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Copycats among underdogs - echoing the sharing economy business model

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ABSTRACT

The sharing economy has gained traction in several industry sectors by establishing ever-new platforms, with digital intermediation and peer-to-peer exchanges at the heart of the business model. Most research on the sharing economy concerns the phenomenon level or focuses on the operations of single platforms. This paper connects various sharing economy platforms by asking: How has the sharing economy spread to new platforms? The purpose of the paper is to explain the pattern of spread of the sharing economy business model. Findings point out a seamless, unobtrusive pattern echoing characteristics of the sharing economy business model across distant sectors to avoid competition while reproducing activities in ever-new resource settings. The paper continues the exploration of the sharing economy related to industrial marketing through moving from the individual platforms to the way they lead to new ones while acknowledging how the innovative model for new platforms is highly based on mandates created through acknowledging oneself as a role model successor. Such a spread mechanism redefines innovation newness, adaptation and diffusion, and raises new insights to understand how current business landscapes would be under the possible transition into a new logic of operations.

1. Introduction

The sharing economy defines digitally-intermediated operations enabling exchanges among peers (Acquier, Daudigeos, & Pinkse, 2017; Eckhardt et al., 2019; Laamanen, Pfeffer, Rong, & Van de Ven, 2018), with its business models describing how such operations are organised (cf. Zott & Amit, 2010). Conceptually, the sharing economy business model could be referred to as a triad including the user, platform and provider (Belk, 2014; ter Huurne, Ronteltap, Corten, & Buskens, 2017). In practice, however, the sharing economy business model would be a platform-centred ecosystem (Ceccagnoli, Forman, Huang, & Wu, 2012) with several users and providers, these though rarely with connections among them and exchanges remaining transactional based on the digital matching of providers and users. As such, the sharing economy has brought several new characteristics to business life (peers, digital matching of parties, and a transactional character of exchanges, Acquier et al., 2017), while it challenges current business interactions and interaction patterns (e.g., Xie & Kwok, 2017).

The individual platforms as nodes in ecosystems of users and providers (Ceccagnoli et al., 2012; Weber, 2014) could, in turn, be seen as unconnected operations in the broader business landscape, with each ecosystem focusing on a specific type of exchange and its intermediation, or competitively fighting for the same users or providers. But while unconnected in terms of business interaction, the similarities in ways to operate suggest some kind of connection among the different ecosystems, not the least seen as new platforms are launched and adapted to. Over the years, the sharing economy has spread from the role models Uber and Airbnb into new sectors (Aloni, 2016; Mair & Reischauer, 2017) while attracting new users and providers. This development includes how current businesses start practicing sharing economy business models, how previous platforms are transformed, *and* how new platforms are created. This paper sets *to explain the pattern of spread of the sharing economy business model*. The following research question is addressed: How has the sharing economy spread to new platforms?

This question is answered by investigating how new platforms pronouncedly describe themselves with references to past ones while creating an echoing of the sharing economy business model. More precisely and linked to the title of this paper, the paper focuses on how the new platforms – referred to as *underdogs* in how they are not only new but struggle to reach profitability, breakthroughs to users or providers, or to remain independent of controlling owners or financiers – refer their operations to the role models Uber and Airbnb, while reproducing – or

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copycatting – these platforms' ways of operating. In the investigation of how new platforms echo role model operations, the paper approaches the sharing economy as a socioeconomic ecosystem (Laamanen et al., 2018) partly integrated with, partly separated from other business operations, and with the individual platforms as unconnected nodes surrounded by their exchange parties.

Positioned to enhance knowledge on business exchanges and ecosystem spread, and framed by an identified gap in the literature between industrial marketing and the sharing economy (Agarwal & Steinmetz, 2019; Eckhardt et al., 2019), this paper extends the lense from individual operations and platforms (Kumar, Lahiri, & Dogan, 2018; Laczko, Hullova, Needham, Rossiter, & Battisti, 2019; Pattinson, 2016) to how a new business logic integrating a platform-based modus operandi in business models unfolds throughout a plethora of industry sectors. The uniqueness of this paper lies in its ability to capture how the sharing economy has spread in the action of spreading, rather than just in the acknowledgement of its presence in various industry sectors (Aloni, 2016; Mair & Reischauer, 2017). As such, echoing the business model of another party creates a specific form of innovation related to business creation as it means that a new operation wants to be associated with a previous one. Again, this is different from the innovator's claim of creating something different from what was (Guilford, 1950). More precisely, business model echoing describes a combination of innovation newness, adaptation and diffusion, and this paper theorises how new platforms reproduce business model activities into as distant as possible resource settings and drafts a typology on echoing, with theoretical contributions to business model diffusion in a digital setting of unconnected platforms.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. First, a discussion on the extant literature about the sharing economy from an industrial marketing perspective is provided, followed by how spread can – and indeed has – previously been studied in the industrial marketing domain. Thereafter, the research design is presented. The findings are described, discussed, and implications are drawn. In the final section, we offer concluding remarks, limitations, and directions for future research.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. The sharing economy from an industrial marketing perspective

Emerging from an idea of non-ownership and more efficient resource uses, and motored by enabling digitalisation, the sharing economy phenomenon early reached attention in consumer marketing studies (e.g., Chen & Xie, 2017; Eckhardt et al., 2019; Hwang & Griffiths, 2017; Lindblom & Lindblom, 2017; Möhlmann, 2015; Scaraboto, 2015) and in research focusing on sustainability. These studies concerned parties' (essentially consumers') reasons for participating in the sharing economy (e.g., Bucher, Fieseler, & Lutz, 2016; Milanova & Maas, 2017), with sustainability referring to one of the core driving forces for the efficient resource use and consumers' changed orientation to ownership (Wilhelms, Henkel, & Falk, 2017). The expected impact on the environment and society compared to the traditional ownership model has since been an ongoing discussion related to sustainability (Cohen & Munoz, 2016; Geissinger, Laurell, Öberg, & Sandström, 2019; Heinrichs, 2013; Hong & Vicdan, 2016; Parguel, Lunardo, & Benoit-Moreau, 2017). In addition to the consumer motives and sustainability, Agarwal and Steinmetz (2019) point out three more research areas in a recent review: conceptualisation, regulation and business models. The conceptualisation follows from the sharing economy as an emerging research phenomenon that still looks for its boundaries (Sundararajan, 2016), while regulation deals with its practices and challenges as an odd bird compared to traditional ways to conduct business (Hartl, Hofmann, & Kirchler, 2016).

Sharing economy *business model* research focuses on what types of goods or services are shared, how trust is created, the plurality of operations including sharing practices such as profit/non-profit operations, and how the sharing economy may transform traditional business operations (Clauss, Harengel, & Hock, 2019; Dreyer, Ludeke-Freund, Hamann, & Faccer, 2017; Ritter & Schanz, 2019). The business model design would be in the hands of the (digital) platform founders (Lee & Kim, 2019), while it needs to attract users and providers. Laamanen et al. (2018) describe sharing economy business models as involving high degrees of co-investments, co-learning and co-innovation blurring organisational boundaries and thereby how activities are distributed among the provider, platform and user (Ferrell, Ferrell, & Huggins, 2017; cf. Zott & Amit, 2010). The role model accommodation and private transport platforms Airbnb and Uber are the prime examples in any empirical research on the sharing economy business models, and, together with the phenomenon level, the literature is dominated by these individual operations as units of analysis.

In relation to industrial marketing, the sharing economy could be argued as replacing known ways of exchanging goods and services. Such traditional ways point at the benefit of creating long-term business relationships, companies operating at both ends of exchanges, and how interdependencies create an ecosystem of ever-connected firms (Aarikka-Stenroos & Ritala, 2017; Anderson, Håkansson, & Johanson, 1994). The sharing economy demonstrates transactional, ad-hoc and intermediated exchanges with consumers potentially operating at both ends of the exchange (Belk, 2014), but while challenging known characteristics of business exchanges and firms' practices in the industrial domain, the imprint of the sharing economy in the industrial marketing literature has remained limited. As few exceptions, Kumar et al. (2018) forward the idea of a double-sided customer relationship through focusing on the platform as a service enabler, Laczko et al. (2019) refer to the platform's orchestrating role, and Pattinson (2016) provides a first attempt to merge the industrial marketing logic from the IMP (industrial marketing and purchasing) interaction model (Håkansson, 1982) with characteristics of the sharing economy. His adaptation of the interaction model (in its original describing product/service, information, financial and social exchanges) includes two additional mechanisms of interaction, cooperation and adaptations. Leszczyński, Waligóra, and Zmyślony (2019) follow Pattinson's attempt and, similar to Agarwal and Steinmetz (2019), point at the research gap between industrial marketing and the sharing economy, with mutual benefits of integrating and contrasting perspectives.

Thus, studies have indicated how research relating the sharing economy to industrial marketing is limited and when Eckhardt et al. (2019) summarise sharing economy research in marketing, they almost exclusively find consumer marketing studies. This, again, is not very surprising given how the sharing economy business model would expect to include consumers as users *and* providers. Those few studies approaching the sharing economy from an industrial marketing point of view centre their attention on the platform and the operational level of the triad (ter Huurne et al., 2017). Beyond the individual platforms as nodes in ecosystems of users and providers (Ceccagnoli et al., 2012) are the broader business landscape of traditional firms, but also other platforms with their users and providers. The industrial marketing literature would describe this as a limitless environment or network (Håkansson & Snehota, 1989) and focus on how firms and other actors are directly or indirectly connected through exchanges (in the forms of collaborations or as suppliers and sub-suppliers, for instance). The sharing economy demonstrates how various platforms and platform ecosystems are unconnected, creating islands in the business landscape, yet with a combined idea among the platform ecosystems on how operations are designed. Thus, the "environment" may include unconnected parties that share practices, which intrigues the question of why they do so, and even more so: why they refer to one another when doing so. Unlike adaption and cooperation as part of the exchanges (cf. Pattinson, 2016), this paper focuses on how the sharing economy as composed of various platforms suggests echoing their business models among them, despite them not taking part in the same exchanges or being directly or indirectly connected. The paper thereby extends the

lens from individual operations (Kumar et al., 2018; Laczko et al., 2019; Leszczyński et al., 2019; Pattinson, 2016) to how a new business logic unfolds through the echoing of the sharing economy business model across industry sectors.

2.2. Patterns of spread: Echoing the ecosystem?

Ecosystems have been used as a concept to capture the platform and its users and providers (Ceccagnoli et al., 2012; Weber, 2014). However, it has also been used to capture the phenomenon level of the sharing economy (e.g., Laamanen et al., 2018; Leung, Xue, & Wen, 2019), then focusing on the social or societal movement of collectivism and changed orientations to ownership. Additionally, ecosystems have been used to grasp a specific industry sector, of which sharing economy platforms could be a part (Almeida-Santana, David-Negre, & Moreno-Gil, 2020). While the different comprehensions of ecosystems may seem confusing, they help to distinguish between the *operational ecosystems* of parties (the platform and its providers and users, Ceccagnoli et al., 2012, that is, a platform ecosystem) and the *socioeconomic ecosystem* (Laamanen et al., 2018) representing the entirety of the sharing economy as a new logic of operations. Theoretically, neither of these levels of ecosystems would potentially hold to be "true" ecosystems (Aarikka-Stenroos & Ritala, 2017) as the former only represents a slice of operations excluding the actual production of resources offered and their possible recycling beyond repeated uses, and the latter describes unconnected nodes of businesses with the only shared determinator being how their exchanges operate. Still, and important for the argument in this paper, these unconnected nodes repeat ways to operate among them.

The literature has provided some early ideas on how the sharing economy is present in various industry sectors (Aloni, 2016) while not explained how the sharing economy spreads among sectors. Meanwhile, the industrial marketing literature entails several descriptions of traditional firms' interconnectivity (as networks, supply and value chains, for instance), but then depicts the noted underlying exchanges making up these interconnectivities and stressing the interdependence of parties (cf. Leszczyński et al., 2019). The various operational sharing economy ecosystems are unconnected from an exchange point of view. Still, new platforms are launched, where these describe themselves with references to past ones while echoing the sharing economy business model.

To understand how this "echoing" is formed, the paper links to how spread has previously been approached in industrial marketing studies dealing with interconnectivity, there describing reactive patterns of changes and how business partners are affected along supply chains (Hertz, 1998). Thilenius, Havila, Dahlin, and Öberg (2016) refer to spread along supply chains or business relationships as a manifest view of relatedness, translated as a cat-on-the-rat chain of reactions following established patterns of interdependencies (and in the industrial marketing case, indeed also exchanges). While the supply chain constructs one example of this and the domino effects following it a manifested pattern up- or downstream (Hertz, 1998), the general idea presented by Thilenius et al. (2016) is how patterns link to interdependencies in time and space, expressed as chronological, sequel and linear patterns. Translated to the sharing economy, the manifest view of relatedness would expect the sharing economy to spread in given sectors, such as more personal transportation platforms following from Uber, or how platforms are created with overlaps in resources, resource refinements or overlaps of its actors.

The alternative, an unobtrusive pattern (Thilenius et al., 2016), would appear as an unrelated "pattern", meaning that the pattern is not easily traced and would emerge as a here-and-there expression. This implies that reactions follow elsewhere in the business landscape, could not be explained by direct business exchanges and only would follow as chronologically sorted as expressed in causality studies (Hume, 1992). For the sharing economy, unobtrusivity would mean that new platforms are created in what may appear randomly across industry sectors. Generally, the unobtrusive patterns would thus be difficult to capture, but a method seizing spread and echoing in the action of spreading and with declared references would help to detect patterns in what may visibly appear as non-patterns.

3. Research design

This paper thus targets how new platforms are created with reference to previous ones to explain the pattern of spread of the sharing economy business model. This again means tracing patterns of spread in the action of spreading. Such a tracing of pattern is important as it highlights how a new business logic unfolds in a digital setting and observes a specific form of innovation related to association. Communication becomes a key aspect of research dealing with referencing, and with the sharing economy being part of the digitalised world, communication in that specific area seemed appropriate as a means to collect data (cf. Snee, Hine, Morey, Roberts, & Watson, 2016). Social media has grown in impact and connects with not only peer-to-peer conversations but also with how companies (including platforms) communicate their businesses (Grover, Kar, & Janssen, 2019; Piore, 2001). Social media can be thought of as "a kind of living lab, which enables academics to collect large amounts of data generated in a real-world environment" (Stieglitz, Dang-Xuan, Bruns, & Neuberger, 2014, p. 90) and thereby links to the big data movement (Brooker, Barnett, Cribbin, & Sharma, 2016; Manyika et al., 2011). Along its development, research methodologies to capture and analyse social media posts have emerged, the latter described as social media analytics (SMA). SMA entails a portfolio of different analytical techniques, including anything from content and discourse analysis to connecting communications or objects to one another (Hu et al., 2019).

3.1. Data collection

A version of Kozinets' (2010) criteria for conducting digital research was adopted, focusing on setting starting points for further analysis of spread to sample the data for this paper. In the accommodation industry, Airbnb has been pointed out as a sharing economy role model (e.g., Lee & Kim, 2019). Airbnb was founded in 2008 in San Francisco and has since become a poster child for the sharing economy. What started with the renting out of floor space in one of the co-founders' apartments in San Francisco has developed into a peer-to-peer accommodation sharing platform and hospitality service that is available in more than 220 countries and 100,000 cities worldwide (Airbnb, 2021). In the personal transportation sector, Uber has, in a similar manner as Airbnb, received substantial attention in research and media (Cramer & Krueger, 2016). Based in San Francisco, Uber Technologies, similar to Airbnb, was founded in 2008 and is a transportation platform company that operates in over 10,000 cities worldwide (Uber, 2021). These two platforms have come to characterise the sharing economy, dominating as examples in research and practice, with a global presence and as early movers in the area. This made them proper starting points to study how the sharing economy has spread into the creation of new platforms.

A real-time tracking tool called Notified was utilised to collect social media data. With the help of the tool, all publicly available user-generated posts that included the term "Airbnb" or "Uber" were collected. All the dominating social media outlets of Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, blogs and forums were tracked throughout the data collection periods in real time. The data collection took place during a 12-month period for Airbnb and during 6 months for Uber to, in a latter step, reach comparable numbers of posts for analysis (see Table 1). The time periods of the data collection are associated with a particularly vibrant activity in the sharing economy and thereby considered appropriate periods to capture how the sharing economy spread. The data collection was limited to social media posts published in Swedish. Sweden would be a particularly promising empirical setting for social media analysis as the high level of digital technology usage has generated an expanding and lively social media landscape due to Sweden

Table 1
Total social media posts and identified posts with new platform references to Airbnb and Uber.

	Airbnb		Uber	
Month	Total no. of posts	Referencing posts, no. of posts	Total no. of posts	Referencing posts, no. of posts
December 2015	375	3		
January 2016	664	66		
February 2016	718	37		
March 2016	517	38		
April 2016	605	41		
May 2016	589	19		
June 2016	611	23		
July 2016	662	9		
August 2016	527	12		
September 2016	541	5	2105	20
October 2016	860	12	4044	3
November 2016	353	6	3256	87
December 2016			2569	62
January 2017			9946	12
February 2017			2356	16
Total	*7022*	*271*	*24276*	*200*

Data was captured in real time, which meant that once we stopped collecting the data, we could not gain it from past periods. The period 2016–2017 was more vibrant in terms of new platforms than today, which enriched the data. While the data may seem somewhat dated, which has to do with the time past between data collection and writing up the findings, we used this time gap to follow up on the individual new platforms to see whether they have remained underdogs or what has happened with them since; see Appendix A.

being a leading country in terms of digital innovation and technology implementation (Findahl & Davidsson, 2015). The data collection generated a dataset of 7022 publicly posted user-generated posts for Airbnb, as well as a dataset of 24276 posts for Uber.

Next, the data was reviewed to figure out how the echoing was expressed and identify the platforms that echoed Airbnb and Uber, respectively. This part of the data collection adopted a content analysis approach (Berelson, 1952; Fico, Lacy, & Riffe, 2008; Holsti, 1969; Krippendorff, 2004; Martinez-Torres, 2015; Silverman, 2001) to empirically establish how the echoing was expressed, while in parallel identifying the individual platforms. This step found 271 references to Airbnb and 200 to Uber in the two data sets, as seen in Table 1. As a step of this analysis, any referencing between Airbnb and Uber was investigated, but leading to a result showing that these two platforms did not refer to each other in any such ways, nor did they describe themselves as adopters to other platforms. This finding helped us to determine that Airbnb and Uber indeed created a relevant baseline as role models (cf. Kozinets, 2010) that others referred to, rather than them being part of any such chain or pattern of referencing.

The referencing, or echoing, was quite homogeneously expressed, including "like Airbnb/Uber but for…" or "an Airbnb/Uber for…". This meant that the further analysis came to concentrate on who referred to whom and how such patterns could be understood. Importantly, this entailed identifying the messenger, that is, the party placing the post on any kind of social media. As the paper targets new platforms, our focus was on representatives of these new platforms, omitting cases where, for instance, an influencer or customer described the new platform. Having secured all posts mentioning a new platform with a backward reference to Airbnb or Uber, the next step of data cleaning included identifying unique platforms by omitting repeated posts about the same platform. This left us with 51 and 10 unique Airbnb and Uber referencing platforms, respectively. As confided in the title of this paper ('underdogs') and disclosed through a follow-up during the revision process of this paper, the identified platforms still struggle to reach profitability, breakthrough or independence. This is not based on a purposeful selection of unfortunate copycats but characterise all platforms found and indeed tells a story about how the spread of the sharing economy business model may not be without problems but still takes place through new platforms.

3.2. Data analysis

Having established how 51 and 10 platforms referred their ways of operating to Airbnb and Uber, respectively, we collected additional data through platforms, websites and apps to capture how the platforms described their operations. This had three objectives: firstly, to ascertain that the new platforms could be regarded as sharing economy platforms (entailing the peers, digital intermediation of parties and transactional exchanges or co-use, Belk, 2014), secondly, to capture details on the operations so as to see in which capacities the various platforms echoed the business models of Airbnb or Uber, and thirdly, from an empirical point of view, to iteratively code their types of operations related to industry sectors and type of offerings.

The first two objectives were accomplished through a round of coding of the role models' and new platforms' operations. The coding departed from sharing economy characteristics as described in previous research: the mentioned peers, digital intermediation and transactional exchanges or co-use, but also profit/non-profit operations, trust-creating cues, and how activities were distributed among the provider, platform and user (cf. Belk, 2014; Ferrell et al., 2017). Based on an initial analysis of these items, it was concluded how Airbnb, Uber and the new platforms, in addition to the prerequisites of peers, digital intermediation and transactional exchanges, all expressed for-profit operations, products and services being created explicitly for the user and the separation of use and provision rather than co-use (Laamanen et al., 2018). The role models and new platforms could thereby be said to belong to a specific part of the sharing economy (cf. Laurell & Sandström, 2017), and business models between role models and new platforms were echoed in these regards, but were there also differences between Airbnb and Uber that decided which party the new platforms referred themselves to?

To detect possible differences between the role models, we departed from Zott and Amit's (2010) operationalisation of business models as activity systems. This entailed a delineation of the similarities and differences of Airbnb and Uber in ways of operating and the spread of various practices as part of these platforms (Airbnb, for instance, including both private persons lending their home when temporarily away and hotel-like operations in specific properties). Zott and Amit (2010) refer to activity system content, structure and governance to describe what activities are pursued, how they are interlinked, and who performs the activities. Uber here contains fewer activities (content), essentially focusing on the core service delivery. The coordination of providers and users (the governance) is almost exclusively done via algorithms of the platform. Meanwhile, Airbnb provides a more advanced set of activities, including pre- and post-service activities, and hence marking supporting activities and a service process. More of the selection is placed by the user (and provider), such as a user looking for a specific type of accommodation, not merely a driver taking him/her from one destination to the next. Hence, coordination in the governance dimension would rely more on preferences. Linking this back to Zott and Amit (2010) and the business model as an activity system, the differences between Uber and Airbnb could thus be described along the dimensions of activity system *content* and *governance*, respectively (with the for-profit orientation, separation of users and providers, and offerings being created specifically for the users being shared characteristics between the platforms). Each new platform was plotted towards the content and governance dimensions, as outlined in Fig. 1 below, to see

whether they randomly referred themselves to Airbnb *or* Uber, or to what extent they actually echoed the business model they referred themselves to. Related to the dimensions outlined in Fig. 1, the coordination based on preferences could well be seen as interlinked with detailed descriptions of services in the pre-service phase and rich evaluations in the post-service phase. But, while both these practices indeed are part of Airbnb's business model, the new platforms may adopt either of these, ensuring how the content and governance axes in Fig. 1 do not measure the same item and forwarding a form of typology (Baden-Fuller & Morgan, 2010) on sharing economy business models.

As for the coding of offerings and industrial sector (see the third objective above), this was accomplished through a process of data reduction by comparing the various platforms' lines of business. We seconded this step by categorising each platform based on an established industry classification (Swedish Industry Codes, SNI) to thereby approach their line of business based on iterated definitions and known standards. The reason for using both approaches had to do with how the sharing economy may be seen as disruptively changing industry definitions (Muller, 2020) and how platforms may not fall easily into present industry categories. Meanwhile, using established standards helped to provide structure to the categorisation. In the presentation of the data, we have maintained the more fine-tuned product/service level of offerings while integrating our industry categorisations with the established industry classification.

Now having a dataset of new sharing economy platforms, each with a link to either Uber or Airbnb (and surprisingly only two platforms – JetSmarter and Lendify – referring themselves to both), and also having a categorisation of each platform's product or service offering, characteristics of its business model, and its industrial belonging, we next investigated the echoing in terms of the new platforms' offerings and industrial belonging (cf. Grover et al., 2019). This process started with producing diagrams as those presented in Figs. 2 and 3 below to capture the spread of platforms across offerings and sectors. More precisely, the step compared the offering and industry categorisations with the role models (Airbnb or Uber depending on which platform was referenced). The analysis departed from an expectation of manifested patterns (Thilenius et al., 2016) to try to trace any possible connectivity in terms of industrial sectors, offerings, interdependencies among platforms or overlaps of users or providers. This again meant returning to the definitions of manifested and unobtrusive patterns of spread and addressing the data with questions about potential interdependencies in or among sectors, products or services of the platforms.

Findings were finally iterated with previous industrial marketing and sharing economy research to ensure the research gap and the theoretical contribution of this paper, the latter referring to the specific way of dealing with innovation through describing new platforms as successors of role models while representing a seamless, unobtrusive pattern of spread reflecting similarities in activity descriptions but freely and with an ambition of distance varying resource offerings among the platforms. It also entailed integrating findings with the industrial marketing literature on patterns of spread and with how the innovation literature describes newness, adaptation and diffusion to detect if that literature has previously used referencing and associating as a means of presenting new ideas. And, as part of the revision process, each identified platform was analysed anew in 2021 through websites or apps and annual reports or newspaper information to see whether the platform was still in business and remained an underdog in terms of lack of profitable operations, for instance. Table 2 summarises the various steps of the data collection and analysis, while Appendix A describes the present status of the new platforms.

Table 2
Data collection and analysis.

Step	Description	Data and qualitative control measures
1	Setting starting points in sharing economy role models (cf. Kozinets, 2010).	Deciding on Airbnb and Uber as points of departure. Selection based on these platforms being those almost exclusively described in research as the primary examples of the sharing economy. Retrospective control of these as relevant starting points through 1) no other platforms being referred to in the data sets as starting points; 2) no references between them (no Uber is like Airbnb, or the converse); and 3) the data capturing including multiple new platforms referring to these.
2	Preparing protocols for Notified (cf. Adams, Bessant, & Phelps, 2006; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003).	Setting protocols to download all public social media posts referring to Airbnb and Uber on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, etc.
3	Data capturing.	Real-time data collection as posts were published on social media. A period of 12 months for Airbnb and 6 months for Uber to reach comparable numbers of references. Real-time data capturing to avoid possible retrospective changes or later deletion of posts (Huber & Power, 1985). Resulted in 7022 Airbnb-related posts and 24276 Uber-related posts.
4	Filtrating relevant cases from the data (manual content analysis to empirically establish how the echoing was expressed, e.g., Krippendorff, 2004), while identifying those platforms referring themselves to Uber or Airbnb.	Manually going through all posts captured in the previous step to see: 1) whether they expressed the voice of platforms referring themselves to either of Uber and Airbnb; and 2) determining how such referencing was expressed. Resulted in 271 Airbnb references and 200 Uber references.
5	Identifying unique platforms.	Reducing the number of referencing through omitting repeated mentioning of the same platform to obtain all platforms referring themselves to Airbnb or Uber from the original data set.
6	Ensuring sharing economy operations (cf. Belk, 2014).	Investigating each new platform to ensure that it operated as part of the sharing economy: digital intermediation, transactional peer-to-peer exchanges or co-use.
7	Comparing echoing in terms of business model similarities (cf. Zott & Amit, 2010).	Comparing each new platform's business model using descriptions from websites and apps with the role model it referred to in order to establish the depth of the echoing. Business model as an activity system was used as the point of departure. Comparison entailed comparing the role models to ensure how they demonstrated differences and how these were expressed in the choice of referencing either of them.
8	Categorising platforms to industries and based on offerings.	Two-way categorisation based on platform descriptions: 1) empirical categories developed in a process of iteration and reduction, and 2) matching of platform descriptions to Swedish Industry Codes. Intention to both find possible new industries and to provide structure using industry standards.
9	Searching for patterns of spread (cf. Thilenius et al., 2016).	Searching for patterns of spread through overlaying the offering and

(*continued on next page*)

4. Findings and analysis

4.1. Expressions of echoing

The data thus entailed a number of new platforms – 51 for Airbnb

Table 2 (*continued*)

Step	Description	Data and qualitative control measures
		industry categorisation with descriptions of manifested patterns.
10	Comparing findings with previous research to ensure theoretical contribution.	Comparing findings with previous research on the sharing economy, with research on innovation through referencing, and with how spread has previously been expressed.
11	Revisiting platforms to capture underdog status.	Using platforms, websites or apps, and annual reports or newspaper items to capture the present status of the new platforms. Only the Chinese version of Airbnb, Tujia, had expanded to any size. Rest had remained small, showing losses, gone bankrupt or been acquired; see Appendix A.

and 10 for Uber – describing their operations with reference to the role models. These voices of referencing were thus quite similar, entailing the described "like, but for…" comments, where the "but for" focused on the new platform or its offering. The following statements were captured (chronologically ordered) to exemplify these:

> *"An Airbnb for food and dinners? The trend is growing. Read more about Airdine and their idea here" (March 21st, 2016).*
> *"Airbnb for #dogs is starting up #swedish #Airbnb for #dogs #dog-buddy" (April 23rd 2016).*
> *"Gothenburg-based* suavoo.com *wants to be an Uber for beauty" (September 29th, 2016).*

Already, these initial examples indicate how the referencing expands across industry borders, a fact that becomes all the more evident when looking at the entire data material below. Airbnb becomes a role model for dog sitting, and a beauty initiative links itself to Uber, for instance.

4.2. Business model echoing: Towards a typology

While the referencing describes a deliberate way to acknowledge the new platform as similar to Airbnb or Uber, the depth of this echoing becomes clear when looking into details on the individual platforms and their business models (cf. Zott & Amit, 2010). Over the years, Airbnb and Uber have developed to become increasingly commercialised while being based on transactional exchanges and digital intermediation (Acquier et al., 2017). Previous studies discussing the sharing economy as a movement have denoted the non-monetary, non-ownership transfer-efficient use of resources through co-practices (cf. Laamanen et al., 2018). This is very different from the production of goods and services for monetary returns (Laurell & Sandström, 2017), which is the present business model of Airbnb and Uber. Like Airbnb and Uber, the new platforms organise their operations through digital intermediation of platforms, including peers as users and providers, and are based on transactional exchanges. There is also largely the separation of users and providers present, which has come to represent the development of Airbnb and Uber and essentially describes how the product or service offering is explicitly created for the user rather than based on co-use between the provider and user (Öberg, 2018a, 2018b). Additionally, the new platforms are, similar to Uber and Airbnb, characterised by the monetary payment for products or services. DogBuddy (referring itself to Airbnb), as one example, offers dog sitting with evaluation systems of the sitters through other dog owners and with payments being delivered through the platform. This is again wastefully different from the very early developments of Uber and Airbnb, and as captured in some back-to-the-roots movements (cf. Guyader, 2019), and points to how the echoing is not only about operating sharing economy business models but very specifically about copying characteristics of the role models' business models (cf. Sundararajan, 2016).

Moving forward and emphasising the *differences* between Airbnb and Uber, Airbnb is more advanced in its operations in how its business model contains more activities along a process of pre-, main- and post-service deliveries. At the same time, Uber focuses more on the core service only, and while evaluations are provided, these are merely to decline any service supply. Additionally, and in terms of differences, Airbnb users would select their providers based on preferences, while algorithms would coordinate the user and provider of Uber. Fig. 1 outlines the new platforms in the dimensions of governance through preferences/algorithms and activity content as core/supporting services (cf. Zott & Amit, 2010), where Airbnb thus includes the preferences and supporting services (with many pre- and main-phase activities), and Uber describes the algorithm-coordinated focus on the core service. As the figure reveals, the echoing follows these differences closely, where the new platforms referring themselves to Airbnb emphasise selection based on preferences, specific interests of users/providers, or their business models placing considerable focus on descriptions, evaluations or both as supporting activities. In parallel, the new platforms referring themselves to Uber are limited in their operations, with the actual delivery in focus and the platform coordinating the use and supply. To exemplify, Middaghosmig, which refers itself to Airbnb, focuses on coordinating individuals for meal services based on preferences, while RefugeesWelcome, also referring itself to Airbnb, provides extensive screening services as supporting activities. Deliveroo, describing itself as an Uber operation, is merely about food delivery, with no active selection of service provider and focusing on the delivery only.

To expand on Fig. 1 as a business model typology (cf. Baden-Fuller & Morgan, 2010), the lower-left quarter of the figure (core product/by algorithm) entails quite simple operations, often linked to an underlying product that requires a local presence of the user and provider, and where the proximity of these become the main selection criterion. LoopRocks, for instance, is about helping out with the transportation of stones and soil, while Cell411 is an emergency service. This quarter also entails car-sharing operations such as ElBnb and Flexdrive. As for those new platforms focusing mainly on the core activity but where selections are based on preferences and thereby done by the provider or user (upper-left quarter of the figure: core product/by preference), these platforms often contain some type of social characteristics of the service and temporal interaction between the user and provider, albeit still representing a division of activities and services produced specifically for the user. This includes, for instance, shared fishing trips (Fishjoin) and a community focus on local dining (Fooever). These business models thereby copy the "different to hotel"-argument of Airbnb.

The new platforms being based on coordination by algorithms but containing supporting services (lower-right quarter of the figure: supporting services/by algorithm) are, as the definitions of content and governance imply (Zott & Amit, 2010), somewhat more complex as services, but still often centre around a product. TipTapp, focusing on waste recycling, carefully follows how the collector deals with the waste material, and Grannsaker includes legal contracting as a supporting service. While, for instance, evaluations and careful descriptions of providers and users, or the service at hand, in the case of Airbnb are heavily linked to how coordination is made by choice of preferences (that is, connecting the upper-left and lower-right quarters of the figure), the new platforms interestingly divide their activities and their governance so that many either contain the coordination by preference *or* the supporting services. This copying of activities *or* governance again links to the underlying product/service, its social component, and how new platforms may not see the use to provide a full repertoire of services as long as they are small-sized underdogs. Lastly, the upper-right corner (supporting services/by preference), which would resemble Airbnb the most, contains several services that would allow users into the personal spheres of providers and thereby require the most precautions as supporting services and careful selections based on preferences. This is also the quarter that entails a few niche platforms building directly on Airbnb

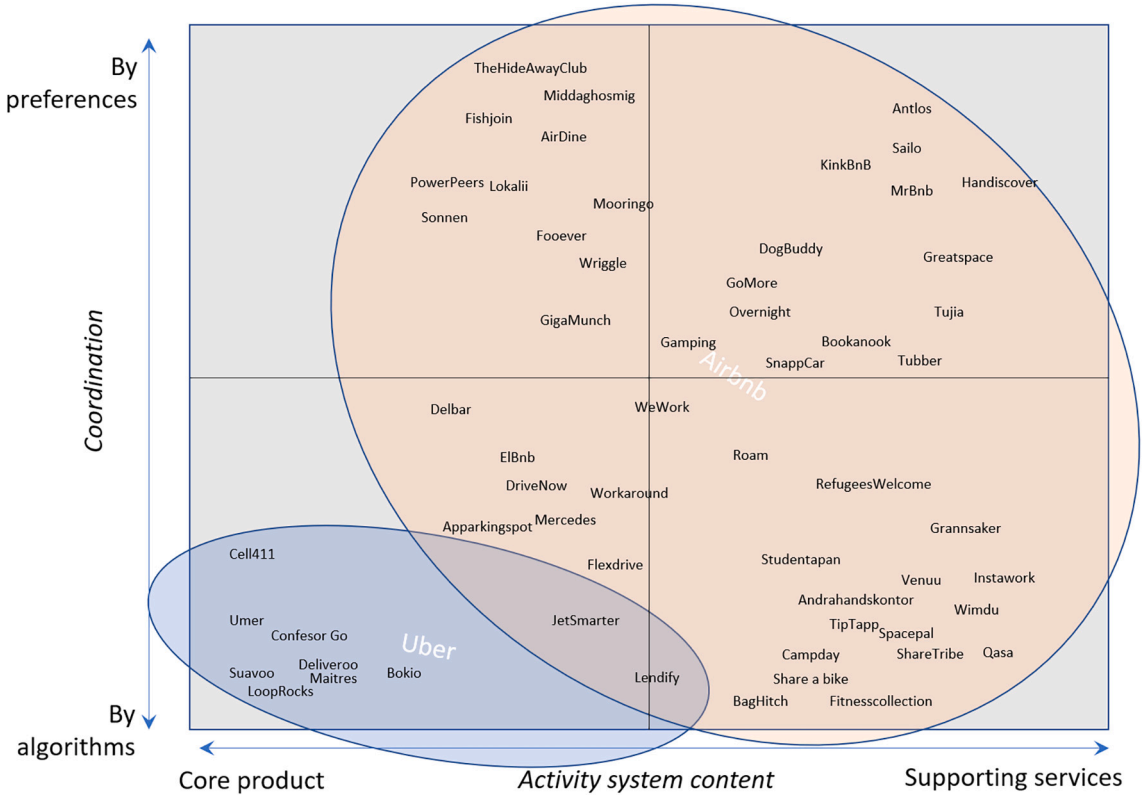

Fig. 1. Business model echoing. Sorts new platforms based on activity-system content and governance (coordination) in terms of who makes decisions: the platform (algorithms) or the user or provider (by preference). The larger ellipse incapsulates those platforms referring themselves to Airbnb, the smaller those referencing their operations to Uber.

through providing similar services, but doing so to a refined group of users, such as accommodation for disabled (Handiscover) or homosexuals (MrBnb).

4.3. Pattern of spread

Having established that the new platforms indeed describe themselves with reference to the role models and also practice similar ways of operating as the two role models across four main configurations as outlined in Fig. 1, we next turn to ask the main question of this paper (How has the sharing economy spread to new platforms?) to thereby establish the pattern of spread. Figs. 2 and 3, as illustrations of the new platforms' broad spectra of offerings and industry sectors, present an overview of the new platforms referring themselves to Airbnb and Uber, respectively. While the data for Airbnb was partly captured before the data for Uber, there are hence more platforms referring themselves to Airbnb (please note that the number of posts in the raw data was 3.5 times higher for Uber but with comparable numbers of referencing as Airbnb, see Table 1).

Fig. 2 outlines the 51 new platforms describing themselves with references to Airbnb. These platforms intermediate food deliveries and meal sharing, fitness services and leisure activities and accommodate specific events or related to specified prerequisites or interests. The industries are dominated by leisure, transportation, business and food in descending order. As mentioned in Section 4.2, these platforms partly or fully rely on coordination through users' (and providers') preferences, include multiple supporting services, or are directed as refined user groups echoing both coordination by preferences and support services from Airbnb. While the new platforms entail some accommodation operations, these are either focused on other types of accommodation (such as camping) or directed at individuals with specific needs (refined user groups), such as accommodation for disabled individuals. Two patterns of spread thereby emerge from the referencing to Airbnb: the dominating one with echoed activities spreading across industry sectors (in turn distributed between a focus on social interaction and coordination by preferences, and supporting services to a more complex delivery requiring evaluations of users/providers or products), and one of specialised accommodation services for niche markets.

When pursuing a similar analysis for Uber (see Fig. 3), the 10 new platforms are equally spread across industries, including food, business and leisure, with single new platforms in each defined sector. While the new platforms operate in versatile industries, most of them offer simple, repeatedly used products in the consumer interface and with somewhat limited needs for engagement or risk-taking by their partakers (cf. Öberg, 2018c), and, as illustrated in Fig. 1, coordination by algorithms and a focus on the core product.

As with the Airbnb references, the Uber-referred platforms are part of the more market-oriented movement of the sharing economy, with separate providers and users and services produced specifically for the users. Interestingly here is how new platforms operating in the transportation sector refer themselves to Airbnb while being part of the same industry as Uber. The references across industries (with only five new platforms – Handiscover, KinkBnb, MrBnb, Wimdu and JetSmarter – describing their operations with references to role models in the same sectors and then describing niche markets of these sectors) is a first indication of how the new platforms do not follow each other – or the role models – in terms of industries. Moreover, the new platforms do not seem to follow supply chains or be based on other types of overlaps. This is seen in how most platforms operate in the consumer interface with parallel offerings to consumers. There is, thereby, nothing that signals a manifest view of relatedness (cf. Thilenius et al., 2016), neither in terms of industrial belonging, underlying products or services, nor supply-chain positioning (cf. Hertz, 1998). Rather, the similarities appear in the design of the business models (cf. Ritter & Schanz, 2019).

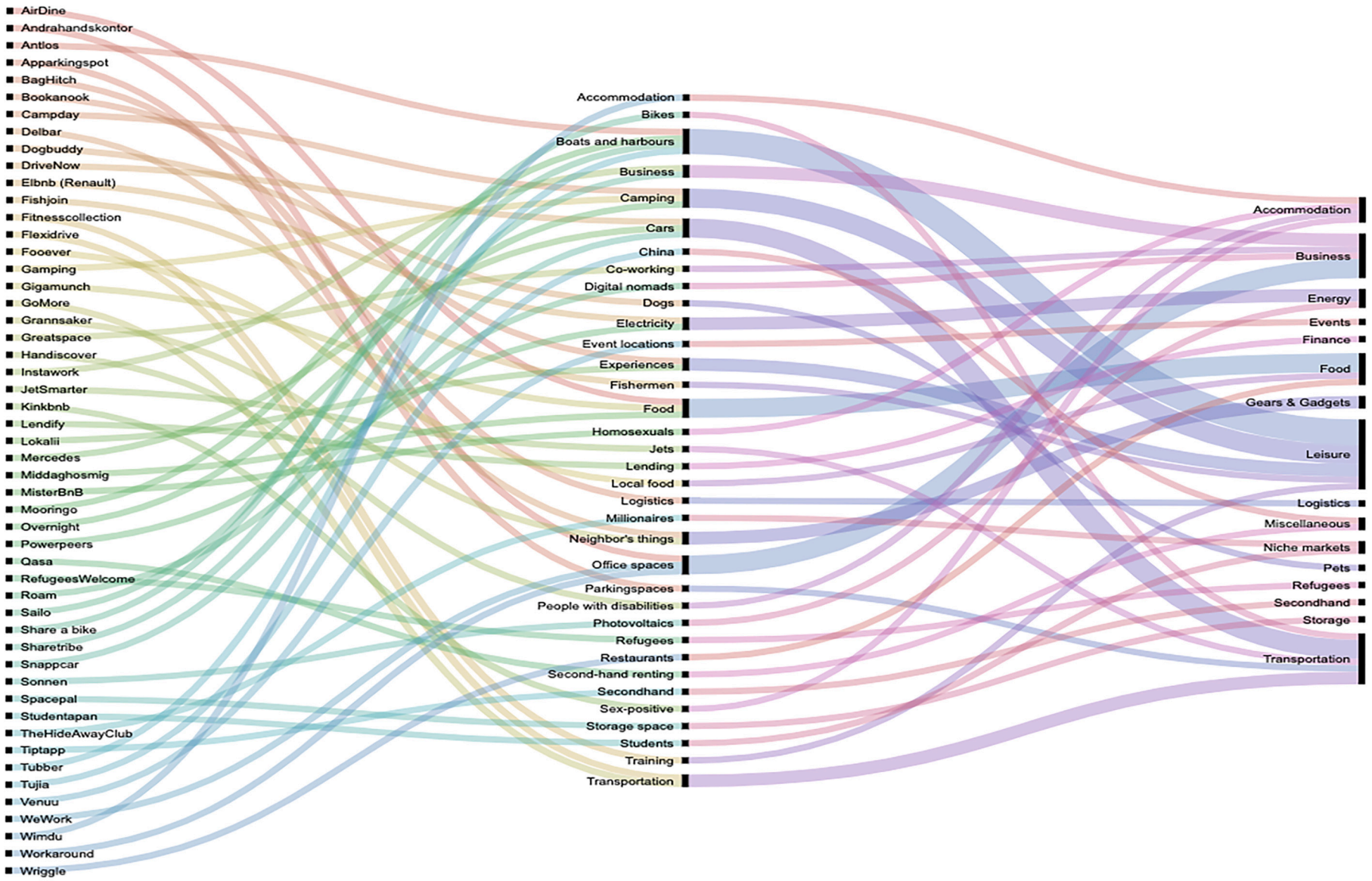

Fig. 2. Overview of new platforms referencing Airbnb, their offerings and industries.

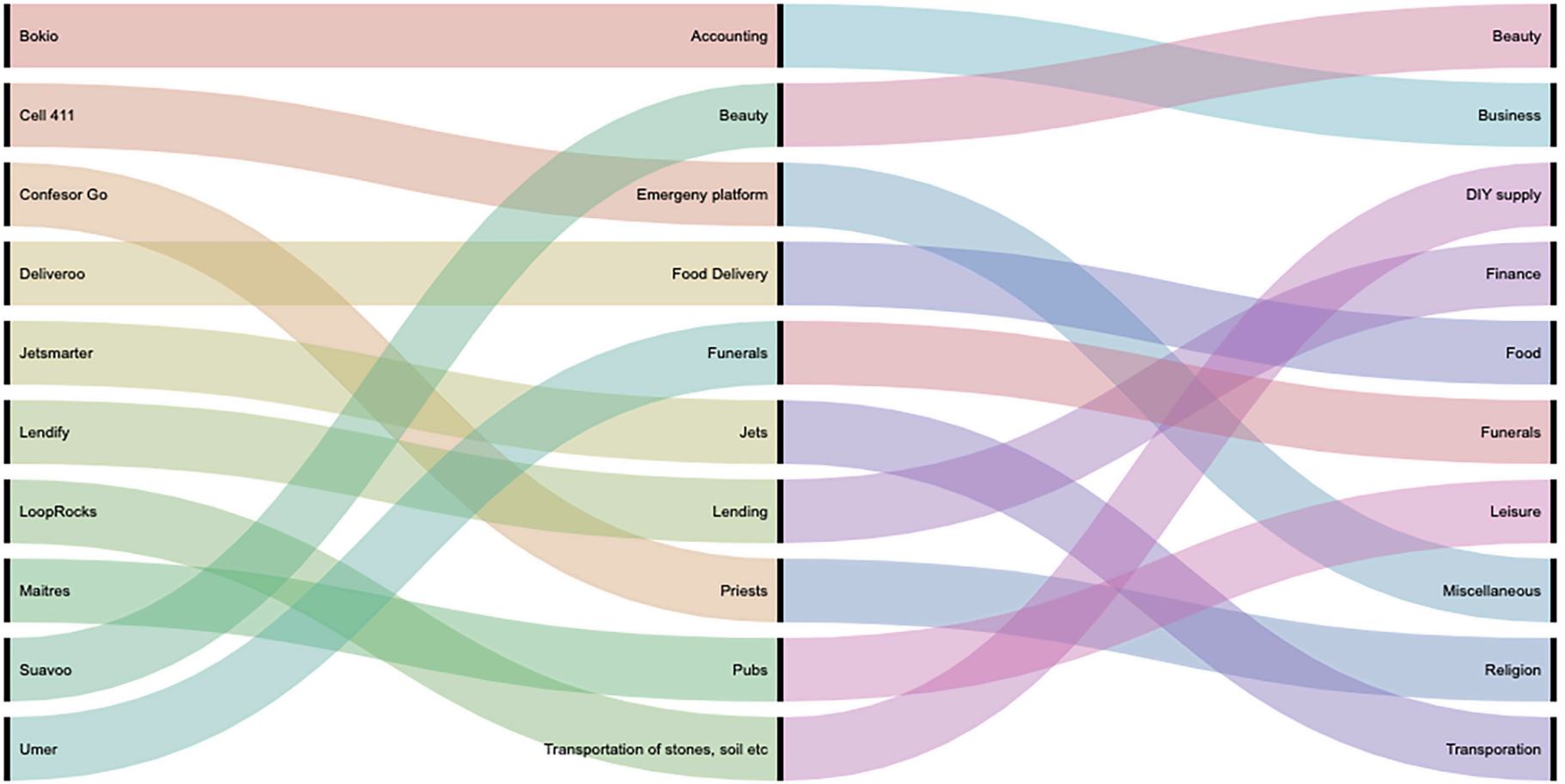

Fig. 3. Overview of new platforms referencing Uber, their offerings and industries.

So, while the echoing is extensive in activity attributes copied, stretches into a variety of industry sectors and is based on a high number of platforms (our sample indicating a total of 59 new platforms), it does not suggest being based on any interdependence or interactivity of players. The various platforms are – from a business exchange point of view – unconnected. This means that the mechanisms of adaptation as occurring in business interaction do not take place, nor is the spread about cooperation among parties (Pattinson, 2016). Rather, the spread suggests being free from constraints of others and indicates, in its across-industry expression, an opportunity-based spread (cf. Lieberman & Asaba, 2006) echoing activities and expressing belongings while doing so into new resource settings (or niche markets) to avoid competition (cf. Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, & Welch, 1992; Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, & Welch, 1998). In fact, when analysing the 59 platforms and their role models simultaneously, the spread suggests being about echoing activities in as distant as possible resource settings. Such resource settings though being within the frames of simple, repeatedly used, low-risk, low-value consumer products and services (cf. Öberg, 2018c), including bike-sharing, food delivery, and parking space sharing.

The referencing becomes about creating mandates for the operations through acknowledging the platforms as role model successors. Echoing a business model of another party, both through references and through copying activities of that party, is indeed wastefully different from claiming the newness or uniqueness of operations as an often-used statement in innovation research and practice (cf. Guilford, 1950) but contains the innovative search for unexplored sectors or niches. This suggests that what drives the spread is about parties searching to introduce a new business logic as something different in industries marked by traditional business regimes, thereby creating potential disruptive forces for further change in these sectors while doing so for individual gains, as expressed in the for-profit, monetary business model design. In how new platforms are created, this becomes different to parties adapting to innovations and innovation diffusion, which would simply be about users starting to consume products or services. Rather, the pattern of spread with new platforms being created echoing said activities into new resource settings indicate business model diffusion in the form of new platform-based ecosystems carrying resemblances with past ones but still being new operators in the market.

5. Discussion

The sharing economy as an operational ecosystem centred around the intermediating platform and with providers and users acting on each side of it (cf. Ceccagnoli et al., 2012) creates a business model quite dissimilar to known ways of operating, not the least in the industrial marketing domain. The research on the sharing economy in industrial marketing is very limited, and Agarwal and Steinmetz (2019) identify such a gap, which this paper responds to. It does so through moving from previous industrial marketing studies' focus on the individual platforms (Kumar et al., 2018; Laczko et al., 2019; Leszczyński et al., 2019; Pattinson, 2016) to the socioeconomic ecosystem on the phenomenon level (Laamanen et al., 2018), where other mechanisms than interconnectivity operate to bring various platforms together. And, it introduces echoing and referencing as mechanisms on that level (cf. Pattinson's operational level cooperation and adaptation).

The unobtrusive (Thilenius et al., 2016) pattern of echoing business models across industry borders not being linked to exchange partners or other interdependences creates an unconventional pattern of spread on the socioeconomic ecosystem level and points at a particular form of an innovative model for new venture creation. The claim to be different from everything-that-is is a frequent argument to justify a new venture by its founders (Guilford, 1950). To rather say "we are like them" is very different from such a claim and indicates a justification for being understood by users and providers and a potential declaration to be part of a socioeconomic restructuring that extends beyond any exchanges and thereby creates a connectivity in mind-sets. Hence, we may thereby need to start considering ecosystems and patterns of spreads in mind rather than based on interactivities as new operations form across industry sectors. And, as the sharing economy suggests expanding into ever-new resource settings – and thereby into more and more industry sectors – we would see this spread of mindsets as a disruptive force introducing a new logic of operations across traditional industry sectors.

Interestingly, the sharing economy was early described as a social movement based on creating difference and stressing non-ownership, collaboration, co-learning and co-innovating (cf. Laamanen et al., 2018). This movement, as a type of collective action (cf. Geissinger, Laurell, Möhlmann, & Öberg, 2019), would be characterised as a grassroots activity with sustainability and efficient use of present resources as main arguments (cf. Hwang & Griffiths, 2017) and with an ambition to create exchanges and co-use among parties on the side of the traditional economy. The commercialised, for-profit, monetary platforms as are the focus in the echoing of the Airbnb and Uber business models have rather been argued to be egocentric, non-caring and competitive (Geissinger, Laurell, Möhlmann, & Öberg, 2019; Kathan, Matzler, & Veider, 2016; Martin, 2016). They have also been argued to more and more resemble traditional firms. Yet, the echoing of business models envisions an acknowledgement of similarities among platforms and a way to express the platform as part of a movement restructuring the business landscape along the line of "we are like them" in a broader landscape of being "different to what is" compared to traditional businesses. This takes place while the new platforms would largely be created based on opportunities and individual gains. Hence, while still being a bottom-up movement, this echoing of sharing economy business models and referencing role models as a movement would be a movement based on individual rather than collective actions.

6. Conclusion

This paper explains the pattern of spread of the sharing economy business model. The introduction raised the following question: How has the sharing economy spread to new platforms? The paper points out a seamless, unobtrusive echoing of business models across industry sectors, reproducing activities (cf. Zott & Amit, 2010) but doing so in different – and as distant as possible – resource settings. The copycat platforms portray an echoing that goes beyond simply explaining their operations through referring them to Airbnb or Uber and describes how the business model as such is really copied in its individual activities. As indicated in Fig. 1, various new platforms may emphasise the activity dimensions to different degrees, and once juxtaposed to Figs. 2 and 3, the resource diversity of new platforms becomes evident. The typology drafted in Section 4.2 indicates four configurational business models (ordered as presented in the section): 1) the local Uber-like configuration with coordination through algorithms and a focus on a core product; 2) the social-experience configuration resembling Airbnb's "different to hotel"-argument, with core services being chosen based on preferences; 3) the evaluation-of-product configuration focusing on coordination through algorithms and supporting services to reassure the user about the product's usability and specific characteristics; and 4) the Airbnb-niche service for a refined user group (partly within, partly outside accommodation).

The referencing would be a means for underdogs to reach legitimacy, while the copycatting introduces a very specific form of entrepreneurship: that of doing similar to others, but in new industry sectors and thereby through using different resources to role models. Again, the echoing of the sharing economy role models Airbnb and Uber denotes an orientation towards the market-logic paradigm of the sharing economy (the production of products or services for monetary returns, with separated users and providers, and service production being targeted at users rather than based on co-use, cf. Laurell & Sandström, 2017), which is vitally different from the non-monetary, alternative movement of collaboration, co-learning and co-innovating as introduced at the very beginning of the sharing economy.

What then explains the pattern of spread? These explanations are found both on the platform and the socioeconomic ecosystem level. The platforms spread into new sectors to grab opportunities and create first-mover advantages related to new-to-the-sharing-economy resources. Meanwhile, the referencing would help to be understood by – and indeed attract – users and providers, something thought to be more important than to appear as (too) new and innovative. On the socio-economic ecosystem level, the referencing explains the new platforms as part of a movement and contrasts the "being similar to others" on the platform level through searching to be different from traditional firms operating in the business landscape. With that said, the echoing and referencing may in the for-profit, monetary adaptation of the sharing economy be regarded as an individual rather than collective action. Three interesting contrasting patterns emerge from such echoing of business models and referencing to role models: 1) the separation of activity copying from resources as expressed through the creation of new platforms echoing activities but doing so in new resource settings; 2) the collective action characterising the early sharing economy contrasting the individual actions of its for-profit adaptations, where these both though challenge known business logics; and 3) the operational and socioeconomic ecosystem of the sharing economy that meets on the activity level, but are separated in terms of exchanges, differentiating the connectivity in mind from the connectivity in business.

6.1. Theoretical contributions

With its main contribution being theorising business model echoing as patterns of spread in a digital setting of unconnected platforms and thereby enhancing knowledge on business exchanges and ecosystem spread, this paper forwards ideas that add insights to the identified literature gap between industrial marketing and the sharing economy (Agarwal & Steinmetz, 2019; Eckhardt et al., 2019), but also innovation studies.

Regarding research in the intersection between industrial marketing and the sharing economy, this paper extends beyond the current few studies focusing solely on individual platforms (Kumar et al., 2018; Laczko et al., 2019; Pattinson, 2016) to bridge operational and socio-economic ecosystem levels. Echoing and referencing here emerge as new mechanisms that add to the current understanding of business landscape interconnectivity. The contrasting and integrating with business exchanges as understood in industrial marketing help to capture uniqueness associated with a new way of operating while using concepts and ideas from industrial marketing to extend the understanding for the sharing economy. Through borrowing the conceptualisation of manifested and unobtrusive patterns of spread from the industrial marketing literature (Thilenius et al., 2016), this paper identifies an unobtrusive pattern of copying activities into new and distant resource settings to avoid competition while dealing with potential changes to business logics on the socioeconomic ecosystem level. The data capturing method using social media data to find explicit referencing among platforms here becomes a prerequisite to capture such an unobtrusive pattern *in the action of spreading*. The interlinkage between the operational and socioeconomic ecosystem helps to understand contrasting ideals of business optimisation and social movements, respectively.

To innovation research, business model echoing denotes a specific form of innovation as it puts forth a quite radical change of exchanges yet contrasts this with how the new platforms want to be understood by those they aim to attract to their operations. This helps to understand business model diffusion in digital settings, with attributes of newness, adaptation and diffusion being given other meanings: the newness occurs on the socioeconomic level and in terms of resource settings on the operational levels but is thus underpinned by a notion of resembling and referencing that contrast primary definitions of innovation. Adaptation and diffusion normally refer to customers starting to use a new product or service, while it here comes forth as new platform-based, operational ecosystems with platform founders adapting the sharing economy activities to new resource settings in the new platform launch. The drafted typology in this paper extends current knowledge on sharing economy business models in the light of business models as copied activity-based systems.

As concluded above, the paper forwards three contrasting patterns, each linked to research on innovation, the sharing economy, and industrial marketing, respectively, namely: the separation of activity copying from new resource settings, the individual and collective action driving the expansion of the sharing economy, and the integration on activity levels and separation of exchanges taking place on the operational and socioeconomic ecosystem levels.

6.2. Managerial implications

The sharing economy could be seen as providing opportunities yet also challenges to any new start-up venture or established firms, not the least based on how the sharing economy business model has accelerated in spread over the past years. Opportunities would link to possibilities to become part of this movement or copying part of its characteristics. The platform as the intermediary party carrying low risks in terms of how resources are provided by other parties in the triad (the providers), and ideas seeming to be limitless of what could be shared, need to be balanced towards how providers and users would be attracted by those offers provided. The providing side is often a neglected area in the literature but would be of detrimental importance if a platform is to expand, and recent years, as well as our follow-up on the new platforms in this paper, have seen several platforms closing down due to low attractiveness.

Being an established firm in any industry sector would mean potentially having to deal with the digital disruption championed by sharing economy parties entering the sector. To keep eyes on the development in other sectors and think ahead about how the firm could reshape its business to make use of ideas developed as part of the sharing logic construct relevant thoughts for any future operation regardless of sector.

6.3. Limitations and further research

Based on the findings from this paper, we call for further research integrating the sharing economy with industrial marketing perspectives, and further studies connecting the socioeconomic and operational ecosystem levels of the sharing economy (and indeed other types of operations), research expanding on potential tensions in orientations and rationales between for-profit and co-use sharing economy models and operational and socioeconomic ecosystems, and research taking those ideas developed in this paper forward. Our data, being collected in Sweden and only following through from those platforms echoing the role models Airbnb and Uber, calls for additional studies in other countries and research following the next cycle of echoing through: do new platforms associate themselves with either of those 59 platforms captured in our study and based on which premises? The data in the paper, being from 2016 to 2017, is an obvious weakness in the sense that it may portray as dated. While this has allowed us to follow up on the individual platforms, it also leaves room to study more recent developments: do new sharing economy platforms still refer themselves to Airbnb or Uber, and do they do so with the same capacity? And, additional studies could, through using other data sources than social media, websites, apps, annual reports and newspaper items, well help to both contrast and extend the findings of this paper.

This paper drafted a typology on sharing economy business models, which would deserve some further attention and testing. An interesting way forward would be to juxtapose the various configurations to the present state (cf. Appendix A) of the new platforms to determine if particular configurations are more successful than others.

Digitalisation indeed causes – or has the potential to cause – intensive reshaping of the business landscape, and it would be interesting to

see how else it affects current business logics, then specifically focusing on how it changes interactions and socioeconomic ecosystem levels. The transactional characteristic of sharing economy exchanges would be of interest to explore further, not the least related to the future development of exchanges and innovation processes.

Appendix A. Performance in 2021, number of platforms

	Airbnb	Uber	Total
No longer in business/bankruptcy	10	2	12
Acquired/part of international firm	10	1	10*
Still financed by venture capital firm	7	–	7
Showing losses	11	4	14*
Growth success	1	–	1
No information found/platform not found 2021	12	3	15
Total	*51*	*10*	*59**

* Two platforms, JetSmarter and Lendify, referred themselves to both role models. To not account for these twice, the summary excludes this duplication.

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