast (a typical accommodation service) at the average rate of €45 to 50 per day, but with progressive discounts based on length of stay and with special conditions for monthly stays;<sup>2</sup>
- rent of co-working spaces and facilities<sup>3</sup> with the option to also rent more private spaces when needed.<sup>4</sup> The coworking fee is around €6 per day, but it can be included in the accommodation price in the case

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<sup>1</sup>For instance, if the venue has 7 rooms, the garden must be at least 500 square meters.

<sup>2</sup>For instance, a monthly stay costs 500 euros and includes; bed and breakfast, co-working, the so-called “philosophical talk”, and free access to a gym, if available.

<sup>3</sup>Based on data provided by the company’s founder, 6 out of 10 guests, on average, pair the accommodation service with co-working.

<sup>4</sup>For instance, in the venue situated in Calabria, co-workers can also use more traditional working spaces located in the venue’s nearest town (so, not in the countryside) if needed for special purposes, like meeting business partners, very important clients, or the like.



- of long stays;
- professional, highly specialized (paid) services such as:
  - training programs: thanks to a strong network of key-partners, Home4Creativity constantly organizes differentiated training events in each venue; these are meant to provide any interested party (not only the venue guests<sup>5</sup>) with specific managerial or technical tools;
  - various kinds of business mentoring (from counseling on a preliminary business or product idea to real business incubation) in several fields (e.g. tourism, technology, etc.).

As for the (authentic) experiences in the product range, they include the following items (either for-free or for-payment):

- social eating: each guest can use the common kitchen on his/her own without any limitations. Moreover, each venue manager actively fosters a shared culinary experience as a special time to spend all together. In this case, guests do not pay a per-meal price, but just compensate the host for food preparation costs;
- “brainstorming around the kitchen table”: in the founder’s words, “our aim is to celebrate those precious moments when people sit down to have a meal, starting from breakfast. Too often, people waste the opportunity to open their minds and relax when having a meal. This is absolutely a not-to-be-missed opportunity. So, we want our guests to take their time and enjoy the meal and the time spent with one another. We try to create the best conditions so people can feel good and happy when having their breakfast or lunch or dinner, and can benefit from sharing their thoughts, daily plans, and goals with others. If you think about it carefully, too many times people too hurriedly and mechanically just have dinner as a sort of duty. Maybe they eat while messaging on their smartphones. At our venues people play, interact, and talk, a lot, over dinner. From this point of view, we just aim to rekindle healthy behaviors”;
- “the philosophical talk”: this is a two-hour talk inspired by philosophical logics with the aim of helping people to “deconstruct and reconstruct” the path of their life. “We want people to realize – the company’s founder said – that they can give their lives a new boost and that their dreams can really come true. It’s so special for us to see people who, through the steps they take during their stays at our venues, can take on new inspiring projects for their life or their work”;
- “the philosophical walk”: this is a touristic walk in authentic places such

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<sup>5</sup>For instance, the so-called “Workation-Camp”, i.e., a one-week intensive training event, is meant to professionally represent all the job and business opportunities coming from the tourism digital revolution.

as the historic center of a village, out in the countryside, or elsewhere. This sightseeing is organized by the Home4Creativity team who aim to encourage people to interact, relax, and enjoy their time together;

- one or more days' packaged tourist experiences in collaboration with several diversified partners (e.g. restaurants, castles, cultural associations, local residents, sport or cultural associations, etc.). The company's founder stated: "In a way, we act as a tour operator, by putting together all those activities that can be pleasant and enjoyable for our guests. And this is something our guests really like."

As mentioned before, overall this formula is designed to foster transformative effects on people (Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis, 2013; Decrop et al., 2018; Molz, 2013) and this is also related to the nature and intensity of relationships that are built on a daily basis by participants. "The added value of spending time in our venues" the company's founder added, is multi-faceted, but I think that the community commitment represents the most important one. We speak of relationships that last for a long time, even for one's entire life. Roughly 70% of our guests keep in touch with one another, out of friendship but also for professional reasons, after leaving a place. I can recall the case of a guy from Cremona (Italy) and another from Holland who decided to create a venture together since they had a common background and diversified skills. That's magic, isn't it?"

#### *4.3. The host profiles*

As regards the company's structure, Home4Creativity is akin to a franchising system based on a specific offering and branding scheme. As a consequence, each venue must comply with common standards in terms of positioning, product range, and relationship management.

Venue franchisees are not necessarily the owners. Nevertheless, their role is fundamental, because, as the community managers, they must see to it that the venue's daily activities flow smoothly. Sometimes, they also have to mediate among persons with different backgrounds and habits. In general terms, they are the key to the comprehensive atmosphere that people can experience during their stays. As mentioned above, they must also find the best players to be involved in the value creation processes and manage the related business relationships.

Overall, the hosts are called to build high-value relationships and connect the guests with the locals, in order for them to experience authentic and transformative stays. In sum, this means that the community managers cannot help but live in the venues themselves.

#### *4.4. The customer segments*

Home4Creativity's offering is addressed to two main categories of clients: the ones who simply access one of the services offered (especially those related to business training) but don't experience co-living, and others who do co-live in the venues for short or long periods of time. The latter are potentially from all over the world; at the moment in fact, 60% of these clients come from abroad and, in particular, northern Europe and South America. On average, they first find out about the Home4Creativity offering (mostly while surfing the Internet searching for a place where they can combine business and pleasure), then they realize that it's located in Italy and in the end, they discover where, precisely, the venue is located. In short, guests tend not to choose a destination but rather, a specific life experience.

These tourists, in turn, can be divided into two segments as follows:

- digital nomads (e.g. creative freelance workers or digital entrepreneurs) who (alone or with their family) can work anywhere and want to do it in inspiring and restorative places, experiencing "something different". They usually want to slow down and/or get new "thrills" on both the professional and the personal level since these aspects are very closely intertwined. They are tourists, but not conventional ones, and they are aware of that. They tend to experience fairly lengthy stays (on average, from 5 weeks to 6 months) just because they are seeking a transformation. Moreover, they are very open to discovering new cultural contexts and aim to experience the most hidden and authentic sides of destinations. In this sense, Home4Creativity's venues can be seen as "systems which enable transformative processes". The company's founder describes them in these terms: "Such a guest often feels the need to come back to us once again, and then once more time again, just to regenerate. Moreover, some of them have even become our business partners, especially for training programs but also for business incubation. They are journalists, consultants, venture capitalists, opinion leaders, and so forth";
- the company identifies the second segment as "inspired travelers". Their stays are shorter (on average, a couple of weeks). They are curious and open-minded travelers who usually create their touristic experiences on their own by mixing sources of information and providers. They are in search of "a different holiday" and come to the Home4Creativity venues without having a clear idea of the kind of experiences they will have. In the founder's words, "Day by day, they realize they are in a sharing context and really enjoy it. At a certain point, they start perceiving their fellow guests as friends, as a new family. We want them to experience an enriching holiday based on sharing and relationships."

#### 4.5. A complex hybrid formula

As for the company's business model, the founder herself is aware that the company does not get paid, in real terms, for all of the transformative effects that they are able to generate on their guests. Aside from that, if we take a careful look at the price listing, we realize that some activities (e.g. the accommodation services, the coworking services, some tourist experiences) actually have a specific rate, while others do not. Moreover, some of the paid activities can be included in kind of a flat rate in case of long stays.<sup>6</sup>

However, what is more interesting in the Home4Creativity formula is the hybridity of value regimes, because, in order to compensate the hosts, the guests can either pay a price for services or give their work hours, artistic skills, or entrepreneurial ability in return. This is what makes this business case quite unique.

More specifically, the case involves:

- either a market-based exchange (e.g. room accommodation with a market price), although within a very particular comprehensive scheme, which shows an inner collaborative nature; or
- a quasi-market exchange (Dalli and Fortezza, 2016), based on a bartering deal between Home4Creativity and its guests. This means that the parties involved in the exchange must decide and agree each time, from square one, on how the tourist experiences and services provided by the company can be compensated.

Actually, in order to properly manage such bartering deals, specific "calls to action" are launched periodically on the company's website. They describe in detail how the exchange works and what the operational conditions are for it to take place, so, for example, also how long the stay can be, based on what is required in return by the company. In more detail, there are three typical "calls" as follows:

- the one for artists (e.g. photographers, sculptors, musicians, and so on) in which tourist stays are bartered for one or more works of art or artistic performances meant to furnish the company's venues<sup>7</sup> or to further enhance the guests' touristic experience;
- the one for other types of workers (e.g. plumbers or accountants) in which the tourist stay is similarly bartered for professional skills required to fulfill the specific needs of one of the company's venues;
- the one for people who have an innovative product or business idea and

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<sup>6</sup>For example, the "philosophical talk" is a for-free activity for stays of at least one week.

<sup>7</sup>For instance, in the venue located in the Calabria region, each of the six work tables of the coworking space were crafted by a different artisan who spent a period of time on-site, thus paying for his/her stay with his/her professional skills.

decide to bring it into one of the company's venues in order to be incubated, based on the professional skills that can be put together within the Home4Creativity's professional network. The company's goal here is to help the project's proponent to translate his/her idea into a real and sustainable business. In order for this to happen, the company makes a preliminary assessment of the proponent's idea through a business model canvas; if the feedback is positive, the proponent can stay, completely gratis, for an agreed-upon number of weeks in a Home4Creativity's venue so that the project can be successfully developed. In the end, if the product or business project actually takes off, Home4Creativity gets a 5% capital share in the new venture.

## **5. Final remarks**

In tourism, the digital and the sharing economy revolution are leading to new significant market opportunities, even for (new or pre-existing) small and micro entrepreneurs. This applies, in general, to "common people", as well.

From this point of view, the most-often cited domain is that of privately-rented accommodations, which actually appears to be too narrow and not properly the most interesting one in a "collaborative" perspective. In fact, first of all we should ask ourselves how long the wake of the entrepreneurial development or boost induced by Airbnb's dramatic rise is or will be. We should also consider two other points as follows:

- it's a global company (Airbnb) that actually gets the most out of the striking success of this supposedly peer-to-peer rental system. In fact, what seems to be just a web platform supporting people-to-people interactions is a value net integrator, which proactively manages and addresses the value processes and enhances the overall value proposition;
- more and more often the Airbnb's venue hosts aren't really micro-entrepreneurs or "common people" but, instead, are well-established and even large companies (e.g. property management companies) which just use the Airbnb system as a different and very profitable business channel.

As Belk (2014b) remarks, this is not really "sharing", but rather "pseudo-sharing". At any rate, the Airbnb case offers a clear example of how powerful the peer-to-peer processes – if properly triggered – can be. This is all about the importance of leading "agents" (Figueiredo and Scaraboto, 2016) and of the "infrastructure level" (off and online) as crucial points (Kozinets, 2002; Scaraboto and Figueiredo, 2017; Perren and Kozinets, 2018) for systemic value creation enabled by the sharing economy, not only in the tourism sector.

In this sense, those platforms and digital contexts that creatively combine and cross different exchange paradigms and options are expected to be one of the most significant novelties in terms of value creation in the next few years. This is related to the growing “hybridization” (Scarabato and Figueiredo, 2017) of consumption which basically translates into:

- the combination of several consumption practices (e.g. ordinary purchases and sharing, renting and bartering, and so forth) and, accordingly, value regimes (e.g. market exchange and social exchange), within a renewed set of choices;
- the shift from one practice and/or value regime to another, based on contextual factors.

For all these reasons, the Home4Creativity case stands out as a very special one.

It only apparently shows strong similarities with some of the most intriguing and/or known models in the sharing economy domain, such as:

- co-housing (Jarvis, 2011): in both cases, people share (to a certain extent) a living experience. However, the Home4Creativity model of co-living:
  - has a different latent purpose (i.e., leading to positive transformations in the guests’ life perspective);
  - is time-limited;
  - implies a random selection of the people to live with;
  - shows a higher degree of sharing compared to co-housing, where each participant individually owns his/her house and just shares some spaces and activities with the others. The co-living model of Home4Creativity, instead, involves its participants in an all-encompassing and systematic shared life experience;
- couchsurfing (Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis, 2013; Decrop et al., 2018; Molz, 2013): in both cases we can speak of “intense sharing”, because human relationships are crucial for value creation. However, the Home4Creativity sharing experience:
  - is longer;
  - has a broader scope since it is not limited to the tourism domain;
  - is for-profit, even though this is not the exclusive company’s mission;
- co-working (Fortezza et al., 2016): this is an important part of Home4Creativity’s offering system, above all due to the company’s preeminent customer segment, i.e., digital nomads. The way co-working activities are organized here is in line with the one of the most advanced co-working hubs at the international level, where people do not merely share common spaces and facilities in order to save money, but they also share ideas, business projects, and new ventures based on a networked perspective on value creation. However, Home4Creativity’s model shows some important additional features, such as co-living (Neuhofer

- et al., 2014) and (shared) tourist experiences;
- the renting Airbnb model: here the only aspect in common with Home4Creativity's formula is the peer-to-peer renting.

Home4Creativity's model conveys a wide sense of opportunities in value creation<sup>8</sup> that go far beyond the one of mere house renting and not necessarily displays a prominent or exclusive business nature in contrast to a social nature or viceversa. It hugely expands the ways of creating value for users who are now more open-minded, more flexible and more and more interested in finding new ways (mainly based on "access") of satisfying their needs. In general, this is an extremely hot topic in the consumer behaviour field (Dalli and Fortezza, 2019; Figueiredo and Scaraboto, 2016; Kozinets, 2002; Scaraboto, 2015), but it's also a very promising one in the tourism field, where it has, so far, been mostly neglected.

Home4Creativity's formula shows three main drivers of interest as follows:

- what the value delivered to tourists consists of: Home4Creativity's offering is a multilevel combination of services and packaged-experiences that is cleverly designed to bring transformative effects in different life domains at the same time. This is a flourishing topic in tourism literature, since people are more and more often looking for positive transformations when choosing a destination as a source of happiness (Lehto, 2013; Chen et al., 2016; Kirillova and Lehto, 2016);
- how value is created and delivered: Home4Creativity's value scheme is fully based on a latent and comprehensive collaborative orientation since the daily people-to-people interactions (between the venue's community manager and guests, as well as among guests) are crucial to making guests feel good, empowered, "regenerated" (Fritz and Sonnentag, 2006);
- how value is assessed and paid back: some of Home4Creativity's offering features are for-free and others are paid activities. On average, the service activities (all paid activities) act as a sort of "pretext" for sharing time and significant life experiences. The payment options range from payment for relatively ordinary purchases (of services and packaged-experiences) to bartering or sharing. This allows many more options in the relationship between the company and its guests, putting the model midway between the domains of market and non-market, the domain of price and non-price (Kozinets, 2002; Dalli and Fortezza, 2019).

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<sup>8</sup> It also recalls another crucial aspect of the rising sharing economy business schemes, that is to say user segmentation and the creative framing of customer needs (Dalli and Fortezza, 2019; Guyader, 2018).

In conclusion, although our research is limited to a single case, we believe it offers new significant insights for interpreting the evolving and complex connections between the sharing economy domain and the tourism domain with special regard to smaller companies. At the present time, the relationship between tourism and sharing seems undeniably too narrow, as it only considers forms of “pseudo-sharing” (e.g., Airbnb), which could cut out small entrepreneurial activities, or forms of “pure sharing” (e.g., Couchsurfing), which basically exclude business opportunities. A hybrid value proposition, instead, can open up huge business opportunities in a sector where people-to-people interactions and authenticity are increasingly important drivers for tourist satisfaction and tourist happiness (Fortezza, 2014).

In more general terms, the Home4Creativity case study also goes well beyond the anachronistic dichotomy between market and non-market to shed light on the different nuances of the sharing phenomenon, providing a more complete idea of it.

We propose the following interesting subsequent research steps:

- consider the demand side in order to verify the aforementioned effects by analyzing the guests’ point of view;
- consider the perspective of local residents and businesses in order to verify the real added value that such a formula can generate for places.

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