

## **The new sharing economy: paradoxes of openness and distinction**



### **ABSTRACT**

The so-called sharing economy has emerged since the great recession in a dramatic fashion. This term, which many debate, includes both peer-to-peer platforms such as AirBnB as well as nonprofit sharing initiatives such as time banks and food swaps. The sharing economy raises a variety of questions for the “new economics” such as whether it actually enhances economic opportunity and spreads wealth, whether the peer-to-peer nature of exchanges represents a fundamentally different type of economic relation, the nature of self-employed labor in this sector and whether the sharing economy has the environmental benefits its proponents claim. In this seminar I will discuss my qualitative research on seven sharing economy sites and platforms. I will present evidence on the ways in which class and other inequalities are reproduced in sharing sites, and offer analysis of likely directions for the sector.