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Making Sense of the Sharing Economy – How and Why Stakeholders Grant Legitimation

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PhD in Management, specialization in Human Resources & Organisational Behaviour

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BUSINESS SCHOOL

Department of Human Resources and Organizational Behavior

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Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it we go nowhere.

Carl Sagan

Table of Contents

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Abstract

The Sharing Economy (SE) has been developing at an impressive pace throughout the globe and emerging as an innovative and hastily growing practice of the economy, which, on the other hand, has been attracting the attention of the scientific community. An increasing number of studies have been brought to light, particularly since 2017, helping to document and analyse how the SE has been unveiling itself and evolving across economic systems. There still is, nevertheless, a scarcity of a well-settled comprehension of the SE. This research addresses this gap by making a valuable contribution in helping to settle the sometimes-controversial, contention/dispute discourse around this arising field of knowledge over the last few years. It is composed of 3 sequential studies, whose respective research questions help find an answer to the central overall research question of the research, which is: what is the nature of the SE, and how and why stakeholders have progressively been granting legitimation to it? In conducting a historical qualitative analysis of the expression SE and its equivalents, Study 1 clarifies that (i) the SE is a phenomenon that has predominantly been formed by emergence processes, comprising social movement, similarity clustering and truce components; (ii) there is a generalised legitimacy granted to the SE by a vast number of stakeholders, even though still lacking on the consolidation of socio-political legitimation; and (iii) the nature of the SE seems to fall in a metaphorical approach, particularly, the notion of radial categories. Studies 2 and 3 represent a deeper dive into the heart of the SE sphere, with the aim to explore the role of two pivotal stakeholders, whose mutual interaction is vital for the legitimacy gaining of the SE: (a) the organisations belonging to the field and (b) the consumers. Results, respectively, show: (a) a content analysis of (1) how SBPs organisations portray themselves and express their identities to the world and (2) what is the nature of the legitimacy that is granted by external audiences to prototypical SBPs reveal that, while SBPs go through a stakeholder evaluation screening process involving the degree of their legitimacy in terms of sameness (or close substitution), distinctiveness, cognitive and socio-political, they resort to a self-presentation strategy that is based on proclaiming to be part of a global social movement and act as social agents of change concerning contemporary high-priority matters: the widespread prevalence of information technologies; the desirability of empowering people; the social cohesion as a requirement in a globalised world; and sustainability as a precondition for a more auspicious world; (b) one experiment reveals that consumers' intention to participate in "pure sharing" and/or "pure exchange" SBPs of the SE depends on either hedonic, either gain, and/or either normative motives, hence comprising both individual and supra individual strands, to be

cognitively activated in them by the stimulus given by the nature of the SBP in question. More relevantly, there is a tendency for consumers to associate both extremes of SBPs of the SE with normative, supra-individual strands, thus, allowing to elaborate that they choose to participate in SBPs due to their transformative character – it is in favour of the collective good, bringing people closer together, a more cohesive, altruistic, non-egocentric, a fairer society and, ultimately, the unlocking of new paths for better sustainability of the planet and a more auspicious future for humanity, which is something that, to the best of our knowledge, current literature did not uncover before.

Keywords: *Sharing Economy; Category Formation; Social Movement; Similarity Clustering; Truce; Radial Category; Organisational Identity; Interconnect; Cohesive; Sustainable; New Paradigm; Empowerment of People; Legitimacy Granting; Socio-Political; Stakeholders; Business Models; Sharing-based programs; Pure Sharing-Pure Exchange; Consumer Behaviour; Goal-Framing; Individual-Supra Individual Goals; Normative; Hedonic; Instrumental/Gain.*

Resumo

A Economia de Partilha (EP) tem vindo a desenvolver-se a um ritmo impressionante em todo o mundo e emergindo rapidamente como uma prática inovadora da economia, que, por outro lado, tem vindo a atrair a atenção da comunidade científica. Um crescente número de estudos tem vindo a emergir, particularmente desde 2017, ajudando a documentar e analisar como a EP tem vindo a revelar-se e evoluir nos sistemas económicos. Ainda existe, no entanto, uma escassez de uma compreensão bem sedimentada e pacífica sobre a EP. Este projeto de investigação aborda essa lacuna dando uma contribuição valiosa para ajudar a resolver/pacificar o discurso, por vezes, controverso em torno deste campo de conhecimento que tem vindo a surgir nos últimos anos. É composto por 3 estudos sequenciais, cujas respetivas perguntas de pesquisa ajudam a encontrar uma resposta para a questão de pesquisa central/geral do projeto, e que é: qual é a natureza da SE e como é que e porque que é que as partes interessadas têm vindo progressivamente a conceder legitimação a ela? Ao realizar uma análise histórica qualitativa da expressão SE e seus equivalentes, o estudo 1 clarifica que (i) a EP é um fenómeno que tem sido formado predominantemente por processos de emergência, compreendendo componentes de movimento social, agrupamento por similaridade e trégua; (ii) existe uma legitimidade generalizada concedida à EP por um vasto número de partes interessadas, embora ainda carente de consolidação da legitimação sociopolítica; e (iii) a natureza da EP parece enquadrar-se numa abordagem metafórica, particularmente, na noção de categorias radiais. Os estudos 2 e 3 representam um olhar mais profundo no seio da esfera da EP, com o objetivo de explorar o papel de dois stakeholders centrais, cuja interação mútua é fundamental para o ganho de legitimidade da EP: (a) as organizações pertencentes ao campo e (b) os consumidores. Os resultados revelam, respectivamente,: (a) uma análise de conteúdo de (1) como as organizações SBPs se retratam e expressam as suas identidades para o mundo e (2) qual é a natureza da legitimidade que é concedida pelas audiências externas a SBPs prototípicas revelam que, enquanto que as SBPs passam por um processo de crivo de avaliação das partes interessadas envolvendo o grau da sua legitimidade em termos de semelhança (ou substituição próxima), distinção, cognitiva e sociopolítica, elas recorrem a uma estratégia de autoapresentação que se baseia na proclamação de fazer parte de um movimento social global e atuar enquanto agentes sociais de mudança no que diz respeito a questões contemporâneas de alta prioridade, nomeadamente: a prevalência generalizada de tecnologias de informação; o desejo de capacitar as pessoas; a coesão social como requisito num mundo globalizado; e a sustentabilidade como pré-condição para um mundo mais auspicioso; (b) uma experiência revela que a intenção dos

consumidores de participar em SBPs da EP de "pura partilha" e/ou de "pura troca" depende quer de motivos hedónicos, de ganho e/ou normativos, compreendendo, portanto, vertentes individuais e supra individuais, de serem cognitivamente ativados neles pelo estímulo dado pela natureza da SBP em questão. Mais relevante, há uma tendência de os consumidores associarem ambos os extremos das SBPs da SE a vertentes normativas, supra-individuais, permitindo assim elaborar que eles optam em grande parte por participar nas SBPs devido ao seu caráter transformador – é a favor do bem coletivo, da aproximação entre as pessoas, de uma sociedade mais coesa, altruísta, não egocêntrica, justa e, em última instância, do desbloqueio de novos caminhos para uma melhor sustentabilidade do planeta e um futuro mais auspicioso para a humanidade, que é algo que, tanto quanto é do nosso conhecimento, a literatura atual não havia posto a nu antes.

Palavras-Chave*: Economia de Partilha; Formação de Categorias; Movimento Social; Clustering por Similaridade; Trégua; Categoria Radial; Identidade Organizacional; Interconectar; Coeso; Sustentável; Novo Paradigma; Empoderamento das Pessoas; Concessão de Legitimidade; Sociopolítica; Partes Interessadas; Modelos de Negócio; Programas com Base de Partilha; Partilha Pura-Troca Pura; Comportamento do Consumidor; Objetivos Enquadrados; Objetivos Individuais-Supra individuais; Normativo; Hedónico; Instrumental/Ganho.*

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

General Introduction

The *Sharing Economy* (SE) is a relatively new phenomenon by way of technology standards (Zifkin, 2015), born of the Internet age (Belk, 2014), and in which you are not helping a friend for free but instead providing SE services to a stranger for money (Sundararajan, 2016). The prototypical actors, commercial sharing services of the SE allow people to share resources in creative, new ways (Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014). SE has been allowing people to have access to rooms – Airbnb, Wimdu –, cars and bicycles – Relay Rides, Wheelz –, and taxi services – Uber, Lyft (Malhotra & Van Alstyne, 2014). It is a new form of sweating underutilized assets, by building communities around them and turning consumers into providers (Varsavsky, cited in Silver, 2013). Its participants are being labelled as *digital matching firms* (ESA, 2016). The sector is perceived to contour four main characteristics (Penn & Wihbey, 2016): (a) they use information technology (IT systems), typically available via web-based platforms, such as mobile "apps" on Internet-enabled devices, to facilitate peer-to-peer transactions; (b) they rely on user-based rating systems for quality control, ensuring a level of trust between consumers and service providers who have not previously met; (c) they offer the workers who provide services via digital matching platforms flexibility in deciding their typical working hours; (d) to the extent that tools and assets are necessary to provide a service, digital matching firms rely on the workers using their own. It also has been seen by some as a label to broadly define the emergent ecosystem that is upending mature business models across the globe. At the same time, analysts (PwC, 2015) argue that no single label can neatly encapsulate this movement, as for some the word "sharing" was a misnomer, a savvy-but-disingenuous spin on an industry they felt was more about economic opportunism than altruism.

In contrast, for others, more appropriate titles included the *Trust Economy*, *Collaborative Consumption*, the *On-Demand* or *Peer-to-Peer Economy* (PwC, 2015). Although "some of the sharing models might have resulted from a need for frugal spending after the global economic recession of 2008, their success was also driven by a growing environmental consciousness combined with the ubiquity of Internet and associated information and communication technologies which make sharing possible at scale" (Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014, p. 279). Together, these developments have started to challenge traditional thinking about how resources can and should be offered and consumed, supporting arguments that incremental improvements in our existing production and consumption systems are insufficient to transform our global economy toward sustainability (Lovins & Cohen, 2011; Stead & Stead, 2013).

This new phenomenon has led the scientific community to broach and treat it as a relevant research object. Notedly from the year 2017 onwards (Cotrim, Nunes & Laurenti, 2020), the scientific knowledge about it has been proliferating across multiple research fields. Today, academia mostly concentrates on making contributions further to refine theoretical and empirical research on the field. One of the first comprehensive review works was Laurenti, Singh, Cotrim, Toni and Sinha's (2019), which synthesized the state and distribution of existing publications related to the SE in multiple disciplines. In using a systematic mapping technique to scope, identify, and classify the publications at an adequate level of granularity, this work concluded that, due to the (un)definitional boundaries offered by the influential articles and authors that have initially shaped the research field, there has been occurring an exchangeable use of more than one term to describe the phenomenon, such as, sharing economy, collaborative consumption or even collaborative economy. On top of that, various online platforms for renting, selling, co-owning, and everything in between have embraced these terms to describe their business models.

Laurenti et al.'s (2019) mapping has revealed other interesting patterns on how academia has broached and treated the research area. Studies have mainly encompassed a combination of exchange behaviours, such as renting, donating, buying and selling second-hand, swapping, and lending and borrowing; participating actors (e.g., C2C, B2B, B2C, etc.); presence or absence of monetary exchanges; and exchange mode (e.g., transfer of ownership, access). Further, current literature has mainly been featured by studying online platforms enabling transactions among strangers, decentralized control of business, users as independent contractors, and democratization of the economy.

One of the central features of modern sharing phenomenon brought by the SE is that it has radically disrupted two particularly business sectors – accommodation and mobility – and led to the arising of an extensive range of different ones, such as, shared accommodation, coworking office, land sharing/farming, car sharing, bike sharing, crowdwork, time banking, energy, meal sharing, clothing, books, furniture, digital manufacturing, customs broker, healthcare, crowdfunding; and the main reasons for this proliferation are intrinsically linked to the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT), which has brought the possibility of significantly reducing the transaction costs of sharing services (Laurenti et al., 2019).

The SE has, on the other hand, stimulated scientific discussion across multiple disciplines distributed over five overarching research clusters: user behaviour, business models and organizational aspects, institution and governance system, conceptualization matters and sustainability evaluation. In general, while business, management, marketing, and social sciences are the most dominant subject areas of research, numerous research methods have been applied in investigating the theme, of which literature review, survey, case study, and interview are the most frequently used methods. Furthermore, empirical studies are the majority, with 53.1% compared with conceptual ones, and qualitative approaches are the most common with 51.5% against 24.9% quantitative and 17.4% mixed methods (Laurenti et al., 2019).

The phenomenon has also increasingly been associated with the sustainability field and makes the scientific community call for further research from an environmental sustainability perspective. In this respect, researchers such as Laurenti et al. (2019) have called for more in-depth research on the motivations behind users' participation in sharing practices, namely a deeper understanding of the differences in motivations to participate in the SE depending on the platform orientation (i.e., for-profit or non-profit), governance structure (i.e., democratic or centralized) and ownership (i.e., collective or limited). Studying how consumers behave towards sharing practices, (i.e., "accessing rather than owning", "second-hand consumption", and "donation" ones) becomes of vital interest, because, as Geissinger et al. (2019, cited in Laurenti et al., 2019) explain, such practices are considered to increase resource efficiency through both (re)circulation of goods and utilization of durable assets and, more generally, to reduce consumption-induced environmental impacts such as waste generation, raw material extraction or CO2 emissions. Hence, there is a critical need to understand more in-depth how and why consumers participate in the SE to guide the selection of the most suitable mechanism to ensure the environmental benefits from resource sharing in its plural forms (Laurenti et al., 2019).

Considering, as we see above, that there has been a remarkable rise of attention given to this new field of knowledge, this current research project represents a contribution in joining the whole discussion on the topic by adding a new refreshed layer into clarifying the real contours of the SE, which has been having over the last few years fracturing encounters, argumentations and disputes over its paradoxes, ambiguities and contradictions. It particularly meets Laurenti et al.'s (2019) call for future research on (a) bringing together leading SE players, stakeholders using a change-driven approach, (b) testing the motivations, preferences, consumption behavioural choices that simultaneously lead consumers to engage in this modern sharing phenomenon actively and maximize the environmental gains from the use of sharing platforms, and (c) considering the SE business models (C2C access, C2C shared ownership, B2C access, second-hand consumption, and donation).

The overall attempt of this piece of work is to assist in appeasing the sometimes-controversial contention discourse over the real legitimacy of the SE including the entities/organizations belonging to the field. In doing so, the research was designed as follows below.

Aims and Overview

⇨ Composed by three sequential studies, this work aims to seek an answer to an overall central research question: what is the nature of the SE and how and why stakeholders have progressively been granting legitimation to it? Each of the three studies was, thus, designed to answer other particular research questions that intertwine with each other:

① **Study 1**

(RQ1): How the SE was formed and evolved as a category?

(RQ2): As a category, is the SE legitimate?

After having an answer to this general overview, the next logical step was to dive even more into the heart of the SE category, as an attempt to find out how two crucial, pivotal stakeholders involved in the epicentre of the category formation of the SE have been granting legitimation to it: (i) the organizations belonging to the field and (ii) consumers. Thus:

② **Study 2**

(RQ1): How SBPs organizations portray themselves and express their identities to the world?

(RQ2): What is the nature of the legitimacy that is granted by external audiences to prototypical SBPs?

③ **Study 3**

(RQ): How the cognitive activation of goals does play a determinant role on how consumers behave towards SBPs ("pure exchange" and "pure sharing" ones) of the SE?

Complementary, there were added, under the Appendices section, two further studies as means to reveal additional insights of other correlated outputs that the author of this thesis has produced in parallel to the task of composing the three core intertwined studies that make this work. The first of these complementary studies (found in Appendix B) refers to a work carried out by an international team of 5 researchers, to which the author was part of and that has already been mentioned in the previous paragraphs, with the overarching aim to identify and systematically map published research associated with the Sharing Economy phenomenon. This study's output was published at *Sustainability* Journal (5-year impact factor: 2.798; Q1 – indexed in Scopus and Web of Science). The second (found in Appendix C), on the other hand, refers to early-stage research conducted by the author together with his Supervisor, Prof. Doctor Francisco Nunes. Its main objective was to clarify what is the role of the category "Sharing Economy" in establishing the identity of organizations belonging to the field, considering both identify claims (self-referential) and legitimacy (granted by stakeholders). This study's output was published at the *European Journal of Economics and Business Studies* (Indexed in RePEc & Ideas, Google Scholar and Crossref).

This work concludes with a general discussion of the main findings (theoretical and empirical contributions) that emerged from the three core studies, keeping in mind the research project's objectives. It also discusses the general limitations of the work and suggestions for future research.

Figure 1 provides a visual diagram that summarises our central research question, the complementary research questions of each of the three core studies, and the respective outputs. The unveiling of each of the three studies follows in the next pages.

Figure 1 – Outline of the central research question, complementary research questions of each of the three core studies, and outputs of this project.

Central research question

What is the nature of the SE and, more specifically, how and why stakeholders have progressively been granting legitimation to it?

Task 1

- To investigate (RQ1) how the SE was formed and evolved as a category, and (RQ2) whether the SE is a legitimate category.
- *Output*: Empirical article published at *Sustainability* (5-year impact factor: 2.798; Q1).

Task 2

- To investigate (RQ1) how SBPs organisations portray themselves and express their identities to the world, and (RQ2) what is the nature of the legitimacy that is granted by external audiences to prototypical SBPs.
- *Output*: Empirical article currently submitted for publication at *International Journal of Business Innovation and Research* (3-year impact factor: 0.59; Q3).

Task 3

- To explore the overarching goal-framing motives behind consumers' behavior towards the SBPs of the SE, that is, (RQ) how the cognitive activation of goals does play a determinant role on how consumers behave towards SBPs ("pure exchange" and "pure sharing" ones) of the SE.
- *Output*: Empirical study to be submitted for publication.

CHAPTER 1

Making sense of the Sharing Economy: a category formation approach[1]

[1] Study published at *Sustainability*, under the reference Cotrim, J. M., Nunes, F. & Laurenti, R. (2020). Making sense of the Sharing Economy: a category formation approach. *Sustainability*, *12*(24), 10648, 1–23. doi.org/10.3390/su122410648.

Abstract

The sharing economy (SE) has drawn significant attention from several society stakeholders in the last five years. While business actors are interested in financial opportunities to meet consumer needs, new business models, academia and governmental organisations are concerned with potential unintended effects on society and the environment. Despite its notable global growth, there is still a lack of more solid ground in understanding its origins and respective mechanisms through which it has been evolving as a category. This research addresses the problematics of the origins and ascendency of the SE by examining the process by which it is arising as a new category, searching for conceptual clarification, and pinpointing the legitimacy granted by stakeholders. Our guiding research questions are: how the SE was formed and evolved as a category, and as a category, is the SE legitimate? Additionally, we attempt to identify the nature of the SE as a category. Making a historical analysis of the expression SE and its equivalents, this paper deepens the discussion about the SE's nature by providing evidence that it has predominantly been formed by emergence processes, comprising social movement, similarity clustering, and truce components, which render the SE a particular case of category formation and allow communication, entrepreneurship, regulation, and research about what it is. Moreover, the findings reveal a generalised legitimacy granted to the SE by a vast number of stakeholders, although still lacking the consolidation of socio-political legitimation. The SE's nature seems to fall into a metaphorical approach, notably, the notion of radial categories.

Keywords: Sharing Economy; Category Formation; Emergence; Social Movement; Similarity Clustering; Truce; Radial Category; Identity Legitimation; Stakeholders; Business Models.

1. Introduction

The sharing economy (SE) is growing at an impressive rate across the globe (Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014). It involves using information technologies to link different stakeholders to use surplus resources to create valuable products and services. As a new phenomenon, there is a lack of shared understanding of the nature of the SE and its underlying mechanisms (Knote & Blohm, 2016), as well as empirical research into the increasing diversity of SE business models and the implications for business growth, community development, sustainability and public policy (Muñoz & Cohen, 2017).

Despite increased awareness of the SE, its nature and establishment as a legitimate category are not well understood. Some companies are often classified as SE exemplars, and at the same time, lack the required legitimacy to operate in specific markets. Uber is one such case. In Korea (Hong & Lee, 2018), for example, taxi unions objected strongly to Uber, and as a consequence, the Korean government banned many of the company's services. Several European countries, namely France, Germany, Spain, and the UK, saw prominent protests by taxi driver associations against the company, giving rise to concerns that government regulators may favour those associations over Uber. In this respect, the Court of Justice of the European Union has recently emphasised the need to resolve this issue:

"The Court finds that we must regard that intermediation service as forming an integral part of an overall service whose main component is a transport service and, accordingly, must be classified not as an 'information society service' but as a 'service in the field of transport'" (Court of Justice of the European Union, 2017).

The Court's explicit use of the expression "must be classified," reveals how vital categories are. Clarifying how one should label and categorise the company has profound consequences on Uber's operation and its substitutes (taxis). In this case, the two competing categories are an information society service versus a transport service. Being classified in one of these categories -information society or transport- makes a decisive difference. In the same vein, the Portuguese Federation of Taxis also considers it urgent to find the right "label" for Uber to identify it as belonging to a correct category: "Today, Uber has written on its forehead: a company of transportation" (Observador, 2017). Oddly, during all this controversy, and to the best of our knowledge, Uber has never presented itself as an SE company, but rather as a platform. It is an exciting way to use membership of a category in a purely strategic way, not as self-definition, as it predicts the social actor's view of organisational identity (Whetten & Mackey, 2002). SE seems to be a label used by some actors but not others, and it is not clear how this category was formed and by whom.

In this research, we shed light on the SE's categorisation mechanisms, showing how different audiences provide legitimacy to the SE as a category over time. In doing so, we address the calls by Cheng (2016) and Parente et al. (2018) to set up a relevant future research agenda and broaden current theories by exploring why, when and how SE commercial platforms expand into societies. We also address the call by Cohen and Kietzmann (2014) regarding the urgency in studying the phenomenon and Knote and Blohm's (2016) concern about finding a common understanding of the SE and its underlying mechanisms. In this paper, we analyse how the meaning of the SE evolved. We examine the process by which the SE is arising as a new category, searching for conceptual clarification and pinpointing the legitimacy granted by critical stakeholders. Thus, our guiding research questions are (RQ1) how the SE was formed and evolved as a category; (RQ2) as a category, is the SE legitimate? Additionally, we attempt to identify the nature of the SE as a category.

By interpreting keywords, concepts, and patterns of discourse used by a range of stakeholders in construing the dimensions associated with the formation of the category of SE and its evolution through time, we constructed a timeline that ranges from 2002 to 2019, comprising three main phases – "revelation phase," "clairvoyance phase" and "knowledge proliferation phase," each one containing distinct formation processes and different actors playing prominent roles. The SE has been formed mainly by emergence processes (Durand & Khaire, 2017) in which social activists, through a process of social movement (Wheaton & Carroll, 2017), have claimed its value as a means for achieving a more sustainable world, which was followed by process of similarity clustering (Wheaton & Carroll, 2017) significantly benchmarked by an appropriation of the field by the scientific community, striving to give sense to and clarify the nature of this emergent phenomenon, which allowed the achievement of a truce momentum (Rhee et al., 2017), thus allowing communication, entrepreneurship, regulation, and research into what the SE is, despite the evident lack of agreement regarding both the label and its content. Complementarily, we suggest that the SE is a category that is closer to a radial category (Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff, & Johnson, 1980) than to a more conventional prototype category (Rosch, 1977; Rosch, 1978, Mervis & Rosch, 1981). In our view, it is the combination of all the processes mentioned above that renders the SE a particular case of category formation.

This article is organised as follows. We begin by presenting a theoretical framework, including a brief review of the idea of the SE, explaining what categories are and how new categories are formed and legitimacy construed. After describing the data collection processes, we present a historical analysis of how the category of SE has been formed and evolved, highlighting each of the milestone events and shedding light on critical dimensions associated with forming a legitimate category. After that, we discuss the study's limitations and avenues for further research. Finally, the conclusion section provides a summary of the main findings.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Conceptualizing the SE

Sharing is as old as humankind. People often have shared assets. The SE, however, is a relatively new phenomenon by way of technology standards (Zifkin, 2015), born of the Internet age (Belk, 2014), and in which you are not helping a friend for free or in the expectation of reciprocity, but instead providing SE services to a stranger for money (Sundararajan, 2016). Sharing and collaborative consumption are growing in popularity today. The growth of these practices generates a debate around the implications for businesses still using traditional models of sales and ownership (Belk, 2014). Although in 2004, Benkler (2004) had already introduced a discussion about a new emergent economic practice, a modality of economic production which he called "sharing," it is believed that the term Sharing Economy itself has been used since 2007, when a law professor named Lawrence Lessig at Harvard Law School used the term in a New York Times story about the Internet's effect on work, followed by publication in 2008 of a book called Remix: Making art and commerce thrive in the hybrid economy. He explained:

"The traditional company is just making money selling widgets or iTunes. The Internet exploded a sharing economy with things like Wikipedia, where people are doing work that creates a lot of value, not for money but just because it's their hobby. We've seen a pattern of hybrid companies like this trying to figure out ways to leverage that for a profit" (The New York Times, 2015).

These hybrid companies referred to by Lessig may also be perceived as what Cohen and Kietzmann (2014) call commercial sharing services that allow people to share resources in creative new ways. Malhotra and Van Alstyne (2014) say that thanks to these SE sharing services, people can have access to rooms – Airbnb, Roomorama –, cars and bicycles – Relay Rides, Wheelz –, and taxi services – Uber, Lyft. These creative business models have spotlighted the SE and its massive growth in sources ranging from Fortune Magazine to President Barack Obama (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2015). Further, the SE was nominated as one of '10 ideas that will change the world' (Teubner, 2014), and its value was estimated at $26 billion in 2013 (Geron, 2013; Cannon & Summers, 2014), being projected to grow to $335 billion in 2025 (Tabcum, 2019).

Attempts to label this emergent phenomenon have appeared. In a report issued in June 2016, the Economics and Statistics Administration (ESA) of the US Commerce Department attempted to define and map out the contours of this emerging business sector, labelling its participants as digital matching firms. The report describes this sector through four main characteristics (Penn & Wihbey, 2016): (a) they use information technology (IT systems), typically available via web-based platforms, such as mobile "apps" on Internet-enabled devices, to facilitate peer-to-peer transactions; (b) they rely on user-based rating systems for quality control, ensuring a level of trust between consumers and service providers who have not previously met; (c) they offer the workers who provide services via digital matching platforms flexibility in deciding their typical working hours; (d) to the extent that tools and assets are necessary to provide a service, digital matching firms rely on the workers using their own.

But the term SE itself raised significant concerns. A PwC report (2015) on assessing the SE used the label broadly to define the emergent ecosystem that is upending mature business models worldwide. The report has concluded that no single label can neatly encapsulate this movement, after having spoken to industry specialists, as for some, the word "sharing" was a misnomer, a savvy-but-disingenuous spin on an industry they felt was more about economic opportunism than altruism. We believe that this duality, involving the selfish exploitation of an opportunity and some sort of contribution to others' welfare, goals that usually do not go together, is a crucial cornerstone in grasping the nature of this movement.

There is much ambiguity surrounding the SE. For example, these new related business and consumption practices have been described as sharing (Belk, 2010), collaborative consumption (Botsman & Rogers, 2010), the mesh (Gansky, 2010), commercial sharing systems (Lamberton & Rose, 2012), co-production (Humphreys & Grayson, 2008), co-creation (Lanier & Schau, 2007; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), prosumption (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Toffler, 1980), product-service systems (Mont, 2002), access-based consumption (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012), consumer participation (Fitzsimmons, 1985), and online volunteering (Postigo, 2003).

Others argue that SE seems to be paradoxical (Acquier et al., 2017). Tensions and uncertainties regarding its real boundaries, effects and logics highlight the SE (Richardson, 2015), where some perceive it as an alternative to market capitalism, but at the same time, it might instigate capitalism (Schor et al., 2016). Even if it defends and promotes “more sustainable consumption and production practices,” it might also “reinforce the current unsustainable economic paradigm” (Martin, 2016, p. 159).

The paradoxical features associated with the SE converge on the dual nature of this emergent process. However, this ambiguous context does not inhibit further efforts to construe more solid common ground in broaching the SE. For example, Frenken and Schor (2017, pp. 4–5) have defined the SE as a phenomenon where “consumers grant each other temporary access to under-utilised physical assets (‘idle capacity’), possibly for money,” where prototypical “goods that are currently shared are cars and homes.” Further, SE platforms should be defined in alliance with the notion of sharing as a historical practice, in the sense that people were already involved in practices of lending, renting and, particularly, sharing goods with well-trusted social contacts, long before the emergence of Internet platforms (Frenken & Schor, 2017). On that premise, Frenken and Schor (2017) argue that what is new today is that people lend goods to others they do not know due to the simple fact that the Internet allows an enormous decrease in transaction costs. Today, because of Internet platforms, we can lower the costs of the search and contract. Based on this definition, the authors advocate that the SE is different from three other types of platforms pre-dating the Internet: (1) second-hand economy (consumers selling goods to each other); (2) product-service economy (renting goods from a company rather than from another consumer); and (3) on-demand economy (peer-to-peer service delivery instead of fair peer-to-peer sharing).

Given the complexity and uncertainties associated with the SE, representing the absence of shared understanding about both the label and the SE content, we find further attempts to construe more consistent building blocks regarding what the SE is and what its constituent activities are. This follows below.

2.2. SE as a complex category: organizing the diversity under an ambiguous umbrella

In the face of various new businesses likely to be categorised as SE, some researchers have developed typologies anchored in very different dimensions (Schor, 2014; Constantiou et al., 2017; Habibi et al., 2017). The duality between maximization of individual benefits and a collective orientation seems to be one of the primary sources of discussion, divergence and unsettled discourse among the academic community. In an attempt to organise the wide range of non-ownership forms of consumption practices, Habibi et al. (2017) suggest the sharing-exchange continuum as a fundamental dimension against which all those forms can be mapped, thus, helping to distinguish the degree to which actual sharing (from "pure sharing" to "pure exchange") is being offered by an SE practice (called an SBP – Sharing-Based Program). The continuum uses a rating given to an SBP in measuring its sharing scores (on a 5-point scale), which is based on several sharing and exchange-related characteristics drawn from Belk's work (2007, 2010). Habibi et al.'s (2016) results reveal that (1) Zipcar SBP was rated as being at the "pure exchange" end of the continuum, (2) Couchsurfing SBP was rated as being at the "pure sharing" end of the continuum, and (3) Airbnb SBP was rated as being a "hybrid" practice, having a mix of "pure exchange" and "pure sharing" characteristics, thus situated in the middle of the continuum.

Other authors attempted to organise the diversity of business forms using more than one dimension. For instance, Schor (2015) proposes market orientation (for-profit vs non-profit) and market structure (peer-to-peer vs business-to-peer) as useful measurements to highlight differences and similarities between SE elements. In Schor's account, these dimensions shape the activities' business models, logics of exchange, and potential to disrupt conventional businesses. The author pinpoints SE activities according to the shared sameness with other category members and the individual distinctiveness from other members. Although the for-profit or non-profit orientation seems to mirror the sharing-exchange fundamental motivation of the service provider, as suggested by Habibi et al. (2017), thus highlighting the essential duality of self-interest versus others' interest that seems to cross the discussion of the nature of the SE, Schor's (2015) typology also includes the level of formalisation of one of the elements of the exchange relationship: is a business involved or not? This is relevant because, typically, business type stakeholders tend to be exclusively concerned with making profits, thus stressing the duality's interest. Thus, Schor's typology can also be mapped on just one dimension.

As an attempt to give meaning to SE, other dimensions have been added. For instance, Constantiou et al. (2017) suggest combining the level of control applied by the platform owner over platform participants (loose vs tight) and the magnitude of rivalry among the platform participants adopted by the platform owner (low vs high). In this approach, what differentiates SE platforms from more traditional marketplaces, supplier networks, third-party intermediaries, and service integrators is how they combine organisational and market mechanisms to coordinate platform participation and engender value. According to Constantiou et al. (2017), there are four distinct combinations (or models), which they call Franchiser, Principal, Chaperone and Gardener, according to the variety of the control and rivalry dimensions: control is governed by extending organisational coordination mechanisms into the platform's user base, whereas rivalry is governed by the market coordination mechanism designed by the platform owner.

In short, scholars have used variety in understanding the nature of the SE. Some attempts have been made to categorise the field, thus recognising intra-category diversity, and SE has been perceived as an umbrella concept. Different dimensions have been used to describe the field, but the self-others interest seems to be the most relevant. Finally, most authors do not question the legitimacy of specific business models, except for Uber, which leads to terminological ambiguity surrounding the SE (Murillo et al., 2017). In our view, this happens because, even though some studies (e.g. Mair & Reischauer, 2017) already draw special attention to the dynamics of the SE in terms of how resource-sharing markets emerge and change, and the intended and unintended consequences of resource sharing, there is a lack of research analyzing its actual roots, highlighting where it comes from and how its conceptualisation has been evolving.

Interestingly, this lack of consensus in defining the SE, with disagreement as to both the label and the content of the category, did not prevent the growth of the SE, both as a dynamic economic activity and as a subject of study for a growing number of researchers. We join this discussion by exploring how categories are formed and evolve. We believe this article can shed light on SE dynamics and can be another step in reducing the ambiguity associated with the SE. Reducing diversity and ambiguity is precisely the primary function of categories, both at the individual and collective levels. To assess whether the SE is a legitimate new category, it is essential first to understand how new categories emerge, and legitimacy is construed. This follows below.

2.3. How new categories emerge and legitimacy is construed

2.3.1. Categories

Categories are essential for daily human functioning. They help humans deal with the great diversity of objects, events and ideas surrounding them, thus performing basic sense-making and communication functions. It is almost impossible to perceive, think or talk without resorting to some kind of category (Lakoff, 1987). Additionally, shared categories enable effective communication. Categorisation happens automatically and unconsciously. Every time we wake up, we organise our physical world into categories, including people, animals and material objects. But we also categorise almost our entire abstract world, regarding events, emotions, social relationships, governments or theories (Lakoff, 1987). Curiously, the first thing people want to know about us before we are born is the classic categorical question heard by pregnant women: is it a boy or a girl? In ordering a beer, knowing whether it is artisanal or made by a large producer can be decisive for some consumers.

At the individual level, the function of categories is to reduce uncertainty and allow thinking to interact in a reasonably cognitive productive manner. The economic sphere is no exception to this human tendency to minimise variability and increase predictability: countries classify their enterprises based on comprehensive sets of categories that describe their core activities. Other more complex categories concern different types of activity and place organisations in the public, private or non-profit sectors, in relation to the type of ownership and purpose. In its most basic sense, the meaning of categorisation is simple: members of a category are similar to each other and different from members of another category. Based on this sense of belonging, the members of a category can define themselves according to what unites them and what differentiates them. As categories are eminently social, external elements can look at an entity as a member of a category, and based on this, form expectations about the actions of that entity, without the need for a great deal of individualised information processing.

Metaphorically, categories are conceptualised as containers of similar objects separating those that are in from those that are out (Lakoff, 1987). This is also the dominant perspective of categories shared by laypeople. But this view was challenged by at least two perspectives, namely the prototype approach (Rosch, 1978) and the metaphorical approach (Lakoff, 1987). These two alternative views of categories posit that members of categories do not need to share their properties as belonging to that category. Those category boundaries are not necessarily definite, thus threatening the very meaning of what a category is.

Following a wide range of experiments, the prototype view of categories (Rosch, 1977; Mervis & Rosch, 1981) established that subjects perceive some subcategory or category members as more representative than others, becoming more prototypical members. For example, a robin is a more prototypical member of the bird category than a chicken. Members of a category can be rated as more or less prototypical. So, categories have a prototypical structure, and these prototypes play an essential role in making inferences about category members, thus acting as cognitive reference points. Reference points are especially relevant in categories without rigid boundaries, like SUV as a vehicle category, in which prototype effects result from the degree of category membership.

Like the prototypical view, the metaphoric approach to categories (Lakoff, 1987) suggests that categories are not homogeneous sets of elements, but it proposes different structural properties in some categories, named radial categories. Using a combination of a container and centre-periphery metaphors, according to which humans view concepts as containers of something (meaning) and everything necessary is perceived as being located in the centre (Lakoff, 1980), this approach describes radial categories as including central subcategories and non-central subcategories whose characteristics cannot be inferred from the prominent members. Non-central members of the category belong to the category because conventions render them variations of the principal members and must be learned with a specific culture. Non-central subcategories are not created from the central ones following general rules and are seen as variations of the central subcategories, extended according to conventions. The central subcategory determines the possibilities for extension and establishes the relationships between a prominent model and the others (Lakoff, 1987). Thus, radial categories are characterised by a conventionalised centre, with several usually metaphoric extension principles describing what links central and less central categories, and specific conventional extensions that cannot be predicted from the centre and have to be understood and learned as separate independent elements (Lakoff, 1987). For example, in the mother category, the primary subcategory is defined by the convergence of the cognitive models of birth, nurture, etc.

In contrast, non-central extensions are all possible variations of the mother condition – adoptive mother, birth mother, foster mother, surrogate mother, etc. In other words, the non-central extensions are understood via their relationship to the central model. Radial categories are essential not only because they equip us with the vocabulary required for characterising relationships between subcategories, but also because they do not prescribe limits for inclusion, which permit the category's extension. In this sense, radial categories give us a more flexible cognitive tool to accommodate novelty, a property not theorised within the prototype perspective.

A more flexible approach to categories can stress that, beyond prototypical gradients, categories can be formed based on the existence of similar goals or the presence of an identical causal relationship in actors (Durand & Paolella, 2013). In markets, belonging to categories is vital to organisations' strategic and symbolic action, as categories provide essential labels for an organisation to stand out in its field (Navis & Glynn, 2010). For example, when creating a new organisation, entrepreneurs can use the new venture's membership of an established category to gain immediate legitimacy from external audiences through rituals of compliance with regulators. This organisation can counterbalance this pressure for isomorphism by strategically developing a differentiated value proposition that captures customers, suppliers or investors (Navis & Glynn, 2010). But how are categories born and formed? This follows below.

2.3.2. The formation of market categories

When used as lenses to look at markets and organisations, “categories provide a cognitive infrastructure that enables evaluations of organisations and their products, drives expectations, and leads to material and symbolic exchanges” (Durand & Paolella, 2013, p. 1102). Categories are, thus, fundamental cognitive devices required for actors to navigate in complex environments like markets. In line with other domains, categories include entities grouped under a label. The formation of these features is mostly socially constructed by relevant actors in a specific field or ecosystem.

As Hannan et al. (2007, p. 47) point out, the process of assigning explicit labels or names to sets of entities means that it “crystallise (s) the sense that (individuals) have identified commonality”. In the same vein, Galperin and Sorenson (2014) suggest that a label representing a category tends to emphasise similarities between entities, facilitates communication about the whole of entities, and smoothes the cognitive process of storing and transferring information about the attributes of specific category members. Thus, studying the emergence of a label, and evolution of the meaning attached to it, can inform us about the origins and change of a category. In this regard, a fundamental question arises: how are categories formed?

In recent years, scholars have addressed questions about the origins of categories and how new ones emerge (Kennedy, 2008; Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010; Navis & Glynn, 2010; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009). In a recent review, Durand and Khaire (2017) suggest that the formation of a category, which demands the rearrangement, reinterpretation and reassessment of existing elements and features, is a process that defies the status ordering of actors in an ecosystem. In describing category formation, the authors propose a clear distinction in the category formation process, distinguishing category emergence from category creation. Emergence occurs when it “crosses over categorical systems and hierarchies and results in the existence of new actors and organisational forms” (Durand & Khaire, 2017, p. 89), whereas creation “contributes to the rejuvenation of existing category systems but preserves the social structuration of markets” (Durand & Khaire, 2017, p. 89). According to Durand and Khaire (2017), seven critical dimensions allow assessment of whether we are in the presence of one or the other: nature of the novelty, origin, organisational agency, mechanism for distinction, the basis of discourse, legitimacy through which it is acquired, and outcome. According to this framework, category emergence happens when the category's formation arises from elements extraneous to an existing market. Complementarily, category creation occurs when there is a redesigning of cognitive boundaries around a subset of features within a pre-existing category system (Durand & Khaire, 2017).

Emergence and creation are not the only processes explaining how categories are formed. In assessing the literature to explain the emergence of the Tex-Mex food category, Wheaton and Carroll (2017) noted the existence of two theoretical streams explaining how categories emerge, namely the social-movement and the similarity-clustering approaches. The social-movement highlights the role of activists who attempt to articulate a “theory” of the nascent category and persuade others about its value. Often, very well-identified activists tend to use the label as much as possible and attempt to present a compelling and positive story about the label to influence the audience's acceptance of the category. Rao et al.’s (2003) explanation of the emergence of nouvelle cuisine is an example of this perspective.

The similarity-clustering approach shares with the social-movement perspective the key role of activists. Instead of promoting the nascent category, these actors are portrayed as aiming to cluster entities, most organisations, according to similar characteristics (Wheaton & Carroll, 2017). Different enthusiasts engage in similarity judgments in the early stages of category formation. Still, they do not achieve consensus (Hannan et al., 2007), and the process of comparison between new entities and between those and existing ones continue until individuals reach consistent groupings of entities and a label is assigned. Unlike the social-movement perspective, these individuals are genuinely interested in the meaning of the category and are not necessarily motivated to sell the label and others' content. After this refined labelling process of clusters, including similar entities, actors usually develop more general frameworks that allow observers to decide if an entity can be included in a particular group and receive the label. The process of assigning the label entails expectations of specific entities, and when enough agreement is achieved between different stakeholders, the category is said to emerge (Wheaton & Carroll, 2017).

Using a process approach, Rhee et al. (2017) theorised on the existence of four types of categories' initial formation, namely proof, consensus, fiat, and truce. These four processes result from the combination of two underlying dimensions describing the degree of agreement about the meaning of a category between different constituencies (high or low) and the level of authority granted to specific actors to establish new categories (centralised or decentralised). Categories are formed by consensus when both audiences and the constituents of an emergent category agree about the meaning of a new category, and category legitimacy does not need official endorsement from authorities. Categories are formed by proof when an established authority, or existing influential experts or actors, uses institutionalised rules to develop a new category. Other actors concur and accept its meaning. Sometimes, centralised authorities establish new categories and use their power to impose the category on actors who do not recognise or want it, a process named fiat. Finally, a category might be set up by truce, a mechanism representing the lack of agreement about the meaning of a category between relevant actors. Still, power relationships prevent the possibility of one actor imposing the importance of a category upon others, which leads to the existence of categories that are largely controversial, or at least, showing great variability in both label and content.

According to Rhee et al. (2017), understanding these fundamental mechanisms explaining categories' initial formation is essential because their prevalence affects subsequent categories' evolution. This evolutionary perspective is relevant to understand the category formation process because, as categories evolve, both the label and the practices or features represented can change or, according to Kennedy et al. (2010), be subject to redefinition, subsumption, or recombination. Some categories are more stable than others, and the critical mechanism involved in their emergence can be imprinted in subsequent category evolution.

In summary, the process of category formation is by no means straightforward. It involves multifaceted mechanisms through which newcomer entities, namely new entrepreneurial organisations or businesses, must pass. Along this process of screening and evolution, there is an element that is granted by a vast spectrum of external audiences and whose role becomes crucial in conferring meaning, appropriateness and viability to the new entities, in finding a place for them in society's pre-established, conventions, conformities, norms or, in a nutshell, legitimacy.

2.3.3. New market categories and entrepreneurship: the central role of legitimacy

Entrepreneurial ventures require legitimacy to succeed, and categories can grant this valuable resource (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994). Even though entrepreneurs put a lot of effort into seeking success and gaining a legitimate place in the market (Haveman et al., 2007), that may not be enough as there may be cases where the establishment of new market categories can flop if they do not gain legitimacy (Navis & Glynn, 2010), cultural recognition (Wry et al., 2011) or understanding from the consumers or investors they seek to influence (Dowd, 2003). Legitimacy, thus, is a precondition of survival.

According to Suchman (1995, p. 574), legitimacy originates from the perception that a venture is "desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions." Moreover, it is often achieved through isomorphism, in other words, conformity to institutionalised preferences (Deephouse, 1996), which means that entrepreneurial ventures must face established constraints (Rindova et al., 2009). However, this conformity is the opposite of entrepreneurship's true nature, which is more associated with novelty, distinctiveness, and nonconformity (Navis & Glynn, 2011). Entrepreneurship legitimacy must then coexist with its contradiction and imply a sort of interchange between entrepreneurs' emancipating aspects and the accommodation of constraints needed to acquire resources (Rindova et al., 2009). A legitimately distinctive entrepreneurial identity has paradoxical features as it embeds both conformity and deviation – circumscribing identity elements that are contradictory or oppositional (Navis & Glynn, 2011).

The appearance of new markets, in other words, "business environments in an early stage of formation" (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009, p. 644), brings along new opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures which, despite their attraction, imply great uncertainty, as technologies, products, or processes are experimental and only partly understood (Tushman &

Anderson, 1986), and product definitions are unclear or unknown (Hargadon & Douglas, 2001). The nascent category is characteristically ambiguous or ill-structured (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005). Further, this uncertainty becomes more condensed when the new market space's entrepreneurial firms are also new (Navis & Glynn, 2010). Because new ventures are often incompletely formed, deficient in resources, and lacking clear or coherent identities, the achievement of legitimacy can be a particularly critical challenge for new ventures operating in new market categories (Navis & Glynn, 2010). Reflecting this in an SE context, SE's category could be an essential resource for new organisations to anchor their identity claims, especially new ventures.

The legitimation of a new category results from the interaction of actors internal to the category, i.e., the strategic and symbolic actions of entrepreneurial organisations, and actors external to the category, i.e., the interested audiences who judge its feasibility, credibility, and appropriateness (Navis & Glynn, 2010). Moreover, a new category exists when two or more products or services are perceived to be of the same type or close substitutes for each other in satisfying market demand. The organisations that produce or supply these related products or services are grouped as members of the same category (Navis & Glynn, 2010). However, although all members share the category's collective identity, not all members are equivalent. Such collective and organisational identities lend meaning to a category. They also pose an identity challenge: member organisations need to navigate their shared sameness with other category members and their distinctiveness (Navis & Glynn, 2010). Resolving the dilemma of sameness and identity difference becomes critical because identities are consequential for legitimacy (Glynn & Abzug 2002; Navis & Glynn, 2011).

Besides sameness and distinctiveness, the construction of legitimacy also requires cognitive and socio-political processes. Cognitive legitimation comes from the spread of knowledge about a new venture, while socio-political legitimation is the extent to which key stakeholders, the general public, key opinion leaders, or governmental officials accept a venture as appropriate and right, given existing norms and laws (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994). The first may be assessed by measuring the level of public knowledge about a new activity – the highest form of cognitive legitimation is achieved when a new product, process, or service is taken for granted. In contrast, the second may be measured by assessing the public’s acceptance of the industry, government subsidies to the industry, or its leaders' public prestige (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994).

In the case of SE, however, the processes that led to establishing it as a legitimate category are not deeply understood. In this context, a historical examination of the evolution of the category, as portrayed by several stakeholders, can identify these formation processes. This is the focus of our analysis.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Data collection

To make a historical analysis, that is, to establish when, how, and by whom the SE category was formed, we compiled data from several publicly available sources: the scientific community, analysts, governmental organisations, international organisations, and other interested audiences. The rationale for searching for a wide range of stakeholders and not merely concentrating, for example, on the scientific community's contribution, was related to the scope of our two research questions. Since the literature on how categories are formed and stakeholders grant legitimacy advocates there must be an analysis of how "external audiences" (comprising a vast panoply of societal agents, actors, stakeholders) judge their feasibility, viability and ultimately confer legitimacy, hence, playing different roles in the formation of the category and granting various types of legitimacy, we followed a strategy of searching and compiling the most heterogeneous range of external audiences possible from different quadrants of society. The aim was to qualitatively observe, analyse their content and subsequently extract the most relevant material that would support us in deducing how each of these would surface, define, describe and confer legitimacy to a new phenomenon – the SE and its constituent entities –, and consequently, the formation of the SE as a legitimate category.

The initial source we used was Sundararajan's (2016) book "The Sharing Economy: The end of employment and the rise of crowd-based capitalism." This source is relevant because the author reveals some possible historical roots that lead to today's SE. From this specific source, we then progressively searched for other publicly available sources by searching various online platforms, such as Google, Google Scholar, Research Gate, Scopus and Web of Science using the keyword "sharing economy" and other equivalent expressions such as "collaborative economy," "collaborative consumption," "access-based consumption," "connected consumption," "peer-to-peer," "sharing paradigm," "crowdsourcing" or "sharing business." At the end of this process, we ended up with a collection of contributions (corresponding to a gross total of 32 sources and 2433 pages read) from diverse stakeholders, such as the scientific community (with 81% of analytical importance) – Benkler, 2002, 2004; Bauwens, 2005;

Lessig, 2007/2008; Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Gansky, 2010; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Owyang, 2013; Belk, 2014; Dubois et al., 2014; Schor, 2014, 2015; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015; Schor et al., 2014; Frenken et al., 2015; Meelen & Frenken, 2015; Hamari et al., 2015; Chase, 2015; McLaren & Agyeman, 2015; Sundararajan, 2016; Stone, 2016; Muñoz & Cohen, 2017; Frenken & Schor, 2017; Habibi et al., 2017; Constantiou et al., 2017; Ryu et al., 2018; and Curtis & Lehner, 2019 –; analysts (6% of analytical importance) – Swawell & Issa, 2015; PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers consulting), 2015 –; governmental organizations (3% of analytical importance) – FTC (Federal Trade Commission), 2015a, 2015b, 2015c –; international organizations and organisms (6% of analytical importance) – OECD (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), 2015a, 2015b; European Commission, 2016 –; and other interested audiences (3% of analytical importance) – Oxford Dictionary, 2015.

We started by distilling and depicting 28 key ideas and conceptualisations of the SE and related labels, chronologically ordered, to grasp how the meaning evolved. Although this time-based ordering is essential to our analysis, we are aware that publication dates do not correspond precisely to the time of the authors' thought. Moreover, close dates can largely overlap, inhibiting the detection of a clear shift in evolution. Despite these limitations, we believe that a chronological display is the best approach to answer how the SE as a category has been formed and evolved. This timeline also enabled us to become aware of the approximate moment in which different stakeholders played an important role, from the beginning of using the SE term until its institutionalisation in commonly accepted language, a momentous event represented by its inclusion in the Oxford Dictionary in 2015. This analysis also enabled us to list the SE related terms, or competitive labels, like collaborative consumption, access-based consumption, or connected consumption.

3.2. Data analysis and interpretation

Once the timeline was established and considering that the study's primary purpose was to analyse the process underlying the formation of a new category, we interpreted all definitions and related meaning provided by authors. We fine-tuned our interpretation by reading the entire documents and searching for complementary meanings to contextualize the SE formation. In essence, we applied a qualitative method in which we observed, content analysed, and subsequently, extracted relevant material from the data reported in the documents, and the literature that would resonate as describing the various category formation processes we had previously identified in the contextual scientific literature about how categories are formed and legitimacy is granted. Thus, in attaching meaning to SE, we used several theoretical sources, namely Durand and Khaire's (2017) distinction between category formation by creation or emergence; the dominant processes of emergence of social-movement or similarity clustering as suggested by Wheaton and Carroll (2017); Rhee et al.'s (2017) influence of authority and agreement between actors, generating the processes of proof, consensus, fiat and truce; Navis and Glynn's (2010) legitimacy granting processes of sameness or close substitution and distinctiveness; and Aldrich and Fiol's (1994) cognitive and sociopolitical approach. In searching for evidence about these different processes describing category formation, we attempted to identify an evolution pattern in which different actors and different processes played distinct roles in forming the SE category. Finally, we used Rosch's (1978, 1977) and Mervis and Rosch's (1981) prototype and Lakoff's (1987), Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) metaphorical approaches to categories in an attempt to grasp the type of the SE as a nascent category.

4. Results

The gross overall results (Table 1) demonstrate that it can be traced to a timeline ranging from 2002 to 2019. Moreover, we identify a pattern in the evolution of the conceptualisation of the SE with some fundamental cornerstones. The first of these is in 2002, the first time someone broached the theme in the Era of the Internet (Benkler's (2002) contribution with the introduction of the concept "commons-based peer production"). The second one occurs in 2014, when there was a rise of multiple SE practices together with the first substantial discussions on the SE (represented by Belk's (2014) contribution in criticising Botsman and Rogers's (2010) book "What's mine is yours: The rise of the Collaborative Consumption"). We may dissect this second cornerstone into one sub-cornerstone: in 2015, which we believe to be the beginning of intense debate around the regulation of the SE, represented by Swawell and Issa's (2017) launch of The Congressional Sharing Economy Caucus. We identify the third cornerstone in 2017, which benchmarks a new phase (ranging from 2017 to 2019) characterised by an unprecedented number of scientific articles on the SE, whose main common trends of thinking were around finding a settling discourse around the SE (some examples are Muñoz & Cohen, 2017; Frenken & Schor, 2017; Ryu et al., 2018; and Curtis & Lehner, 2019).

Although these cornerstones are indicative, in the sense that they do not mean to represent specific dates, they are informative in supporting an attempt to identify phases in the processes of the formation of the SE. Moreover, the phases we identify are not entirely discrete, in the sense that the same processes can operate in different stages but with different emphases.

Table 1 – Gross overall results – key ideas, chronologically ordered, from different actors in establishing the SE as a legitimate category.

Date/Actor	Key ideas	Main category formation processes
2002/Benkler	Introduction of the concept *commons-based peer production*: "It is a socio-economic system of production that is emerging in the digitally networked environment." (Benkler, 2002).	• **Formation**: mainly emergence, including new organizations, new products, new enabling technologies and new consumer motives (non-ownership and collaborative aims); some evidence of creation. • **Dominant process:** a social movement in its early stages, described as having transformative power toward an alternative world. • **Authority/agreement**: the absence of both authority influence and agreement regarding the category. • **Legitimacy**: early signs of the cognitive factor. • **Type of category**: identification of possible category label and members, but in early stages. • **Key actors**: academics and analysts voicing a new possibility.
2004/Benkler	Publication of an essay *Sharing Nicely: On Shareable Goods and the Emergence of Sharing as a Modality of Economic Production* – Introduction of a discussion about a new emergent economic practice, "modality of economic production". The author uses the word "sharing" as means to describe it (Benkler, 2004).	
2005/Bauwens	Publication of an essay *The Political Economy of Peer Production* – Introduction of concept *peer to peer (P2P)*: "As political, economic, and social systems transform themselves into distributed networks, a new human dynamic is emerging: P2P" (Bauwens, 2005).	
2007/2008/Lessig	Introduction of the term *Sharing Economy (SE)*: "The Internet exploded a sharing economy with things like Wikipedia where people are doing work that creates a lot of value, not for money but just because it's their hobby. We've seen a pattern of hybrid companies like this trying to figure out ways to leverage that for a profit" (Lessig, cited in New York Times, 2007).	
2010/Botsman & Rogers	Introduction of the term *collaborative consumption (CC)*: "Hyper consumption is defined by ownership, collaborative consumption by shared access" (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).	
2010/Gansky	Introduction of the term *Mesh*: "The Mesh is a type of network that allows any node to link in any direction with any other node in the system" (Gansky, 2010).	
2012/Bardhi & Eckhardt	Introduction of the expression *access-based consumption:* "Transactions that can be market mediated but where no transfer of ownership takes place and differ from both ownership and sharing" (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012).	
2013/Owyang	Introduction of the concept *Collaborative Economy (CE)*: "An economic model where commonly available technologies enable people to get what they need from each other" (Owyang, 2013).	

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2014/Belk	The author criticizes Botsman's & Rogers' approach by defining *CC* as "people coordinating the acquisition and distribution of a resource for a fee or other compensation" (Belk, 2014).	• **Formation**: emergence remains the main process; evidence of creation exists but is residual. • **Dominant process**: social activists establish the idea of a possible better world, more collaborative and, based on internet, able to exploit underutilized resources; scholars start efforts to refine the concept, which signals the beginning of the similarity-clustering operation. • **Authority/Agreement**: the absence of authority to establish the category and agreement about its nature becomes clear, thus giving rise to the truce process. • **Legitimacy**: cognitive, distinctiveness, and sameness factors are clear; evidence of lack of socio-political legitimacy. • **Type of category**: reduced ambiguity of both label and category content leads to signs of fragmented radial construction. • **Key actors**: scholars start attempting to refine the concept; official agencies recognize ambiguity inherent to this novelty; both actors recognize the ambiguity of the concept, but the convergence toward the label starts.
2014/2015/Dubois et al. (2014); Schor (2014, 2015); Schor & Fitzmaurice (2015); Schor et al. (2014)	Introduction of the expression *connected consumption*: "Digitally connected economic activities including the following possible categories: recirculation of goods; increased utilization of durable assets; exchange of services; sharing of productive assets; and building of social connections" (Dubois et al., 2014; Schor, 2014, 2015; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015; Schor et al., 2014).	
2015/Oxford Dictionary	Definition of *SE*: "An economic system in which assets or services are shared between private individuals, either for free or for a fee, typically by means of the Internet" (cited in Liftshare, 2015).	
2015/Frenken et al.; Meelen & Frenken	Definition of *SE:* "Consumers (or firms) granting each other temporary access to their under-utilized physical assets ("idle capacity"), possibly for money" (Frenken et al., 2015; Meelen & Frenken, 2015).	
2015/Hamari et al.	Definition of *CC:* "It's "a peer-to-peer-based activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services, coordinated through community-based online services" (Hamari et al., 2015).	
2015/Chase	Definition of *CE*: "Enabled by new technology, a revolution is taking place inside capitalism as we reimagine the role of consumers, producers, and even ownership (…) What distinguishes these activities is that platforms connect, organize, aggregate, and empower the participating peers" (Chase, 2015).	
2015/McLaren & Agyeman	A new *sharing paradigm*: "a new sharing paradigm, which goes beyond the faddish sharing economy – seen in ventures as Uber and TaskRabbit – to envision models of sharing that are not always commercial but also communal, encouraging trust and collaboration" (McLaren & Agyeman, 2015).	
2015/Swawell & Issa	Definition of *SE*: "Americans increasingly rely on the sorts of innovative services the Internet has made possible – services that bring Americans together while providing a new measure of convenience by providing opportunities to conduct business in more efficient ways" (Swawell & Issa, 2015).	
2015/FTC (Federal Trade Commission)	Definition of *SE*: "P2P platforms, which enable suppliers and consumers to connect and do business, have led to the emergence of new business models in industries that have been subject to regulation" (FTC, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c).	
2015/OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development)	Definition of *SE*: "a variety of online platforms specialized in matching demand and supply in specific markets, enabling peer-to-peer (P2P) sales and rentals" (OECD, 2015a, 2015b).	
2015/PwC (Pricewaterhouse Coopers)	Definition of *SE*: "An emergent ecosystem that is upending mature business models across the globe". It allows individuals and groups to make money from underused assets (PwC, 2015).	
2016/Sundararajan	Definition of *SE* or as the author calls *crowd-based capitalism*: It's a transaction "in which you are not helping a friend for free but rather providing SE services to a stranger for money" (Sundararajan, 2016).	
2016/Stone	Definition of *SE* or as the author calls *Trust Economy*: "Airbnb and Uber didn't spawn the *sharing economy*, the *on-demand economy*, or the *one-tap economy* so much as usher in a new trust economy, helping regular folks to negotiate transportation and accommodations in the age of ubiquitous internet access" (Stone, 2016).	
2016/EC (European Commission)	Definition of *SE*: "There is no consensual definition, and the overwhelming majority of the available definitions are 'ostensive' rather than 'intentional'" (EC, 2016).	

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2017/Muñoz & Cohen	Definition of *SE*: There are "seven distinct dimensions of sharing business models. 1) platforms for collaboration 2) under-utilized resources, 3) peer-to-peer interactions, 4) collaborative governance, 5) mission driven, 6) alternative funding, and 7) technology reliance" (Muñoz & Cohen, 2017).	• **Formation**: the emergence establishes as the main formation process; evidence of creation almost disappears. • **Dominant process**: the social movement loses strength, although the idea of a better world remains, often implicitly; the similarity-clustering process becomes the main emergence process. • **Authority**: the absence of authority to establish the category and agreement about its nature continues and the truce process is established. • **Legitimacy**: cognitive, distinctiveness, and sameness factors continue to operate; evidence of lack of socio-political legitimacy is becoming weaker. • **Type of category**: a radial category is established, with the establishment of more central elements and conventions for other memberships. • **Key actors**: scientific community continues to elaborate the concept, reaching the phase of widespread empirical research; other key actors are playing secondary roles.
2017/Frenken & Schor	Definition of *SE*: "Consumers granting each other temporary access to under-utilized physical assets ("idle capacity"), possibly for money" (Frenken & Schor, 2017).	
2017/Habibi et al.	Definition of *SE*: It "has grown to become an umbrella term for a wide range of nonownership forms of consumption activities such as swapping, bartering, trading, renting, sharing, and exchanging (…) we argue that each practice is a hybrid of sharing and exchange, and provides several recommendations based on the nature of each practice's offering (…)" (Habibi et al., 2017).	
2017/Constantiou et al.	Definition of *SE*: "platforms combine organizational and market mechanisms in innovative ways to gain competitive advantages over incumbents. These mechanisms are combined on two key dimensions: tight or loose control over participants, and high or low rivalry between participants. We call the resulting four sharing economy models Franchiser, Principal, Chaperone and Gardener" (Constantiou et al., 2017).	
2018/Ryu et al.	Definition of *SE*: "With th3e advance of ICT, the realm of sharing has expanded drastically, which has led to the evolution of the 'sharing paradigm'. In spite of the increasing attention on the new sharing phenomenon and its potential contribution to a sustainable and resilient society, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of varied sharing practices in the context of sustainability and resilience. The sharing of manufactured goods and accommodations, and access-based sharing with monetary compensation via intermediaries such as online platforms are predominant" (Ryu et al., 2018).	
2019/Curtis & Lehner	Definition of *SE*: It "has emerged as a phenomenon widely described by academic literature to promote more sustainable consumption practices such as access over ownership. We propose the following characteristics, or semantic properties, of the SE for sustainability: ICT-mediated, non-pecuniary motivation for ownership, temporary access, rivalrous and tangible goods. If we, as academics, fail to be critical of the SE and its current implementation due to continued semantic confusion, we suggest the sustainability potential of the SE may never be realized." (Curtis & Lehner, 2019).	

Source: own elaboration.

Phase 1. The revelation: activists disclose the possibility of a better world

The very first overall observation derived from our analysis is the identification of clear main phases in the formation and evolution of the SE as a category. Although we can extend it until 2016, the 1st main phase is mainly concentrated between 2002 and 2013. This phase can be named the "Revelation". Key actors are mostly 'general analysts' and some academics like Lessig (2008) (in 2007/2008) and Benkler (2002, 2004) (in 2002, 2004), who seek to make sense of a new phenomenon, even though not based on empirical studies, and are concerned about suggesting a name for it. Because they are in the very early stages of a new phenomenon, there is no consensus about the label and the aspects of the situation covered. For instance, Benkler (2002) (in 2002) and Bauwens (2006) (in 2005) use different labels (commons-base peer production and peer to peer production, respectively) to describe a similar novel economic system in which people can exchange outside the common capitalist system. It is, at the same time, the reconnaissance of a new reality, but also a suggestion of an alternative better future, in which people can share resources and experiences to their advantage, sometimes without searching to maximise individual profits, as noted by Lessig (2008) (in 2007/2008), the author to whom the SE label is attributed. Labels can become subcategories of broader overarching categories, like the suggestion of the "collaborative economy," a new economic model that can include the newly popularised term "shared economy," as pointed out by Owyang (2017) (in 2013). Illustrative quotes are:

"It is a socio-economic system of production that is emerging in the digitally networked environment. Facilitated by the technical infrastructure of the Internet, the hallmark of this socio-technical system is a collaboration among large groups of individuals, sometimes in the order of tens or even hundreds of thousands, who cooperate effectively to provide information, knowledge, or cultural goods without relying on either market pricing or managerial hierarchies to coordinate their common enterprise (…) examples: GNU/Linux operating system, the Apache webserver, Perl and BIND (…) SETI (…) Clickworkers (…) Wikipedia (…) Slashdot (…) Kuro5hin (…) Open Directory Project“ (Benkler & Nissenbaum, 2006, pp. 394–400); and "As political, economic, and social systems transform themselves into distributed networks, a new human dynamic is emerging: P2P". This new dynamic is giving rise to "a third mode of production, a third mode of governance, and a third mode of property" and, ultimately, "it is poised to overhaul our political economy in unprecedented ways" (Bauwens, 2006, p. 33).

This new world is made possible by the Internet 2.0, a technology that enables evolution to a more tied global community (Botsman and Rogers (2010) – in 2010), and opening new exchange possibilities including business, as highlighted by Gansky (2010) (in 2010). In this new world, classical external constraints like advertising, market price, or managerial hierarchies can now be replaced by active consumers pursuing their motivations. Consumption and ownership can be separated in people who do not define themselves by their possessions but by the possibility to share access to consumption. Variously labelled, this new reality encompasses a vast array of elements, such as individual consumers, hybrid companies, entire economic systems, or peer-to-peer projects.

Phase 2. Clairvoyance: scientific community searches for clarification while official organisations seek peace

Some proposals made by authors included in the "Revelation" phase faced serious challenges from new actors. Therefore, a new (2nd) main phase took place, named the "Clairvoyance" phase. Although there are exact overlaps in terms of dates, we believe that significant events from 2014 to 2016 represent a qualitative shift in SE formation. Two key actors, each owning its power base, played critical complementary roles in this move: scholars attempted to discuss and refine the concept. At the same time, official agencies recognised the ambiguities but assumed the label. Contributions made by Schor (2015) (in 2014), Schor and Fitzmaurice (2015) (in 2015), and Schor et al. (2014) (in 2014) are good examples of the conceptual refinement process initiated during this period. An illustrative quote is:

"Digitally connected economic activities including the following possible categories: recirculation of goods (i.e., Craigslist, eBay); increased utilisation of durable assets (i.e., Zipcar, Relay Rides, Uber, CouchSurfing, Airbnb); exchange of services (i.e., Time banking, TaskRabbit, Zaarly); sharing of productive assets; and building of social connections (i.e., Mama Bake, Soup Sharing, and EatWithMe)". The critical distinguishing elements are: "a) the ability of facilitating exchange among strangers rather than among kin or within community; b) the strong reliance on technology that may also favor offline activities; and c) the participation of high cultural capital consumers rather than being limited to a survival mechanisms among the most disadvantaged (as was mostly the case for older forms of sharing and collaborative consumption), as it remains for some socially oriented current not for profit initiatives" (Dubois et al., Schor, Schor & Fitzmaurice, and Schor et al. cited in EC, 2017, p. 6).

Schor (2015) (in 2014) not only questions the motivations of people involved in SE activities but also raises a vital categorisation question when stating that most commercial platforms included do not belong there. In line with the process of category meaning refinement, authors engage in the discussion of what types of activities and organisations should be included, such as those that re-circulate goods that increase the use of durable assets, as well as the critical dimensions that can be used as bases for other classificatory activities, like the ability to facilitate exchange among strangers or the participation of high cultural capital consumers. Frenken et al.'s (2015) (in 2015) and Meelen and Frenken's (2015) (in 2015) definition, although shorter, also entails the effort to identify critical defining elements, despite the purpose underlying the exchange activity, namely for profit or not. The search for good examples of what the SE is, is a core element characterising this phase. It seems that the label is being widely shared, but the discussion about the features remains.

This "Clairvoyance" phase includes a specific feature: the rise of controversy and debate on regulation and how far the SE is real sharing. This dispute involves the role of official agencies in stabilising the label, despite recognising several ambiguities regarding its elements and criteria for inclusion. Concerned about competition, consumer protection, and other economic issues raised by the SE, in 2015, the US Federal Trade Commission (2015a, 2015b, 2015c) refers to "P2P platforms which enable suppliers and consumers to connect and to do business, have led to the emergence of new business models and industries that have been subject to regulation". In the same year, the OECD (2015a, 2015b) does not present a specific definition but refers to "a variety of online platforms specialised in matching demand and supply in specific markets, enabling peer-to-peer sales and rentals." The label seems to be assumed. Still, the inclusion requirements are left open enough to avoid entering into the discussion. During the same period, the European Commission (2016) (in 2016) issued a comprehensive report, based on a review recognising that there are "ambiguous answers to some of the fundamental questions about the sharing economy," and that the field requires policy attention, especially regarding regulatory, consumer protection, and unfair competition issues. Illustrative quotes are:

"No single label can neatly encapsulate the movement, as for some the word ´sharing´ was a misnomer, a savvy-but-disingenuous spin on an industry they felt was more about economic opportunism than altruism, while for others, more appropriate titles included the Trust Economy, Collaborative Consumption, the On-Demand or Peer-to-Peer Economy" (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2015, p. 14); "Together, these companies have come to embody a new business code that has forced local governments to question their faithfulness to the regulatory regimes of the past" (Stone, 2016, p. 10); and "there still are ambiguous answers to some of the fundamental questions about the 'sharing economy' (…) (a) there is no consensual definition and (b) the overwhelming majority of the available definitions are 'ostensive' rather than 'intentional'" (EC, 2016, pp. 3–7).

The result of this convergence process can be observed in SE entering the Oxford Dictionary (Liftshare, 2015) (in 2015), according to which SE refers to "an economic system in which assets or services are shared between private individuals, either for free or for a fee, typically by means of the Internet." As happened, for example, with the OECD approach, the label is coined. Still, the definition is left open enough to accommodate great variability regarding the category's members and their motives.

It should be noted that some key ideas included in the "Revelation" phase can also be observed in the "Clairvoyance" phase. Several authors issue books calling people's attention to a new world being constructed. This is the case of McLaren and Agyeman's (2015) (in 2015) propositions of a new, broader and more inclusive framing for the SE, named "sharing paradigm," Sundararajan's (2016) (in 2016) book about the end of employment and the rise of crowd-based capitalism, and Stone's (2016) (in 2016) book about how Uber, Airbnb, and killer companies of the New Silicon Valley are changing the world.

Phase 3. Knowledge proliferation: scientific community takes over and sharing economy becomes a research object

In our view, the period from 2017 to 2019 also represents a clear shift in the SE formation – a new 3rd main phase. In this phase, we see the SE label being globally adopted, and original proponents of related terms as labels for a new world losing prominence, the same happening with official agencies, and a straightforward take over from academia. We call this the "Knowledge Proliferation phase." An illustrative quote is:

"Sharing of resources, goods, services, experiences, and knowledge is one of the fundamental practices that has been widely embedded in human nature. With the advance of information and communication technology, the realm of sharing has expanded drastically, which has led to the evolution of the 'sharing paradigm.' Despite the increasing attention on the new sharing phenomenon and its potential contribution to a sustainable and resilient society, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of varied sharing practices in the context of sustainability and resilience. This study maps out the academic landscape of sharing and examines what and how we share by a systematic literature review. We discuss research gaps in sharing paradigm studies and the potential contribution of sharing in building sustainable and resilient societies. Our results show regional and sectoral imbalances in the sharing studies. The findings also illustrate that sharing manufactured goods and accommodations and access-based sharing with monetary compensation via intermediaries such as online platforms are predominant. Our evaluation provides a bird's-eye view of existing sharing studies and practices, enabling the discovery of new opportunities for sustainable and resilient societies. Beyond sharing businesses, we need to have a closer look at how our nature of sharing is linked to sustainability and resilience of our societies" (Ryu et al., 2018, p. 515).

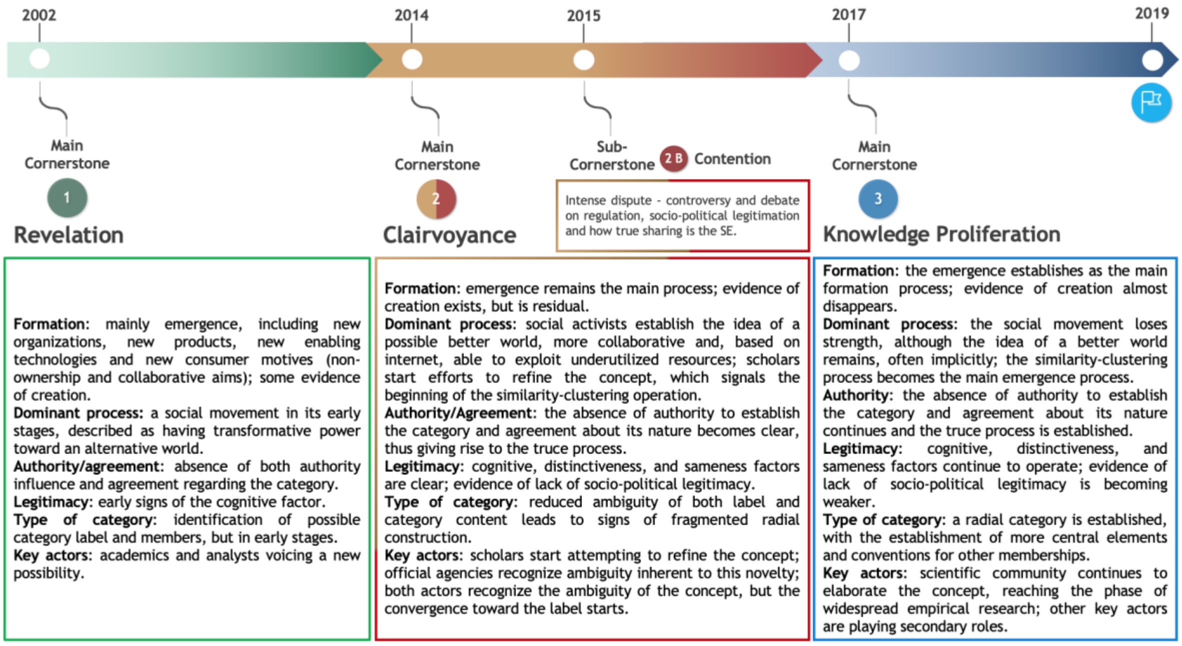
In 2017, Muñoz and Cohen (2017) published a paper mapping out the SE with special attention to existing business models. Frenken and Schor (2017) (in 2017) provided an overview of the concept, refining its nature, and also discussing future possibilities. Other scientific articles progressively came to light, their main focus being to contribute to settling the discourse around the SE, particularly (i) identifying and arranging its main activities, practices, and businesses, (ii) explaining its implications, impacts and effects, and (iii) bringing the theme into the sustainability field. Examples of this trend are Habibi, et al. (2017) (in 2017); Constantiou, et al. (2017) (in 2017); Ryu, et al. (2018) (in 2018); Curtis and Lehner (2019) (in 2019). Today, academia is mostly focused on contributing to further theoretical and empirical refinement of the current literature. The profusion of research has led to comprehensive review work, such as that of Laurenti et al. (2019) (in 2019).

5. Discussion

This research's overriding goal was to investigate how the SE was formed and evolved as a legitimate category. Our analysis reveals a sequential category construction process involving three phases: the revelation, clairvoyance, and knowledge proliferation. Initiated as a social movement with a subsequent take over by a similarity clustering process, with different actors playing distinct roles with rapid adoption and institutionalisation by official entities and fast integration by the academic community as a new subject that deserves attention, all this despite the lack of consensus between actors and the questionable awareness of the category by the members themselves and the general public. Key actors are aware of the ambiguity around membership of the SE, but this possible divide did not prevent the label's widespread use. As a category, the SE is performing the essential functions of these fundamental cognitive devices: it allows humans to deal with the vast diversity of initiatives, events, and ideas that characterise this new phenomenon, thus assuring basic collective sense-making and communication functions while maintaining enough cognitive flexibility to accommodate novelty and not prevent development (Rosch, 1978; Rosch 1977; Mervis & Rosch, 1981; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As a category in formation, the SE is a unique cognitive framework guiding how different stakeholders evaluate new organisations and their products, determines expectations regarding organisational actions, and enables both material and symbolic exchanges (Durand & Paolella, 2013).

In the first instance, regarding how the SE has been forming and evolving as a category through time, we note a timeline ranging from 2002 to 2019. We suggest that this evolution may be split into three distinct main phases representing different formation processes. Figure 2 summarises our proposition.

Figure 2 – Timeline evolution of the formation of the SE as a category.



Source: own elaboration.

The 1st main phase – Revelation- is the primordial period of conceptualisation and cognition. It is a phase mainly characterised as being full of significant dazzle, appeal and fascination, revealing that we were in the presence of a new phenomenon disrupting the preceding status-quo as if announcing the solution to heal the world and turn it into a fairer, wiser, equable, rational, well-balanced and more sustainable one – a solution defending the interests of what Lindenberg and Foss (2011) call a “supra-individual entity” with collectivistic, normative and altruistic concerns towards more communal causes; in other words, a solution goal-orientated around the “We,” “a collective self, oriented toward acting appropriately in an exemplary fashion in terms of what is good for the collective goals” (Lindenberg & Foss, 2011, p. 505).

This phase's critical formation process is emergence, although some signs of creation are present (Durand & Khaire, 2017). This emergence of a new reality was led by activists, indicating a social movement process (Wheaton & Carroll, 2017). At a very early stage, no actor emerged as having the authority to impose the category. The lack of consensus among actors regarding both the label and the content was evident, paving the way for future truce processes (Rhee et al., 2017).

The 2nd main phase, clairvoyance, represents a clear shift in the formation of the SE. This is a period where there is a consolidation of cognition penetration and diffusion into society. It is a phase mainly characterised and benchmarked by the emergence of critical discussion in questioning SE’s true nature and identifying various prototypical activities. It is a more sceptical, less glamorous, and more grounded phase as if the announced solution to heal the world was a mere illusion and some analysts and scholars began to come to terms with the harsh reality, becoming more discerned, and realising that this new SE disruptive paradigm had brought with it many more layers, rather than just being a noble service of a supra-individual entity. The SE seems to be a mere pretext for a vast spectrum of individualistic and opportunistic stakeholders (i.e., incumbents, start-ups, various types of businesses, customers, etc.) to come into play and gain benefits from their involvement (selfish exploitation of an opportunity without any kind of collectivist concerns about contributing to others’ welfare and participating in something that is for the good of society and the community as a whole). The various agents, particularly businesses and customers/users, participate in the SE because their goal orientation is around the I, either with hedonic or gain purposes discarding normative or collective-oriented motivations (Lindenberg & Foss, 2011).

This second phase includes contention elements, representing controversy and debate on regulation and socio-political legitimation and how real SE sharing is. In this phase, we notice the increase in the number of stakeholders involved in the discussion, mainly with official organisations entering the scene and activists and scholars. Altogether, the clairvoyance phase represents a period dominated by a debate on the content, but the SE label tends to stabilise. The critical formation process is emergence (Durand & Khaire, 2017), with the social movement explanation starting to lose its prominent role, as happened in the revelation phase, due to the arrival of more academic scrutiny, indicating a shift to a similarity-clustering process (Rhee et al., 2017). In the absence of authority from specific key actors to impose the category and the presence of profound disagreement about the nature of the category, the truce process (Rhee et al., 2017) enables the accommodation of ambiguity without preventing development.

The 3rd main phase, knowledge proliferation, is mainly characterised by a high number of scientific articles, whose primary focus is to help settle the discourse around the SE, particularly identifying and arranging its main activities, practices and businesses. This is the effect of the scientific community’s predominant role. In this phase, the SE becomes a research object, and activists and official agencies become secondary players in understanding and communicating what the SE is. The primary category formation process is emergence (Durand & Khaire, 2017), and perhaps due to the prominent role of researchers, evidence of creation is now absent. Thus, similarity clustering becomes the dominant process of emergence. As observed in the clairvoyance phase, the truce process allows key actors to continue to talk about the SE, although the lack of consensus regarding the meaning and content of this new trend remains evident.

Complementarily, we foresee the possibility of forming a new phase that may currently be under construction (from 2020 onwards) and may lead to further developments in clarifying and settling the whole contention discourse initiated in 2015.

Altogether, our analysis contributes to the existing literature on the formation of categories because the SE is a case that does not fall into just one, significantly narrowed process. Instead, we are in the presence of multiple processes of diverse natures that are intertwined, with each one being dominant in distinct phases.

Regarding whether the SE is a new legitimate category, we used the data to support the generalised legitimacy granted to the SE. Several products and services are perceived to be of the same type in satisfying market demand and grouped as members of that same category, thus meeting the sameness requirement for legitimacy (Navis & Glynn, 2010). On the other hand, not all members are equal within the category, corresponding to the distinctiveness requirement (Navis & Glynn, 2010). Signs of public knowledge of this new activity and its products and services abound (PwC, 2015), which supports the cognitive need for legitimacy (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994). The debate around the appropriateness of some organisations usually included in the SE, namely Uber, is far from closed, which is an indication that socio-political legitimation is currently under construction.

The SE's nature seems to fall into the metaphorical approach of how categories are structured, particularly the notion of radial categories (Lakoff, 1987; Galperin & Sorenson, 2014). These categories include central and less central members whose features cannot be inferred from the central ones' characteristics. Non-central elements' attributes have to be determined, usually metaphorically, by convention or institutionalised agreements between relevant actors. Thus, consistent with the truce process previously highlighted (Rhee et al., 2017), the SE gives us a cognitive infrastructure to understand this new reality as a radial category. Still, it does not prescribe limits for inclusion, which allows the extension and change of the category by a succeeding process of collective sense-making and entrepreneurship.

5.1. Limitations and future research directions

This study is not without limitations. First, the literature we used to map the evolution of the SE did not come from a systematic search of both academic and non-academic sources, limiting the scope of our analysis by leaving important constitutions out of the corpus. In addition, our findings do not reveal clear, finite, separated periods. We believe that the definite establishment of these milestone events will be impossible to ascertain. That is to say, as the SE's consolidation as a category shows signs of still being a continuous process of evolution, it is more than predictable that new milestone events may arise in its evolution. Finally, entrepreneurs of the several forms of SE projects were left out of the analysis, which lessens understanding of the category formation process. However, we suspect that in the early stages of category formation, with the characteristics we identify in the SE, the label itself is not a feature for those who are involved in launching new ventures. Indeed, this will not be the case when starting new ventures in well-established categories, such as private versus non-profit organisations. Entrepreneurs can claim category membership on which to base their organisations' identity.

In the same way, customers of several types of offers made by SE organisations were not analysed. The motivations underlying consumption decisions, especially when compared to substitutes from non-SE, could be subject to study. Besides addressing these issues, future research could shed light on the interaction processes by which different stakeholders craft a category based on a truce, considering that actors engage in reciprocal influence processes.

6. Conclusion

Keeping in mind our research questions – (RQ1) how the SE was formed and evolved as a category; and (RQ2), as a category, is the SE legitimate? – our findings reveal that the SE is arising (associated mainly with emergence formation processes, comprising social movement, similarity clustering, and truce components) as a new legitimate category, even though it still lacks a degree of socio-political legitimation.

Moreover, from a perspective of how categories are structured, our results reveal that the nature of the SE seems to fall into a metaphorical approach, particularly the notion of radial categories, where there is a growing truce in conventionally agreeing to use the metaphor "sharing economy" to refer to a wide range of apparently divergent, contradictory, paradoxical, opposite categories and subcategories. This is why we have been witnessing major, sometimes, inconclusive discussions, interpretations amongst diverse stakeholders about what the SE really is (how it should be addressed). This unsettled discourse has, therefore, been contributing to an increasing number of stakeholders interested in this discussion, as well as affecting and changing the way those stakeholders have been communicating with each other.

In short, this study offers an additional layer in making sense of the SE from a category formation standpoint. It highlights how the category of the SE was formed, evolved, and the legitimacy gained. It can serve as another vital benchmark in grasping the reasons for the impressive growth of the SE in recent years across the globe.

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CHAPTER 2

Entrepreneurial organisational identity in the Sharing Economy: an identity claims and legitimacy granting approach

Abstract

As an emergent phenomenon offering potential pathways towards more sustainable societies, the Sharing Economy has been established as a generic category representing multiple entrepreneurial ventures or Sharing Based Programs (SBPs). As new actors, to assure their viability, these SBPs must position themselves regarding, and obtain legitimacy from, other stakeholders, and the nature of this self-presentation strategy and legitimacy granting is mostly unknown. This paper aims to identify how SBPs claim their identities and the extent to which key stakeholders grant legitimacy to them. In seeking to attain this purpose, we content analysed how 40 SBPs organisations self-present to the world and the nature of legitimacy that 95 stakeholders grant to four SBPs prototypical organisations. Results reveal that SBPs self-proclaim to be part of a global social movement and act as social agents of change concerning contemporary high-priority matters: the widespread prevalence of information technologies; the desirability of empowering people; the social cohesion as a requirement in a globalised world; and sustainability as a precondition for a more auspicious world. External audiences, on the other hand, have generally been granting legitimacy to prototypical SBPs, through means of four natures of legitimation – sameness, distinctiveness, cognitive and socio-political, even though the latter one is still under construction.

Keywords: Sharing Economy; Identity Claims; Legitimacy Granting; SBPs; Prototypical Entrepreneurial Organisations; Stakeholders.

1. Introduction

The *Sharing Economy* (SE) has been having a significant boost and attracting great attention over the last few years from a wide variety of stakeholders. Along the process, it has been evaluated as (i) having massive potential for creating new businesses and services that may allocate value more fairly bringing people together in new ways (Schor, 2014), (ii) involving millions or even billions of participants and (iii) capitalising the existing assets while providing spillover effects in the economy. Broadly described as a peer-to-peer based sharing of access to goods and services that are facilitated by community-based online platforms, the SE is perceived as being an emerging economic model over the last years (Mi & Coffman, 2019). This arising model has progressively been proliferating across a panoply of sectors, most notably in transportation (e.g., *Zipcar* or *Drive Now*) and hospitality (e.g., *Airbnb*), but also other sectors such as *time*-based service exchange (e.g., *TimeBanks*) or share/rent space for coworking purposes (e.g., *Make: makerspaces*), activities named by Habibi et al. (2017) as *Sharing Based Programs* (SBPs).

The SE and its SBPs consubstantiate potential instruments to accomplish more sustainable societies, while contributing for positive environmental impacts byways of reducing the resources needed and helping lower pollutants and carbon emissions into the atmosphere (Mi & Coffman, 2019). The transportation sector is one of the most prominent examples: today's transportation SBPs activities have the potential to instigate an essential shift in consumer's behaviour), as it signifies a reduction in the total number of kilometres travelled, and with that, other SBPs, like bicycle sharing, contribute to the decrease in motorcycle vehicles that use fossil fuels, thus, reducing the emission of polluting gases, especially in cities.

In fact, SBPs are innovative proposals that take advantage of and are influenced by a context of technological evolution, growing individual self-determination and a more cohesive and sustainable globalized future. At the same time, they are actors actively involved in the creation of this social movement, creating part of the context that provided them with the material they used to conceive their value propositions. These are the actors who constitute what was signalled as a new possibility of operating in the economy, which was initially classified by dispersed members of the academy as being SE ones, more precisely what Cotrim, Nunes and Laurenti (2020) identified in the initial phase – the revelation period – of the formation process of the SE as a generic category, and which was followed by two phases – the clairvoyance and the knowledge proliferation periods –, in the conceptualization of the authors.

As emergent entities, the SBPs entrepreneurial organisations require legitimacy to operate in the market, which is granted by the external relevant audiences. To create viable and legitimate entrepreneurial ventures, these need to pass through two fundamental processes that go hand-in-hand: on the one hand, SBPs need to articulate a self-presentation content compatible with generally accepted practices and values, while, on the other hand, key stakeholders have to grant legitimacy to these organisations (Glynn, 2008). Due to the novelty of the SE, researchers call for the need to unpack and make sense of this inspiring and complex phenomenon (Mair & Reischauer, 2017), namely by providing a better understanding of how two central actors in this field, SBPs and external audiences, position themselves in this emerging category (Cotrim, Nunes & Laurenti, 2020). Hence, our guiding research questions are: how SBPs organisations portray themselves and express their identities to the world? And what is the nature of the legitimacy that is granted by external audiences to prototypical SBPs? Indeed, we believe that this would bring deeper layers for the understanding of how both SBPs and external audiences are enacting the SE as a legitimate economic model.

This article organises as follows. We begin by discussing the nature of the SE and sustainability potential of the SE and its SBPs, which is followed by a description of the role of identity claims and legitimacy granting as organisational identity establishment components. After describing the processes of data collection, we present our findings on (1) how SBPs organisations portray themselves and express their identities to the world, and (2) what is the nature of the legitimacy that is granted by external audiences to prototypical SBPs. After that, we discuss the study’s limitations and avenues for further research. Finally, under the conclusion section, we provide a summary of the main findings.

2. The Theoretical-Conceptual Framework

2.1. What is the SE

Often being an object of great controversy, due to the apparent misleading word of *sharing*, which may cognitively anchor in all of us the perception that we are in the presence of something that is of *pure sharing* (Habibi et al., 2017) and, thus, not having to do with any practice linked with exchange purposes (the SE has grown as a label to encapsulate a whole spectrum of social and economic practices, also referred as SBPs that may range from pure sharing ones to pure exchange ones, in a sharing-exchange continuum.

In the context of this diversity of activities, several attempts have been made to make sense of the SE. Zifkin (2015) refers to it as a relatively new phenomenon by way of technology standards, whereas Belk (2014) addresses it as a new movement born of the Internet age. Others, like Sundararajan (2016), see SE as social and economic praxis in which people are not helping a friend for free or reciprocity expectations, but rather providing SE services to a stranger for money. The use of the term SE itself is, believed to have its founding roots in Lessig's contribution, where he explained that "the Internet exploded a sharing economy with things like Wikipedia where people are doing work that creates a lot of value, not for money but just because it's their hobby" (Lessig in *The New York Times*, 2007). The phenomenon has brought the possibility for new commercial sharing services, entrepreneurial organisations (Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014) to arise and allow new ways for citizens to share resources in innovative and creative forms. Such new services have also brought with them the possibility for all of us to have access to already existing resources but in new unprecedented ways. It is thanks to services that are built on online platforms, such as Airbnb, Uber, Zipcar, Drive Now, Lyft, Turo Jump, or Lime that citizens can have broad access to rooms, taxi services, cars, scooters and bicycles.

In an attempt to further straighten and arrange possible activities that make the SE, Frenken and Schor (2017), differentiate SE service platforms from other three primary sorts of conventional more traditional social and economic platforms pre-dating the internet: (1) *second-hand economy* (consumers selling goods to each other); (2) *product-service economy* (renting goods from a company rather than from another consumer); and (3) *on-demand economy* (peer-to-peer service delivery instead of good peer-to-peer sharing). In an attempt to establish a more reliable definition of the SE, the European Commission (2016, pp. 6–7) referred to it as being a phenomenon encapsulating "'digitally connected' 5 economic activities including the following possible categories: recirculation of goods (i.e. Craigslist, eBay); increased utilisation of durable assets (i.e. Zipcar, Relay Rides, Uber, CouchSurfing, Airbnb); exchange of services (i.e. TimeBanks, TaskRabbit, Zaarly); sharing of productive assets; and building of social connections (i.e. Mama Bake, Soup Sharing, and EatWithMe)".

The SE has progressively been associated with sustainability. In this regard, Frenken (2017) argues that the environmental promise of sharing platforms is that consumers become much less reliant and dependent on individual/private ownership and, can have cheap and easy access to goods that are owned by other peer-consumers that otherwise would stand idle. Such a shift allows consumers not only to save money but also contribute to lower material demand and energy use. It is through this mean that the SE may be viewed, at least potentially, as contributing to a sustainability transition. Ertz and Leblanc-Proulx (2018) have also brought to light the recent and progressive attention given by scholars to the SE concerning an increasing coverage of sustainability-related topics. In the same vein, Curtis and Lehner (2019) have also stressed the enormous sustainable potential of SE business models, even though the market is mostly full by market-based exchanges (as opposed to pure sharing models). More, the links between the SE and sustainability were mapped by Plewnia and Guenther (2019). In short, SBPs can contribute to the more rational use of underutilised resources, to carbon-free emissions and, overall, to a more sustainable society. This desirable high-level goal can be interpreted in the context of the goal framing theory (Lindenberg, 2008; Lindenberg & Foss, 2011; Lindenberg & Steg, 2013). According to this approach, three overarching goals influence humans' motivations and cognitions: the hedonic goal, or the aim to improve how one feels right now; the gain goal, or the search to protect and improve one's resources; the normative goal, or the search for acting appropriately for the collective entities to which one belongs. The normative goal can be activated by external cues, engendering beliefs and behaviours favouring collective goods, sometimes sacrificing both the goal of improving how we feel and what we will gain. SBPs can represent agents of these desirable collective goods.

As emergent entities that may indeed contribute for a new desirable sustainable paradigm, the SBPs require, nevertheless, both to express their identity to locate them in their respective market and to be granted legitimacy from stakeholders, essential ingredients of organisational survival. Below, we expose the importance of identity claims and legitimacy granting as fundamental organisational identity establishment components.

2.2. Identity claims as an organisational identity establishment component

Globally, identity reflects how organisations describe themselves in terms of "who we are", "what we do" (Raffaelli, 2013), "what is the business are we in" and "what do we want to become" (Albert & Whetten, 1985, p. 265). These self-defining features shape how managers frame strategic issues and how they assess organisational capabilities and resources. More generally, identity enables stakeholders' assessment of the value of organisations and serves as a reference for the connection between stakeholders and the organisation. Thus, identity strongly influences organisational survival and performance (Glynn, Lockwood & Raffaelli, 2015).

Further, in finding their foundational features, organisations might resort to elements like the culture, the market position or the categories to which they belong. Because, ”at its core, organisational identity is about how a collective defines itself” (Pratt et al., 2016, p. 3), as a consequence of this self-referential reflective process, organisational identity can emerge and be established or change, as long as the organisational elements used for self-definition fulfil the three fundamental criteria of being central, distinctive and enduring (Albert & Whetten, 1985). SBPs need to articulate self-presentation content compatible with generally accepted practices and values.

Because it addresses the fundamental nature of organisations, organisational identity is considered the most intriguing and relevant concept we deal with both in our personal and organisational lives (Gioia, 2008). Consequently, the research about this topic has bourgeoning (Gioia et al., 2013; Pratt et al., 2016). As a concept grown from multiple theoretical traditions, the diversity of perspectives is considerable, what led some researchers to identify the underlying intellectual foundations or root metaphors for organisational identity (Cornelissen et al., 2016; Haslam et al., 2017). According to authors, three root metaphors or metatheories for this topic can be identified: framing, categorisation, and personification, representing, respectively, the social constructionist, the social identity, and the social actor theorising about organisational identity. The framing root metaphor describes organisational identity as a result of a collective process of construction of shared meanings about the organisation that serve as frames of reference for individual´s believes about the organisation. The categorisation root metaphor focuses on the effects of individuals' classification as members of one organisation and how this belonging influence individual's self-views and emotions. Of particular interest for this work is the personification root metaphor, a metatheory that sees organisational identity as an attribution of an actor status to an organisation, an entity who portraits a distinctive profile and legitimacy (Gioia et al., 2013; Pratt et al., 2016).

Essentially, the personification root metaphor taps the social view or organisational identity (Whetten & Mackey, 2002). This view suggests that identity is a global property of organisations acting as a sense-giving process for the sake of self-definition and action. As a social actor, organisations are required to be identified by a society that expects them to act in a self-directed and accountable way (King et al., 2010). As pointed by Scott (2003), organisation engage in "actions, utilise resources, enter into contracts, and own property" (p. 7), which points to a high level of anthropomorphising process (Ashforth et al., 2020) in line with the social actor view. Identity is viewed as an essential explanation for diverse individual and organisational level outcomes, like identification, reputation, or performance (Foreman et al., 2012). As social actors belonging to specific contexts, organisations express identity claims (Whetten, 2006), presenting themselves as legitimate entities, an essential requirement for becoming viable entities.

The embeddedness of organisations in specific context becomes an essential source of contents for the construction of one's organisation identity. The institutional context becomes a vital source of identity elements that organisations can use to self-defining processes while assuring legitimacy (Glynn, 2008). Although organisations are active in constructing their identities, the institutional context plays a fundamental role in shaping the limits and the content of the organisational identities (Besharov & Brickson, 2016). As pointed by Glynn (2008), organisations can use both local environments, like industry or geographical clusters, or more distal environments, like global trends or nations, to extract their central, distinctive and enduring self-defining elements. In the case of SBPs, we, however, don't know from what type of environments they draw those elements to construe their structural and functional identity attributes.

2.3. Legitimacy granting as an organisational identity establishment component

Besides initial identity construction, entrepreneurial ventures require legitimacy – an essential ingredient for the viability of business models, especially new ones. Legitimacy involves both entrepreneurial organisations and prospective resource providers, such as investors, analysts, customers, media, and other interested audiences, in the social construction of entire market categories and organisational identities (Navis & Glynn, 2010).

The legitimation of new market categories and organisational identities, complementarily, depends on specific key determinants (Navis & Glynn, 2010; Aldrich & Fiol, 1994): (i) Sameness (or Close substitution) – a new categorical, organisational identity exists when two or more products or services are perceived to be of the same type or close substitutes for each other in satisfying market demand; the organisations producing or supplying these related products or services group as members of the same category; (ii) Distinctiveness – although all members share the collective identity of the category, not all members are equivalent in the category. Such collective and organisational identities lend meaning to a category, but they also pose an identity challenge: member organisations need to navigate between their shared sameness with other category members and their distinctiveness from other members; (iii) Cognitive legitimation – relates to the spread of knowledge about a new venture, the level of public knowledge about a new activity (the highest form of cognitive legitimation is achieved when a new product, process, or service is taken for granted); (iv) Socio-political legitimation – relates to the process by which key stakeholders, actors external to the categorical, organisational identity (i.e. interested audiences) judge its feasibility, credibility and appropriateness. It generally involves the general public, key opinion leaders, or government officials who accept a venture as appropriate and right, given existing norms and laws (the public acceptance of industry, government subsidies to the industry, or the public prestige of its leaders).

In the case of the SE and having in mind the importance of both components of identity claims and legitimacy granting in the establishment of organisational identity, it still isn't, however, completely understood how SBPs organisations portray themselves and express their identities to the world, and what is the nature of the legitimacy that is granted by external audiences to prototypical SBPs, stakeholders to them. This is the focus of our analysis.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Data collection, analysis strategy and interpretation

SBPs' self-presentation

As a way to comprise the most extensive possible range of types of activities so that we would leave no kind of activity behind, our identification and selection strategy of SBPs organisations to be analysed was guided by Schor's (2014) four SE archetypes of activity, that is (i) peer-to-peer, for-profit, (ii) business-to-peer, for-profit, (iii) peer-to-peer, non-profit and (iv) business-to-peer, non-profit. Based on this premise, we then proceeded to the selection of one prototypical organisation per archetype of activity and, consequently, came up with Airbnb, Zipcar, TimeBanks and Make: makerspaces. Then, as a way of enlarging our sample, we proceeded to gather more organisations per Schor's SE archetypes of activity and, in the end, we came up with a round number of 40 (10 per the four archetypes of activity) due to the sole fact that, as we progressively moved on with the analysis of the subjects, a clear picture began to gain body: no organisation showed evidence of claiming itself to be part of a SE category (except for one). Thus, there was no use to continue gathering and analysing other organisations – in other words, increasing our sample just for the sake of it, would not alter whatsoever what we were finding. In practice, we used a strategy of saturation, in line with Glaser and Strauss' (1999).

It is essential to explain that, in terms of the business-to-peer, for-profit activity option chosen, we reckon that the study would probably have gained more visibility in case, for example, we had opted for the prototypical organisation of Uber instead of Zipcar, mostly for the simple fact that the first has been caught greater attention from stakeholders and audiences, recently. In this respect, yes, we contemplated the first one, but, unfortunately, its website wasn't and still isn't running in Portugal due to regulatory constraints, thus, not allowing to obtain direct identity claims data.

We further proceeded with content analysing the webpages of organisations, following Powell, Horvath and Brandtner's (2016) recommendation that, in present times, the digital transformation is rapidly shaping organisations and making their online presence a significant source of rich information about them, thus, becoming a precious resource of information to study organisations. As the authors advocate, such analysis would help us to unveil both what is the type of narrative used by them and how they present to their audiences.

We guided our data analysis by the methodological approach proposed by Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2013). In line with what is recommended by this approach, data analysis started by reading the content of the sections/menus (i.e., "About us", "What we do", "How does it work") and assigning initial categories, the first-order concepts, which included terms generated by the organisations, as a way to ensure adherence to their perceptions. We read the first-order concepts several times to refine the designations. Then, these same concepts were interpreted and, using a constant comparison strategy, we grouped them in different clusters, the second-order themes. Finally, we distilled second-order themes into aggregate dimensions, which represent the highest level of abstraction. Figure 3 shows the result of this procedure, the stature of data in the terminology of the approach suggested by Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2013).

Legitimacy granting by stakeholders

Considering the same Schor's (2014) four SBPs prototypical organisations – Airbnb, Zipcar, TimeBanks and Make: makerspaces –, it was analysed how five categories of stakeholders – scientific community, investors, customers, media and other analysts – have been granting legitimacy to the four organisations, as we believe that, and in line with Schor's proposition, each of them is excellent examples of each type of the four SE archetypes of activity. Concisely, and resorting to a content analysis of data from a total of 95 publicly available reports and other secondary data available online (distributed over 22 scientific articles, reports from 50 investors, 5 main actors that provide relevant information about costumers' adherence to the four prototypical organisations, 12 media actors and 6 other relevant analysts[2]), it was studied how audiences assess the viability of SE's organisations and can grant or withhold legitimacy to SBPs organisations. There certainly could have been more stakeholders to be included in our analysis list of the legitimacy granting. However, our objective wasn't to do a systematic literature review nor include all existing stakeholders. Our strategy was to instead compile and analyse the most heterogeneous range of external audiences, stakeholders as possible.

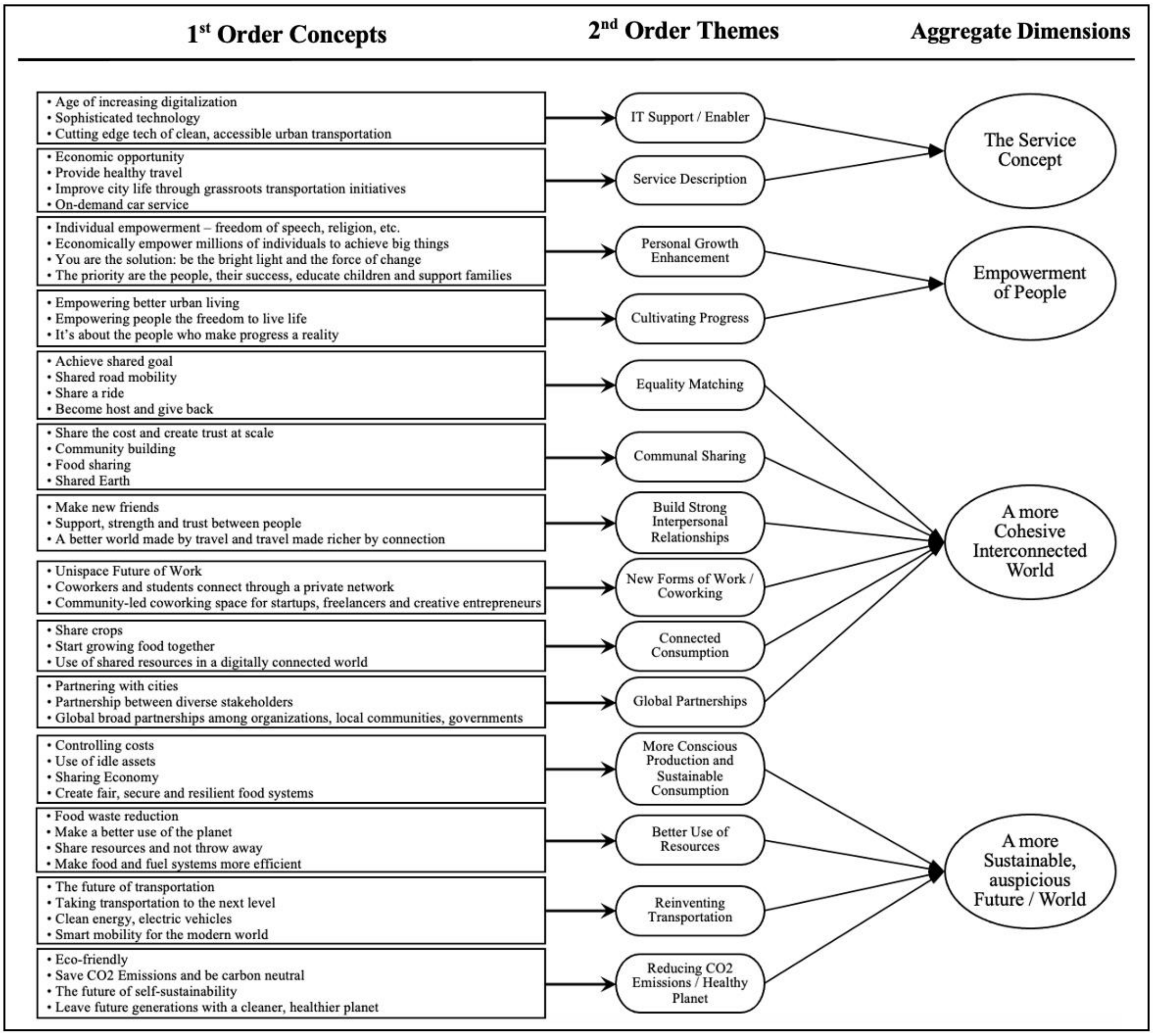
To analyse the data, we followed a thematic analysis approach. We followed King and Brooks' (2018) generic approach on conducting a "qualitative analysis that principally focuses on identifying, organising and interpreting themes in textual data" (pp. 219-220). Given that theory about the sources of legitimacy is well established, we used Navis and Glynn's (2010) sameness and distinctiveness and Aldrich and Fiol's (1994) cognitive and socio-political as main themes to be recognised on data. More precisely, for sameness and distinctiveness, we searched for stakeholders describing the organisation/activity in question as being part of a whole group of activities equivalent but also different. In terms of cognitive legitimacy, we searched for the extent to which stakeholders refer to the organisation in question, namely, describing its vital organisational characteristics and the reach of its activity, what signals familiarity and knowledge about it. In terms of socio-political legitimacy, we captured meanings revealing judgements about the feasibility, credibility and appropriateness of any of the four prototypical SBPs. Table 2 illustrates the outcome of this procedure.

[2] A detailed list of each of the five categories of stakeholders may be requested to the corresponding author.

4. Results

4.1. How SBPs organisations portray themselves and express their identities to the world?

Figure 3 – Outcome data structure of the content analysis made to the SBPs.



Source: own elaboration.

As shown in figure 3, our analysis of the nature of self-presentation strategies used by SBPs highlight the existence of four key aggregate dimensions: describing the service concept; prompting people's empowerment; suggesting the contribution for a more cohesive and interconnected world; stressing a pivotal role in contributing for a more auspicious sustainable world.

The aggregate dimension of service concept includes the description of the service concept and the IT infrastructure supporting it as 2nd order themes. As expected, considering the nature of the raw data we used, this dimension is foreseeable, as websites use to communicate the offer. First-order concepts include “sophisticated technology” and “on-demand car service”.

SBPs also assume a contribution to the empowerment of people, the second aggregate dimension we identified. In empowering people, SBPs contribute to personal growth enhancement and cultivating progress, the two 2nd order themes, thus, revealing the pursuit of helping human being’s enablement, emancipation and development at the individual level. First-order concepts backing these include “economically empower millions of individuals to achieve big things” and “it’s about the people who make progress a reality”.

SBPs also present themselves as contributing to a more cohesive interconnected world, an aggregate dimension that comprehends a whole set of 2nd order themes, ranging from equally matching, communal sharing, build strong interpersonal relationships, new forms of work/coworking, connected consumption to global partnerships. In our view, all these reveal that SBPs communicate concerns with fomenting and encouraging an interrelatedness, togetherness, positive, strong bonds, connection, community sense and unity amongst all human beings at a global scale. Examples of first-order concepts associated with these are “achieve shared goal”, “community building”, “support, strength and trust between people”, “community-led coworking space for startups”, “freelancers and creative entrepreneurs”, “digitally connected world” and “global broad partnerships among organisations, local communities, governments”.

The final aggregate dimension of a more sustainable, auspicious future/world encapsulates 2nd order themes that are associated with a sort of mission to promote systemic transformation with global reach as means to support human being’s and planet’s wellbeing, health and wealth: more conscious production and sustainable consumption, a better user of resources, reinventing transportation and reducing CO_2 emissions/healthy planet. The first order concepts rooting these include “controlling costs”, “create fair, secure and resilient food systems”, “sharing economy”, “share resources and not throw away”, “smart mobility for the modern world” and “save CO_2 emissions”, ”carbon neutral”.

Additionally, it is noteworthy that, in terms of how SBPs organisations have been self-referring themselves as being part of a SE category, the absence of awareness by them is a novel case differentiating SE emergence from other emergencies – only 1 (Turo) identifies itself as belonging to a category named "sharing economy" (it expressly claims itself to be a "pioneer of the sharing economy"). However, the majority do make allusions in relating their core business/activity to "sharing" practices. Content analysing the description of "About us" or "What we do" or even "How does it work" lead us to deductively conclude that they clearly mirror something related to a "sharing" category through the use of various expressions like: "achieve a shared goal (…) value to share with someone else" (*TimeBanks*); "Couchsurfers share their lives (…) community of 14 million people in more than 200,000 cities who share their life (…) global network of people willing to share in profound and meaningful ways (…) share their homes with strangers" (*CouchSurfing*); "we want to make sharing and meeting not only fun but also easy (…) sharing creates a better world (…) we share experiences, moments, knowledge and we welcome guests in our homes" (*BeWelcome*); "Shared Earth (…) land or tools to share" (*SharedEarth*); "borrow and share items with your neighbours (…) sharing platform (…) an electric drill is used for 13 minutes during its lifespan (…) why not share it if it is just lying around somewhere collecting dust?!" (*Peerby*); "The Food Sharing Revolution (…) surplus food can be shared (…) future where our most precious resources are shared, not thrown away" (*Olio*); etc.

4.2. What is the nature of the legitimacy that is granted by external audiences to prototypical SBPs?

Table 2 – Nature of the legitimacy granted by external audiences, stakeholders to four SBPs prototypical organisations.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="4">Prototypical Organization</th></tr>
<tr><th>Stakeholders</th><th>airbnb</th><th>zipcar</th><th>TimeBanks</th><th>Make: makerspaces</th></tr>
<tr><td>Scientific Community</td><td>Hamari et al. (2015) – Collaborative consumption is “a peer-to-peer-based activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services, coordinated through community-based online services (…) an umbrella concept that encompasses (…) sharing the consumption of goods and services through activities such as renting, swapping, or trading. This includes services such as Zipcar, as well as Couchsurfing and Airbnb”.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive, Sameness or Close Substitution, Distinctiveness.</td><td>Dubois et al. (2014) – Some categories: “recirculation of goods (i.e., Craigslist, eBay); increased utilization of durable assets (i.e., Zipcar, Relay Rides, Uber, CouchSurfing, Airbnb); exchange of services (i.e., Time banking, TaskRabbit, Zaarly); sharing of productive assets; and building of social connections (i.e., Mama Bake, Soup Sharing, and EatWithMe)”.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive, Sameness or Close Substitution, Distinctiveness.</td><td>Owyang (2013) – Collaborative Economy is “an economic model where commonly available technologies enable people to get what they need from each other (…) it is a wide enough scope of the overall trend: P2P transactions (…) Examples of these include: Airbnb, Lyft, Kickstarter, eBay, Etsy, Zipcar, Timebanks”.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive, Sameness or Close Substitution, Distinctiveness.</td><td>Bradley & Pargman (2017) – Some examples of SE practices and businesses: “SE platforms, such as TaskRabbit, Airbnb and RelayRides (…) maker spaces, etc.”.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive, Sameness or Close Substitution, Distinctiveness.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Investors</td><td>A whole range of investors between the years 2009 and 2017 – Total amounts of investments: 2009 – Total Investment of $620 thousand; 2010 – Total Investment of $7.2 million; 2011 – Total Investment of $112 million; 2013 – Total Investment of $200 million; 2014 – Total Investment of $475 million; 2015 – Total Investment of $1.6 billion; 2016 – Total Investment of $1.555,46 billion; 2017 – Total Investment of $447.8 million.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive.</td><td>A whole range of investors between the years 2002 and 2013 – Total amounts of investments: 2002 – Total of $4.7 million raised in a venture round (Series B); 2003 – Total Investment of $2 million; 2005 – Total Investment of $10 million; 2006 – Total Investment of $25 million; 2007 – Total Investment of $45 million; 2010 – Total Investment of $21 million; 2013 – Total Investment of $500 million.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive.</td><td>NO INVESTORS
(Non-Profit prototypical organization)</td><td>NO INVESTORS
(Non-Profit prototypical organization)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Customers</td><td colspan="2">PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) (2015) – Examples of the SE businesses – “(1) Hospitality and Dining: CouchSurfing, Airbnb, Feastly, LeftoverSwap; (2) Automotive and Transportation: Zipcar, RelayRides, Hitch, Uber, Lyft, Getaround, Sidecar; (3) Retail and Consumer Goods: Neighborgoods, SnapGoods, Poshmark, Tradesy; (4) Media and Entertainment: Amazon Family Library, Wix, Spotify, SoundCloud, Earbits”.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive, Sameness or Close Substitution, Distinctiveness.</td><td>TimeBanks (2017) itself – Data provided in its website: “Timebank communities – 286; Individual members – 21827; Countries – 19 spread by the six continents (Asia, Africa, North America; South America, Europe and Australia); Cities – 255”.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive.</td><td>NYU (New York University) (2012) – “Makers chose terms identifying themselves as ‘Leading Edge’, entrepreneur, innovator, or influencer (…) 59% of all respondents either said others use what they make (41%) or they make things with others’ (50%) (…) 72% have some type of ‘formal’ involvement with a makerspace, most being current or past members. Altogether, 46% of income/commerce makers said their making activity is or will be their job, 20% actually have maker jobs now, while 25% said that making would be their job in the future. An even larger group of income/commerce makers (56%) said their making activity is part of their job”.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Media

(Press, TV News Broadcasters, Social Networks)</td><td>CNN TV News Channel (2015) – “P2P rental is worth an estimated $26 billion each year, with Airbnb valued at $10 billion (…) The SE refers to companies such as Airbnb, which helps people to ‘share’ their homes or Uber, which allows drivers to ‘share’ their cars with passengers”.

Financial Times Newspaper (2016) – “As the European Commission recommended in its recent pronouncement on the ‘SE’, the big digital platforms (including Airbnb) raise many difficult policy challenges, especially for competition authorities, but they provide big benefits too”.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive, Sameness or Close Substitution, Distinctiveness, and discussion around Sociopolitical.</td><td colspan="3">Buckingham (2017) – in explaining the role of Social Networks on the expansion of the SE and, inherently, its organizations and activities (in which Zipcar, TimeBanks and Make: Makerspaces are included): “On one level, the SE largely depends upon social media (in the form of the Internet, apps and mobile devices) to market its services, and to develop reputations via user rating and recommendation systems. In this respect, it uses media technologies as tools. However, many of the same arguments apply to the sharing of media artefacts themselves – where the media are products rather than merely tools”.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive, Sameness or Close Substitution, Distinctiveness.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other Analysts</td><td>OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) (2015) – “Online platforms specialized in matching demand and supply in specific markets, enabling peer-to-peer (P2P) sales and rentals (…) There are three types: a) P2P selling (examples: eBay and Etsy); b) P2P sharing (examples: Airbnb, Uber, TaskRabbit); and c) crowdsourcing (examples: Mechanical Turks, Kickstarter, AngelList)”.

Stone (2016) – “Uber and Airbnb (…) these companies have come to embody a new business code that has forced local governments to question their faithfulness to the regulatory regimes of the past”.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive, Sameness or Close Substitution, Distinctiveness, and discussion around Sociopolitical.</td><td>Gansky (2010) – “The Mesh Economy relies on advanced digital networks (…) goods can be shared whenever and wherever (…) driven by social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (…) it is global in scale and potential (…) Businesses as big as Netflix or Zipcar, and as small as a guy who rents Christmas trees, have figured out there is gold in giving people convenient access to shared goods (…) as peer-to-peer car sharing”.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive, Sameness or Close Substitution, Distinctiveness.</td><td>EC (European Commission) (2016) – “The ‘sharing economy’ is defined as ‘digitally connected’ 5 economic activities. It includes categories as: recirculation of goods (i.e., Craigslist, eBay); increased utilization of durable assets (i.e. Zipcar, Relay Rides, Uber, CouchSurfing, Airbnb); exchange of services (i.e. TimeBanks, TaskRabbit, Zaarly); sharing of productive assets; and building of social connections (i.e. Mama Bake, Soup Sharing, and EatWithMe)”; “sharing platforms (P2P activities)” that bring “policy concerns”, including “regulatory and consumer protection issues, potentially unfair competition with formal B2C service providers, and questions related to dominance and market power of the P2P platform operator as a commercial business”.

Nature of Legitimation: Cognitive, Sameness or Close Substitution, Distinctiveness, and discussion around Sociopolitical.</td><td>No relevant actors nor data from Other Analysts to be analyzed</td></tr>
</table>

Source: own elaboration.

As one may note in table 2 above, we have analysed five distinct categories of stakeholders – *scientific community, investors, customers, media* and *other analysts*. The objective was to pinpoint any relevant actor within each of the categories whose data obtained from their publicly available reports, and other available secondary data would reveal a discourse, facts and events that were associated with a direct or indirect granting of any of the four natures of legitimacy granting – sameness (or close substitution), distinctiveness, cognitive legitimation and socio-political legitimation – to the four prototypical organisations.

In terms of sameness (or close substitution) and distinctiveness, our analysis reveals that both these natures of legitimacy are conferred mainly to the four organisations by all five categories of stakeholders, only except investors in case of all four organisations, on the one hand, and customers in case of TimeBanks and Make: makerspaces, on the other hand. As shown, for example, in the illustration quote of how OECD (2015) refers to Airbnb, it is indicated as being part of a group of "online platforms" that may be divided into "three types: a) P2P selling – examples: eBay and Etsy –; b) P2P sharing – examples: Airbnb, Uber, TaskRabbit –; and c) crowdsourcing – examples: Mechanical Turks, Kickstarter, AngelList" – thus, being the same through belonging to the same group, but also distinct between each other through being able to divide them into three types.

Regarding cognitive legitimation, our data reveal that it is vigorously spread and present, only except for investors regarding TimeBanks and Make: makerspaces. The reason for us to draw this is that these are two non-profit organisations, and, as such, due to their non-profit nature (thus, not publicly traded), we might deduce that it is expectable that no investor will know of their existence; hence, have no cognitive knowledge about them. An illustration quote is Owyang's (2013), where the author refers to TimeBanks as being part of "an economic model (collaborative economy) where commonly available technologies enable people to get what they need from each other", and pertaining to "a wide enough scope of the overall trend: P2P transactions (…) examples of these include: Airbnb, Lyft, Kickstarter, eBay, Etsy, Zipcar, Timebanks" – thus, signalling familiarity and knowledge about it through describing the characteristics and the reach of its activity.

Finally, regarding socio-political legitimation, it shows signs of yet being under a construction process. Meaning: there has been an ongoing, continuous, not-closure discussion about the socio-political legitimacy of the four organisations and other similar ones. An illustrative quote of this is EC's (2016), where it refers to the Sharing Economy and its "digitally connected' 5 economic activities" (comprising Zipcar, Airbnb, TimeBanks, among others), as having brought "policy concerns", including "regulatory and consumer protection issues, potentially unfair competition with formal B2C service providers, and questions related to dominance and market power of the P2P platform operator as a commercial business" – thus, revealing judgements about their feasibility, credibility and appropriateness.

Overall, the results reveal that stakeholders grant legitimacy to the four organisations through means of mainly three of the four natures of legitimacy granting: sameness (or close substitution), distinctiveness and cognitive legitimation. In terms of socio-political legitimation, it seems that it still isn't consolidated, as stakeholders have been discussing and judging the feasibility and credibility of products and services as the ones offered by the four organisations, together with a gradual concern with persistent unsettled regulation, policy intervention, impacts, effects and implications issues for societies worldwide.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Aimed at investigating how SBPs organisations portray themselves and express their identities to the world, and what is the nature of the legitimacy that is granted by external audiences to prototypical SBPs, our study reveals that these entities state who they are and what they do by resorting to a self-presentation strategy that is based on proclaiming to be part of a global social movement and act as social agents of change concerning contemporary high-priority matters: the widespread prevalence of information technologies; the desirability of empowering people; the social cohesion as a requirement in a globalised world; and sustainability as a precondition for a more auspicious world. By doing this, SBPs are using global meanings and positive shared beliefs as ingredients to craft their identities and maximise legitimacy regarding external stakeholders, in line with Glynn's (2008) proposition that organisations build their organisational identities from distal/universal environments, even though it also might happen from local environments, such as industry or geographic clusters.

The qualitative analysis shows that SBPs use their websites to convey the service concept of the service they offer. The description of the service includes not only the services themselves but also the advantages they bring, covering a wide range of benefits, from economic to experiential. Moreover, these offers are seen as enabled by innovative, disruptive information technologies that are derived from the eruption of the internet, particularly, web 2.0 and other derivates, which is one the central pillars that represent the SE, as pointed by Cotrim (2020). These entrepreneurial ventures state what they do as natural products of the information age, thus positioning themselves as highly contemporary projects in a new paradigm of market offering, potentially distinguishing from other existing products in the market. There is a whole range of projects that are very closed-related, pertaining to the same category, while others are very distinct from each, hence, in line with Navis and Glynn's (2010) suggestion that within the same category there is always a degree of both sameness and distinctiveness shared by all constituents.

Also, interestingly, is the fact that, in stating who they are and what they do, SBPs claim the contribution to the generalised empowerment of people, a widely accepted and desirable goal (United Nations, 2015). By participating in the SBPs, people are adhering to a more general movement that cultivates progress and, on the other hand, can achieve higher levels of personal growth and self-expression, in line with self-determination approaches to individual identity (Ryan & Deci, 2019).

The other two aggregate dimensions we found to reveal more collective desirable goals that are fundamentally featured by the desire to transform the world into a more cohesive and interconnected one while aiming to attain a more sustainable, auspicious future/world. Regarding the first – a more cohesive, interconnected world –, SBPs portray themselves as entrepreneurial ventures that have higher purposes associated with building strong interpersonal relationships, strengthening trust between people, promoting new forms of work (co-working, for example), thus, creating connection through a widespread private network. Moreover, as means to promote such a more cohesive interconnected world, SBPs present themselves as being in line with the necessity to attain higher degrees of connecting consumption and global partnerships between diverse stakeholders, such as organisations, local communities and governments. It is also noteworthy that SBPs self-portray as acting as agents with a specific mission to help construct greater levels of equality matching and communal sharing, which are per two of the four elementary forms of human relations suggested by Fiske (1993). In the first, the critical feature is that there isn't any authority between people nor is there the more profound responsibility towards one another, contrarily, for example, to communal sharing.

Regarding the second aggregate dimension that we also found to associate to more collective desirable goals – a more sustainable, auspicious future/world –, we can equally observe that SBPs portray themselves as entrepreneurial ventures that have higher purposes that link with globally promoting a more conscious production and sustainable consumption, in which it is vital to, for example, put into practice the better uses of existing resources and reinvent transportation, as means to inclusive reduce CO2 emissions and attain a healthier planet.

Claiming to contribute to a more cohesive and sustainable world, associated with desirable collective goals in line with the overarching normative goal, as suggested Lindenberg and Steg (2013) or, in Habibi et al.'s (2017) terms, pure sharing SBPs, these two aggregate dimensions correspond to European Commission's (2016) description of the normative dimension of the sharing economy and mirrors United Nations' (2015) sustainable development goals.

Thus, in portraying themselves as new emerging entities, SBPs make use of the culture in which they are inserted as a toolkit where they can resort and find cultural elements, symbols, concepts, discourses, sentiments, and rules that will help them, through a "process of bricolage" (Glynn, 2008), to build their central character, distinctiveness and, potentially, enduring organisational identity attributes (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Pratt et al., 2016).

SBPs' expressions of identity, on the other hand, associate with engaging with social actions, causes, concerns, activities, businesses, thus, in line with Scott's (2003), Whetten's (2006) and King et al.'s (2010) suggestion that organisations operate as social actors, utilise resources, enter into contracts, and even own property. In this sense, SBPs appear to be anthropomorphised entities, in the sense that they use sentiments, emotions, traits, intentions, symbols, etc. that proliferate in culture as a way to attach meaning to their identity and, thus, confer an image of themselves in such a way that society may quickly identify with and feel emotionally connected to, and at the end of the day, recognise them to act in a self-directed and accountable way (Ashforth et al., 2020).

Regarding the nature of the legitimacy that is granted by external audiences to prototypical SBPs, our results reveal that stakeholders have mainly been conferring legitimation to them based on assessing how same or close substitutes they are to other existing products in the market, as well as, identifying the degree of which they distinguish themselves from others, hence, in line with Navis and Glynn's (2010) determinants of legitimacy. On the other hand, the degree of which external audiences have knowledge about the prototypical SBPs is widely spread among the various stakeholders, which tell us that these have been conferring legitimation to them based on the cognitive knowledge they have about them, thus, in line with Aldrich and Fiol's (1994) proposition that in order for any given business to be legitimised it needs the necessary cognitive legitimation from external audiences.

Our results also reveal that there has been a progressive tension and dispute along the years due to regulation, policy intervention, impacts and implications brought by SBPs organisations to societies worldwide. Some are presently facing milestone challenges in gaining legitimation from governmental officials and regulators (Ex: Airbnb's prohibition in Berlin, Germany, and the taxi driver's community "fight" against Uber), hence, clearly also in line with Aldrich and Fiol's (1994) suggestion that any attempt to gain legitimation without a socio-political stamp becomes worthless.

Our study unveils, therefore, that SBPs are entrepreneurial ventures operating in an environment whose main stakeholders broadly legitimise their operation and in which these projects seek the favourable content that allows them to build a legitimate identity, hence, suffering the influence of the context but, at the same time, taking an active role in innovating and building a better, more cohesive and sustainable world. Moreover, the SE is a generic category built mainly by the academic community that has been established through a process characterized by three phases: revelation, clairvoyance and knowledge proliferation (Cotrim, Nunes & Laurenti, 2020) and in which the SBPs initiatives were the ones that the initial scholars amplified as a novelty.

5.1. Limitations and further research

This study is not without limitations. First, we treated all organisations included in our study as belonging to the SE as a broad emergent category. Thus, differences between organisations, or the distinctiveness criterion (Albert & Whetten, 1985) were not examined. Additionally, SE is not the only category to which SBPs belong to. Some are for-profit and others non-for-profit, and all operate in market categories, like transportation or hospitality, that also developed specific sector requirements. The role of this multiple belonging was not analysed.

Second, we assumed a personification metaphor to study an important perspective of the SBPs identity formation, which led us to highlight how these entrepreneurial ventures claim to be important actors contributing to a more sustainable and cohesive world. However, this approach did not allow access to the process that important internal actors, particularly founders and other leaders, use to construct the meaning of the identity of their organisations collectively.

When studying the legitimacy granting to SBPs, we have chosen four specific prototypical organisations. These organisations are, at least nowadays, well-established entities, which means that they already have benefited from the legitimacy required for survival. The fact that we did not include SBPs projects that failed limits the reach of the conclusion about the importance of legitimacy in the emergence and viability of these new entrepreneurial ventures.

Besides addressing these limitations, further research could assume a longitudinal perspective and analyse how the identity of specific SBPs evolves (Glynn, Lockwood & Raffaelli, 2015) and what is the role played by several important stakeholders, both internal and external, in creating stable and/or fluid identities in a context in which, foreseeably, the adherence to sustainability practices by all kinds of organisations become the norm. Moreover, and considering that SBPs present themselves as active crafters of a better world, which underscores the adherence of normative goals, or the priority of the collective interest over the individual one (Lindenberg & Foss, 2011), future research could determine if consumers of SBPs products or services are sensitive to these claims or, in contrary, when making purchase decisions, the search for maximising gains or individual experiences prevail.

5.2. Conclusion

The SE and its SBPs constituents have emerged as a promising new category with the potential to achieve more sustainable societies (Mi & Coffman, 2019). As mostly new entrepreneurial ventures, SBPs viability in the market require legitimacy from relevant stakeholders, and, to some extent, to adhere to accepted practices and values, which might not be fully achieved, mainly due to the novelty of the SE and the potential impact of SBPs on established business.

Having already passed through three paramount legitimacy granting determinants (cognitive, sameness and distinctiveness), however not yet overcome a sociopolitical sieve, entrepreneurial organisations belonging to the SE field have been portraying themselves as being part of a global social movement and acting as social agents of change that propose themselves to contribute for human being’s empowerment, but, most importantly, for the pursuit of higher purposes that are at the service of universal, global causes and trends that promote the cohesion, interconnection, sustainability, wellbeing, health and wealth of an entire ecosystem comprising human being’s and planet’s realms.

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CHAPTER 3

Understanding peoples' willingness to participate in the Sharing Economy: a goal-framing approach

Abstract

This research analyses the reasons for consumer participation in the Sharing Economy (SE). Building on two sets of main theories – goal-framing and sharing-exchange continuum –, we question how the cognitive activation of goals does play a determinant role on how consumers behave towards "pure exchange" and "pure sharing" Sharing Based Programs (SBPs) of the SE. One experiment showed that consumers' intention to participate in "pure sharing" and "pure exchange" SBPs of the SE depends on either hedonic, either gain, either normative motives, hence comprising both individual and supra individual strands, to be cognitively activated in them by the stimulus given by the nature of the SBP in question. More relevantly, we observe that there is a tendency for consumers to associate both extremes of SBPs of the SE with normative, supra-individual strands, thus, allowing to elaborate that they choose to participate in SBPs due to their transformative character – it is in favour of the collective good, bringing people closer together, a more cohesive, altruistic, non-egocentric, a fairer society and, ultimately, the unlocking of new paths for better sustainability of the planet and a more auspicious future for humanity, which is something that, to the best of our knowledge, current literature did not uncover before.

Keywords: Sharing Economy; Sharing-based programs; Pure Sharing; Pure Exchange; Traditional Businesses; Consumer Behaviour; Goal-Framing Motives.

1. Introduction

A wide range of SE practices (organisational entities) or as Davidson et al. (2018) call them sharing-based programs (SBPs), has been flourishing at a steady pace along the past few years. Such booming induced us to research a central player that has also been contributing for the evolution of the SE as a legitimate practice, category – the consumers, clients, users, customers –, thus, meeting our previous study's call for further research on deepening the analysis on how this key player has been concurring for the expansion of the field. The present study's main objective is to explore why this new market trend has been getting significant attention from the consumers themselves, and ultimately, why these end up opting for SBPs, thus, participating in the SE. We believe that such study's conduction would bring a further layer for the broader discussion around understanding how and why external audiences have been judging, using, participating in, and granted SE as a legitimate label/practice.

In this context of existing literature, we make a contribution by exploring a new angle of looking at consumers' willingness to participate in the SE that is based on the nature of the SBP (Davidson et al., 2018) – being of "pure sharing" or "pure exchange" in a sharing-exchange continuum (Habibi et al., 2016) of the SE – and drawn from goal-framing theory (Lindenberg, 2006, 2008, 2013; Lindenberg & Foss, 2011; Lindenberg & Steg, 2007, 2013). In other words, we particularly explore the overarching goal-framing motives behind consumers' behaviour towards the SBPs of the SE, that is, how the cognitive activation of goals does play a determinant role on how consumers behave towards SBPs ("pure exchange" and "pure sharing" ones) of the SE. In seeking an answer, this research conducted an experimental study. Having the Portuguese consumers as our targeted population, our findings reveal that what determines consumers to participate in "pure sharing" and "pure exchange" SBPs of the SE depends on either hedonic, either gain, either normative motives to be cognitively activated in them by the stimulus given by the nature of the SBP in question. Moreover, we observe a clear tendency of consumers to associate both extremes of SBPs of the SE with normative/supra-individual strands. Furthermore, the findings allow us to deductively elaborate that consumers recognised characteristics in SE's services/products that are intrinsically linked with a collective good, altruistic, non-egocentric orientation, thus, dimensions that are fundamentally characterised by having transformative purposes – favouring the collective good, bringing people closer together, a more cohesive, altruistic, non-egocentric, fairer society, and ultimately, why not, the unlocking of new paths for better sustainability of the planet and a more auspicious future for humanity.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Consumer motives for SE participation

2.1.1. The preconditions of trust and host's permission for participation in SBPs of the SE

Within the group of existing literature that studies the role of trust as a precondition in influencing consumers' willingness to participate in the SE, Hawlitschek, Teubner and Weinhardt (2016) highlight how trust has had great attention from academics to regards to business-to-consumer e-commerce and, most recently, with the rise of consumer-to-consumer markets occurring in the SE. It particularly calls the attention for the role of trust in today's online transactions, thus proposing a new conceptual research model explaining how trust plays a crucial part in determining consumers' and suppliers' intentions to participate and engage in the SE. The study presents consumers' and suppliers' participation from a perspective of how they have trust towards Peer, Platform and Product, and the beliefs of ability, integrity, and benevolence they have upon each one of those 3 Ps.

In examining the transportation sector (the object of the study is Uber), Mittendorf (2017), on the other hand, unveils the underlying reasons for consumers to trust and use Uber's service. It makes a clear distinction between two variables: trust in Uber and trust in drivers, while, at the same time, unveiling two antecedents of these variables: Disposition to trust and Familiarity with Uber. According to this study, (i) platform trust influences the customers' intentions to use Uber, while (ii) trust in drivers has no significant effect on the customers' intentions to use Uber (in other words, the seller's trust has no impact whatsoever on the customers' purchase intentions).

Möhlmann and Geissinger (2018) make a theoretical proposal by emphasising the critical role of trust in the SE and, in doing so, differentiate two types of trust that must be taken into account in a SE context: interpersonal trust and institutional trust. As explained by the authors, interpersonal trust has a central role in the trust towards the sharing economy because its platforms rely on relationships between peers. Further, the sharing platform provider acts as an enabler for such interpersonal trust and is dependent on being perceived as a trustworthy institution itself.

An empirical study, which studies explicitly the accommodation sector (the object of the study is Airbnb) and the underlying reasons for costumers/users seeking accommodation to, actually, use Airbnb's service, is the one brought by Karlsson, Kemperman and Dolnicar (2017). The authors highlight a central variable, an additional supplement precondition, that is closely related to trust: costumers'/users' participation depends on the permission from the hosts/providers part. Such dependent is a new thing in the tourism sector. Whereas to book a room in a hotel, motel or B&B there isn't a previously detailed assessment of a booking inquiry, in peer-to-peer hosting there may be a refusal to book a room, in case the potential guest does not meet particular criteria imposed by each of the hosts – example: the host may inquiry the potential guest about the purpose of his/her trip, and in case the response does not satisfy the host, he/she may politely refuse to accept the permission to book.

2.1.2. Participation in SBPs of the SE based on individual and/or supra individual variables

Within the second group of existing literature in studying the role of other independent variables influencing consumers' willingness to participate in the SE, we highlight two groups of studies whose research is around two distinct, yet closed linked with each other, overarching variables: individual and supra-individual ones. Each of these aggregates a whole range of independent variables that respectively resonates with us to be characterised by what we call individualistic/personal (the individual level of the self) and collectivistic/supra-individual (the collective level of the self) motives. As one may see in the explanation and description of each of the studies, much of both of these overarching variables are present within the same study.

With a comprehensive proposition about actors' motives, activities, resources, and capabilities in Collaborative Consumption (CC), Benoit et al.'s (2017) make a theoretical proposal, in which it is explained the roles of the actors (a triangle made of "platform providers"; "peer service providers"; and "customers") in the CC through three dimensions: motives, activities and resources and capabilities. Regarding the dimension of "motives", the authors suggest that what influences costumers to participate/engage with CC services (ex: Uber) are a whole range of independent variables that resonate to us as being associated to individual motivations: Economic Motives (ex: the use of CC is often less expensive), Social Motives (ex: meeting other people, which makes more authentic travel), Hedonic value Motives (ex: accessing products that are exciting or normally out of reach), and Reduce Risks & Responsibilities Motives (ex: no burdens of ownership, option to preview a product for potential purchase).

Davidson, Habibi and Laroche's (2018) study, on the other hand, empirically investigate the role of materialism in participation in sharing-based programs (SBPs) of the SE cross-culturally (Americans versus Indians). The authors unveil that what explains materialistic American consumers and materialistic Indian consumers to participate in SBPs are two sets of independent variables that also resonate to us as being associated to individual motivations: Transformation Expectations (Self, Relational, Hedonic, Efficacy) in the case of Americans and Perceived Utility (Convenience, Availability, Flexibility) in the case of Indians.

Another empirical study (Godelnik, 2017), tests explicitly millennial (people born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s) engagement with the SE. In quantitatively and qualitatively analysing the results data, this study shows that millennials are adopting a new mindset in which access to goods and services is seen as more valuable than ownership of them. However, the results suggest that a shift toward this new, access-driven mindset may be more challenging than popularly assumed. The research reveals that what leads millennials to participate/engage includes both individual and supra-individual motivations: Economic Reasons (ex: saving money), Social Reasons (ex: positive effects on communities, socially just, sense of community, bringing people closer) and Environmental Reasons (ex: ecologically sustainable; positive effects on the environment).

Further, Cherry and Pidgeon (2018) unveil some of the reasons/motivations behind public acceptability and engagement with the SE. The authors present independent variables that resonate to us as being associated with both individual and supra-individual bases. These are, respectively: Personal Interests (Ex: Affordability; Convenience; Hygiene) and Social Values (Ex: Fostering social equality; Encourage and support the development of healthy and independent local communities; Ensure that business practices operate lawfully in the shared interest of business, consumers and the environment). Specifically focusing on the transportation sector (the object of the study is Car Sharing), Mugion et al. (2019), on the other hand, unveiled the main motives, drivers, antecedents, behind the intention to use CS services. The study shows that the reasons behind users' choice to use CS services are specific independent variables – Usefulness and Inhibitors (direct influencers) –, which, on the other hand, have two antecedents (indirect influencers) that resonate to us as being associated to both individual and supra-individual motivations: Expected Service Quality and Green Attitude.

Moreover, Bocker and Meelen (2017) provide an overview of people's motivations to participate in different forms of the SE. The authors consider differences between (a) sectors of the SE, (b) socio-demographic groups, and (c) users and providers. In terms of the users and providers, this study reveals a set of independent variables that resonate to us as being associated to both individual and supra-individual motivations: Economic Motivations (ex: financial benefit), Social Motivations (ex: meeting people) and Environmental Motivations (ex: contributing to a healthy natural environment). The reasons behind consumers' buying second-hand P2P goods were also explored by Parguel, Lunardo and Benoit-Moreau (2017). According to this study, there are two specific conditions/independent variables, which, on the other hand, both do contribute for a 3rd condition/independent variable for consumers to engage in second-hand P2P platforms. Particularly regarding the first two, there is a resonance to us as being associated with both individual and supra-individual motivations. They, respectively, are Materialism, Environmental Consciousness and Cognitive Dissonance Reduction.

An empirical study brought by Zhang, Jahromi and Kizildag (2018) highlights the role of co-created values in a SE context and examining consumers' willingness to pay a premium price. These co-created values are categorised in the study as emotional, functional, and social. This study confirms that what explains consumers to participate and pay a premium are independent variables that are associated to individual motivations: Emotional Value (ex: this Airbnb accommodation would give me pleasure), Functional Value (ex: this Airbnb accommodation has up-to-date facilities to satisfy my stay needs) and Social Value (ex: this Airbnb accommodation would help me to feel acceptable).

From another standpoint, Wang et al. (2019) make a further contribution in exploring how customer sustainable consumption behaviours are boosted and expressed in the context of the SE. This study suggests that what determines costumers to have sustainable consumption behaviours in a SE context are independent variables that resonate to us as being associated with individual motivations. In other words: it shows that social factors (i.e., social influence) exert a positive influence on customer sustainable consumption behaviours, whereas economic factors (i.e., price) exert a negative influence on customer sustainable consumption behaviours. It also concludes that the service provider's strategies (i.e., reputation – symbolic factor – and response rate – functional factor) could positively enhance (thus, both acting as moderators) the effect of social influence on customer sustainable consumption behaviours.

The identification of the desired end states that users want to achieve by renting a P2P accommodation is also explored by Toni et al. (2018). The authors build a model based on the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, 1985) constructs and, with that, they disclose the relationship between collaborative consumption (CC) and sustainable behaviour. Their study attests that what regulate users and their sustainable consumption behaviours in a CC (SE) context are two independent variables that resonate to us as being associated to individual motivations: Terminal Value (i.e., objectives of the life of a person) and Instrumental Value (i.e., the methods an individual would like to adopt for achieving his/her life's aim) – both known as Personal Values.

Finally, one of the most comprehensive studies about consumer behaviour towards the SE and its peer-to-peer sharing (PPS) platforms is Hawlitschek, Teubner and Gimpel's (2018), which investigates the relative importance of consumer motives for and against PPS. Also grounded in Theory of Planned Behaviour constructs, it examines consumer motives (i.e., drivers, prerequisites and impediments) for participating in PPS by exploring "17 prospective motives and their effects on consumer attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, behavioural intention, and actual PPS platform usage" (p. 144). The findings unveil that 12 principal factors play a crucial role as antecedents for consumers to engage with PPS, from which, seven standout from the rest all resonating as being associated to both individual and supra-individual motivations: Financial benefits (a driver); The desire to display a modern lifestyle (a driver); Ecological sustainability (a driver); Trust in other users (a precondition); Effort expectancy (an impediment); Process risk concerns (an impediment); Independence gained through ownership (an impediment).

We see that all the above-mentioned existing studies draw from a vast panoply of theories and a broad spectrum of motivational perspectives; however, none of them expressly builds, in a consistent manner, from a particular research approach: the goal-framing theory (Lindenberg, 2006, 2008, 2013; Lindenberg & Foss, 2011; Lindenberg & Steg, 2007, 2013). In other words, we did not identify any existing study that applied the goal-framing theory to a SE context and its "pure exchange" and "pure sharing" SBPs, that is studies that were concentrated in exclusively exploring the particular cognitive activation of goal-framing motives in the minds of consumers, hence, explicitly addressing how human phycology functions and understanding how the human mind reacts upon the presence and stimuli of different environments and situations, and for the purposes of the present study, considering the stimuli that are triggered by SBPs. No research has, to the best of our knowledge to date, explained the motives for participation in SBPs from a perspective of the specific cognitive activation in consumers, as the goal-framing theory explains, of a triad of particular overarching motivations (hedonic, gain and normative) for behaviour, which, on the other hand, depends on the stimulus that is given by the different contexts, environments (in a SE context, by the SBPs) that consumers face.

One may clearly identify, in an isolated manner, very particular independent variables brought by the revised studies, (i) the majority of which resonate to us as being associated to hedonic, instrumental/gain, and/or normative overarching motives, while (ii) a very small minority (four of them) do not sound to us as falling in any of these three categories of overarching motives (these, actually, are centered around two crucial preconditions for actual participation to occur – trust, acting as a moderator, and host's permission – Table 4 evidences this by providing an overview look of how the motivational factors/drivers revealed by each of the studies are reflected against the triad framework of overarching goal-framing motives brought by the theory), notwithstanding, there isn't any study that is concretely and exclusively focused in conducting an experiment testing how the cognitive activation of the motive that is stimulated by the context, environment, situation, circumstance presented to the individual plays a determinant influence on his/her willingness to participate in activities/businesses of the SE.

Therefore, the current study intends to examine consumer's behaviour towards the SE from a goal-framing standpoint. In other words, we propose a new line of investigation that seeks to find how the cognitive activation of goals does play a determinant role on how consumers behave towards SBPs ("pure exchange" and "pure sharing" ones) of the SE. The explanation of this follows below, by firstly providing a view of the goal-framing theory.

2.1.3. Participation in SBPs of the SE based on a Goal-Framing Perspective

The goal-framing theory (Lindenberg, 2006, 2008, 2013; Lindenberg & Foss, 2011; Lindenberg & Steg, 2007, 2013) posits that goals govern or "frame" how people process information and act upon it. It has its founding roots on (social) cognition research, which stresses that (i) mental constructs have to be activated to affect behaviour and (ii) goals are powerful mental constructs in which cognitions and motivations intercross in an intricate way (Lindenberg & Foss, 2011). Further, the theory anchors to what Brewer and Caporael (2004 and 1997 cited in Lindenberg & Foss, 2011) call a distinction between an individual and a supra-individual mindset; and, depending on the activation of three specific overarching goals on the stands of individuals, one or the other may be predominant. These goals are (Lindenberg & Foss, 2011; Lindenberg & Steg, 2013): hedonic, gain, and normative. The first one aims to maintain or improve how one feels in the present moment, the "here and now perspective" – seeking immediate, direct gratification/satisfaction. The second one aims to maintain or improve the resources one has at his/her disposal, the "future self-perspective" – linked with more strategic and calculative intentions to improve one's situation in the longer run). The latter refers to how one behaves appropriately conforming to social norms and rules (the "generalised other perspective"). In short, both hedonic and gain goal frames seem to be connected to an individual orientation while the normative goal frame to a supra-individual orientation.

Moreover, as Lindenberg and Foss (2011) further explain (see table 3 below), the problematics and the analysis of the dynamics (what the authors call the "elements" to take into account) associated to theory, should be seen from four distinct but intertwined angles, lenses. First, in terms of the overarching goals that govern the behaviour, there are normative behaviours, which are around the "we", collective, supra-individual, and hedonic and gain more self-centred behaviours around the "I", individual him/herself; Second, regarding the background goal that may strengthen the goal frame, and in the case of the normative goal frame, the background goals that may reinforce and enhance it are the gain goal, which enhances status, and the hedonic goal, which couples with a warm glow and exciting tasks. In the case of the hedonic goal frame, the strengthening of it may occur upon the presence of a normative goal, whereas, in the case of the gain goal frame, the strengthening of it may happen in case there is a presence of either (or both) of the other two background goals: normative legitimacy when there is a gain improvement, and hedonic goal when gain improvement reduces anxieties; Third, in terms of the stimuli/triggers/cues that cognitively activate the goal frame, and in for the normative goal frame to cognitively activate, the respective stimuli/triggers/cues may be, for example, transparent task and team structure, vision/mission for the collective, clear collective goals, rewards that emphasise common goals, whereas, in the case of the hedonic goal frame, the stimuli may be, for example, emphasis on enjoyable task rewards and hedonic bonuses like bigger offices and company cars, while, for the gain goal frame to be cognitively be activated, it needs that the situation/context with which the individual confronts with does stimulate, for example, strong contingent individual rewards, strong focus on personal career, intense competition. Finally, to regards to the a priori strength of the goal, this last angle to be taken into account help us understand the dynamics of the overarching goal frames in terms of how much power does each one of them have by default (the a priori condition): in the case of the normative goal frame, it is the weakest of the three, as it needs robust flanking arrangements to avoid displacement by the two other goal frames, while the hedonic goal frame is considered the strongest, due to its direct links to need satisfaction. Also vital, but lesser than the previous one is the gain goal frame, which may be displaced by the hedonic goal frame.

Table 3 – Overview of Dynamics associated with the Goal-Framing Theory.

Dynamics of Goal-Framing Theory (elements to be taken into account)	**Overarching Goal Frames**		
	Supra Individual	*Individual*	
	Normative	**Hedonic**	**Instrumental / Gain**
(1) The overarching goals governing the behavior	Around the "We" Meaning: A collective self-oriented toward acting appropriately in an exemplary fashion in terms of what is good for the collective goals.	Around the "I" Meaning: The individual's personal self that is motivated toward improving how he/she feels right in the present moment.	Around the "I" Meaning: The individual's personal self that is motivated toward improving his/her resources.
(2) The background goal that may strengthen the goal frame (with examples)	Instrumental/Gain goal (when furthering common goals) enhances status; hedonic goal (when furthering common goals) is related to a warm glow and/or interesting tasks	Normative legitimacy of hedonic aspects of tasks and rewards	Normative legitimacy of gain improvement; hedonic goal when gain improvement reduces anxieties
(3) The stimuli/triggers/cues that cognitively activate the goal frame (with examples)	Transparent task and team structure, vision/mission for the collective, clear collective goals; rewards that emphasize common goals; contagion	Emphasis on enjoyable task rewards and hedonic bonuses like bigger offices and company cars; expense accounts	Strong contingent individual rewards; strong focus on personal career; strong competition
(4) The a priori strength of the goal	Weakest – it needs strong flanking arrangements to avoid displacement by the two other goal frames	Strongest – because of its direct links to need satisfaction	Strong – however, may be displaced by the hedonic goal frame

Source: own elaboration and adapted from Lindenberg & Foss, 2011.

In our view, the interest of using the goal-framing theory approach in relation to the reviewed studies is that it consistently represents the coexistence of three overarching goals. Further, as external stimuli can trigger goals, this approach may be relevant to complement existing studies, in most cases correlational, with experimental studies that analyse how consumers react to stimuli that trigger the various goals, and for the present study, in relation to stimuli that are triggered by SBPs.

Complementarily, we also propose to introduce into this framing a different theory, which characterises SBPs as a whole spectrum of archetypes of activities of the SE in terms of how they are of "pure sharing" or "pure exchange" natures – the Sharing-Exchange Continuum (Habibi et al., 2016). Explained with more detail under the next section, this continuum functions as a precious tool in helping to map out the level of "pure sharing" or "pure exchange" of any given SBP of the SE. Hence, we reckon that it would be of great value to add it to our proposed study. In doing so, we could explore and measure what drives, determines (at the cognitive activation level), and knowing beforehand the crucial preconditional moderation role of trust in influencing actual participation, consumers to respectively participate in "pure sharing" and "pure exchange" SBPs of the SE (does the cognitive activation in consumers, which is stimulated by the SBP in question, of hedonic, gain and normative goal-framing motives play a determining role?). This is the focus of our investigation, which follows under section 3.

Table 4 – Literature overview reflected against the overarching goal-framing motives (*hedonic*, *gain*, and *normative*).

Authors	**(Goal-Framing) Motives**		
	Individual		*Supra Individual*
	Hedonic	**Instrumental / Gain**	**Normative**
Benoit et al. (2017)	✓ *Hedonic value* (ex: accessing products that are exciting or normally out of reach) *Social* (ex: meeting other people, which makes more authentic travel)	✓ *Economic* (ex: the use of CC is often less expensive) *Reduce Risks & Responsibilities* (ex: no burdens of ownership, option to preview a product for potential purchase)	✗
Davidson, Habibi & Laroche (2018)	✓ *Transformation Expectations* (Self, Relational, Hedonic, Efficacy)	✓ *Perceived Utility* (Convenience, Availability, Flexibility)	✗
Godelnik (2017)	✗	✓ *Economic* (ex: saving money)	✓ *Social* (ex: positive effects on communities, socially just, sense of community, bringing people closer) *Environmental* (ex: ecologically sustainable; positive effects on the environment)
Cherry & Pidgeon (2018)	✗	✓ *Personal Interests* (Ex: Affordability; Convenience; Hygiene)	✓ *Social Values* (Ex: Fostering social equality; Encourage and support the development of strong and independent local communities; Ensure that business practices operate fairly in the shared interest of business, consumers and the environment)
Mugion et al. (2019)	✗	✓ *Expected Service Quality*	✓ *Green Attitude*
Bocker & Meelen (2017)	✓ *Social* (ex: meeting people)	✓ *Economic* (ex: financial benefit)	✓ *Environmental* (ex: contributing to a healthy natural environment)
Parguel, Lunardo & Benoit-Moreau (2017)	✓ ← *Materialism*	✓ →	✓ *Environmental Consciousness*

(continues on the next page)

Zhang, Jahromi and Kizildag (2018)	✓ *Emotional Value* (ex: this Airbnb accommodation would give me pleasure)	✓ *Functional Value* (ex: this Airbnb accommodation has up-to-date facilities to satisfy my stay needs) *Social Value* (ex: this Airbnb accommodation would help me to feel acceptable)	✗
Wang et al. (2019)	✓	✓ *Emotional Factor* (i.e. price – low price that indicates money saving)	✗
	← *Social Factor* (i.e. social influence – to be more engaged in reciprocal exchanges when P2P relationship features with social opportunities and online communication) →		
Toni et al. (2018)	✓	✓ *Instrumental Value* (i.e. the methods an individual would like to adopt for achieving his/her life's aim)	✗
	← *Terminal Value* (i.e. objectives of the life of a person) →		
Hawlitschek, Teubner & Gimpel's (2018)	✓ *The desire to display a modern lifestyle*	✓ *Financial benefits* *Independence gained through ownership*	✓ *Ecological sustainability*
	← *Trust in other users* →		
	← *Effort expectancy* →		
	← *Process risk concerns* →		
– Studies centered around two crucial preconditions for actual participation to occur: *Trust* (acting as a moderator) and *Host's Permission* –			
Hawlitschek, Teubner & Weinhardt (2016)	(Research exploring participation based on an independent variable – *Trust* – that doesn't necessarily fall in the categories of individual and/or supra individual overarching motives).		
Mittendorf (2017)	(Research exploring participation based on an independent variable – *Trust* (in *Uber* and *drivers*) – that doesn't necessarily fall in the categories of individual and/or supra individual overarching motives).		
Möhlmann & Geissinger (2018)	(Research exploring participation based on an independent variable – *Trust* (*interpersonal* and *institutional*) – that doesn't necessarily fall in the categories of individual and/or supra individual overarching motives).		
Karlsson, Kemperman & Dolnicar (2017)	(Research exploring participation based on an independent variable – *Host's Permission* – that doesn't necessarily fall in the categories of individual and/or supra individual overarching motives).		
This study	✓	✓	✓
	Our proposal is to explain the motives from a perspective of the *cognitive activation* in consumers of these 3 overarching goals, which are *dependent on the stimulus* that is given by the *different contexts, environments, situations, circumstances* (in a SE context, by the SBPs) that consumers are faced with, and given that a crucial precondition for actual participation to occur is the presence of *Trust* (acting as a moderator).		

Source: own elaboration.

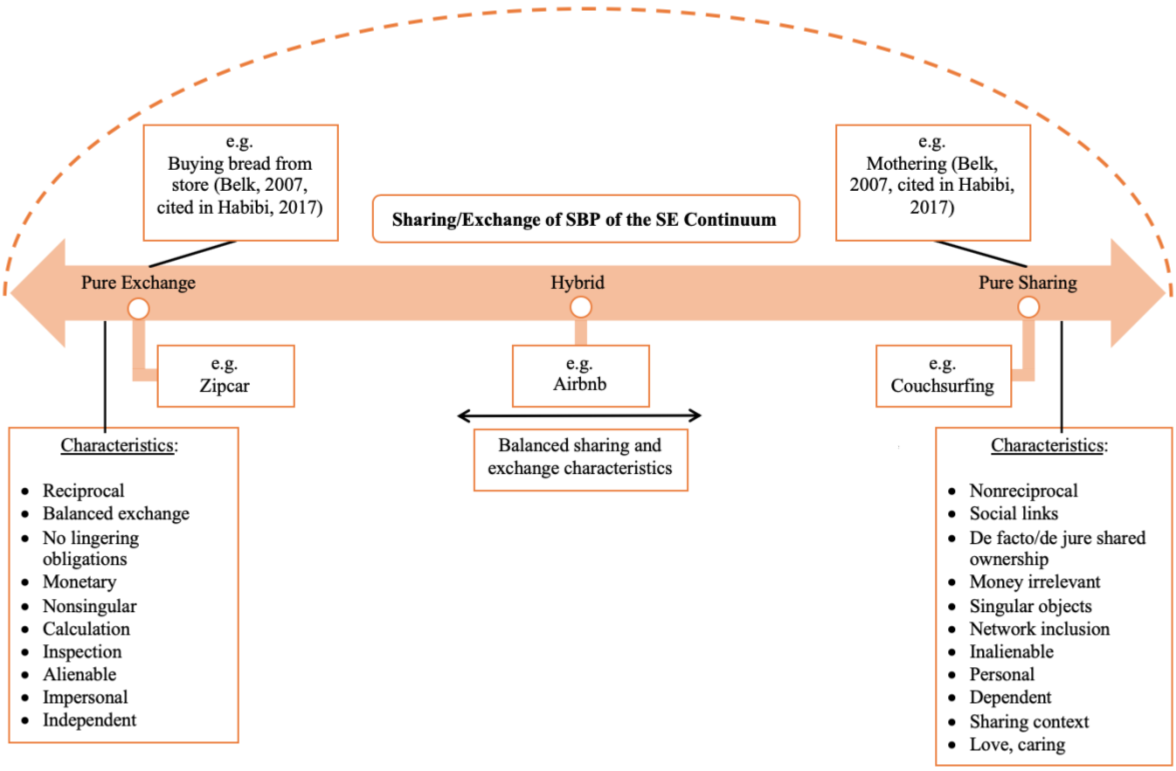
2.2. The Sharing-Exchange Continuum of SBPs of the SE

2.2.1. Participation in SBPs of the SE based on a Sharing-Exchange Continuum

Habibi et al. (2016) developed the sharing-exchange continuum to help distinguish the degree to which actual sharing is being offered by a SE practice (named as SBP – Sharing-Based Program). Put very simply, the continuum functions as a fundamental dimension against which all archetypes of activities of the SE can be mapped, thus, helping distinguish the degree to which an SBP is offering actual sharing (from "pure sharing" to "pure exchange"). The design of the continuum bases on a rating given to an SBP in measuring its "sharing scores" (in a 5-point Likert scale), which, on the other hand, is based on several sharing and exchange-related characteristics that draw out of Belk (2007, 2010), and the description of these may be seen in Figure 4, below, which is adapted from Habibi et al. (2017).

The results of Habibi et al.'s study (2016) revealed that (1) Zipcar SBP rates as being in the "pure exchange" end of the continuum, (2) Couchsurfing SBP rates as being in the "pure sharing" end of the continuum, and (3) Airbnb SBP was rated as being a "hybrid" practice, having mix "pure exchange" and "pure sharing" characteristics, thus, falling into the middle of the continuum. This continuum becomes very much pertinent for the present study because it provides a valuable insight to trace any SBP you can recall and clarify how much nonownership forms of consumption consist of sharing-related attributes.

Figure 4 – The Sharing/Exchange continuum.



Source: own elaboration and adapted from Habibi et al., 2017.

3. Research framework and hypotheses

In exploring the overarching goal-framing motives behind consumers' behaviour towards the SBPs of the SE, that is, how the cognitive activation of goals does play a determinant role on how consumers behave towards SBPs ("pure exchange" and "pure sharing" ones) of the SE, this study uses two sets of main theories – goal-framing and sharing-exchange continuum – as means to test the factors behind consumer participation.

Accordingly, in a first moment of elaborating our assumptions, logic tells us that, as a general conceptualisation, consumers' intention, willingness to participate in the SE, which is made of a broad spectrum of "pure sharing" and "pure exchange" SBPs, is driven by overarching goal-framing motives. Meaning: the intention to participate depends on either gain, either hedonic, either normative motives to be cognitively activated in consumers by the stimulus (in other words, by the nature of the SBP in question), as these three overarching motives resonate to us to associate to the two ends of the activities/businesses (SBPs) continuum that forms the SE, that is, "pure exchange" SBPs (more individual-oriented – in the case of gain and hedonic) and "pure sharing" SBPs (more supra-individual oriented – in the case of normative and hedonic – we also include hedonic in the latter one as "supra-individual oriented", because, although, yes, hedonic motives do, in a first instance, resonate as being connected to a much individual orientation, more individualistic, where individuals seek their own "selfish" immediate, direct gratification/satisfaction, as previously explained, we assume that a motive for an individual to be willing to participate in a "pure sharing" SBP – which, presumingly, is an activity more oriented towards the collective, communal benefit – of the SE may also well be the "immediate, direct gratification/satisfaction" from knowing that he/she is contributing for something greater than him/herself, that is for the good of society as a whole and above his/her self-centred individualistic interests).

However, in a second moment of further elaborating our assumptions, and if we take into account our previous study, which reveals that a very large majority of the various archetypes of SBPs of the SE (being P2P; B2P; G2P; For-Profit; Non-Profit) have embedded in their identity claims (in how they self-refer themselves) either individual, either supra-individual elements/features simultaneously (in other words, one may find individual and supra-individual at the same time in either a pure exchange, either a pure sharing SBP of the SE), we also elaborate that a pure exchange SBP of the SE, which, in a first instance, resonates to us as being mainly individual oriented (strongly featured by individual elements, thus more gain and/or hedonic oriented), may also have a certain degree of supra-individual orientation (simultaneously featured by supra-individual factors, therefore even normative oriented); following the same line of reasoning, a pure sharing SBP of the SE, which, equally in a first instance, resonates to us as being mainly supra-individual oriented (strongly featured by supra-individual elements, thus more normative oriented), may also have a certain degree of individual orientation (simultaneously featured by individual components, therefore also gain and/or hedonic oriented). Hence, we say that: (a) the intention to specifically participate in a pure exchange SBP of the SE may not depend on the cognitive activation of solely gain and hedonic motives, but also normative ones. Further, the intention to participate may also depend on the simultaneous cognitive activation of more than one motive (being two or even three at the same time); (b) the intention to specifically participate in a pure sharing SBP of the SE may not depend on the cognitive activation of solely normative (and hedonic, as explained previously) motives, but also on gain ones. Further, the intention to participate may also depend on the simultaneous cognitive activation of more than one motive (being two or even three at the same time).

Considering the above discussion, we hypothesise the following:

H1a. SBPs activate consumers' hedonic, gain and normative overarching goals.

H1b. Compared with exchange SBPs, sharing-based SBPs will trigger similarly the hedonic and gain goals, but the normative goal will be more activated.

H2. Hedonic, gain and normative goals will influence consumers' willingness to participate in SBPs. The relationship between the normative goal and the willingness to participate will be higher in shared-based SBPs than in exchange-based SBPs.

4. The study

4.1. Method

To test hypotheses 1 and 2, we conducted a two-level single factor experiment in which we manipulated the type of SBP offer (exchange or sharing). To maintain the credibility of the offers, we used existing companies as references for the i-car and the share your couch as inspirations for manipulating our variable. Appendix A contains the full description of the stimulus.

Subjects were recruited from the general population by a data-gathering company specialised in on-line surveys (N = 300; female = 52.3%; age 18-54, M= 36.27, SD = 9.90). Participants were asked to read the description of each service and to express the foreseeable personal consequences of using it as a measure of the activation of the hedonic, gain, and normative goals. Usually, goal framing theory does not resort to questionnaires to measure its core variables. In fact, we just found a study using this technique (Dijkstra et al., 2015), and we have used it as an inspiration to build our measures for the dependent variable. We asked participants to express the extent to which they agree with items in a seven-point rating scale (1 = Totally disagree; 7 = Totally agree). Each of the three overarching goals was measured with four items. An example of an item measuring the hedonic motive is "I would enjoy a pleasant experience", and the reliability of this scale is acceptable ($\alpha = 0.87$). The gain motive was measured with items like "I would save money", and this measure has an acceptable level of reliability ($\alpha = 0.87$).

A measure of familiarity with each service was included, to be used as a control variable in testing hypothesis 2. This scale was inspired by Davidson et al.'s (2018) measurements used to evaluate the familiarity with Couchsurfing programs. The reliability is acceptable ($\alpha = 0.84$).

We measured the willingness to participate using an adaptation of the scale also used by Davidson et al.'s (2018) in measuring the willingness to participate in Couchsurfing programs, with slight wording adaptations to each type of offer. The reliability analysis of this scale yielded good results ($\alpha = 0.91$).

4.2. Results

The means, standard deviations and intercorrelations between study variables are reported in table 5.

Table 5 – Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations between study variables.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Familiarity	2,93	1,64	-			
Hedonic goal	4,61	1,36	0.35**	-		
Gain goal	5,05	1,33	0.25**	0.73**	-	
Normative goal	4,79	1,38	0.32**	0.72**	0,74**	-
Willingness	3,98	1,56	0.43**	0.66**	0.53**	0.62**

N = 300; * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; rating scales from 1 to 7.

Results reveal that the familiarity with the SBP under study is relatively low in the total sample (Mean = 2.93, SD 1.64) and lower in the exchange offer (Mean = 2.71, SD = 1.57) than in the sharing one (Mean = 3.15, SD = 1.69). The SBP offered to consumers tends to activate the three goals, at least to some extent, in line with our hypothesis one. Accordingly, the willingness to adhere to the SBPs is moderate (Mean= 3.98, SD = 1,56). The relationships between the three goals and the willingness to participate are significant, thus providing preliminary evidence supporting our hypothesis two. The relationships between the three goals are high, showing that the SBP we offered tend to stimulate all goals.

We tested hypotheses 1a and 1b by computing the means obtained in the three overarching goals. Table 6 depicts the results for the entire sample. In support of the hypothesis 1a, participants reveal the activation of the three goals. Results of paired comparisons, show that hedonic goal (Mean = 4.61, SD = 1.36) is less activated than both gain (Mean = 5.05, SD = 1.33; $t = -7.82$, $p < 0.00$) and normative (Mean = 4.79, SD = 1.38; $t = -3.33$, $p < 0.00$). The gain goal is more activated than the normative goal ($t = 5.05$, $p < 0.00$).

Table 6 contains the results of the ANOVA test conducted to test hypothesis 1b. Results reveal that the difference between exchange and sharing SBPs regarding the hedonic goal is not significant ($F = 0.42$, $p = 0.52$) and that the same happens with the gain goal ($F = 0.32$, $p = 0.57$), thus partially supporting hypothesis 1b. However, although the difference regarding the normative goal is statistically significant ($F = 5.81$, $p = 0.02$), it goes in the opposite direction regarding our expectation, being higher in exchange condition (Mean = 4.98, SD = 1.38) than in the sharing condition (Mean = 4.60, SD = 1.36), thus not supporting the hypothesis 1b.

Table 6 – ANOVA analysis comparing goal activation in exchange and sharing SBPs.

	Entire sample		Exchange		Sharing		
Goal	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Hedonic	4,61	1,36	4.56	1.41	4,65	1.31	0.42
Gain	5,05	1,33	5.00	1.39	5.09	1.27	0.32
Normative	4,79	1,38	4.98	1.38	4.60	1.36	5.81**

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01

To test hypothesis 2, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. In model one, we included, as controls, the age and the familiarity with services like those under study. Our intuition was that SE is a new phenomenon, thus becoming more appealing to the young.

Regarding familiarity, on the same grounds of novelty, the expectation was that this variable could play a key role in influencing consumers' willingness to participate in SBPs. Results are shown in table 7.

Table 7 – Hierarchical regression analysis predicting willingness to participate in exchange and sharing SBPs.

	Total sample		Exchange		Sharing	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Controls						
Age	0.10		0.21**		0.01	
Familiarity	0.44**		0.35**		0.57**	
Overarching goals						
Age		0.09		0.12*		0.07
Familiarity		0.22**		0.18**		0.32**
Hedonic		0.44**		0.35**		0.54**
Gain		-0.03		0.27*		-0.22**
Normative		0.24**		0.10		0.34**
R^2	0.20**	0.52**	0.15**	0.49**	0.32**	0.63**
R^2 change		0.32**		0.34**		0.31**

N= 300, 150 in both exchange and sharing samples; * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; Standardized coefficients are reported.

Considering the entire sample, we observe that, in line with our prediction, familiarity shows a significant relationship with consumers' willingness to participate in studied SBPs (β = 0.44, p < 0.00). The effect of age is non-significant (β = 0.10). This tendency remained in step two when interest variable was introduced. Here we see that the study variables explain a significant part of the variation of the consumers' willingness to participate in SBP (R^2 = 0.52, p< 0.00). More specifically, and in line with our predictions, the hedonic (β = 0.44, p < 0.00) and the normative (β = 0.24, p < 0.00) goals show a significant relationship with the willingness to participate, a result not obtained in the gain goal (β = -0.03).

When we analyse the pattern of relationships between variables considering the type of SBP under examination, exchange or sharing, we observe important changes. The familiarity with the offer plays an important role in explaining consumers' willingness to participate in both exchange (β = 0.35, p < 0.00) and sharing SBPs (β = 0.57, p < 0.00), but, contrarily to our prediction, the relationships are positive. Regarding age, it is influential just in the exchange SBP (β = 0.21, p < 0.00). The inclusion of goals in the second model reveals important differences between both offers. In exchange SBP just the hedonic ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.00$) and the gain ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.00$) goals significantly predict consumers' willingness to adhere to service explaining, but the effect of the normative goal is not significant ($\beta = 0.10$), in line with the hypothesis two. Together with controls, these two goals explain a significant proportion of the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.49$, $p< 0.00$).

In support of our hypothesis two, the normative goal is positively related to the willingness to participate in the sharing SBP ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.00$). In the same sense, the hedonic goal is a relevant predictor ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < 0.00$), the same happening with the gain goal, but with a surprising negative relationship ($\beta = -0.22$, $p < 0.00$). All study variables explain an important part of the variance of the willingness to participate in the SBP ($R^2 = 0.63$, $p< 0.00$).

5. Discussion

The overriding goal of this research was to explore the overarching goal-framing motives behind consumers' behaviour towards the SBPs of the SE, that is, how the cognitive activation of goals does play a determinant role on how consumers behave towards SBPs ("pure exchange" and "pure sharing" ones) of the SE. Our results show that our H1a, H1b and H2 were tendentially confirmed. SBPs do, indeed, cognitively activate consumers' hedonic, gain and normative overarching goals. Consumers' willingness to participate in SBPs is influenced by all these three goals. That is, consumers show interest in participating in the two extreme opposite ends of the SBPs continuum that forms the SE due to the cognitive activation (positively or negatively) of either of the three-overarching goal-framing motives, which are triggered by the stimulus presented. Participation, on the other hand, in "pure exchange" SBPs is tendentially mostly driven by two of the three motives – "hedonic" and "gain" –, whereas, in "pure sharing" SBPs is tendentially mainly driven by also two of the three motives – "hedonic" and "normative"; and compared with "pure exchange" SBPs, "pure sharing" SBPs similarly triggers the hedonic and gain goals, however, the latter one in a negative way.

Furthermore, as expected, the relationship between the normative goal and the willingness to participate is higher in "pure sharing" SBPs than in "pure exchange" SBPs. Additionally, we also obverse that the respondents' age goes in the opposite direction of the foreseeable. On the other hand, in the case of the "pure sharing" SBP, the gain motive has a significant but negative relationship, which could be explained by economic factors (i.e., price) as pointed by Wang et al. (2019) regarding the negative influence on customer sustainable consumption behaviours.

In a first instance, what the confirmation of our hypotheses reveals and leads us to elaborate is that consumers participate in the various forms SE's activities due to either individual ("selfish" interest, centred around the "I") and supra-individual ("altruistic" interest, centred around the "we", the "collective") interests, thus, in line with Brewer and Caporael's (2004 and 1997 cited in Lindenberg & Foss, 2011) distinction between an individual and a supra-individual mindset.

In a second instance, what the results further reveal us is that the willingness to participate in SBPs is, indeed, depend on either individual (being gain or hedonic) and supra-individual (being normative) motivations and not just on one of them, thus in line with what the specific group of literature described about consumers' participation in SBPs of the SE that is based on both individual and supra-individual motives postulate (Benoit et al., 2017; Habibi & Laroche, 2018; Godelnik, 2017; Cherry & Pidgeon, 2018; Bocker & Meelen, 2017; Zhang et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2019; Toni et al., 2018; and Hawlitschek et al., 2018). On the other hand, observing our results together with the results obtained from the studies mentioned above, we see that all of them meet Lindenberg's (2008) explanation that the existence of 'mixed motives' is the rule rather than the exception. And the reason for that is because, even though when one of the three goals is cognitively activated and becomes the predominant (the focal one), this does not mean that the other two simply disappear. Contrarily, they are 'just' moved to lower cues in the consumers' minds, pushed into their cognitive background, but still exert some influence. This could well explain why studies on consumers' participation in SBPs, including the present one, tendentially reveal a strong presence of all three goals simultaneously.

Analysing with much precision, and as Lindenberg (2008) proposes, it is perfectly expectable that, for example, the hedonic goal-frame has a strong presence, because it has an apriori strength that is stronger than the gain goal-frame, which, on the other hand, is stronger than the normative goal-frame; and the hedonic goal-frame is, almost by default, the strongest of the three, because it is directly related to need satisfaction and thus directed linked with our most basic instinct, let us say, of survival. In that sense, it is natural that consumers' manifest interest in participating in SBPs due to hedonic reasons. It was expected that the hedonic dimension would be present in both extremes of SBPs of the SE.

Furthermore, and knowing in hand that the hedonic goal-frame would be present in any of the two SBPs services presented to our respondents, however, the same prediction in regards to the other two goal-frames (gain and normative) could have some variances, because, as also explained by Lindenberg (2008), in order for any of these two to displace the hedonic goal from the foreground, they "must have additional supports from compatible goals in the background" (p. 675); And such additional supports are dependent on external influence, particularly, from institutional arrangements, social institutions, organisations. It is those institutional arrangements that come to have a decisive role in stimulating citizens and consumers to act, behave in a much normative goal-oriented manner, which, as Lindenberg (2008) explains, among the three is the one that is even more dependent on external support.

Having this in mind, we can therefore observe and interpret, again both in the results of the present study and the ones revealed by other studies on the matter, that consumers do show interest in participating in SBPs of the SE also due to the normative and gain strands they associate them with. In this sense, the way SBPs present themselves and describe their services to consumers is done in a such a way that successfully cognitively activates in the minds of consumers both the normative and/or gain goal-frames, thus making consumers believe that by participating in them they predominantly feel a gain satisfaction and, more importantly, they believe that they are contributing for something that is above his/herself, individual interest, in other words, a supra-individual interest.

Moreover, if we try to interpret our results further, especially explain why consumers show interest in participating in SBPs due to normative motives, we find that they do so most probably because of the content of the "smart norm" (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007) that is associated with the description of each of the two SBPs. In other words, in both descriptions of each of the two SBPs, it is highlighted some prominent characteristics that sound like as both services having a mission and values around acting as pro-community, pro-alternative modes of transportation/accommodation, or, as Lindenberg and Steg (2007) call pro-environmentally, with no intention to harm others, and extending the impacts of such acts to future generations – examples: (1) "we are redefining the way the world thinks about alternative transport", "our mission is to provide a simple and responsible urban life (…) we aspire to a world where, in cities, there are more people who share than owners", or "our values are to build community of trust and offer an excellent, convenient and reliable service", in the case of Zipcar questionnaire; (2) "we are redefining how the world thinks about alternative accommodation", "our mission is to provide truly social travel experience (…) we aspire to a world in which people share their lives, promoting cultural exchange and mutual respect", or "our values are to build sharing community and offer a service of trust and kindness that connects people", in the case of Couchsurfing questionnaire.

Even further, in trying to understand why consumers show interest in participating in SBPs due to hedonic motives, we may find one of the possible explanations for that in Lindenberg and Steg's (2007) clarification: people, in a hedonic frame, will tend to decide their behaviour primarily dependent on the mood they have at that particular moment. Meaning: in case they do not feel like it, they will not follow pro-environmental, pro-community, pro-alternative modes of transportation/accommodation behaviours. Simply as that. Similarly, regarding the gain motives behind consumers' intention to participate in both SBPs, they may be explained if we again interpret the results through Lindenberg and Steg's (2007) lenses. The authors proclaim that people may engage in pro-environmental behaviours, also due to gain motives. Such behaviour happens when people recognize that they are confronted with an opportunity to minimize costs in a particular situation. Therefore, some respondents to both SBPs questionnaires may also have responded that they would participate in that particular SBP because they recognized in it a supra-individual strand, with markedly pro-environmental, pro-community, pro-alternative modes of transportation/accommodation higher purposes, however also due to how much they could have individually gained from participating in such SBP.

We complementary observe that the individual motivations are in line with the transformation expectations (around the self, relational, hedonic and efficacy) that respondents associate with both extremes of SBPs (being of "pure sharing", being of "pure exchange"), hence in line with Habibi and Laroche's (2018) study. Our results also show us that, indeed, respondents' mindset seems to reflect the adoption of a new mindset in which access to goods and services is seen as more valuable than ownership of them, thus, recalling Godelnik's (2017) proclamation that, in current times, there is the tendency for the adoption of such a new mindset, especially from millennials' generation.

Finally, if we observe the results specifically through the lenses of Lindenberg's (2006, 2008, 2013), Lindenberg and Foss's (2011), and Lindenberg and Steg's (2007, 2013) overarching goals, what we observe is that, in the case of Couchsurfing (a "pure sharing" SBP), respondents showed intention to participate in it majority due to "hedonic" and "normative" motives (thus, tendentially supra-individual purposes), whereas, in the case of Zipcar (a "pure exchange" SBP), the intention to participate is, instead, majority driven by "hedonic" and "gain" motives (thus, tendentially individual purposes). However, respondents showed interest in participating in a Zipcar program also due to normative motives, even though with not so much emphasis compared with the other two overarching motives. Therefore, the fact that respondents do associate both extremes of SBPs of the SE with normative/supra-individual strands leads us to elaborate that they recognised in SE's services/products collective good, altruistic, non-egocentric features; thus, dimensions that are mainly characterised by having transformative purposes – favouring, let us say, the interconnection, closeness between people, a more cohesive, fairer society – and, hence, in line with Lindenberg and Steg's (2007) suggestion that, the attaining of pro-environmental behaviour in the population at large, is fundamentally dependent on the normative frame.

5.1. Limitations and future research directions

Our measure of the hedonic, gain and normative goals was a first attempt to measure these variables. As seen in the correlation matrix, the relationship between the three motives is high, even if multicollinearity tests conducted in regression analysis have shown acceptable results. Future research could refine the measure such that the construct validity can be assured.

Second, from an empirical perspective, this study presents data based on a limited sample, confined to Portuguese population; thus, we cannot extrapolate from our findings that the same results could have been obtained from, for example, another sample originated in another country, as there might understandably be variations in other scenarios, cultures, societies.

Third, the conducted experiment does not, however, reveal us what the most differentiating overarching goal-framing motive for consumers to be willing to participate in SE's SBPs versus Non-SE's more traditional, conventional services/products is. We predict that it is expectable that the most differentiating overarching motive between the two is the normative one. Two of the three overarching motives – instrumental/gain and hedonic – will be present in both scenarios, but only 1 – normative – will remain in one of them.

Therefore, future research venues could address these limitations and conduct additional experiments, in which it would test with more in-depth the overarching goal-framing motives behind consumers' willingness to participate in Non-SE's more conventional services/products vs SE's SBPs. The idea would be to unveil whether the overarching normative motive would stand out as the most differentiating driver for consumers to participate in SBPs of the SE, and thus, in the SE as a whole.

6. Conclusion

Consumers' intention to participate in "pure sharing" and "pure exchange" SBPs of the SE depends on either hedonic, either gain, either normative motives, hence comprising both individual and supra-individual strands, to be cognitively activated in them by the stimulus given by the nature of the SBP in question. More relevantly, it can be observed that there is a tendency for consumers to associate both extremes of SBPs of the SE with normative/supra-individual strands, hence, allowing to deductively elaborate that they markedly choose to participate in the SE due to its also transformative character – it is in favour of the collective good, bringing people closer together, a more cohesive, altruistic, non-egocentric, fairer society, and ultimately, why not, the unlocking of new paths for better sustainability of the planet and a more auspicious future for humanity. This deduction needs, however, further confirmation, which could be tested under a more in-depth second experiment whose primary goal would be to seek an answer to an additional complimentary research question: in comparing consumers' willingness to participate in SE's SBPs versus Non-SE's more conventional services/products, what is(are) the overarching goal-framing motive(s) standing out as the most differentiating driver(s) for consumers to participate in the first? Our preliminary assumption, and partially based on the results of the present study, is that, with a precondition that consumers have trust (variable acting as a moderator) towards each of these two blocks of services/products, the "normative" motive will stand out as the most differentiating driver for consumers to participate in first.

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GENERAL CONCLUSION

Main Findings, Theoretical and Empirical Contributions

As a general overview, this research project represents a new additional layer into the overall discussion on clarifying the real contours of the SE. It contributes explicitly, like other mentioned studies along this work – Acquier et al. (2017), Muñoz & Cohen (2017), Frenken & Schor (2017), Ryu et al. (2018), Constantiou et al. (2017), Trenz et al. (2018) or even Habibi et al. (2017), just to give a few examples –, in giving sense to a field of knowledge that presents crass paradoxes, divergencies, and contradictions. In other words, facing apparent chaos, it concurs to reduce the general ambiguity and settle the contention/dispute discourse that we have been witnessing over the last few years (particularly, from 2015 onwards). In this sense, this work also helps to demystify and deconstruct some scepticism from specific stakeholders – particularly, academia, the scientific community – about its real relevance.

The first study helped to clarify and understand the SE in terms of an overall legitimate category (to the best of our knowledge, it is the first to do so in scientific research). It notably revealed that the SE is arising, associated mainly with emergence formation processes, comprising social movement, similarity clustering, and truce components, as a new legitimate category, even though it still lacks a degree of socio-political legitimation. Moreover, from a perspective of how categories are structured, the nature of the SE seems to fall into a metaphorical approach, particularly the notion of radial categories, where there is a growing truce in conventionally agreeing to use the metaphor "sharing economy" to refer to a wide range of apparently divergent, paradoxical, opposite categories and subcategories. This is why we have been witnessing major, sometimes, inconclusive discussions, interpretations amongst diverse stakeholders about what the SE really is. This unsettled discourse has, therefore, been contributing to an increasing number of stakeholders interested in this discussion, as well as affecting and changing the way those stakeholders have been communicating with each other.

Overviewing studies 2 and 3, on the other hand, they both represent a contribution in analysing two pivotal and central stakeholders, whose mutual interaction have been crucial for the construction and legitimacy gaining of SE as a whole category, and without which we indeed wouldn't be talking about the SE today – (i) the entities/organisations belonging to the field and (ii) the consumers.

Concerning study 2, it contributes from a perspective of trying to understand how and why SE organisations have been gaining legitimacy (also in this case, and to the best of our knowledge, it is the first to do so in scientific research). As means to find out this, the present work followed a two-layer strategy: firstly, it was analysed how entities/organisations belonging to the field have been portraying themselves to the world (identity claims); and, secondly, it was analysed how external audiences, stakeholders have progressively been referring to those entities/organisations, as means to unveil what is the nature of the legitimacy that is granted to them. The findings, respectively, revealed that:

1) Given that there is an evident absence of awareness from SBPs of whether their activity belongs to a field that external audiences/stakeholders are progressively labelling as "SE", our study on SBPs reveals that these entities state who they are and what they do by resorting to a self-presentation strategy that is based on proclaiming to be part of a global social movement and act as social agents of change concerning contemporary high-priority matters: the widespread prevalence of information technologies; the desirability of empowering people; the social cohesion as a requirement in a globalised world; and sustainability as a precondition for a more auspicious world;
2) A vast panoply of stakeholders has been contributing to the legitimacy gaining of the SE and the respective entities/organisations belonging to the field. Specific stakeholders – for instance: scientific community, analysts, media, regulators, governments, and international organisations/organisms – have mainly been involved in finding a meaning to the SE and its constituent entities/organisations, and a disciplined fit into societal categories. In this respect, there is a clear pattern path in granting the SE and its constituents as legitimate market identities (the nature of the legitimacy granted is sameness/close substitution, distinctiveness, cognitive legitimation, and Socio-political, even though the latter one is currently still under construction). By doing this, SBPs are using global meanings and positive shared beliefs as ingredients to craft their identities and maximise legitimacy regarding external stakeholders.

Overall, the study unveils that SBPs are entrepreneurial ventures operating in an environment whose main stakeholders broadly legitimise their operation and in which these projects seek the favourable content that allows them to build a legitimate identity, hence, suffering the influence of the context but, at the same time, taking an active role in innovating and building a better, more cohesive and sustainable world.

Regarding study 3, it adds another layer to understanding why consumers/customers/users/clients are ending up using SE services/products. In this respect, and once again as to the best of our knowledge, it is the first in studying how consumers behave towards the SE from a perspective of a Goal-Framing Theory, in other words, it sought to find out how the cognitive activation of goals does play a determinant role on how consumers behave towards SBPs ("pure exchange" and "pure sharing" ones) of the SE. The findings revealed that consumers' intention to participate in "pure sharing" and "pure exchange" SBPs of the SE depends on either hedonic, either gain, either normative motives, hence comprising both individual and supra-individual strands, to be cognitively activated in them by the stimulus given by the nature of the SBP in question. More relevantly, we can observe that there is a tendency for consumers to associate both extremes of SBPs of the SE with normative/supra-individual strands, hence, allowing to deductively elaborate that they markedly choose to participate in the SE due to its also transformative character – it is in favour of the collective good, bringing people closer together, a more cohesive, altruistic, non-egocentric, fairer society, and ultimately, why not, the unlocking of new paths for better sustainability of the planet and a more auspicious future for humanity.

From a managerial/practitioners' perspective, this research project may also be of great value, as it may help incumbents/startups and prospective businesses (i) understand what the real contours of the SE are, (ii) get a complete look at all spectrum of activities that make the field so they may better identify the type of activity they might want to develop their product/business, (iii) find the best business model for their activity, (iv) understand how important it is to know your targeted audiences, potential customers, from a perspective of what are the real "hidden" motives behind their consumer behaviour (being more "hedonic", "instrumental/gain" – these two at the individual level – or even "normative" – this one at the supra-individual entity level – motives). This is crucial in a SE context, because, as we saw before, the field is full of numerous activities that range from being of "pure share" (more closely associated to "collectivistic consumer behaviour") to being of "pure exchange" (more closely associated to "individualistic consumer behaviour"). It is fundamental for managers and practitioners to know how their audiences behave, as it will determine whether or not their product/service will be appealing for potential customers.

Summing up, all things considered, having in mind our central research question – what is the nature of the SE and how and why stakeholders have progressively been granting legitimation to it? –, and particularly taking into consideration the three intertwined studies that give body to this overall research project, a new refreshed approach and definition of the SE seems to arise naturally:

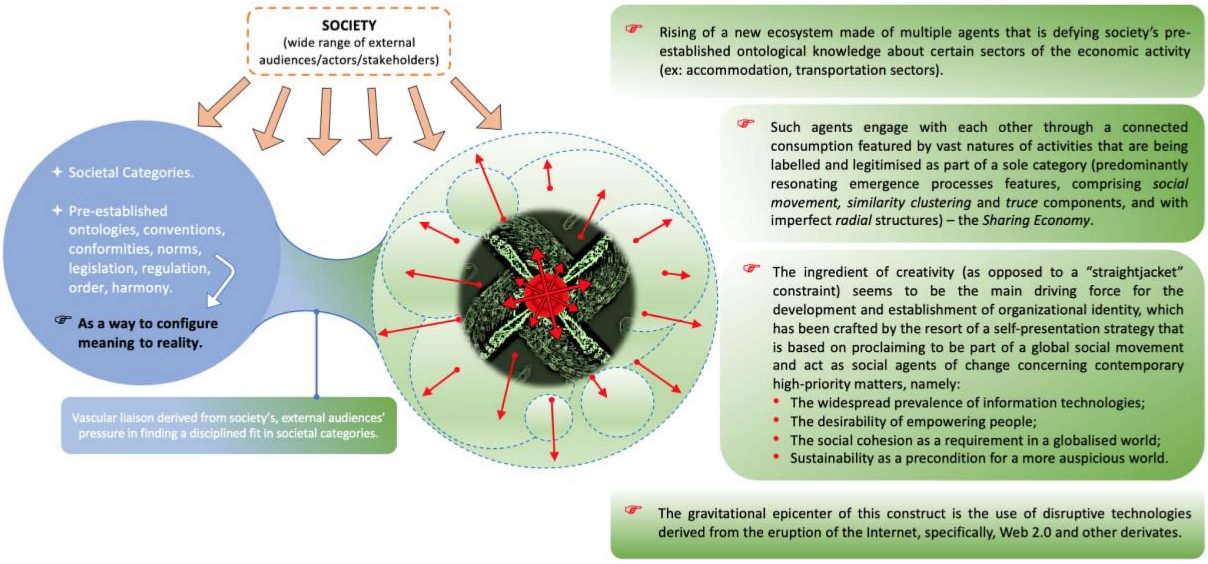
☞ It is a new interrelations paradigm, made of an ecosystem of multiple agents – producers, suppliers, consumers and complementary service providers – who engage with each other through a connected consumption featured by vast natures of activities (sometimes ambiguous, paradoxical, divergent, antagonistic, opposite, contradictory) – P2P; B2P; G2P; For-Profit; Non-Profit – that society (a panoply of actors/stakeholders) have progressively been agreeing and legitimising to all be part of the same category (predominantly resonating emergence processes features, comprising social movement, similarity clustering and truce components, and with imperfect radial structures). Moreover, the ingredient of creativity (as opposed to a "straightjacket" constraint) seems to be the main driving force for the development and establishment of organisational identity, which has been crafted by the resort of a self-presentation strategy that is based on proclaiming to be part of a global social movement and act as social agents of change concerning contemporary high-priority matters:

- The widespread prevalence of information technologies.
- The desirability of empowering people.
- The social cohesion as a requirement in a globalised world.
- Sustainability as a precondition for a more auspicious world.

☞ The gravitational epicentre of this whole phenomenon is the use of disruptive technologies derived from the eruption of the Internet, specifically, Web 2.0 and other derivates.

Below follows figure 5 as an attempt to illustrate this.

Figure 5 – Overview of the SE as a rising societal radial category



Source: own elaboration.

Limitations

⇨ In terms of each of the three studies conducted along with this research project

As previously described under the subsection "Limitations" of each of the three studies, the main limitations are:

- ✓ To regards to Study 1

First, the literature we used to map the evolution of the SE did not come from a systematic search of both academic and non-academic sources, limiting the scope of our analysis by leaving important constitutions out of the corpus. Besides, our findings do not reveal clear, finite, separated periods. We believe that the definite establishment of these milestone events will be impossible to ascertain. That is to say, as the SE's consolidation as a category shows signs of still being a continuous process of evolution, it is more than predictable that new milestone events may arise in its evolution. Finally, entrepreneurs of the several forms of SE projects were left out of the analysis, which lessens understanding of the category formation process. However, we suspect that in the early stages of category formation, with the characteristics we identify in the SE, the label itself is not a feature for those who are involved in launching new ventures. Indeed, this will not be the case when starting new ventures in well-established categories, such as private versus non-profit organisations. Entrepreneurs can claim category membership on which to base their organisations' identity. In the same way, customers of several types of offers made by SE organisations were not analysed.

- ✓ To regards to Study 2

First, we treated all organisations included in our study as belonging to the SE as a broad emergent category. Thus, differences between organisations, or the distinctiveness criterion (Albert & Whetten, 1985) were not examined. Additionally, SE is not the only category to which SBPs belong to. Some are for-profit and others non-for-profit, and all operate in market categories, like transportation or hospitality, that also developed specific sector requirements. The role of this multiple belonging was not analysed.

Second, we assumed a personification metaphor to study an important perspective of the SBPs identity formation, which led us to highlight how these entrepreneurial ventures claim to be important actors contributing to a more sustainable and cohesive world. However, this approach did not allow access to the process that important internal actors, particularly founders and other leaders, use to construct the meaning of the identity of their organisations collectively.

Third, when studying the legitimacy granting to SBPs, we have chosen four specific prototypical organisations. These organisations are, at least nowadays, well-established entities, which means that they already have benefited from the legitimacy required for survival. The fact that we did not include SBPs projects that failed limits the reach of the conclusion about the importance of legitimacy in the emergence and viability of these new entrepreneurial ventures.

- ✓ To regards to Study 3

Our measure of the hedonic, gain and normative goals was a first attempt to measure these variables. As seen in the correlation matrix, the relationship between the three motives is high, even if multicollinearity tests conducted in regression analysis have shown acceptable results. Future research could refine the measure such that the construct validity can be assured.

Second, from an empirical perspective, this study presents data based on a limited sample, confined to Portuguese population; thus, we cannot extrapolate from our findings that the same results could have been obtained from, for example, another sample originated in another country, as there might understandably be variations in other scenarios, cultures, societies.

Finally, the conducted experiment does not, however, reveal us what the most differentiating overarching goal-framing motive for consumers to be willing to participate in SE's SBPs versus Non-SE's more traditional, conventional services/products is. We predict that it is expectable that the most differentiating overarching motive between the two is the normative one. Two of the three overarching motives – instrumental/gain and hedonic – will be present in both scenarios, but only 1 – normative – will remain in one of them.

⇨ **In terms of the research project as a whole**

Complementarily, and taking into consideration this research project as a whole, one may elaborate the following:

This research project had the ambition to become a relevant additional contribution in helping clarify and settle the discussion, many times controversial and with great dispute amongst various actors/stakeholders, about the real contours of the SE, and mainly, about its real legitimacy as a new arising phenomenon that came to stay and lay its foundations in society for good, and is not an epiphenomenon, derived from a temporary "cultural construction" that, for example, without the media attention and the way these marketise and mediatise it, no one would be talking about it. It embodies an additional layer, just as other mentioned contributing studies along this work did – Acquier et al. (2017), Muñoz & Cohen (2017), Frenken & Schor (2017), Ryu et al. (2018), Constantiou et al. (2017), Trenz et al. (2018) or even Habibi et al. (2017) to name a few, in providing further sense to this so exciting arising field of knowledge.

The prism used by this research project to broach how one should further demystify the significant controversies around the SE is nothing more than that: just another building block in reinforcing and providing sense to it, reduce the ambiguity and find a disciplined fit into societal categories. It does not represent a sort of "messiah's revelation" that, with this sole piece of work, we finally came to understand what the SE is. It does not have the presumption to say that it is the ultimate arrival point, the final missing stone that brings the so quested solution to close once and for all the tensions around the subject and which everyone was missing. Meaning: this overall research certainly is not the most exhausting study made so far regarding the SE. Although, yes, it adds up to current literature on the subject – again, as to the best of our knowledge, it is the first to broach the theme and frame it against particular relevant literature theories (namely, category formation theory, organisational identity theory, legitimacy construction, gaining and granting theory, and goal-framing theory) – it is limited, nevertheless, in the sense that there certainly could be other theories in the literature that could be taken into account as bottom line frameworks to investigate the SE.

Suggestions for Future Research

⇨ **In terms of each of the three studies conducted along with this research project**

Since the future research directions identified in study 1 – specifically regarding the shedding light on the interaction processes by which different stakeholders craft a category based on a truce, considering that actors engage in reciprocal influence processes – were addressed by the conduction of study 2 and, likewise, the ones specified in study 2 – specifically concerning studying consumer behaviour towards SBPs products or services – were addressed by the conduction of study 3, all that remains still unaddressed are the future research directions associated with study 3. Thus, to regards to the last study, and as previously described under the subsection "future research directions" of it, the suggestions for future research may include, for example, the undertaking of complementary research that, being inspired in our study 3, could bring further insights from other populations, countries, societal environments. Such exploration could contribute to adding one more building block in construing a more substantial, comprehensive and broader framework of why people, citizens, users, costumers, clients around the world are increasingly participating in the SE.

Further, future research venues could address these limitations and conduct additional experiments, in which it would test with more in-depth the overarching goal-framing motives behind consumers' willingness to participate in Non-SE's more conventional services/products vs SE's SBPs. The idea would be to unveil whether the overarching normative motive would stand out as the most differentiating driver for consumers to participate in SBPs of the SE, and thus, in the SE as a whole.

Moreover, future research could advance in further explaining why consumers participate in the SE by identifying other bottom-line frameworks and research paths other than those elected by study 3. There indeed may be different not yet unidentified alternative baseline literature frameworks besides Habibi et al.'s (2017) Sharing/Exchange continuum, and

Lindenberg's (2006, 2008, 2013), Lindenberg and Foss's (2011), and Lindenberg and Steg's (2007, 2013) Goal-Framing theories chosen by us to be taken into consideration and worth reflection.

⇨ **In terms of the research project as a whole**

Complementarily, and taking into consideration this research project as a whole, one may elaborate the following:

Just as we proposed ourselves to do it with the current research project, we also encourage other scholars to explore different lines of research that may be based on other complementary theories came from other interdisciplinary literature. That would undoubtedly enrich further advancements in this field of knowledge, uncover and bring to the table more, not yet identified, missing pieces of the whole puzzle that construes the SE.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please consider the following transport service from a web platform (www.iCar.com)

> **iCar** is the world's leading car sharing network. Based on new technologies, we are redefining the way the world thinks about alternative transport.
>
> Our mission is to provide a simple and responsible urban life. We aspire to a world where, in cities, there are more people who share cars than owners.
> Our values are: to build a community of trust and to offer an excellent, convenient and reliable service.
>
> We provide access to cars for hours or days. Customers pay based on usage time.
>
> This service can be accessed online, via smartphone or tablet and to access it you only have to be over 18 years of age, have a driving license and:
> Choose the plan that suits you better, with a payment of only 6 EUR/month and the rest depending on usage.

1) Considering this service, please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Totally disagree			Do not agree nor disagree			Totally agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1.	I'm familiar with services like this one	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I've used services like this one	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	My knowledge of how such a service works is high	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I would probably opt for a service like this the next time I need transportation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	I would prefer a service like this instead of another transportation service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	I would probably choose a service like this instead of another transportation service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2) From your point of view, what do you think are the consequences, on a personal level, of using this service (on a scale of 1 to 7)?

Totally disagree			Do not agree nor disagree			Totally agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	If I would use this service							
1.	I would enjoy myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I would be contributing to a better world	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I could save resources to invest in the future	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I would enjoy a pleasant experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	I would be contributing to a fairer society	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	I would be doing a good deal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	I could enjoy life more	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	I would be doing what should be done in present times	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	I would be managing my resources more reasonably	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	I would have a really interesting experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	I would help other people monetize their resources	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	I would save money	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The following questions will be used to identify the participants. ISCTE-IUL strictly complies with the requirements inherent to individual data protection.

1. Sex: M ❒ F ❒ Transgender ❒
2. Age: ____ years of age
3. What is your level of education?

   ❒ Graduate Degree ❒ Master's Degree ❒ Other Postgraduation Degree

4. Compared to other people in the country where you live, how would you characterize your family's overall financial status?

   ❒ Well below average
   ❒ Below average
   ❒ Slightly below average
   ❒ Slightly above average
   ❒ Above average
   ❒ Well above average

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please consider the following accommodation service from a web platform (www.shareyourcouch.com)

> **Share Your Couch** is the world's leading accommodation sharing network. Based on new technologies, we are re-defining how the world thinks about alternative accommodation.
>
> Our mission is to provide truly social travel experiences. We aspire to a world in which people share their lives, promoting cultural exchange and mutual respect.
> Our values are: to build a sharing community and offer a service of trust and kindness that connects people.
>
> We provide access to private accommodation for days or weeks. Customers do not pay; they only make their accommodation available to other travelers.
>
> This service can be accessed online, via smartphone or tablet and to access you only have to:
> Find a place to stay on your vacation at locals' residences who have also joined and share their homes with other travelers.

1) Considering this service, please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Totally disagree			Do not agree nor disagree			Totally agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1. I'm familiar with services like this one	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I've used services like this one	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My knowledge of how such a service works is high	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I would probably opt for a service like this the next time I need accommodation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I would prefer a service like this instead of another accommodation service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I would probably choose a service like this instead of another accommodation service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2) From your point of view, what do you think are the consequences, on a personal level, of using this service (on a scale of 1 to 7)?

Totally disagree			Do not agree nor disagree			Totally agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

If I would use this service							
1. I would enjoy myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I would be contributing to a better world	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I could save resources to invest in the future	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I would enjoy a pleasant experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I would be contributing to a fairer society	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I would be doing a good deal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I could enjoy life more	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I would be doing what should be done in present times	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I would be managing my resources more reasonably	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I would have a really interesting experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I would help other people monetize their resources	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I would save money	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The following questions will be used to identify the participants. ISCTE-IUL strictly complies with the requirements inherent to individual data protection.

1. Sex: M ❒ F ❒ Transgender ❒
2. Age: ____ years of age
3. What is your level of education?

   ❒ Graduate Degree ❒ Master's Degree ❒ Other Postgraduation Degree

4. Compared to other people in the country where you live, how would you characterize your family's overall financial status?
   ❒ Well below average
   ❒ Below average
   ❒ Slightly below average
   ❒ Slightly above average
   ❒ Above average
   ❒ Well above average

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

2

Appendix B

sustainability

MDPI

Review

Characterizing the Sharing Economy State of the Research: A Systematic Map

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Abstract: The sharing economy is an emerging niche for innovation capable of disrupting established socio-technical and economic regimes. Because of this potential to cause radical changes in a wide array of domains, research in multiple disciplines addressing various aspects entailing this phenomenon is proliferating. In this emerging body of literature, the understanding and framing of the sharing economy are often different. Without knowledge about the current state of the research related to the sharing economy, delineating research trends, gaps, and needs for directing effectively primary research are not possible. This study aimed to synthesize the state and distribution of existing publications related to the sharing economy in multiple disciplines. We used the systematic mapping technique to scope, identify, and classify the publications at a fine level of granularity. We reviewed 589 journal articles (published from 1978 to 2017), and 454 met the selection criteria. The journal articles reviewed were published in 284 different journals. Intriguingly, 15 journals published five to 13 publications each and 221 journals had a single article about the topic. Journals belonging to the subject areas "business, management and accounting" (42.1%) and "social sciences" (35.2%) published more than 70% of the reviewed publications. Accommodation (19.8%) and car and ridesharing (17.2%) were the two most prominent sectors; 50.2% of the publications addressed C2C transactions (10.6% B2C, 24.4% more than one type); 62.3% were about accessing resources, and 5.1% concerned transfer of ownership (i.e., second-hand or donation); and 19.2% covered access and transfer of ownership simultaneously. While empirical studies were the majority (53.1%, when comparing with conceptual ones), qualitative approaches were most common (51.5% against 24.9% quantitative and 17.4% mixed methods). Literature review (22.9%), survey (13.2%), case study (7.3%) and interview (7%) were the most frequently used methods. User behavior (26.4%), business models and organizational aspects (22.7%), institution and governance system (18.7%), conceptualization matters (17%), and sustainability evaluation (15.3%) are research clusters identified from a grounded approach. The link between user behavior and net environmental impacts of sharing options was the largest gap found in the research needing attention from a sustainability perspective. Accordingly, multidisciplinary investigations quantifying behavioral root causes, magnitude, and likelihood of environmental rebound effects using real-world data are strongly encouraged.

Keywords: sharing economy; collaborative consumption; collaborative economy; systematic map; sustainability

1. Introduction

Privately owned resources such as everyday objects and tools, large consumer goods, and even skills were commonly shared among neighbors, family, and friends, in a time when material abundance was not so universal as today. An extraordinary increase of material affluence in wealthy societies, driven by a combination of contributing factors, such as, profitability targets as the main driver in business, mass production, easy access to natural resources, and availability of cheap labor [1,2], has allowed almost every household to potentially be able to afford and privately own their own resources. Consequently, private resources ceased to be collectively shared. Because most resources are not in use all of the time, an enormous idle capacity has been created [3].

More recently, a combination of factors involving this phenomenon of plentiful idle resources and the popularization of ICT tools among consumers contributed to the re-emergence of collaborative ways of consumption, now in market niches often referred to as sharing economy or collaborative consumption. In this "novel" socioeconomic paradigm, traditional sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting, and swapping were redefined through ICT [4]. The extension of the act of sharing from familiar ties towards a network of (unknown) peers, represented a radical breakthrough induced by the web 2.0. Innovative businesses enabled the exchange of underutilized resources among users (peer-to-peer) via online platforms [5].

The modern sharing phenomenon has been described through quite a few inter-related concepts and a plethora of concomitant definitions [6–8]. Today, the sharing economy is often presented as a "confusing", "ill-defined" or even an "umbrella" concept, with as many interpretations as applications exist [9–11]. The growing body of literature in different disciplines reflects the endless (and useless) debates and conflicting definitions and segmentation for new sharing and exchange. Examining attributes of publications related to the phenomenon can help direct the trajectory of the field to more constructive matters by clarifying research gaps and needs.

The aim of this study is, therefore, to describe and "map" research about the sharing economy. We use the systematic mapping technique [12] to scope, identify, and classify publications referred as sharing economy at a fine level of granularity. Relevant publications are categorized and presented in the form of a searchable database. The resulting database can be used to identify knowledge gaps to inform primary research, other research synthesis methods such as synopses of evidence, and synthesis and evaluation methods such as a systematic review. Hence, this database may be of potential interest not only for researchers from diverse fields looking at distinct characteristics of the sharing economy but also to a wide range of stakeholders, including policymakers, consumers, nongovernmental organizations, authorities, and research funding bodies.

2. Theoretical Background

Sharing is the universal form of human economic behavior, distinct from and more fundamental than reciprocity. It has also probably been the most basic form of economic distribution in hominid societies for several hundred thousand years [13]. Social networks and the development of ICT changed the way people communicate and interact worldwide paving the way to the modern sharing phenomenon [4,5]. Innovative businesses exploit this market opportunity by creating a virtual space (online platforms) for enabling underutilized resource (information and assets) exchange among users (consumer-to-consumer, C2C) on the internet.

Multiple and distinct events of legitimacy, mechanisms. and claims have characterized the evolution of the phenomenon of consumers sharing resources [14]. Entrepreneurial organizations, consumers, and other key stakeholders, namely, the scientific community, investors, and the media, have established novel complex interactions. This new structure has led to the emerging behaviors about identity claims (self-referential) and legitimacy granting (from stakeholders). Intriguingly, pioneering organizations (for- and not-for-profit) of the modern sharing phenomenon (e.g., Airbnb, Zipcar, Timebanks, Make:markerspaces) do not state themselves as a sharing economy category business, whereas a vast range of stakeholders, external actors, and interested audiences have granted legitimacy to these organizations.

Several scholars have tried to grasp what the phenomenon of sharing is and provide a definition for it, however, scholars have either adopted similar terms to describe distinct contexts or used different words to name similar instances. Noteworthy, historical conceptions of sharing resources are described in the classic work of the French sociologist Marcel Mauss [15] and American scholar Lewis Hyde [16,17]. Mauss laid the foundation of social theories of reciprocity and gift exchange, and Hyde offered a thoughtful analysis of the social function of goods and services exchanged outside the structure of the market, both using "sharing" to connote gift exchange. Probably the first scholar to use the term "sharing economy" was Lawrence Lessig, Harvard Professor and founder of Creative Commons, in his seminal book, *Remix* [18]. Professor Lessig used the term sharing economy in the context of culture and art rather than physical resources. Then, Professor Russel Belk [19] and Rachel Botsman and Roo Rogers [4] conceptualized definitions and a segmentation to the phenomenon under the umbrella "collaborative consumption", a term that drew much attention from academia and business.

Belk [19] distinguishes in two main periods, before and after the web 2.0. Firstly, the act of sharing already occurred, but it was mainly without monetary exchange and enclosed among relatives, friends, and acquaintances. On this regard, Belk [19] basically refers to sharing economy as "the act and process of distributing what is ours to others for their use and/or the act and process of receiving or taking something from others for our us". In this case (before web 2.0), sharing represents an ancient type of consumption. After web 2.0, sharing tangible and intangible assets became a widespread trend and economic, social, and environmental drivers contribute to its diffusion in order to encourage sustainable behaviors.

Botsman and Rogers [4] interpreted collaborative consumption as the phenomenon of consumers accessing underutilized resources (goods, services, information, skills, time, and money) in creative and innovative ways, reinventing traditional market behaviors (renting, lending, swapping, sharing, bartering, and gifting) and enabling access over ownership. This interpretation implies maximizing the utilization of assets through efficient models of redistribution and shared access. According to the authors, collaborative consumption is one of the four instances of what they called "collaborative economy"; collaborative production, collaborative education, and collaborative finance being the other three. The collaborative economy was defined as "an economy built on distributed networks of connected individuals and communities versus centralized institutions, transforming how we can produce, consume, finance, and learn" [4]. A common characteristic of the four is the presence of a network of peers, trust, and idle resources.

The segmentation offered by Botsman and Rogers's overlaps previous attempts to define the phenomenon of sharing and precedent studies used the terms with far too little rigor. Moreover, the fact that the term "sharing" acquired a broader meaning with the advent of social commerce has contributed to the lack of consistent use of the terms. The main consequence is that sharing has been associated simultaneously to gift exchange (donation), asset exchange (second-hand buy and sell), renting, and co-owning between peers (P2P), business-to-consumer (B2C), or business-to-business (B2B) via the internet.

For this reason, there might be a need for further strict definitions. More recently, further attempts to define the field have been made. Frenken and Schor [3], for example, provide a marked distinction among definitions, building a boundary between what sharing economy is and what it is not related to various forms of platform economy such as product-service systems (PSS), on-demand economy, and second-hand economy. According to the authors, in a sharing economy, consumers grant each other temporary access to under-utilized physical assets ("idle capacity"), possibly for monetary compensation. Thus, in their definition, the distinct features of the sharing economy involve consumer-to-consumer interaction (C2C), temporary access, and physical goods. Curtis and Lehner [20] further identify some of the key semantic properties of the sharing economy for sustainability such as non-pecuniary motivation for temporary ownership and rivalrous (i.e., prevents simultaneous use by other users).

Despite that the use of the terms have changed over a short period, they lack more stringent and clear-cut definitions. It is not our purpose in this paper, however, to try to come up with new and more specific definitions, but rather to examine how the terms "sharing economy", "collaborative economy", and "collaborative consumption" have been used by scholars. Nevertheless, to establish the scope of the present paper and the unit of analysis, we have interpreted the phenomenon of modern sharing as an economic model based on sharing underutilized assets (products, spaces, and skills) for monetary or nonmonetary benefits mediated by the internet. To systematically dissect and structure this emerging research field is the topic of this paper.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Systematic Mapping

Systematic mapping studies are designed to give an overview of a research area through classification and coding [21]. It involves searching the literature in order to know what topics have been covered, and where the literature has been published [22]. Systematic mapping was developed in social sciences in response to a lack of empirical data when answering questions using systematic review methods, and a need for a method to describe the literature across a broad subject of interest [23]. The method has been recently adapted to be used to generate evidence synthesis in environmental sciences [12]. Currently, systematic mapping is used in social and environmental sciences to provide an overview of evidence for broad research questions.

Systematic mapping, like a systematic review, is a robust, repeatable, and transparent scientific method used to identify and categorize available literature on a particular topic [24]. It uses established searching protocols and has rigorous criteria for inclusion or exclusion [12].

Although a systematic mapping study and a systematic literature review share some commonalities (e.g., concerning searching and study selection), they are different in terms of goals, and thus approaches to data analysis [12]. Systematic reviews aim at synthesizing evidence and also consider the strength of evidence, whereas systematic maps are primarily concerned with structuring a research area and do not usually attempt full data extraction or critical appraisal of the relevant research [21]. Systematic mapping does not attempt to answer "closed-framed" questions (where all the critical elements are clearly specified are termed) as systematic review does, but instead describes the state of knowledge for "open-framed" question (questions that lack specification of some critical elements) or topics [12], identifying the nature, volume, and characteristics of research in a chosen field [24]. Moreover, a systematic map can also provide the basis for an informed decision about whether to undertake the in-depth review on all of the studies or just a subset. Mapping studies enable the contextualization of in-depth systematic literature reviews within broader literature and identification of gaps in the evidence base [25].

We adapted the guidance for systematic mapping developed in the fields of social sciences [23] and environmental sciences [12], following the steps shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Steps of the systematic mapping of this study.

3.2. *Objective of the Map*

3.2.1. Objective Formulation

The terms "sharing economy", "collaborative consumption" and "collaborative economy" have been commonly used in recent years to refer to a proliferation of initiatives, business models, and forms of work. These include the development of far-reaching corporate digital platforms that have become a means of organizing cooperative practices, and the local, regional, and community-led collaborative initiatives in sectors such as housing, tourism, transport, social enterprise, culture, and the arts. Researchers from many disciplines have studied this phenomenon from diverse perspectives.

This study aims to identify and systematically map published research to address the following objectives (Os):

O1. To characterize and map research associated with the sharing economy phenomenon, describing the developments, themes and recurrent features of the research;
O2. Provide a map that is searchable by topic;
O3. Inform future research synthesis and evaluation methods such as systematic review;
O4. Identify knowledge gaps in order to inform future primary research.

3.2.2. Research Questions

The research questions (RQs) that guided the construction of the map were:

RQ1. In which knowledge areas, by which journals and when research on sharing economy has been published?
RQ2. Which sharing sectors and items have been studied?
RQ3. What types of transactions (e.g., C2C, B2C, B2B, B2C) have been said to comprise the sharing phenomenon?
RQ4. What research methods and sources of data have been used?
RQ5. What topic areas have been focused?

3.3. Search Strategy and Searches

3.3.1. Databases

The search aimed to include the online databases Scopus and ISI Web of Science (WoS) which cover the breadth and depth of available literature on the unit of analysis of this study.

3.3.2. Search Terms

We scoped to identify suitable relevant key terms to include in the finalized search string. First, we adopted the seven terms related to "collaborative economy" described by Botsman and Rogers [4] to initially scope the field, and used them in individual searches in the Scopus and WoS database. We performed the search in August 2018 and restricting the results to items published before the year 2018. Table 1 presents the keywords used and the number of hits obtained.

Table 1. Keywords used and hits obtained during the initial scooping of the field.

Search String	Scopus Hits	WoS Hits
"collaborative economy"	96	72
"collaborative consumption"	181	184
"sharing economy"	691	539
"collaborative production"	359	199
"peer economy"	20	16
"collaborative finance"	4	3
"collaborative education"	240	163
TOTAL	1591	1176

Then, we combined all the seven terms in a single string and obtained 1452 and 1009 hits. We observed that only 139 and 167 items were overlapping within the keywords used in Scopus and WoS database, respectively. This result indicated that each of these keywords (at least those with most hits) might represent individual research clusters. To check this assumption and aid the selection of the keywords, we produced term maps of co-occurrence of terms in the title, abstract, and authors' keywords of the publications using the software VOSViewer [26], see Figure 2.

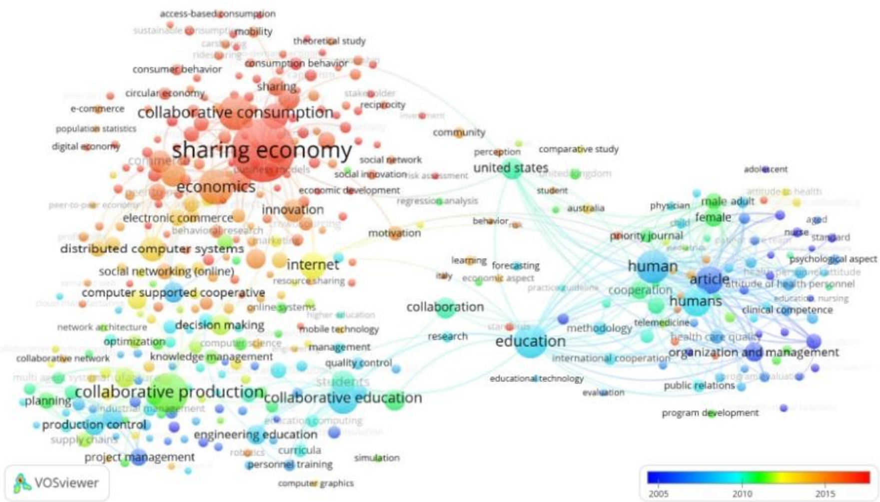

Figure 2. Temporal co-occurrence term map of the keywords shown in Table 1.

The network visualization (Figure 2) shows that three main clusters exist as follows:

1. Collaborative education;
2. Collaborative production;
3. Sharing economy, encompassing collaborative consumption, and collaborative economy.

The publications related to collaborative education have emerged around the years 2005 to 2008 (see Figure 2); subsequently, about the year 2010, research probing collaborative production began to develop. Then, after the year 2012, publications refereeing to collaborative economy, collaborative consumption, and sharing economy took over the research field. Sharing economy is currently the most used term in publications.

It appeared that the terms the search strings "peer economy" and "collaborative finance" were of no significant relevance for our study due to their relatively low number of publications (see Table 1). Moreover, analyzing the term map shown in Figure 2, research on "collaborative education" and "collaborative production", proved to be of low relevance to the core of the sharing economy research. Then, we decided to produce a new term map only including the keywords "sharing economy", "collaborative economy", and "collaborative consumption" to check whether these keywords can be seen as a single nucleus that unifies various research areas. Figure A1 of Appendix A presents the term map developed. Those three keywords formed a consistent system boundary for the study. Therefore, we decided to proceed only with those keywords. Table 2 displays the finalized search string and the number of publications in Scopus and WoS.

Table 2. Finalized search string following scoping in Scopus and Web of Knowledge.

Search String	Scopus Hits	WoS Hits
"sharing economy" OR "collaborative economy" OR "collaborative consumption"	837	662

3.3.3. Saving Results

We imported the results retrieved from Scopus and Web of Knowledge (1499 publications) into Mendeley, a software to manage references. The automatic function in the software removed all duplicates in the dataset. A total of 942 unique publications remained. We than exported the cleaned dataset to a Google® Sheet so that the members of the systematic mapping team could build the database simultaneously. The Google Sheet contained the following primary bibliographic information: item type (journal article, conference paper, book, etc.), publication year, author, title, where it was published (e.g., journal name, conference name, and book title), abstract, pages, issue, volume, publisher, place, language, and DOI. Table A1 of Appendix A shows a breakdown by publication type.

3.4. Screening and Coding of Titles and Abstracts

3.4.1. Selection Criteria

We decided to extract information for the coding only of journal papers (n = 618) since this is the highest quality of publication among the other publication types. Journal papers were assigned as excluded from the database when their main topic was not about the sharing economy, collaborative consumption, or collaborative consumption (false positive).

3.4.2. Development of Coding Categories

We adapted the classification constructs for the sharing economy proposed by Hamari and colleagues [27], Plewnia and Guenther [28], and Trenz and colleagues [29]. In addition to what these studies used, we added publication areas and general theme as code categories. Table 3 shows the coding categories, their definition, subcategories of codes, and references used.

Table 3. Codes used for classifying the sharing economy publications.

Coding Category	Definition	Code Subcategory	References
Sharing sector	Business sector that the article refers to	Several, coded following a grounded approach	[28]
Actors involved	Describes the actors involved in the transaction	Consumer-to-consumer Business-to-consumer Business-to-business More than one type Not clear	[29]
Type of behavior	Indicates the type of trading activity	Buying used Swapping Borrowing Renting Donating More than one type Not clear	[27]
Acquisition mode	Mode of exchange	Transfer of ownership Access over ownership More than one mode Not clear	[27]
Compensation scheme	Describes how the sharing transaction is compensated	Monetary Nonmonetary Not clear	[29]
Publication area	Knowledge area of the journal that the article was published. It can be seen as the knowledge paradigm under which the publication was written	Several, coded accordingly to Scopus and WoS classification (e.g., social sciences, computer sciences, multidisciplinary)	Scopus and WoS
Themes in sharing economy research	Describes the general theme of the publication	Grounded approach of coding and recoding in an iterative way	[30,31]

"Not clear" was used when we could not determine the level of a category from the information contained in the title, abstract, and keywords of the publication.

3.4.3. Coding

The title, abstract, and authors' keywords of the 618 journal articles were reviewed and coded accordingly to the code classification in Table 3. It took approximately four months to complete coding for all publications. Twenty-nine (29) items were actually "popular science articles", and 10 were special issue reports, and thus, these were excluded from the review. We identified 102 articles as a false positive, and therefore excluded from the mapping. We excluded another 28 papers because their abstract was not available; and nine entries were special issue editorials. Finally, a total of 453 journal articles remained for review and coding.

The coding team (the authors of this paper) shared a working log, writing the progress, modifications in the working sheet, codes added, essential points to be discussed or check by another member. We visited this working log each time we initiated and reinitiated the coding for acknowledging new updates. We also had virtual follow-up meetings every second week during the coding phase.

Once all papers were reviewed, we imported the Google working sheet into the RStudio software (Version 1.1.463) using the package "googlesheets". We plotted and explored the results of the mapping with the "ggplot2" package.

4. Results

4.1. Evolution of Publications on the Research Topic

The data show that the number of publications has grown from 18 studies in the year 2013 to 589 publications in the year 2018 (see Figure 3). This exponential increase in publications indicates that the topic of the sharing economy is an emerging field of the research area. We can see in Figure 3 that the number of publications on the sharing economy suppressed those of older and established research paradigms such as sustainable consumption and product-service system. Moreover, a sharp increase in publications in 2017 occurred not only in the sharing economy field but also in its neighboring field, circular economy.

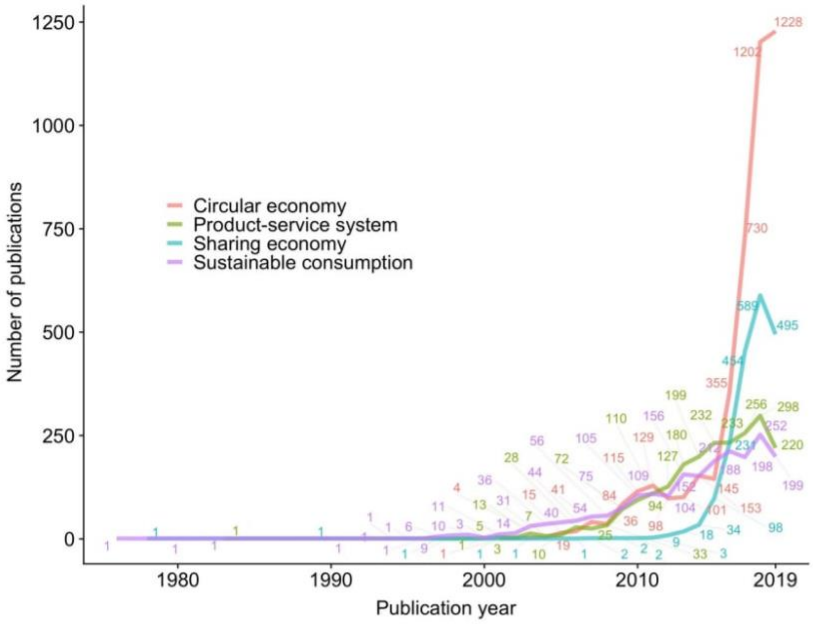

Figure 3. Comparison of the evolution of the sharing economy field with the circular economy, product-service system, and sustainable consumption field. Data retrieved from Scopus on 2 September 2019 (publications in journal issues of the year 2020 were allocated to the year 2019).

Some pivotal publications are considered foundation in the sharing economy field. Table A2 of Appendix B highlights the top ten most cited publications in Scopus concerning the keywords "sharing economy", "collaborative consumption", or "collaborative economy". In our study, we decided to proceed with these three search keywords that describe the core of the sharing economy research field (cf. Table 2). The use of these terms of describing the research field could be explained by analyzing the most influential publications (cf. Table A2 of Appendix B) and the evolution of the sharing economy publications (Figure 3) over the years. The top-most cited publication "What's mine is yours: how collaborative consumption is changing the way we live" by Botsman and Rogers [4] and older publication by Felson and Spaeth [32] explain the early use of the term "collaborative consumption" in academia. Accordingly, "What's mine is yours" by Botsman and Rogers [4] actively contributed to the increasing number of publications in the area. Furthermore, with the rise of sharing platforms such as Airbnb and Uber over these years, the term "sharing economy" became more popular and an accepted "buzz word" in society.

The following sections present the results of the classification of the 453 journal articles selected concerning the knowledge area of the journal they were published in, the business sectors they referred to, the actors involved and sharing behaviors that they addressed, the research approach, methods, and data type that they used. We close the results section by showing the research clusters identified through a grounded approach. The resulting database where the 453 articles were classified is available in the Supplementary Material 1 accompanying this study.

4.2. Knowledge Areas

The subject areas of the journals determine the nature and type of the scientific contributions of the publications. In this study, we adopted the Scopus classification, which uses a general and a specific category to classify the journals. Concerning a general classification (right-hand side of Figure 4), journals belonging to the subject areas "business, management and accounting" (42.2%) and "social sciences" (35.1%) published more than 70% of the reviewed publications. The publications within "environmental science" and "economics, econometrics and finance", "computer science", and "general engineering" account for 8.4%, 5.3%, 4.8%, and 4.2%, respectively.

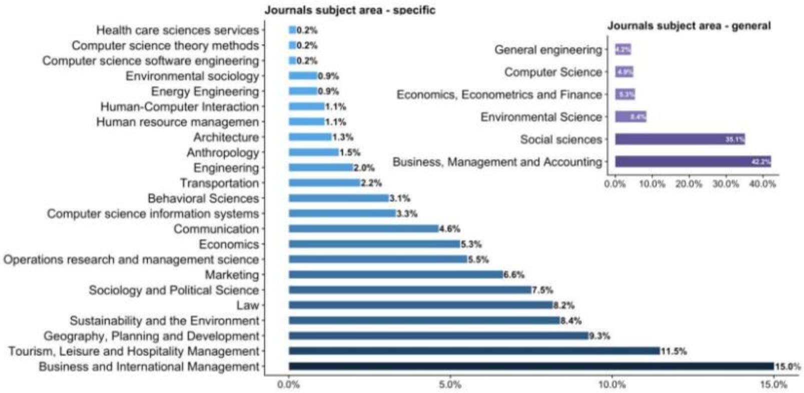

Figure 4. Percentage of publications in subject areas (general and specific).

Concerning specific subject areas (left-hand side of Figure 4), about 35% of the total publications were in three areas, "business and international management" (15%), "tourism, leisure, and hospitality management" (11.5%), and "geography, planning, and development" (9.3%). Publications in areas such as "sustainability and the environment", "law", "sociology and political sciences", "marketing", "operations research and management science", and "economics" account for between 8% to 5% each, whereas "economics" and "social economics" score below 3% each.

Remarkably, two hundred eighty-four (284) different journals published the 453 journal articles reviewed, 15 journals published between five and 13 publications each, and 221 journals issued a single article about the topic. The *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* was the top with 13 articles, followed by the *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* (11 articles) and the *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* (10 articles), *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* (8 articles), *Journal of Cleaner Production* (8 articles), and *Sustainability* (8 articles). See Figure 5 for a complete overview of the number of articles published in diverse journals.

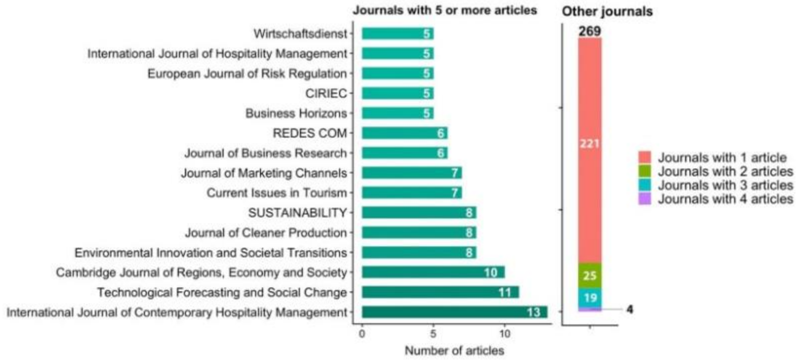

Figure 5. Names of journals with five or more articles (left side) and number of journals with four to one article (right side).

4.3. Business Sectors

Shared space (21.4%) and shared mobility (18.1%) are the two main focuses of the majority of the publications. Some of the publications analyzed more than one sectors (15.4%), whereas 34.8% do not specify the sector of application (generic context). The predominant focus of these latter publications was on conceptualization and discourses about the modern sharing phenomenon in general terms. The remaining publications (10.5%) were about other intangible assets (3.1%), food (2.6%), other tangible assets (2.6%), finance (0.7%), and other sectors (1.3%). Table 4 shows the detailed percentage distribution within each business sector. Except for food and finance that refer only to one specific sector (i.e., meal sharing and crowdfunding), the other sectors embed various subsectors. Space contains shared accommodation (19.8%), coworking office (0.9%), and land sharing (0.7%); mobility divides car sharing (17.2%) and bike sharing (0.4%); other intangible assets covers crowdwork (2%), time banking (0.7%), and energy (0.4%); other tangible assets holds clothing (2.2%), books (0.2%), and furniture (0.2%); finally, other sectors entails digital manufacturing (0.7%), customs broker (0.2%), journalism (0.2%), and healthcare (0.2%). Hence, shared accommodation and car sharing result to be the main contexts of research application; on the contrary, scarce focus has been employed to other subsectors of space and mobility, such as coworking office and bike sharing, finance, food, other tangible assets, and other intangible assets.

Table 4. Percentage of publications in business sectors identified through the mapping.

Business Sector	Subsectors
Space (21.4%)	shared accommodation (19.8%)
	coworking office (0.9%)
	land sharing/farming (0.7%)
Mobility (17.6%)	car sharing (17.2%)
	bike sharing (0.4%)
Other intangible assets (3.1%)	crowdwork (2%)
	time banking (0.7%)
	energy (0.4%)
Food (2.6%)	meal sharing (2.6%)
Other tangible assets (2.6%)	clothing (2.2%)
	books (0.2%)
	furniture (0.2%)
Other sectors (1.3%)	digital manufacturing (0.7%)
	customs broker (0.2%)
	journalism (0.2%)
	healthcare (0.2%)
Finance (0.9%)	crowdfunding (0.9%)
Not identified 34.8%	

4.4. Actors Involved and Types of Resource Exchanges

Private consumers granting each other access to products or services with monetary compensation are the predominant characteristics of the research field; 50.2% of the publications reviewed addressed consumers-to-consumer transactions, and 62.3% were about accessing resources in diverse business sectors. Business-to-consumer transactions covered 10.6% of the publications, while 24.4% encompassed more than one type of transaction. Few studies (5.1%) were about the transfer of ownership (i.e., second-hand or donation) and 19.2% covered access and transfer of ownership together in the same publication. Accordingly, renting and transactions with monetary compensation comprised 44.1% and 59.7% of the publications, respectively. In contrast, few publications mentioned buying used (1.3%) and donating (1.1%). This is aligned with the definition of sharing economy by Frenken and Schor [3] that state that transactions entailing transfer of ownership belong instead to a so-called "second-hand economy". Furthermore, our results point out that nonmonetary sharing behaviors such as borrowing (4%) and swapping (1.8%) have received little attention in research. Figure 6 presents the exact percentages for the different types of transactions.

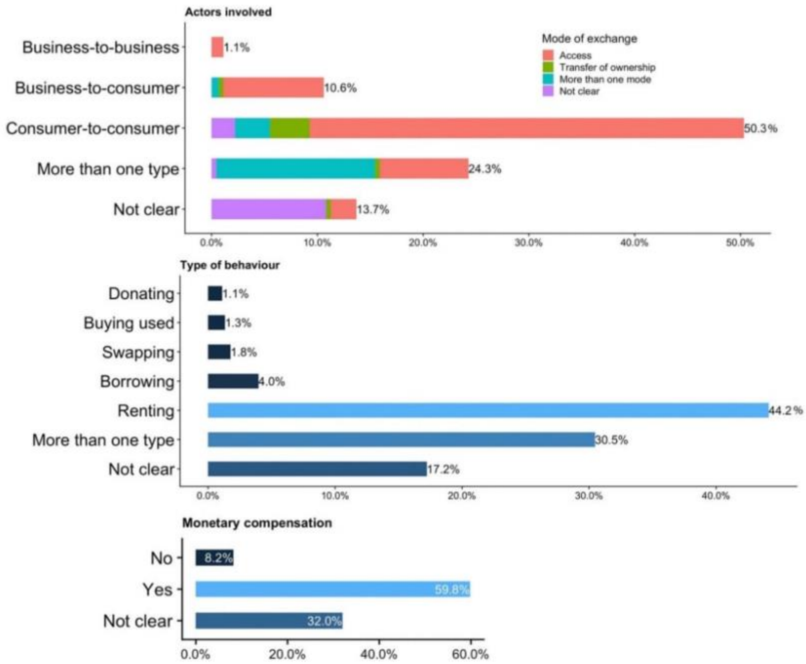

Figure 6. Representation of how publications covered different types of transactions between actors.

4.5. Research Approach and Methods

The majority of the reviewed studies were empirical (53.1%), while qualitative was the most commonly adopted approach (51.5%). Twenty-seven methods were identified across all disciplines (see Figure 7). The vast extent of these methods were literature review (22.9%), surveys (13.2%), case studies (7.3%), and interviews (7%) indicating that major efforts are made to understanding the area and its dynamics; whereas methods based on data mining are less utilized showing the emergence and low data availability of the field. Notably, life cycle assessment, the most popular method to assess the environmental impacts of products and services, appeared in a single publication [33]. Figure 7 shows the precise percentages of the research approach and methods.

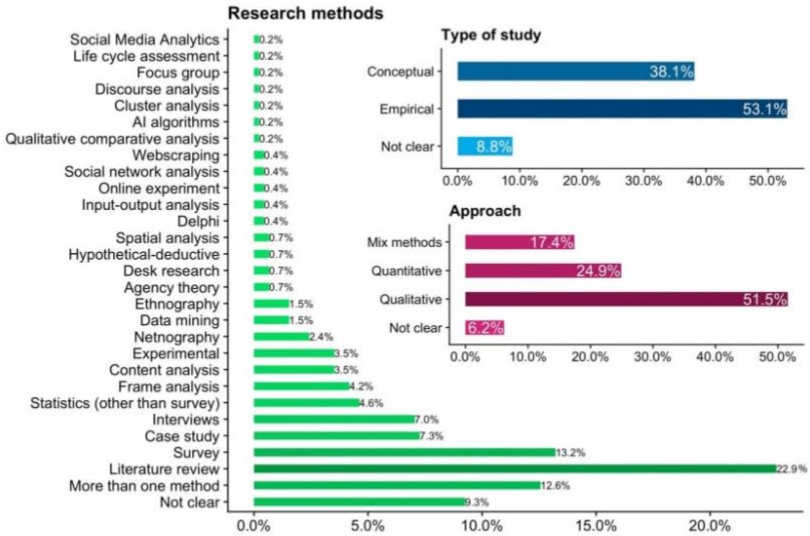

Figure 7. Percentage of conceptual vs. empirical studies, research approach, and methods.

4.6. Research Clusters and Recurring Themes

We identified the following five clear research clusters: (1) user behavior (26.4%), (2) business models and organizational aspects (22.7%), (3) institution and governance system (18.7%), (4) conceptualization matters (17%), and (5) sustainability evaluation (15.3%). Table 5 shows the recurring themes, the size of each cluster, and example of studies.

Table 5. Five research clusters, respective recurring themes, size, and example of studies. Note that the percentage of the publications designates the cluster size.

Research Cluster	Recurring Themes within the Cluster	Cluster Size	Examples of Studies
User behavior	Investigation of preferences and motivation of users and attitude towards sharing; study of human-computer interactions; scrutiny of issues related to reputation, risk and trust and human–computer interaction.	26.4%	[9,27,34]
Business models and organizational aspects	Development and evaluation of new business models for sharing; comparison between traditional and sharing business models; analysis and discussion on emerging challenges to management.	22.7%	[35–37]
Institution and governance system	Proposals for implementation of regulation and laws; analysis of matters of ethics and labor; discussion on asymmetric power relationships between actors; argumentation about societal norms.	18.7%	[38–40]
Conceptualization matters	Proposal of definitions of the sharing economy, collaborative consumption and collaborative economy; analysis and exploration of the modern sharing discourse; discussion about what sharing economy is and is not; debates about the promises and paradoxes of the paradigm; examination of the societal drivers and barriers to a transition to and scale up a sharing society.	17%	[3,5,41]
Sustainability evaluation	Appraisal, discussion and estimation of: social impacts (penetration of the SE in societal areas; impact on the job market and working condition); environmental impacts (estimates on possible adverse effects caused by sharing/exchanging business models in the environment); and economic impacts (measures of business revenue or economic potential).	15.3% Social impacts (8.4%) Environmental impacts (5.1%) Economic impacts (1.8%)	[42–44]

5. Discussion

5.1. Emerging Patterns from the Research Trajectory

The (un)definitional boundaries offered by the influential articles and authors that have initially shaped the research field may explain the exchangeable use of the terms sharing economy, collaborative economy, and collaborative consumption. Our results indicate that a variety of online platforms for renting, selling, co-owning, and everything in between have embraced these terms to describe their business models. In this sense, the research area is characterized by studies encompassing a rich combination of exchange behaviors, such as renting [45], donating [46], buying and selling second-hand [47], swapping [48], and lending and borrowing [49]; participating actors (e.g., C2C, B2B, B2C, etc.); presence or absence of monetary exchanges; and exchange mode (e.g., transfer of ownership, access). Some of the distinguishing features of the literature are online platforms enabling transactions among strangers [50], decentralized control of business [51], users as independent contractors [52], and democratization of economy [53]. The lack of consistent use of the above terms may suggest that the research area is not only an emerging one but also taking over established research fields, namely, the product-service systems (B2C access via monetary exchange).

Our results also illustrate that the modern sharing phenomenon has radically disrupted the business sectors accommodation and mobility, and is entering an extensive range of different ones (cf. Table 4). The main reasons for this may be ascribed to the use of ICT [54] that has reduced transaction costs of sharing services [51]. Some literature attributes unintended adverse social and environmental effects to these developments and highlights the need for new regulatory mechanisms [55] and value co-creation [56,57]. We also encountered a few prominent studies arguing that the negative sentiments associated with some of the significant sharing organizations such as Airbnb, Uber, and Lyft in the public discourses across countries have influenced the general public perception of the modern sharing phenomenon in society [58,59].

The modern sharing phenomenon has stimulated scientific discussions across multiple disciplines about five research clusters (similar themes, see Table 5), investigated through numerous research methods. Business, management, marketing, and social sciences, in general, are the two dominant subject areas (cf. Figure 4). Nine special issues identified in our mapping also acknowledge the preeminence of these knowledge areas (Table A3 of Appendix B lists the special issues). While empirical studies were the majority (53.1% as comparing with conceptual ones), qualitative approaches were most common (51.5% against 24.9% quantitative and 17.4% mixed methods). Furthermore, literature review, survey, case study, and interview were the most frequently used methods (Figure 7). We can notice that the choice of research methods largely depends upon the unit of analysis (theme). It appears, therefore, that there is a correlation between disciplines, themes, and methods in our mapping.

The nuances of across disciplines and sectors demand an agreed definition of these new phenomena that avoids confusion with other similar business models and enables a congruent account of the sharing economy discourse. Radical framings of sharing economy in academia may clearly define and distinguish the research field. For instance, Steven and Lehner [20] proposed an intentional definition of sharing economy for sustainability as the sharing activity that is IT-enabled, non-pecuniary motivation for ownership (i.e., it leverages the idling capacity), temporary access, durable goods, peer-to-peer or business-to-business, rivalrous. Such radical definition, however, may also disconnect the current dominant understanding of the sharing economy in society.

5.2. Research Needs from an Environmental Sustainability Perspective

Although user behavior is the largest research cluster identified in our mapping, most of the research was done for the accommodation and mobility contexts. Hence, more research on the motivation of users to engage in sharing practices [60] beyond the accommodation and mobility sector is needed. Moreover, a deeper understanding of the differences in motivations to participate in the sharing economy depending on the platform orientation (i.e., for- or not-for-profit) [60–62], governance structure (i.e., democratic or centralized) [63–66] and ownership (i.e., collective or limited) are needed.

User behavior is also particularly crucial in the context of achieving net positive environmental impacts from sharing practices. "Accessing rather than owning", "second-hand consumption", and "donation" practices are deemed to increase resource efficiency through both (re)circulation of goods and utilization of durable assets and, more generally, to reduce consumption-induced environmental impacts such as waste generation or raw material extraction [67]. Consumer demand can increase when sharing practices make the provision of a particular service cheaper [3]. Additionally, the income gained (by providers and sellers) or freed (by takers and buyers) can be spent on other goods or services; the emissions (e.g., CO_2) of this marginal expending can offset partly, fully, or be more higher than the initial gains [68]. This phenomenon is known as re-spending rebound effect [69]. In this respect, to establish how the net environmental impacts of for-profit platforms like Uber and Airbnb differ from platforms that promote a democratic relation among their participants (Fairmondo or Fairbnb.coop, for instance) is a cornerstone to delineate the environmental sustainability of the modern sharing movement. Therefore, a more refined understanding of why consumers engage in the sharing economy seems also crucial to guide the selection of the most suitable mechanism to safeguards the environmental benefits from resource sharing in its many forms.

Policy as well as platform providers can consider actions and incentives to minimize the unwanted rebound effect. The effectiveness of respective organizational practices, however, depends on a deep understanding of the mechanisms that drive behavioral change of individuals. It seems that the current literature lacks empirical evidence about the effectiveness of practices and a consideration of the particularities of the sharing economy. Hence, our current understanding does not provide actionable advice for platform providers to adapt their business models.

There is, therefore, a salient need to bring together leading sharing economy players using a change-driven approach more urgent than pointless debates about terms and definitions. Mechanisms that simultaneously lead consumers to engage in the modern sharing phenomenon actively and maximize the environmental gains from the use of sharing platforms need development and testing. These mechanisms should be tailored to specific users' groups based on their particular characteristics (motivations, preferences, consumption behavioral choices). Future research should consider the full spectrum of the sharing economy business models considered (C2C access, C2C shared ownership, B2C access, second-hand consumption, and donation). More specifically, we see the following as essential for an environmentally sustainable sharing economy:

1. A behavioral framework for analyzing sharing behaviors and related spending intentions;
2. Understanding of the root causes and quantifications of full environmental behavioral effects addressing the fundamental gap whether, to what extent, and under which conditions rebound effects undermine the environmental gains of the sharing economy; and
3. Systemic understanding of rebound effects that allows for exploring inconsistencies in values, motives, and actions, i.e., why and how consumers engaged in sharing platforms spend the freed and saved money (involving, thus, dissimilar rebound effects and subsequently, different net environmental impacts), in regards to platform orientation and governance.

6. Conclusions

In this article, we reviewed and classified existing publications related to the sharing economy in multiple disciplines. Using the keywords "sharing economy", "collaborative economy," and "collaborative consumption", we extracted 942 unique publications from Scopus and Web of Knowledge published between 1978 and 2017. Four hundred and fifty-three (453) journal articles met the criteria for inclusion. These articles were in 284 different journals; 15 journals published five to 13 publications each and 221 journals had a single article about the topic. Journals from "business, management and accounting" (42.1%) and "social sciences" (35.2%) published more than 70% of the reviewed publications. The research has been focused consumers granting each other access to resources (i.e., transactions without transfer of ownership which mainly implies renting with monetary transactions). Accommodation and mobility were the dominating sectors, whereas other tangible (such as various type of objects) and intangible exchange (such as services, expertise, and ability) are rarely analyzed. Slightly more than half of the studies were empirical and qualitative approaches were dominant. We identified 27 different research methods. Literature review (22.9%), survey (13.2%), case study (7.3%), and interview (7%) were the four most frequently used methods. Using a grounded approach, we inductively identified the following five research clusters regarding the central theme being addressed in the publications: (1) user behavior (26.4%), (2) business models and organizational aspects (22.7%), (3) institution and governance system (18.7%), (4) conceptualization matters (17%), and (5) sustainability evaluation (15.3%). Although user behavior was the largest cluster, the link between user behavior and net environmental impacts in diverse sharing sectors is an important area needing attention. Quantitative studies should explore the relations between the motives for participating in sharing economy and how (i.e., which consumption areas) users spending their earnings, the root causes, magnitude and likelihood of environmental rebound effects. Sharing platform providers should avoid making shallow claims of environmental benefits. Instead, they should spend their efforts towards driving the modern sharing phenomenon as a genuine mode of sustainable consumption.

Supplementary Materials: The following are available online at http://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/20/5729/s1, Supplementary Material 1: Mapping database.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, R.L.; methodology, R.L.; formal analysis, R.L., J.S., J.M.C., M.T. and R.S.; investigation, R.L., J.S., J.M.C., M.T. and R.S.; writing—original draft preparation, R.L., J.S., J.M.C., M.T. and R.S.; writing—review and editing, R.L.; visualization, R.L.

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Appendix A

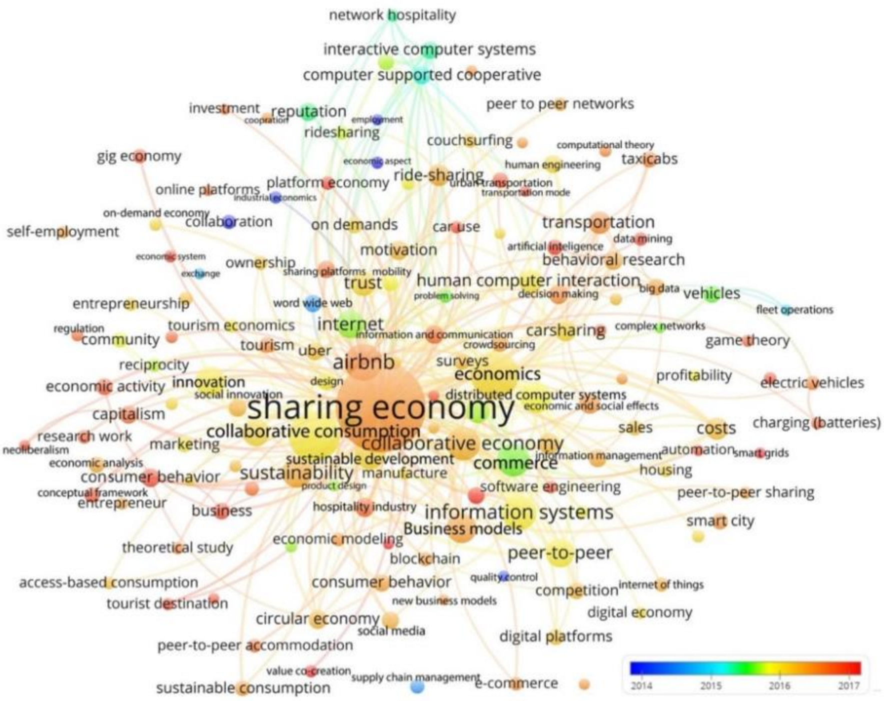

Figure A1. Term map out of the search string "sharing economy" OR "collaborative economy" OR "collaborative consumption" from Scopus.

Table A1. Breakdown of publication type and quantities after removing duplicates.

Publication Type	Quantity
Journal article	618
Books	53
Book chapters	19
Conference paper	252

Appendix B

Table A2. Top 10 most cited publications accordingly to google scholar using the keywords "sharing economy", "collaborative consumption", and "collaborative economy". Retrieved on 25 June 2018.

Cities	Authors	Publication Title	Year	Source Title
2011	R Botsman, R Rogers	What's mine is yours: how collaborative consumption is changing the way we live	2011	Book
1068	R Belk	You are what you can access: Sharing and collaborative consumption online	2014	Journal of Business Research
850	J Hamari, M Sjöklint, A Ukkonen	The sharing economy: Why people participate in collaborative consumption	2016	Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology

Table A2. *Cont.*

Cities	Authors	Publication Title	Year	Source Title
592	G Zervas, D Proserpio, JW Byers	The rise of the sharing economy: Estimating the impact of Airbnb on the hotel industry	2017	Journal of Marketing Research
407	J Schor	Debating the sharing economy.	2016	Journal of Self-Governance and Management Economics
330	A Sundararajan	The sharing economy: The end of employment and the rise of crowd-based capitalism	2016	Book
318	M Felson, JL Spaeth	Community structure and collaborative consumption: A routine activity approach	1978	American Behavioral Scientist
317	B Cohen, J Kietzmann	Ride on! Mobility business models for the sharing economy	2014	Organization and Environment
292	M Möhlmann	Collaborative consumption: determinants of satisfaction and the likelihood of using a sharing economy option again	2015	Journal of Consumer Behaviour
260	CJ Martin	The sharing economy: A pathway to sustainability or a nightmarish form of neoliberal capitalism?	2016	Ecological Economics

Table A3. Journal special issues on the sharing economy.

Publication Year	Special Issue Title	Journal Title
2016	Regulating the sharing economy	Internet Policy Review
2016	The risks and opportunities of the sharing economy	European Journal of Risk Regulation
2016	Mobility and the sharing economy	Transport Policy
2016	The City as a Lab: open innovation meets the collaborative economy	California Management Review
2017	Promises and paradoxes of the sharing economy: An organizing framework	Technological Forecasting and Social Change
2017	Sustainability perspectives on the sharing economy	Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions
2017	The Sharing Economy: Opportunities and Challenges for Marketing Channels and Supply Chains	Journal of Marketing Channels
2017	Shared responsibility and blurring boundaries: Strategic implications of the sharing economy	MIS Quarterly Executive
2017	Platforms and Ecosystems	Technology Innovation Management Review
2017	The Silicon Valley Ethos: Tech Industry Products, Discourses, and Practices	Television and New Media

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Appendix C

Sharing Economy: The Establishment of Organizational Identity Overtime, Considering Identify Claims and Legitimacy Granting

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Abstract

The Sharing Economy (SE) has been growing at an impressive rate across the globe (Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014) and emerging as an innovative and rapidly growing sector of the economy (Hira & Reilly, 2017), which attracted the attention of the scientific community. An increasing number of studies have been brought to light helping to document and analyze how SE manifests and evolves across economic systems, thus, contributing to refine and recast existing management theory (Mair & Reischauer, 2017). Nevertheless, there still is a lack of a common understanding of SE and its underlying mechanisms (Knote & Blohm, 2016). As an emergent category, SE has been contoured by being a mutant process, as it has been crafted by multiple and distinct temporal identity and legitimacy events, mechanisms and claims. Showing signs of being an on-going process of evolution, there is a constant need for further research to identify developments in the evolution of SE considering both identify claims (self-referential) and legitimacy (granted by stakeholders), which would offer additional comprehension about the SE phenomenon. The research addresses it by studying *what is the role of SE in establishing the identity of organizations belonging to the field, considering both identify claims (self-referential) and legitimacy (granted by stakeholders)?* To answer the research question, the research was designed involving two components inspired on category creation studies (Durand & Paolella, 2013; Glynn & Navis, 2013; Navis & Glynn, 2010; Kennedy & Fiss, 2013; Kennedy et al., 2010; Lounsbury & Rao, 2004; and Wry et al., 2014): 1) four prototypical SE organizations were selected, each of them belonging to Schor's (2014) four SE archetypes of activities: (i) *Airbnb* – peer-to-peer, for-profit activity –, (ii) *Zipcar* – business-to-peer, for-profit activity –, (iii) *TimeBanks* – peer-to-peer, non-profit – and (iv) *Make: makerspaces* – business-to-peer, non-profit. The content of the evolution of their identity claims was analyzed, using data from their public available reports, as well as, other secondary data available on-line; and 2) considering the same set of SE organizations, legitimacy evolution was analyzed considering how scientific community, investors, customers, media, other analysts and other interested audiences have been constructing category meaning to them, conferring the formation of SE categorical and organizational identities, and perceptions about the viability of their business models (Tripsas, 2009, as cited in Navis & Glynn, 2010). In short, it was analyzed how stakeholders assess the viability of SE categories and organizations and can grant or withhold legitimacy to SE organizations (Zuckerman, 1999, as cited in Navis & Glynn, 2010). This research presents a new layer on framing a detailed understanding of the SE field in its maturing dimension, thus, meeting Mair's and Reischauer's (2017) call for studying the SE, unpack and make sense of an inspiring and complex phenomenon and thereby advancing and sophisticate the existing theory.

***Keywords**: Sharing Economy; Identity Claims; Legitimacy Granting; Prototypical Organizations; Stakeholders.*

Introduction

The *Sharing Economy* has been having a great boost and attracting great attention over the last few years from a vast variety of stakeholders. Along the process, it has been evaluated as (i) having a huge potential for creating new businesses and services that may allocate value more fairly bringing people together in new ways (Schor, 2014), (ii) involving millions or even billions of participants and (iii) capitalizing the existing assets while providing spillover effects in the economy (Bonciu & Bâlgar, 2016).

This research main objective is to study how has the establishment of SE organizational identities been evolving overtime, considering identify claims and legitimacy granting.

The Theoretical-Conceptual Framework

The *Sharing Economy* (SE) is a relatively new phenomenon by way of technology standards (Zifkin, 2015), born of the Internet age (Belk, 2014), and in which you are not helping a friend for free but rather providing SE services to a stranger for money (Sundararajan, 2016). The commercial sharing services or "prototypical actors and practices" (Navis et al., 2012, p. 26) of SE allow people share resources in creative, new ways (Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014). It's a new form of sweating underutilized assets, by building communities around them and turning consumers into providers (Varsavsky, cited in Silver, 2013). Its participants are being labeled as *digital matching firms* (ESA, 2016) and the sector is perceived to contour four main characteristics (Penn & Wihbey, 2016): (a) they use information technology (IT systems) facilitate peer-to-peer transactions; (b) they rely on user-based rating systems for quality control; (c) they offer the workers who provide services via digital matching platforms flexibility in deciding their typical working hours; (d) to the extent that tools and assets are necessary to provide a service, digital matching firms rely on the workers using their own. It also has been seen by some as a label to broadly define the emergent ecosystem that is upending mature business models across the globe, while analysts argue that no single label can neatly encapsulate this movement, as for some the word "sharing" was a misnomer, a savvy-but-disingenuous spin on an industry they felt was more about monetary opportunism than altruism, while for others, more appropriate titles included the *Trust Economy*, *Collaborative Consumption*, the *On-Demand* or *Peer-to-Peer Economy* (PwC, 2015). These developments have started to challenge traditional thinking about how resources can and should be offered and consumed, supporting arguments that incremental improvements in our existing production and consumption systems are insufficient to transform our global economy toward sustainability (Lovins & Cohen, 2011; Stead & Stead, 2013).

As we see, SE has a novelty dimension associated with it, in the sense that it is an emergent category. Thus, it should be studied as an important phenomenon influencing the establishment of organizational identity and legitimacy in both for-profit and non-profit businesses/activities. We, therefore, propose a new layer of research on SE that gives light to its category construction, emphasizing the establishment of organizational identity overtime, considering both identify claims and legitimacy granting. This follows below.

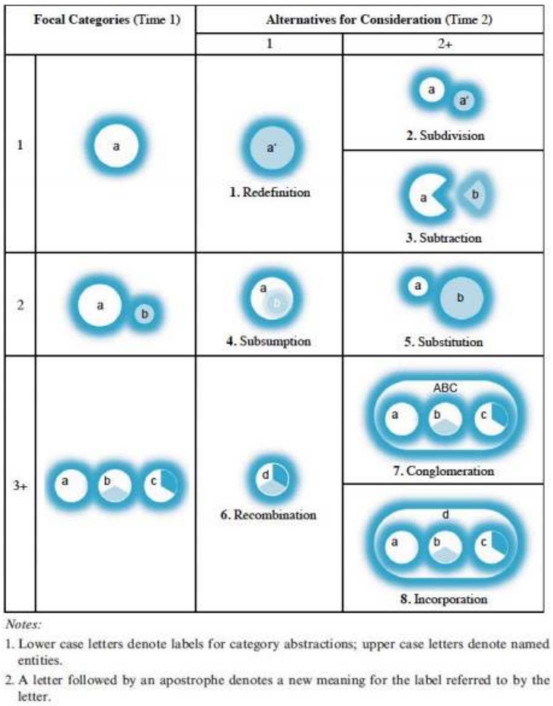
The process of categorization has not only a component of "straightjacket" (in the sense of delimiting a particular practice to a narrow group of actors), but also a "generative" component of new identities, practices (Glynn & Navis, 2013). That is, when a new (supposed) category appears, it can also give an opportunity to open a range of new actors, entities and practices. We therefore have two dimensions in this discussion: in the genesis of "categorizing" something, there is both the need to define boundaries very well (who is and who cannot be within that category) as well as the almost intrinsic possibility (just like any other new and emerging process) of being the generator of new ideas, practices, prototypes and actors (the "creativity ingredient"). Further, the greater the uncertainty, the greater the sociocultural "pressure" to find a category for that entity, actor, practice or activity. That is, one of the factors/determinants for categorization is the so-called "sociocultural urgency in reducing identity uncertainty".

Durand and Paolella (2013), on the other hand, advocate that the process of categorizing / categorization goes beyond the classical prototype theory (Rosch & Mervis, 1975), also known as the model of categorical constraint, where there is a very disciplinary exercise with strict, rigid (like a straightjacket) classification of products/actors/industries depending on their perfect match with the key features of a given category prototype. The authors bring to light Redher's (2003a, 2003b) causal model and Barsalou's (1983) goal-derived categories (ad hoc categories) in justifying that categorizing also involves other mediating sub-variables, antecedents coming from external audiences: (i) "cognitive test of congruence" and (ii) "goal satisfying calculus". In other words, audiences may legitimate a given product as being part of a particular category depending on situational circumstances, and not so much on general pre-conceived constructions of what a category is. Because of this, there may be multi-category memberships, hybrid organizations, which may be classified as being part of multi-categories and not just one. Audiences (consumers), thus, play a determinant part in such process. The process of categorization is much multifaceted with multi-variables. Thus, categories do involve a disciplinary exercise (Rosch's and Mervis' prototype theory), but also a cognitive test of congruence (Redher's causal model theory), and a goal satisfying calculus (Barsalou's goal-derived categories theory). In other words, when theorizing on categorization, one should consider the "integration of codes, causal associations, and goals".

Complementary, Kennedy and Fiss (2013) urge a research that focuses on how categories emerge and fall out of use and acquire meaning and relevance, arguing that research on categories should upstream study how categories emerge and fall out (dissolute). And to find answers to that, it must be taken into account two distinctive but complementary antecedent dimensions: (1) the occasions and motivations for invoking categories (similar to Durand's and Paolella's argument is that ad hoc and nascent categories occur when they facilitate goals or explain the causes of specific situations), and (2) their meaning and encompassing ontologies (that is: it involves studying the changing meaning of existing categories or of new categories that are emerging or failing to emerge, and it involves studying the implications for encompassing ontologies).

Kennedy et al. (2010), in turn, stress the importance in this discussion of what they call *category currency*. Meaning: category construction is a dynamic process, where audiences "buy" or "dismiss" certain emergent category ("alternatives for consideration") and, depending on these "exchanges" of category acceptance and rejection (or "the changing value of conformity"), category construction takes form. Figure1 below, illustrates how category meaning is an ongoing/dynamic construction. There are eight possible ways/paths for changing category meaning.

Figure 1 – Eight Ways Category Meaning Can Change



Source: Kennedy et al., 2010.

The discussion on categorization should also take into account Lounsbury's and Rao's (2004) contribution. The authors bring forward a new layer on the topic by introducing a new line of research, a new factor for category construction, durability, change and reconstruction: Political Power (from powerful producers) – "product categories are products of practical politics" (p. 991). Focusing on the role of industry media in institutional change, the authors argue that "industry media are not passive observers but important actors that promote stability by maintaining existing categories or creating new product categories from existing product categories so as to preserve comparability among firms (p. 972)". Moreover, they argue that "product categorization is importantly shaped by the politics of markets (…) and when powerful producers dominate a category, they can counteract the effects of performance variability and the influx of new entrants and encourage industry media to preserve the existing structure of categories" (p. 972). The authors' study suggests that "changes in product categories are not driven merely by technical processes but are fundamentally shaped by the politics of markets (…) product categories are fragile cognitive structures that can be brought down when there is high performance variability and new entrants embody variations and disturb the status quo" (p. 990). Categories are, therefore, just an outcome (like an interface) of the interplay of interests among industry media and producers. In this sense, "producers may pressure editors to locate them in product categories in which they look better (…) and cultural constructions such as product categories are implicated in a system of power" (p. 991-992).

The dimension of *hybridization* (Wry et al., 2014) should also be discussed. That is: organizations that span mix elements of multiple categories. "The category a firm starts in, how it hybridizes, and the degree to which this affects core versus peripheral identity markers may all affect how it is perceived" (p. 1309). Hybridization, thus, may not necessarily be negative ("overlooked" or "devalued"), but rather, organizations having mixed elements of multiple categories may generate positive reactions from external audiences.

Another component intrinsically associated with the process of categorization is *legitimation*. That is, how stakeholders confer the formation of categorical and organizational identities, and perceptions about the viability of their business models. Being a complex social process (Fligstein, 1997; Kennedy, 2008; Kennedy, Lo, and Lounsbury, 2010, cited in Navis and Glynn, 2010), it involves both entrepreneurial organizations and prospective resource providers, such as investors, analysts, customers, media, and other interested audiences, in the social construction of a market category's meaning, the formation of categorical and organizational identities, and perceptions about the viability of the business model (Tripsas, 2009, cited in Navis & Glynn, 2010). Legitimating a new (market) category, on the other hand, involves consumers, industry analysts, stock market investors, or other audiences (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, cited in cited in Navis & Glynn, 2010) whose interests transcend individual organizations (Suchman, 1995, cited in Navis & Glynn, 2010). Thus, it becomes critical to study the influence/role of audiences as they assess the viability of categories and organizations and can grant or withhold legitimacy (Zuckerman, 1999, cited in Navis & Glynn, 2010). Also, with respect to the discussion around the SE, it becomes of particular importance to take into account how organizational identity affects audiences' evaluation of organizational performance, as Smith's (2011) study reveals that investors, for instance, are more likely to "allocate capital more readily to nonconforming hedge funds following periods of short-term positive performance". The more atypical a given organization is, the more likelihood of audiences to positively to respond to it and, thus, grant it legitimacy, which on the other hand, provides a distinct competitive advantage for that non-conforming organization. For the purposes of the present study, it becomes, therefore, important to understand how SE atypical organizations/entities have been assessed by audiences and stakeholders.

The legitimation of a new category, complementarily, depends on certain key determinants (Navis & Glynn, 2010; Aldrich & Fiol, 1994): (i) *Sameness (or Close Substitution)* – a new category exists when two or more products or services are perceived to be of the same type or close substitutes for each other in satisfying market demand; (ii) *Distinctiveness* – not all members are equivalent in the category; (iii) *Credibility* – given by actors external to the category, i.e., the interested audiences who judge its feasibility, credibility and appropriateness; (iv) *Cognitive legitimation* – relates to the level of public knowledge about a new activity (the highest form of cognitive legitimation is achieved when a new product, process, or service is taken for granted); (v) *Sociopolitical legitimation* – relates to the process by which key stakeholders, the general public, key opinion leaders, or governmental officials accept a venture as appropriate and right, given existing norms and laws. (the public acceptance of an industry, government subsidies to the industry, or the public prestige of its leaders).

In terms of the SE, and bearing in mind the determinants of *Sameness (or Close Substitution)* and *Distinctiveness*, Schor (2014) describes a number of services that are perceived to be of the same type in satisfying market demand that may be grouped together as members of the same category. She calls this as "four main types of SE activities". Below follows figure 2, which pinpoints SE activities according to the shared sameness with other category members and the individual distinctiveness from other members.

Figure 2 – Archetypes of sharing economy activities

		Type of Provider	
		Peer to Peer	Business to Peer
Platform Orientation	Non-Profit	Food Swaps TimeBanks	Makerspaces
	For-Profit	Relay Rides (transportation) Airbnb (accommodation) Uber (transportation)	Zipcar (transportation)

Source: Schor, 2014.

Methodology

The Methods Used to Gather Data

Bearing in mind the theoretical background exposed above, we pose the following Research Question and elaborate the respective Research Design:

Research Question (RQ): What is the role of SE in establishing the identity of organizations belonging to the field, considering both identify claims (self-referential) and legitimacy (granted by stakeholders, namely scientific community, investors, analysts, customers, media, and other interested audiences)? Is SE constraining the identity claims for the stake of legitimacy granting, or is SE acting as a general ambiguous category enabling divergence in identities and business models?

Research Design: this RQ was answered by a design involving two components inspired on category creation studies (Durand & Paolella, 2013; Glynn & Navis, 2013; Navis & Glynn, 2010; Kennedy & Fiss, 2013; Kennedy et al., 2010; Lounsbury & Rao, 2004; and Wry et al., 2014): 1) four prototypical SE organizations were selected, each of them belonging to Schor's (2014) four SE archetypes of activities. Respectively: (i) *Airbnb* – peer-to-peer, for-profit activity –, (ii) *Zipcar* – business-to-peer, for-profit activity –, (iii) *TimeBanks* – peer-to-peer, non-profit – and (iv) *Make: makerspaces* – business-to-peer, non-profit. The evolution of their identity claims were content analyzed, using data from their publically available reports, as well as, other secondary data available on-line; and 2) considering the same set of SE organizations, legitimacy evolution was analyzed considering how scientific community, investors, analysts, customers, media, and other interested audiences have been constructing category meaning to them, conferring the formation of SE categorical and organizational identities, and perceptions about the viability of their business models (Tripsas, 2009, as cited in Navis & Glynn, 2010). In short, it was analyzed how audiences assess the viability of SE categories and organizations and can grant or withhold legitimacy to SE organizations (Zuckerman, 1999, as cited in Navis & Glynn, 2010).

Results

Evolution of Identity Claims (self-referential) of Prototypical SE Organizations

Table 1 below presents the results in a concise timeline of the key events related with the evolution of identity claims (self-referential) of four prototypical SE organizations: *Airbnb, Zipcar, Timebanks* and *Make: makerspaces.*

Table 1 – Evolution of Identity Claims (self-referential) of Prototypical SE Organizations

Evolution of Identity Claims (self-referential) of Prototypical SE Organizations		
Prototypical Organization	Architype of SE activity	Milestone Facts & Events
airbnb	Peer-to-peer For-profit	**FALL 2007** Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia host the first guests of Airbedandbreakfast.com to make rent money.

(continuation of table 1)	Peer-to-peer For-profit	
		MARCH 2008 Airbed & Breakfast officially launches during SXSW 2008 and makes two bookings.
		EARLY AUGUST 2008 The formal Airbed & Breakfast website launches for the Democratic National Convention to offer a solution for hotel room shortages and makes 80 bookings.
		AUGUST 25-28, 2008 The Democratic National Convention in Denver.
		FALL 2008 Chesky and Gebbia come up with the idea for Obama O's and Cap'n McCain's and sell $30K worth.
		MARCH 2009 Airbed & Breakfast changes its name to Airbnb and expands beyond just rooms to apartments, houses, and vacation rentals.
		SEPTEMBER 2009 First International meetup in Paris.
		NOVEMBER 2010 Airbnb launches the iPhone app and Instant Book feature.
airbnb		**SUMMER 2011** Airbnb begins international expansion with opening of German office.
		MAY 2012 Airbnb introduces the $1M Host Guarantee.
		JUNE 2012 Airbnb launches the Wish Lists feature.
		NOVEMBER 7, 2012 Airbnb offers free listings for Hurricane Sandy in partnership with the city of New York - the official launch of the Disaster Relief tool.
		SUMMER 2013 Airbnb moves headquarters to 888 Brannan San Francisco.
		JUNE 2014 Airbnb hosts more than 100,000 guests during the Rio World Cup.
		JULY 2014 Airbnb launches rebranding and introduces the Belo.
		NOVEMBER 21-23, 2014 Airbnb Open in San Francisco - 1,500 hosts attend.
		MARCH 27, 2015 Airbnb becomes the official alternative accommodation services supplier for 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

(continuation of table 1)	Peer-to-peer For-profit	**APRIL 7, 2015** Airbnb launches in Cuba.
		MAY 25, 2015 The White House appoints Brian Chesky as Presidential Ambassador for Global Entrepreneurship.
		NOVEMBER 12-14, 2015 Airbnb welcomes 6,000 hosts at the Airbnb Open in Paris.
		NOVEMBER 17-19, 2016 At the Airbnb Open in LA, Airbnb announces the launch of Trips and welcomes 7,000 attendees from over 100 countries.
airbnb		**FEBRUARY 5, 2017** Airbnb launches the #weaccept campaign in response to the refugee ban.
		MARCH 2017 Airbnb executives travel the globe meeting with the host community and world leaders to expand Trips to 20 more cities.
		MARCH 21, 2017 Airbnb launches their Chinese brand, Aibiying.
		AS PER TODAY, AUGUST 3, 2017 Airbnb stresses its identity claims in its website, by self-referring itself as: "Founded in August of 2008 and based in San Francisco, California, Airbnb is a trusted community marketplace for people to list, discover, and book unique accommodations around the world — online or from a mobile phone or tablet"; "Whether an apartment for a night, a castle for a week, or a villa for a month, Airbnb connects people to unique travel experiences, at any price point, in more than 65,000 cities and 191 countries. And with world-class customer service and a growing community of users, Airbnb is the easiest way for people to monetize their extra space and showcase it to an audience of millions".

Prototypical Organization	Architype of SE activity	Milestone Facts & Events
	Business-to-peer For-profit	**1999** Antje Danielson and Robin Chase conceive the idea for Zipcar.
		2000 The first Zipcar logo; JUNE: The first Zipcars debut on the streets of Boston and Cambridge.
zipcar		**SEPTEMBER 2001** Zipcar arrives in Washington D.C.
		FEBRUARY 2002 Zipcar arrives in New York city.
		2003 The second Zipcar logo; JANUARY: Zipcar reaches 5,000 users.

(continuation of table 1)	Business-to-peer For-profit	**2004** The third Zipcar logo; APRIL: Launch of Zipcar for Business (to help companies get their innovative ideas off the ground); AUGUST: The first out-of-city campus opens at Wellesley College.
		2006 APRIL: Zipcar reaches 50,000 users; MAY: Zipcar arrives in Toronto and Ontario, Canada; NOVEMBER: Zipcar opens a London office as part of a European expansion effort.
		OCTOBER 2007 Zipcar merges with Seattle-based rival Flexcar, with the resulting company retaining the name and Cambridge headquarters of Zipcar.
		SEPTEMBER 2008 Zipcar reaches 5,000 "Zipcars".
		JUNE 2009 The Zipcar iPhone app is announced at the Apple Worldwide Developer Conference.
zipcar		**APRIL 2010** Zipcar buys Streetcar, the largest British car-sharing company, for about $50 million.
		DECEMBER 2010 In a venture funding round, Zipcar raises $21 million from Meritech Capital Partners and Pinnacle Ventures.
		APRIL 2011 Zipcar goes public, earning a market valuation of more than $1 billion; Zipcar reaches 500,000 users.
		2012 MARCH: Zipcar debuts at airports: JFK, Newark and LaGuardia; MAY: Zipcar reaches 10,000 "Zipcars"; JULY: Zipcar expands its European presence; NOVEMBER: Zipcar has 767,000 members, more than 700 employees and 11,000 cars available in the U.S., Canada and Europe.
		2013 JANUARY: Avis Budget Group announces its intent to buy Zipcar. It will operate as an Avis subsidiary. OCTOBER: Zipcar launches its first TV commercial airs; DECEMBER: Zipcar launches their Blog (Ziptopia).
		2014 MAY: ONE>WAY beta launches in Boston. JUNE: Zipcar reaches 900,000 users.

(continuation of table 1)	Business-to-peer For-profit	**2015** OCTOBER: Zipcar is live in more places and more people than ever: 500+ cities and towns, 500+ universities, 50+ airports; DECEMBER: Zipcar reaches an ecological footprint: its members reduced their CO2 emissions by over 1.5 billion pounds in 2015.
		NOVEMBER 8, 2016 Zipcar gives away free car rentals on American Election Day to encourage its members to vote; A Zipcar is reserved every 6 seconds.
zipcar		**AS PER TODAY, AUGUST 3, 2017** Zipcar stresses its identity claims in its website, by self-referring itself as: "We've been around since 1999. That was before Wikipedia, the Razr phone, and the iPod. Whoa. With 15 years of collaboration and innovation under our (seat) belts, we're working to make cities better places to live." "It's been more than a decade since our founders sat in a café and decided to bring the European car-sharing idea to North America. Once the wheels were in motion, it was only a matter of time before some major changes helped grow a little car-sharing company into the world's leading car-sharing network. Today, thanks to cool technology, a member-driven user experience, and an amazing team of hands-on car sharing enthusiasts, we are redefining the way this generation thinks about alternative transportation"; "We're not horn tooters, more like ambassadors for change. Zipcar isn't just about the concept of car sharing; it's about the people who make it a reality: a team that works hard, members who believe, and organizations that are making conscious decisions for the future. We're gonna keep doing what we're doing, looking for ways to make car sharing easier, faster, and better. We're not trying to rule the world, just trying to give regular people – young and old, business types and family types – the freedom to live life".

Prototypical Organization	Architype of SE activity	Milestone Facts & Events
	Peer-to-peer Non-profit	**1980 (VERY EARLY DAYS)** Dr. Edgar S. Cahn creates TimeBanking as a medium of exchange that would act as a way to encourage and reward the work needed to build strong, resilient communities.
TimeBanks		**1981 (STILL VERY EARLY DAYS)** Grace Hill Settlement House in St. Louis, MO became the first organization to use TimeBanking.
		1995 TimeBanks USA (TBUSA), a registered 501c3 headquartered in Washington D.C., was formed by Dr. Edgar Cahn to expand the knowledge and field of timebanking and its impact on individuals, youth, families, communities, the environment, and the world.

(continuation of table 1) TimeBanks	Peer-to-peer Non-profit	**<u>1995 - 2017</u>** TBUSA has fostered the spread of TimeBanking by providing presentations, courses, manuals, guide-books and materials, workshops, conferences, strategic planning, and mentoring for communities and organizations at grass-roots, professional, academic and policy levels; The TimeBanking movement is spreading across the United States and internationally. It now includes a network of 200+ independent TimeBanks in the United States. 32+ countries have active TimeBanks.
		<u>AS PER TODAY, AUGUST 3, 2017</u> *TimeBanks* stresses its identity claims in its website, by self-referring itself as: "Timebanking is a time-based currency that helps to build circles and network of mutual support. With timebanking, you give one hour of service to another, and receive one time credit. An hour is always an hour (regardless of the service offered). You can use the credits in turn to receive services — or you can donate them to others"; "Timebanks can be local, regional, national or international in scope. They can vary in size from as few as 20 people to tens of thousands. Most (but not all) timebanks use timebanking software, which helps them keep track of member activity".

Prototypical Organization	Architype of SE activity	Milestone Facts & Events
Make: makerspaces	Business-to-peer Non-profit	**<u>2005</u>** Having one of its roots in MIT's Fab Labs (Burke, 2014, as cited in Davis, 2017), the makerspace movement has its first milestone foundation pillar with the launch of Make: magazine with the use of the word "Maker" to name the community.
		<u>2006</u> A further catalyst for the surge of the maker movement was the Launch of Maker Faires. The first was held in 2006 in the San Francisco Bay Area.
		<u>2016</u> There were nearly 200 Maker Faire around the world with four of the events drawing at or above 100,000 people in San Mateo, New York, Rome and Shenzhen.
		<u>2005-2017</u> During this period, Make: has been published bi-monthly in print and featuring dozens of DIY technology projects.

(continuation of table 1)	Business-to-peer Non-profit	
Make: makerspaces		**AS PER TODAY, AUGUST 3, 2017** Make: makerspaces stresses its identity claims in its website, by self-referring itself as: "Makerspaces represent the democratization of design, engineering, fabrication, and education"; "To describe them simply, makerspaces are community centers with tools. Makerspaces combine manufacturing equipment, community, and education for the purposes of enabling community members to design, prototype and create manufactured works that wouldn't be possible to create with the resources available to individuals working alone"; "These spaces can take the form of loosely-organized individuals sharing space and tools, for-profit companies, non-profit corporations, organizations affiliated with or hosted within schools, universities or libraries, and more. All are united in the purpose of providing access to equipment, community, and education, and all are unique in exactly how they are arranged to fit the purposes of the community they serve".

Source: Airbnb, 2017; Zipcar, 2017a; Zipcar, 2017b; Eha, 2013; Kaufman, 2016; TimeBanks, 2017; Make: makerspaces, 2017; Davis, 2017.

Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by Stakeholders, External Actors, Interested Audiences

Scientific Community

Table 2 below presents the results in a concise timeline of the key events related with the evolution of legitimacy granting by the scientific community to four prototypical SE organizations: *Airbnb, Zipcar, Timebanks* and *Make: makerspaces*.

Table 2 – Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by Scientific Community

Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by Scientific Community			
STAKEHOLDER		**PROTOTYPICAL ORGANIZATIONS**	**STAKEHOLDER**
↘ *Scientific Community*		airbnb zipcar TimeBanks Make: makerspaces	↙ *Scientific Community*
Date	***Actor***	***EVENTS*** ***→ considering legitimacy granting as a whole to their field of action***	***Nature of Legitimacy Granting***
Two of these four prototypical organizations are founded before any scientific studies related to their field of action: **1995** Official launch of TimeBanks **2000** Official launch of zipcar			

(continuation of table 2)

2002	Benkler	Introduction of the concept "commons-based peer production".	Very early days of *Cognitive Legitimation*.
2005 Official launch of Make: makerspaces			
2005	Bauwens	Publication of an essay "The Political Economy of Peer Production".	Very early days of *Cognitive Legitimation*.
2008	Lessig	Introduction of the term "Sharing Economy".	Very early days of *Cognitive Legitimation*.
2008 Official launch of airbnb			
2010	Botsman & Rogers	Publication of Book "What's mine is yours: The rise of the Collaborative Consumption". Introduction of the term "collaborative consumption".	Early days of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2012	Bardhi & Eckhardt	Introduction of the expression: "access-based consumption".	Early days of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2013	Owyang	Introduction of the concept "Collaborative Economy".	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2014	Belk	The author criticizes Botsman's & Rogers' approach by defining collaborative consumption as "people coordinating the acquisition and distribution of a resource for a fee or other compensation".	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.

(continuation of table 2)

2014/2015	Dubois, et al. (2014); Schor (2014, 2015); Schor & Fitzmaurice (2015); Schor et al. (2014)	Contribution in defining the SE. Introduction of the expression: "connected consumption".	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2015	Frenken et al.; Meelen & Frenken	Further contribution in defining the SE.	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2015	Hamari et al.	Introduction of an alternative definition of *Collaborative Consumption*: it's "a peer-to-peer-based activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services, coordinated through community-based online services".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2015	Kim et al.	Publication of a study "Why people participate in the Sharing Economy: A Social Exchange Perspective".	*Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility*.
2016	Knote & Blohm	Publication of a study "Deconstructing the Sharing Economy: On the Relevance for IS Research".	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2016	Lee et al.	Publication of "A Study on Factors Influencing Consumers' Information Needs for Sharing Economy Service".	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2016	Cheng	Publication of "Sharing Economy: A review and agenda for future research".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*; *Sociopolitical Legitimation* discussion.
2016	Bonciu & Bâlgar	Publication of a study "Sharing Economy as a Contributor to Sustainable Growth. An EU Perspective".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*; *Sociopolitical Legitimation* discussion.

(continuation of table 2)			
2017	Frenken & Schor	Publication of a study "Putting the sharing economy into perspective".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*; *Sociopolitical Legitimation* discussion.
2017	Yang et al.	Publication of a study on "Why are customers loyal in sharing-economy services? A relational benefits perspective".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2017	Mair & Reischauer	Publication of a study on "Capturing the dynamics of the sharing economy: Institutional research on the plural forms and practices of sharing economy organizations".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*; *Sociopolitical Legitimation* discussion.
2017	Muñoz & Cohen	Publication of a study on "Mapping out the sharing economy: A configurational approach to sharing business modelling".	*Sameness*; *Distinctiveness*; consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility*; *Sociopolitical Legitimation* discussion.
2017	Bradley & Pargman	Publication of a study on "The sharing economy as the commons of the 21st century".	*Sameness*; *Distinctiveness*; consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility*; *Sociopolitical Legitimation* discussion.
2017	Hira & Reilly	Publication of a study on "The Emergence of the Sharing Economy: Implications for Development".	*Sameness*; *Distinctiveness*; consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility*; *Sociopolitical Legitimation* discussion.

Source: Airbnb, 2017; Zipcar, 2017a; Zipcar, 2017b; TimeBanks, 2017; Make: makerspaces, 2017; Benkler, 2002; Bauwens, 2005; Lessig, 2008; Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Owyang, 2013; Belk, 2014; Dubois et al., 2014; Schor, 2014; Schor, 2015; Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015; Schor et al., 2014; Frenken et al., 2015; Meelen & Frenken, 2015; Hamari et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2015; Knote & Blohm, 2016; Lee et al., 2016; Cheng, 2016; Bonciu & Bâlgar, 2016; Frenken & Schor, 2017; Yang et al., 2017; Mair & Reischauer, 2017; Muñoz & Cohen, 2017; Hira & Reilly, 2017; Bradley & Pargman, 2017.

Investors

Table 3 below presents the results in a concise timeline of the key events related with the evolution of legitimacy granting by investors to four prototypical SE organizations: *Airbnb, Zipcar, Timebanks* and *Make: makerspaces*.

Table 3 – Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by Investors

Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by Investors			
STAKEHOLDER		**PROTOTYPICAL ORGANIZATIONS**	**STAKEHOLDER**
↘ *Investors*		***EVENTS*** ➔ ***considering individual legitimacy granting***	↙ *Investors*
Date	***Actor***	① airbnb	***Nature of Legitimacy Granting***
January 2009	Y Combinator	Investment of $20 thousand.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
April 2009	Sequoia Capital and Y Ventures	Investment of $600 thousand.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
November 2010	Greylock Partners; Keith Rabois; Y Ventures; SV Angel; Elad Gil; Jeremy Stoppelman; Ashton Kutcher; Sequoia Capital	Investment of $7.2 million.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
July 2011	CrunchFund; Ashton Kutcher; Jeff Bezos; General Catalyst; DST Global; Andreessen Horowitz; Oliver Jung; Sequoia Capital	Investment of $112 million.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
October 2013	Ashton Kutcher; CrunchFund; Founders Fund; Sequoia Capital; Airbnb	Investment of $200 million.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.

(continuation of table 3)

April 2014	Dragoneer Investment Group; T. Rowe Price; TPG Growth; Sherpa Capital; Sequoia Capital; Andreessen Horowitz	Investment of $475 million.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
June 2015	Groupe Arnault; Horizons Ventures; Hillhouse Capital Group; General Atlantic; Tiger Global Management; Temasek Holdings; Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers; GGV Capital; China Broadband Capital; Wellington Management; Baillie Gifford; T. Rowe Price; Fidelity Investments; Sequoia Capital	Investment of $1.5 billion.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
November 2015	FirstMark	Investment of $100 million.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
June 2016	JP Morgan Chase & Co.; Citigroup; Morgan Stanley; Brand Capital	Investment of $1 billion.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
September 2016	Altimeter Capital; Glade Brook Capital Partners; Geodesic Capital; TCV; CapitalG	Investment of $555.46 million.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
March 2017	Jeff Jordan; Alfred Lin; TCV; CapitalG	Investment of $447.8 million.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.

(continuation of table 3)

Date	Actor	② zipcar	Nature of Legitimacy Granting
December 2002	Name of entity(ies) not available	$4.7 million raised in a venture round (Series B).	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
November 2003	Boston Community Capital	Investment of $2 million.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
January 2005	Benchmark	Investment of $10 million.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
November 2006	Greylock Partners; Benchmark; Globespan Capital Partners	Investment of $25 million.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
November 2007	Boston Community Capital; Benchmark	Investment of $45 million.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
December 2010	Pinnacle Ventures; Meritech Capital Partners	Investment of $21 million.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
January 2013	Avis Budget Group	Buys Zipcar for $500 million (Zipcar, though, will operate as an Avis subsidiary, retain its CEO and chief operating officer)	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
Date	***Actor***	③ TimeBanks	***Nature of Legitimacy Granting***
		NO INVESTORS (Non-Profit prototypical organization)	
Date	***Actor***	④ Make: makerspaces	***Nature of Legitimacy Granting***
		NO INVESTORS (Non-Profit prototypical organization)	

Source: Crunchbase, 2017a; Crunchbase, 2017b.

Customers

Table 4 below presents the results in a concise timeline of the key events related with the evolution of legitimacy granting by customers to four prototypical SE organizations: *Airbnb, Zipcar, Timebanks* and *Make: makerspaces*.

Table 4 – Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by Customers

Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by Customers			
STAKEHOLDER		**PROTOTYPICAL ORGANIZATIONS**	**STAKEHOLDER**
↘ *Customers*		airbnb; zipcar; TimeBanks; Make: makerspaces	↙ *Customers*
Date	***Actor***	***EVENTS*** ➔ ***considering legitimacy granting as a whole to their field of action*** ➔ ***considering individual legitimacy granting***	***Nature of Legitimacy Granting***
2012	NYU (New York University)	Study co-sponsored by *Make:* and *Intel*, where there is an in-depth analysis of the profile of makerspaces users/community, thus addressing why they opted for using makerspaces.	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility.*
2015	PwC (Pricewater house Coopers)	Report on assessing the SE and the customers'/public's adherence to SE products and services in the USA.	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility.*
2015	Zipcar	Zipcar publishes a "story", where it presents a timeline in an infographic format of the key facts and metrics accumulated along the years regarding its customers' adherence.	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility.*
2016	Airbnb	Report "airbnb citizen", showing the results of year 2016 in terms of customer adherence to its services.	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility.*
2017	TimeBanks	As per date August 9, 2017, the "Directory of TimeBanks" reveals some key metrics showing the overall level of adherence of society worldwide: ✓ *Timebank communities*: 286; ✓ *Individual members*: 21827; ✓ *Countries*: 19 spread by the six continents – Asia, Africa, North America; South America, Europe and Australia; ✓ *Cities*: 255.	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility.*

Source: NYU, 2012; PwC, 2015; Zipcar, 2017a; Zipcar, 2017b; Airbnb, 2016; TimeBanks, 2017b.

Media

Table 5 below presents the results in a concise timeline of the key events related with the evolution of legitimacy granting by the media to four prototypical SE organizations: *Airbnb, Zipcar, Timebanks* and *Make: makerspaces.*

Table 5 – Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by the Media

Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by Media			
STAKEHOLDER		**PROTOTYPICAL ORGANIZATIONS**	**STAKEHOLDER**
↘ *Media*		airbnb, zipcar, TimeBanks, Make: makerspaces	↙ *Media*
Date	***Actor***	***EVENTS*** ➔ ***considering legitimacy granting as a whole to their field of action*** ➔ ***considering individual legitimacy granting***	***Nature of Legitimacy Granting***
PRESS (newspapers and magazines)			
2015	Fortune (Magazine)	Alternative terms to SE are brought forward: *Gig Economy, On-Demand Economy* and *Rental Economy*.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2015	The New York Times (Newspaper)	Article on the malefic effects of Airbnb renting for a local and quite neighborhood in Austin, Texas, USA.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility* discussion; *Sociopolitical Legitimation* discussion.
2015	WSJ (The Wall Street Journal)	Article on the effect of Airbnb listings on the accommodation sector, particularly on "Hotel's Power", during Pope's US visit. Main conclusions of the article.	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2016	FT (Financial Times Newspaper)	Article about the Sharing Economy, arguing that "regulators should not rush to curb Uber and Airbnb".	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*; *Sociopolitical Legitimation* discussion.

(continuation of table 5)			
2016	El Mundo (Newspaper)	Article about Airbnb having legal barriers in Barcelona, Spain.	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*; *Sociopolitical Legitimation* discussion.
2016	The Economist (Magazine)	Article "The sharing economy brings tycoon lifestyles within reach of some".	*Sameness*; *Distinctiveness*; consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation;* consolidation of *Credibility*.
TV NEWS BROADCASTERS			
2014	CNBC TV News Channel	Periodic debate space named "Sharing Economy". These debates still run today and reach all sectors of activity with SE.	*Sameness*; *Distinctiveness*; consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation;* consolidation of *Credibility*.
2014	BBC TV News Channel	Article "JustPark and the sharing economy".	*Sameness*; *Distinctiveness*; *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility*.
2015	CNN TV News Channel	Article "Sharing is daring: mapping the disruption economy".	*Sameness*; *Distinctiveness*; *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility*.
2016	Bloomberg TV News Channel	Video together with an article "The Sharing Economy Doesn't Share the Wealth".	*Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility* discussion; *Sociopolitical Legitimation* discussion.
2017	CBS TV News Channel	Video together with an article "Inside China's booming sharing economy".	*Sameness*; *Distinctiveness*; consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation;* consolidation of *Credibility*.

(continuation of table 5)

SOCIAL NETWORKS			
Since Social Networks inception	Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest and Twitter	How does the SE relate to media? As David Buckingham (2017) explains, "On one level, the sharing economy largely depends upon social media (in the form of the internet, apps and mobile devices) to market its services, and to develop reputations via user rating and recommendation systems. In this respect, it uses media technologies as tools. However, many of the same arguments apply to the sharing of media artefacts themselves – where the media are products rather than merely tools (…) In this sense, platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest and Twitter could all be seen as examples of the sharing economy. They present themselves as services that enable the free sharing of media material (whoever produces it), but they are all commercial platforms that generate (or promise to generate) massive profits for their owners. The only notable exception to this is Wikipedia, which remains one of the very few non-commercial sharing platforms". YouTube videos, for instance, are clear examples of how social media platforms serve to promote the services of *Airbnb*, *Zipcar*, *TimeBanks* and *Maker: makerspaces*. All these prototypical organizations make use of the potential and effectiveness of social media to reach their audiences, explain what they are, make self-referential identity claims and outline their value proposal.	*Sameness; Distinctiveness; Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility.*

Source: Fortune, 2015; The New York Times, 2015; WSJ, 2015; FT, 2016a; El mundo, 2016; The Economist, 2016; CNBC, 2014; BBC News, 2014; CNN, 2015; Bloomberg, 2016; CBS, 2017; Buckingham, 2017.

Other Analysts

Table 6 below presents the results in a concise timeline of the key events related with the evolution of legitimacy granting by other analysts to four prototypical SE organizations: *Airbnb, Zipcar, Timebanks* and *Make: makerspaces*.

Table 6 – Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by Other Analysts

Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by Other Analysts			
STAKEHOLDER		**PROTOTYPICAL ORGANIZATIONS**	**STAKEHOLDER**
↘ *Other Analysts*		airbnb zipcar TimeBanks Make: makerspaces	↙ *Other Analysts*
Date	***Actor***	***EVENTS*** ➔ ***considering legitimacy granting as a whole to their field of action*** ➔ ***considering individual legitimacy granting***	***Nature of Legitimacy Granting***
2010	Gansky	Book "The Mesh". Introduction of the term "Mesh".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility.*
2015	OECD	The Organization attempts to define the SE.	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility.*
2015	PwC (Pricewaterhouse Coopers)	Report on assessing the SE.	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility.*
2016	ESA (Economics and Statistics Administration of the U.S. Commerce Department)	Report attempting to define and map out the contours of the SE.	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility.*
2016	Sundararajan	Book "The Sharing Economy: the end of employment and the rise of crowd-based capitalism".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility.*

(continuation of table 6)			
2016	Stone	Book "The Upstarts: How Uber, Airbnb, and the Killer Companies of the New Silicon Valley Are Changing the World".	*Sameness*; *Distinctiveness*; Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2016	EC (European Commission)	Report "Scoping the Sharing Economy: Origins, Definitions, Impact and Regulatory Issues".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*; Steps towards *Sociopolitical Legitimation*.

Source: Gansky, 2010; OECD, 2015a, OECD, 2015b; PwC, 2015; ESA, 2016; Sundararajan, 2016; Stone, 2016; EC, 20016.

Other Interested Audiences

Table 7 below presents the results in a concise timeline of the key events related with the evolution of legitimacy granting by other interested audiences to four prototypical SE organizations: *Airbnb, Zipcar, Timebanks* and *Make: makerspaces*.

Table 7 – Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by Other Interested Audiences

Evolution of Legitimacy Granting by Other Interested Audiences			
STAKEHOLDER		**PROTOTYPICAL ORGANIZATIONS**	**STAKEHOLDER**
↘ *Other Interested Audiences*		airbnb; zipcar; TimeBanks; Make: makerspaces	↙ *Other Interested Audiences*
Date	***Actor***	***EVENTS*** ➔ ***considering legitimacy granting as a whole to their field of action*** ➔ ***considering individual legitimacy granting***	***Nature of Legitimacy Granting***
2013	Switzer Foundation (Boston, USA)	Conference: "Sharing Economy Conference: Boston with Julia Ledewitz".	Early days of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2015	Breakers Makers (London, UK)	Conference: "The Sharing Economy & On Demand Conference".	*Cognitive Legitimation; Credibility*.
2015	Oxford Dictionary	The terms "Sharing Economy" (SE) and "Ride-Share" (RS) are added to Oxford Dictionary.	Reinforcement of *Cognitive Legitimation* and *Credibility*.

(continuation of table 7)

2015	U.S. House (Washington DC, USA)	"The Congressional Sharing Economy Caucus".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2015	FCT (Federal Trade Commission)	Public Workshop to Examine Competition, Consumer Protection and Economic Issues Raised by the Sharing Economy.	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2015	Utrecht University (Utrecht, Netherlands)	Workshop: "First International Workshop on the Sharing Economy".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2016	Milken Institute (Santa Monica, LA, USA)	Conference: "Is the Sharing Economy the New Normal?".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2016	ESCP Europe (Paris, France)	Workshop: "Second International Workshop on the Sharing Economy".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2016	Maddox Events (London, UK)	Conference: "The Sharing Economy Conference 2016".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2016	University of Southampton (Southampton, UK)	Workshop: "Third International Workshop on the Sharing Economy ".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2016	Financial Times (London, UK)	Summit: "FT Sharing Economy Summit Europe 2016 – Achieving stability among growing regulation".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*; Steps towards *Sociopolitical Legitimation*.
2016	Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Berlin, Germany)	Conference: "7th International Conference on Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility – CSR In an Age of Digitization". One of the tracks was about the "Sharing Economy".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*; Steps towards *Sociopolitical Legitimation*.
2016	Ryerson University (Toronto, Canada)	Conference: "The Sharing Economy and the Future of Work".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*; Steps towards *Sociopolitical Legitimation*.
2017	Shidler College of Business – University of Hawaii (Mānoa, Hawaii)	Conference: "50th Hawaiian International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS)". One of the tracks was about the "Sharing Economy".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.

(continuation of table 7)			
2017	Lund University (Lund, Sweden)	Workshop: "Fourth International Workshop on the Sharing Economy".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2017	Bizz Grid (Stockholm, Sweden)	Conference: "Sharing Economy and Earnings on Demand".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2017	Universidade do Algarve (in collaboration with two other partner institutions: The University of Applied Sciences, Pforzheim, Germany; Autónoma University, Madrid, Spain (Faro, Portugal)	Conference: "Sharing Economy – Collaborative Consumption: Current trends and visions in key economic areas for Germany and Southern Europe".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.
2017	ATINER – Athens Institute for Education and Research (Athens, Greece)	Conference: "A Panel on *The Sharing Economy* as part of the 4th Annual International Conference on Social Sciences".	Consolidation of *Cognitive Legitimation*; *Credibility*.

Source: Switzer Foundation, 2013; Breakers Makers, 2015; Liftshare, 2015; U.S. House, 2015; FCT, 2015a; FCT, 2015b; FCT, 2015c; Utrecht University, 2015; Milken Institute, 2016; ESCP Europe, 2016; Maddox Events, 2016; University of Southampton, 2016; FT, 2016b; Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2016; Ryerson University, 2016; Shidler College of Business – University of Hawaii, 2017; Lund University, 2017; Bizz Grid, 2017; Universidade do Algarve, 2017; ATINER, 2017.

Discussion

From a perspective of the evolution of the identity claims (self-referential) our findings reveal that none of the four prototypical SE organizations identify themselves as belonging to a category named "sharing economy". However, all them present a progressive sustainable evolution in their identity claims with significant milestone events and facts overtime towards their consolidation in the market place. Observing the timeline evolution, we can see how far has each of the organizations evolved. Comparing the two temporal extremes of the timeline – one dated in the inception and another dated August 2017 – of each of them, we may notice how much they have elaborated, gained density and, consequently, got scale dimension along the years.

From a perspective of the evolution of legitimacy granting by stakeholders, and taking into consideration the studies of category creation – (i) Glynn & Navis, 2013; (ii) Durand & Paolella, 2013; (iii) Kennedy & Fiss, 2013; (iv) Kennedy et al., 2010; (v) Lounsbury & Rao, 2004; (vi) Wry et al., 2014; (vii) Navis & Glynn, 2010; (viii) Tripsas, 2009; and (ix) Zuckerman, 1999, our findings respectively show that:

SE is still connoted with great uncertainties, category legitimation and, yes, there currently is an increasingly pressure from audiences, specially from Scholars and Governmental officials, in finding a legitimate and disciplined fit in societal categories. SE is acting as a general ambiguous category enabling divergence in identities and business models;

In the exercise of constructing a categorization meaning to SE, yes, one should consider a process that goes beyond a mere rigid, constraint, straitjacket categorical model. That is, SE seems to be contoured by (a) a causal dimension – i.e. since Airbnb uses web 2.0 whose purpose is to enable the sharing (in exchange of money) of rooms between a community, then its interested audiences may extrapolate that it is inserted within the SE category ("cognitive test of congruence") – and (b) goal dimension – it generates ad hoc categories (goal-derived categories) – i.e. since Airbnb was created to serve as an appealing alternative, in terms of price, social experience, easiness in accessing, etc., to Hotel Reservations ("goal satisfying calculus"), then its interested audiences tend to legitimate it because it meets their goal satisfying calculus in having access to a less expensive service, more exciting social experience, less complicated reservation experience and an overall enhancement in comfort;

Yes, SE seems to be contoured by the two dimensions described by Kennedy and Fiss (2013): (a) – i.e. There is an "occasion and motivation" dimension for invoking Airbnb as a category. It seems to be a nascent and ad hoc category of "Accommodation", as it facilitates a specific goal (audiences seek access to a less expensive service, more exciting social experience, less complicated reservation experience and an overall enhancement in comfort comparing to Hotel Reservations, for example); and (b) sure the emergence of Airbnb as a new ad hoc category implies a direct effect of pre-established ontologies, due to the simple fact that anything that is nascent and new will force the understanding (its true meaning) of how it will fit within pre-existent conformities and it will re-shape the ontological knowledge on the "accommodation" sector. Thus, the role of SE seems to be as a straitjacket in the definition of organizational identity, and types of business models within it;

Yes, there seems to be a "category currency" dimension associated with the construction of SE as a presumably "alternative" category. Explaining: if one applies the example of Zipcar in Kennedy et al.'s (2010) model of Category Meaning Construction and its 8 ways how category meaning can change, one would elaborate: the Focal Category (or reference category) would be "Taxi transportation", whereas the Alternative for Consideration would be "Zipcar transportation". Moreover, in evaluating the conformity of the latter one (in other words, how would one label it in the context of taxi transportation), one should consider the 8-hypothesis brought forward by Kennedy et al: 1) Should one re-define what "taxi transportation" is?, 2) Should one, instead, derive that there are two distinct services (Taxi and Zipcar), a sub-division, although belonging to the same focal category?, 3) Should one consider that none of these hypothesis is true and that Zipcar represents a subtraction of Taxi (in other words, is Zipcar an ad hoc category of Taxi?), 4) Should one validate that Zipcar is part of the Taxi Focal Category (subsumption)?, 5) Or is Zipcar a substitute of Taxi?, 6) Further, are Zipcar and Taxi a part of a much larger category – "Transportation" –, which allows one to recombine them into a broader categorization?, 7) Even further, is Zipcar inserted in a conglomerate that is formed by several ad hoc categories (ex: transportation in general: Taxi, Zipcar, BUS, Train, Car, Bicycle, Airplane and Boat transportation)?, 8) Or is Zipcar such a disruptive change that makes the market to re-organize itself and invert the logics of the transportation sector? Should, for example, Zipcar become the beacon, the main reference (the rising currency) of the transportation market and incorporate the rest into ad hoc categories (declining currencies) of itself? In other words, all existing "transportation" means should be reconsidered and given a radical change in its meaning, that is, a previously overlooked or unappealing offering – Zipcar – becomes so popular that it disfavors a previously appealing service – Taxi? All things considered and taking into account Kennedy et al.'s model of Category Meaning Construction and its 8 ways of how category meaning can change, it becomes hard to have a clear answer to whether SE is a straitjacket or an ingredient of creativity in the definition of organizational identity. Meaning: it becomes hard to clearly answer each of the 8 questions above. It's difficult to positively say that SE is acting as a mere straitjacket in the definition of organizational identity. However, given that all 8 questions have, at this moment in time of the evolution of SE, an open answer, one may deduce that, for now, it may only have a role as an ingredient of creativity, which, one the other hand, turns SE as acting as a general ambiguous category enabling divergence in identities and business models. There isn't a well-defined, restricted "SE category" if one takes into account Kennedy et al.'s model of Category Meaning Construction. There currently still are rising many disruptive activities and businesses which are very difficult to frame them within a specific existent category (ex: Zipcar vs Taxi in the transportation sector. Do they belong to the same "focal category", or are they two distinct categories? The same co-relation analysis should be put into perspective regarding the other 3 prototypical organizations – Airbnb, TimeBanks and Make: makerspaces – in terms of their respective sector);

Having Lounsbury's and Rao's (2004) work as a reference, the results of the present study do not show any concrete answers, thus, leaving three open questions (maybe for future research opportunities) – (1) Is SE a "cultural construction" implicated in system of power? That is: will its durability last as long as its dominant producers (prototypes) compel industry media to maintain them?; (2) Without media attention, mediation, and their role as a platform for marketing spreading, will our current notion of SE as a "supposed" category wane and, thus, vanish?; (3) Based on Lounsbury's and Rao's findings, one should ask: is SE (the conceptualization of it and its growing referring and discussion over the last decade or so) a mere and harsh result of industry politics?;

SE firms seem to be hybrid. In the sense that there is a "head-modifier" structure when one category anchors cognition but is modified by features of the other. Example: Zipcar is a type of "transportation service" (the "focal category" or the "header" category, which anchors perceptions of what "transportation service" is), that is modified by features of the other category (the modifier). This other category is: "web 2.0 (mobile app) service" that apparently is less expensive, more convenient and fast in having access to, "presumably" providing a better overall experience to its external audience (consumers). Findings from Wry et al.'s (2014) study leads us to extrapolate that, for example, Zipcar and Airbnb may have been rewarded (ongoing process) or even punished by external audiences (being: consumers, investors, governmental officials, civil society in general) for hybridization contingent on how they mixed "transportation/accommodation", "innovation" and "technology". In general terms, these examples of SE services and activities (Zipcar, Airbnb, TimeBanks and Make: makerspaces) have largely been rewarded by customers over the last years, since their adherence to them has undoubtedly increased, but also been punished in some cases by external audiences: (i) taxi driver's community (its "fight" against Uber, for example) and (ii) governmental officials (Airbnb, for example, was forbidden in Berlin, Germany, in 2016). If one takes into consideration Wry et al.'s findings, that hybridization may indeed have a positive effect on audiences, then one may confirm that, at least from a consumer's perspective, SE firms such as Zipcar and Airbnb have been legitimized and not overlooked or devalued by them;

Bearing in mind Navis' and Glynn's (2010) determinants for legitimation, our results show that 4 out of 5 of those are present in the SE case, thus revealing that there is a pattern path of progressive legitimacy granting in consolidating its place as a category. Recalling the determinants: (1) *Sameness (or Close Substitution)* – there are a number of services that are perceived to be of the same type in satisfying market demand that may be grouped together as members of that same category. Ex: Schor's peer-to-peer, for-profit services (Relay Rides and Uber – both in the transportation sector); (2) *Distinctiveness* – there is a distinctiveness of the members of the SE category. Ex: Schor's peer-to-peer and business-to-peer, for-profit services (Airbnb and Zipcar – accommodation and transportation sectors, respectively); (3) *Credibility* – stakeholders (scientific community, customers, investors, media, other analysts and other interested audiences), actors external to the category are judging the feasibility, appropriateness and giving credibility to products and services labelled as SE ones; (4) *Cognitive legitimation* – stakeholders, the public in general are increasingly becoming familiarized with products and services associated to what has been labelled as SE ones; (5) However, the determinant of *Sociopolitical legitimation* is still under construction – SE companies are presently facing milestone challenges in gaining legitimation from governmental officials and regulators (Ex: Airbnb's prohibition in Berlin, Germany, and the taxi driver's community "fight" against Uber);

The results of our study (data shown in Tables 1 to 7) also meet Tripsas' (cited in Navis & Glynn, 2010) foundation that the legitimation construct is a complex social process involving both entrepreneurial organizations – in our case: *Airbnb, Zipcar, TimeBanks* and *Make: makerspaces* – and prospective resource providers (stakeholders), such as investors, analysts, customers, media, and other interested audiences, in the social construction of a market category's meaning, the formation of categorical and organizational identities, and perceptions about the viability of the business model;

Also, meeting Zuckerman's (1999, cited in Navis & Glynn, 2010) findings, our study confirms that audiences (stakeholders) have an absolutely vital influence in assessing the viability of SE and its organizations and can grant or withhold legitimacy to them.

Conclusion and Limitations

In a first instance, from a perspective of the evolution of the identity claims (self-referential) of *Airbnb, Zipcar, TimeBanks* and *Make: makerspaces*, our findings show that none of them identify themselves as belonging to a SE category, thus, revealing that SE hasn't been having a significant role in establishing the identity of those organizations. In a second instance, from a perspective of the evolution of legitimacy granting by stakeholders to the same set of prototypical organizations, we complementarily were able to identify how a vast range of stakeholders, external actors and interested audiences have been granting legitimacy to them. Being a complex social process involving both entrepreneurial organizations and stakeholders, such as investors, analysts, customers, media, and other interested audiences, our study confirms that stakeholders have an critical influence in assessing the viability of SE and its organizations and can grant or withhold legitimacy to them. In this respect, there is a clear pattern path of a progressive legitimacy granting in establishing SE as a category (4 out of 5 identified determinants are present). It has been a process contoured by complex, dense and multifaceted evolutionary granting events. It becomes clearer that SE has been having a positive effect in establishing the identity of organizations belonging to the field. A comprehensive range of stakeholders –scientific community, investors, analysts, customers, media, and other interested audiences – have been studying, analysing, discussing, debating, put into perspective, investing, and adhering to SE products and services (including *Airbnb's, Zipcar's, TimeBanks'* and *Make: makerspaces'* ones) in a progressive manner along the years. Further, based on the studies of category creation discussed earlier, we generally conclude that the process of creating SE as a category is one that that goes beyond a mere rigid, constraint, straitjacket categorical model. That is, at least for now, SE has only been having a role as an ingredient of creativity, which, one the other hand, turns SE as acting as a general ambiguous category enabling divergence in identities and business models. Moreover, SE prototypical organizations seem to be hybrid, in the sense that there is a "head-modifier" structure when one category anchors cognition but is modified by features of the other. Our findings lead us, on the other hand, to extrapolate that prototypical SE services and activities have largely been rewarded by customers over the last years, since their adherence to them has undoubtedly increased, but they also have been punished by other external audiences, namely, governmental officials and regulators for the hybridization contingent on how they mixed "transportation/accommodation", "innovation" and "technology", thus, not providing *Sociopolitical legitimation* to them. Examples of this are (i) the taxi driver's community "fight" against Uber and (ii) governmental officials in delaying clear regulations for SE companies, such as Airbnb, to legitimately act in the market zone.

Resuming, although each stakeholder gives SE prototypical organizations heterogeneous, diverse, very specific, different, well-defined and sometimes divergent contours (thus, each of them providing SE various activities a "straitjacket" dimension, in the sense of confining them to very specific spheres of action. Example: Schor's confinement of SE activities into four main archetypes – peer-to-peer, for-profit; business-to-peer, for-profit activity; peer-to-peer, non-profit and business-to-peer, non-profit) and as it shows signs of still being a mutant and evolving process of identity creation, SE seems to be countered by an ingredient of creativity in the definition of organizational identity more than a "straightjacket" force. Stakeholders, in general terms, broach and define SE in various forms and in their very own way. That is the same to say that, taking into consideration the evidence collected in this study, yes SE is constraining the identity claims for the stake of legitimacy granting and it still is acting as a general ambiguous category enabling divergence in identities and business models.

This study provides a number of contributions to extant literature. From an academic perspective, it offers a new layer on framing a detailed understanding of the SE field in its maturing dimension, thus, meeting Mair and Reischauer's (2017) call for studying the SE, unpack and make sense of an inspiring and complex phenomenon and thereby to advance and refine existing theory. From a methodological perspective, this paper contributes in making an historical analysis of the establishment of organizational identity of four prototypical SE organizations, considering identify claims and legitimacy granting. From a practical point of view, it can serve as a guide (for new up-coming SE aspiring organizations/entities, for example) to (i) understand what it takes to be considered and legitimated as an SE activity and (ii) get a deeper glance over how socially complex it is to gain legitimation from stakeholders, as it interdependently involves entrepreneurial organizations and prospective resource providers (such as investors, analysts, customers, media, and other interested audiences) in the social construction of their market category meaning, the formation of their categorical and organizational identities, and perceptions about the viability of their business models.

This study is not without limitations. At the forefront, it may be criticized for being too descriptive, in the sense that there wasn't any experimental design involved in it. The aim was, nevertheless, to make an historical analysis of the establishment of SE organizational identity, considering both identify claims and legitimacy granting, thus, it would always have by default a descriptive dimension associated to it. Second, regarding the chosen sample – just four prototypical organizations –, it would had enlarged the consistency and robustness of our analysis and consequent findings if we would had added more organizations. In this respect, however, our aim was to primary analyze all four Schor's four SE architypes of activities, so no activity would be left behind. Having that as a premise, we then chose one organization per architype of activity and, consequently, came up with *Airbnb, Zipcar, TimeBanks* and *Make: makerspaces*. Third, in terms of the *business-to-peer, for-profit activity* option chosen, we reckon that the study would probably have gained more visibility in case, for example, we had opted for the prototypical organization of *Uber* instead of *Zipcar*, mostly for the simple fact that the first has been caught greater attention from stakeholders and audiences, recently. In this respect, yes, we contemplated the first one, but, unfortunately, its website wasn't and still isn't running in Portugal due to regulatory constraints, thus, not allowing to obtain direct identity claims data. Fourth, there may certainly be more stakeholders that could well be included in our analysis list of the evolution of legitimacy granting. However, our objective wasn't to make a systematic literature review nor include all existing stakeholders, but rather to analyze the maximum spectrum of stakeholders as possible.

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