



Diversity or Convergence in the Platform Economy?

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The Sharing Economy was introduced with multiple common good claims

- increase economic efficiency
- reduce ecological and carbon footprints
- increase social interaction, build new dense and durable social ties
- provide economic opportunity for all
- reduce wealth and income inequality
- create cultural diversity

our research calls all of these into question as automatic features of platforms, whether they are for profit or not for profit
these outcomes can be difficult to achieve



WE HAVE CONSUMED OVER A THIRD OF OUR PLANET'S NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE LAST FIFTY YEARS. I refuse to contribute to this legacy.
I am not a consumer, I believe in people over possessions. I AM MORE THAN I HAVE.
I AM A human being. The things I do own, will never own me. I am not against things, in fact things are so sacred I think they ought to be shared.
BUT THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE AREN'T THINGS.
I am part of a movement underway where we believe it's possible to own less, and live more. **WE HAVE NO INTEREST IN COLLECTING DUST.**



New Yorkers agree: Airbnb is great for New York City

Airbnb provides supplemental income for tens of thousands of New Yorkers. It also helps the local businesses in our neighborhoods and strengthens our communities. Airbnb is great for NYC.



airbnb nyc

Join the movement. Visit AirbnbNYC.com

182-025

Sharing platforms
quickly became
controversial

Unfair competition
(ignored regulations and
broke laws)

Externalities (housing
supply, rents,
neighborhood quality)

THE SHARED ECONOMY
IS A LIE
~~Joan Rivers was a BIGOT~~

**New Yorkers agree:
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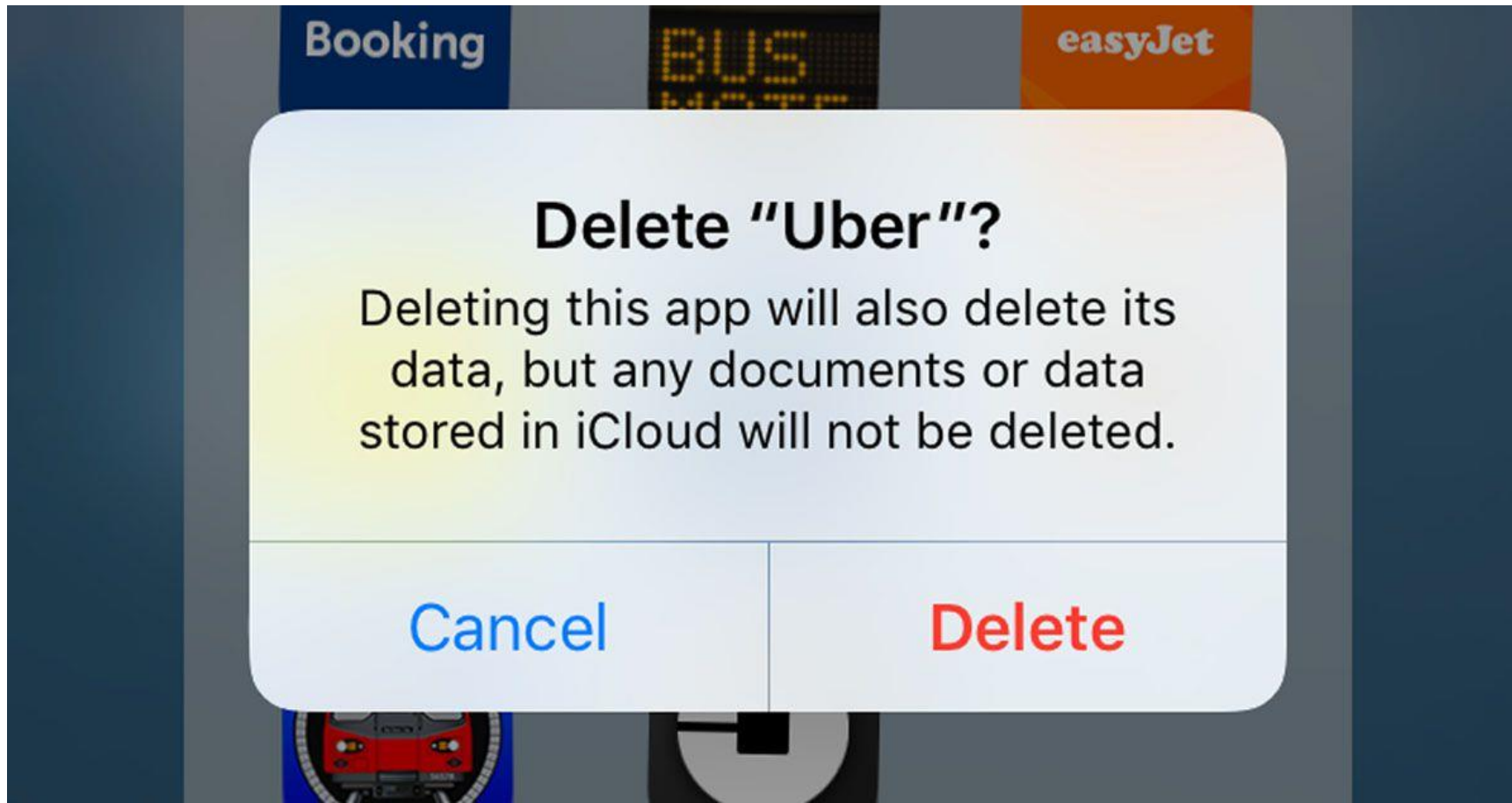
 **airbnb nyc**

Join the movement. Visit [AirbnbNYC.com](https://www.airbnb.com/nyc)

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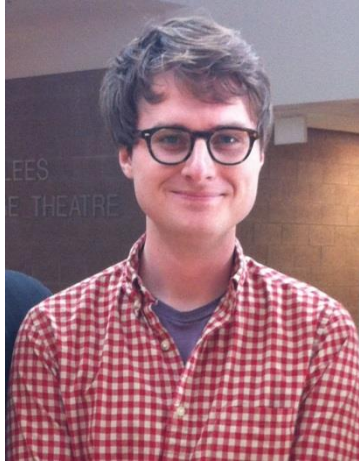
#DeleteUber: gig labor platforms accused of “race to the bottom”

“Uberworked and Underpaid”



MacArthur Project: Connected Consumption & Connected Economy 2011-18

<https://tinyurl.com/macschor>



Will Attwood-Charles



Bobby Wengronowitz



Luka Carfagna



Connor Fitzmaurice



Isak Ladegaard



Samantha Eddy



Mehmet Cansoy

A photograph of a multi-arched brick bridge spanning a river. The bridge has a decorative stone balustrade on top. The sky is overcast, and there are bare trees in the background. The text 'Time Trade Circle' is overlaid in a purple, sans-serif font at the top of the image.

Time Trade Circle

THE TIMEBANK

THE FOOD SWAP



Haloumi -
grilling + frying cheese
za'atar (thyme, sumac
+ SESAME SEEDS)

CHEESE
FOR FRYING
& GRILLING
VEG -

Haloumi -
grilling +
frying cheese

Haloumi -
grilling +
frying cheese

Haloumi -
grilling +
frying cheese

Haloumi -
grilling +
frying cheese

Haloumi -
grilling +
frying cheese

Haloumi
(grilling +
frying cheese)

Haloumi -
grilling +
frying cheese

Haloumi -
grilling +
frying cheese

Haloumi -
grilling +
frying cheese

Haloumi -
grilling +
frying cheese

HOME MADE
CHEESE
MIX of cows/gaats milk



NAME & SWAP:

Swap
Name & Swap
NAME & SWAP

VEGETARIAN

Name:
Item: Cheese /
Haloumi - grilling
+ frying cheese

(1) NAME & SWAP:
Bethany
Beer. So sub. almond milk

(2) NAME & SWAP:
Bethany R. D. Small
Transitioning from you four
to lacto-ovo starts
SWAP:

THE MAKERSPACE





airbnb



TURO



taskrabbit

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FAVOR

SUSTAINABLE
STOCK

Stocksy

UNITED

Photography

What
Is
The
Sharing
Economy?

**PEER ECONOMY, ACCESS
ECONOMY, GIG ECONOMY,
COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION,
SHARING ECONOMY, ON-DEMAND
ECONOMY, CIRCULAR ECONOMY,
PEER ECONOMY, SHARING
ECONOMY, COLLABORATIVE
ECONOMY...**



The Sharing Economy refers to Consumer Goods and Services, not all platform businesses

Recirculation of used goods

originals: eBay, Craig's List

Freecycle, Yerdle, Swapstyle

Loans/rentals of durable assets

lodging shares or rentals, car shares or rentals, neighborhood borrowing platforms

Labor service exchange (gig work)

ridesourcing, Postmates, Task Rabbit, timebanks
[what about Uber!!??]

**Very varied sector with many types of entities;
Although only a few platforms are large**



Ownership models

Peer to Peer (P2P) **Sharing Economy Classico.**

Peers own the assets. Providers and customers are “peers,” i.e., non-commercial entities. Examples: Airbnb, BlaBla Car, Neighborgoods

Business to Customer (B2C) **Not typically sharing**

Business owns the assets, “rents” to customers. Examples: Zipcar, Car2Go

Municipality to Citizen (M2C)? **Sharing?**

Municipality owns assets and makes available to citizens/visitors (eg, bikeshare) **[the old version is the library]**

FOR PROFIT

NOT FOR PROFIT

PEER
TO
PEER



BUSINESS
TO PEER



Does exchange of money preclude sharing?



Yes: Common view (eg Russell Belk)
“Sharewashing” by companies

Maybe not: Sharing has many meanings

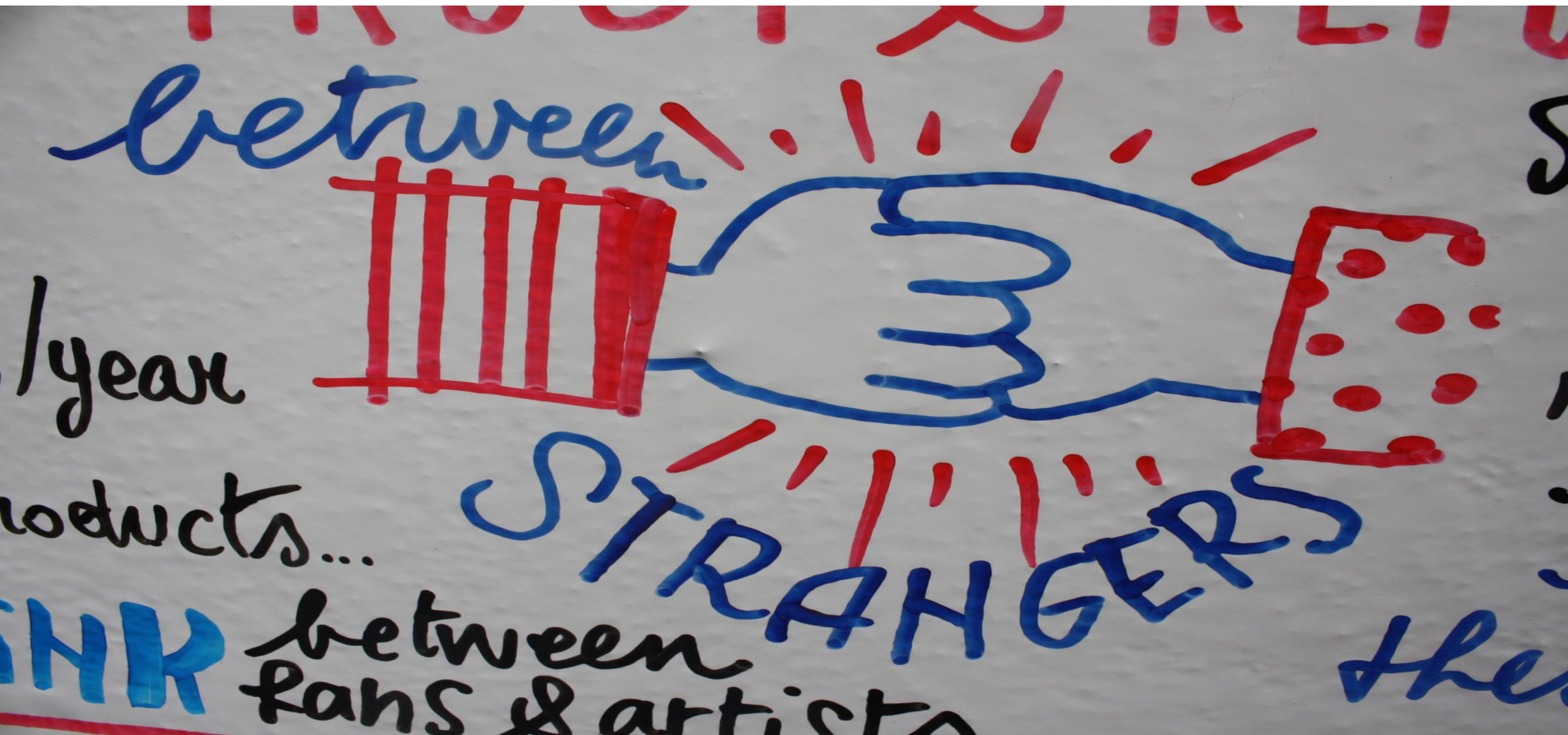
Avoid simplistic view that money is profane

No: Many relationships of sharing involve mutual gain, transfers of resources

Sharing before the internet: among kin and neighbors, within communities



What's new is stranger sharing
(enabled by crowd sourcing of ratings and reputational data)



labor market experiences and outcomes: platform dependence

Platform workforces are highly diverse. Most work few hours; a minority are full time.

Dependent: wholly or primarily dependent on the platform for their livelihood; rely on earnings to pay for monthly expenses; roughly equivalent to full-time workers)

Partially-dependent: rely somewhat on platform earnings, but either work on multiple platforms or have part-time jobs, small businesses or other sources of income.

Supplemental: platform earnings are not part of their regular income source, and are considered extra, or supplemental. Many have full-time employment or activity (i.e., schooling).

Coded by answers on survey, interview data

What are the experiences of "providers" on sharing economy platforms?
findings from seven for profits (from "Dependence and Precarity" paper)

Outcomes	Earnings are supplemental	Earnings used for living expenses
Satisfaction	Mixed/low	High
Autonomy	High	Limited
Wages	Can be selective to earn highest wages	Must accept all/most trades/wages lower

Assessing precarity

Case	Is platform activity a response to precarity?	Do platform earnings mitigate precarity?
Airbnb	Generally not	Yes
TaskRabbit	Generally not	Not for dependent earners
Uber/Lyft/Postmates/Favor	Mixed	Not for dependent earners

The Platform Hierarchy

Capital v Labor income
Wages
Job control
Race and socio-economic class of provider



POSTMATES



Diversity or convergence?

Neo-liberalization or a path to deeper cooperation?



The context of austerity and the argument for neo-liberalization

Sharing platforms within the technology eco-system

Participants' views

Limits of deep cooperative forms

Is Europe different?

Is it just Airbnb and Uber?

Arguments for convergence:

Sharing platforms as a response to austerity and downward mobility

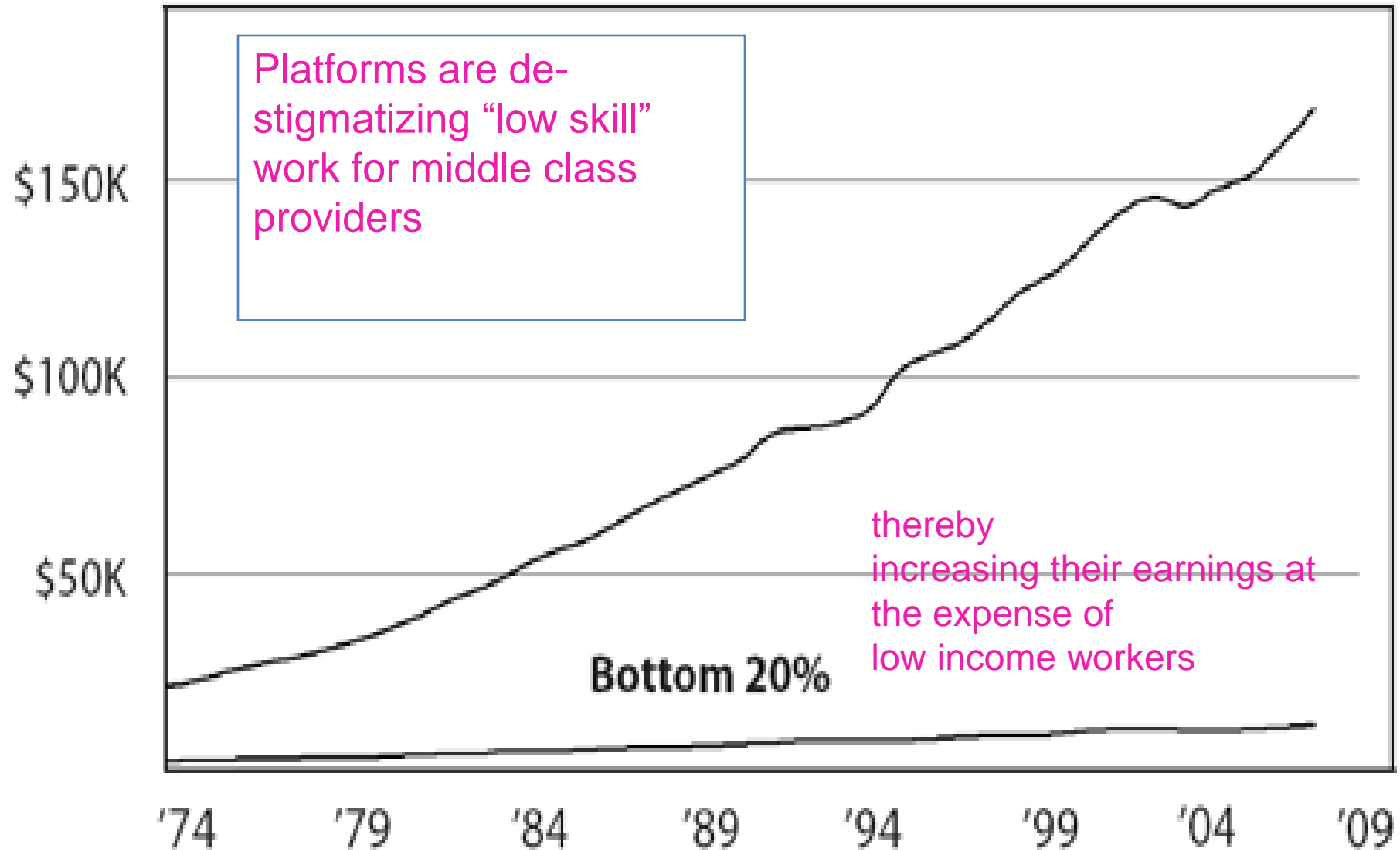


Emerged from the financial collapse of 2008 and subsequent austerity

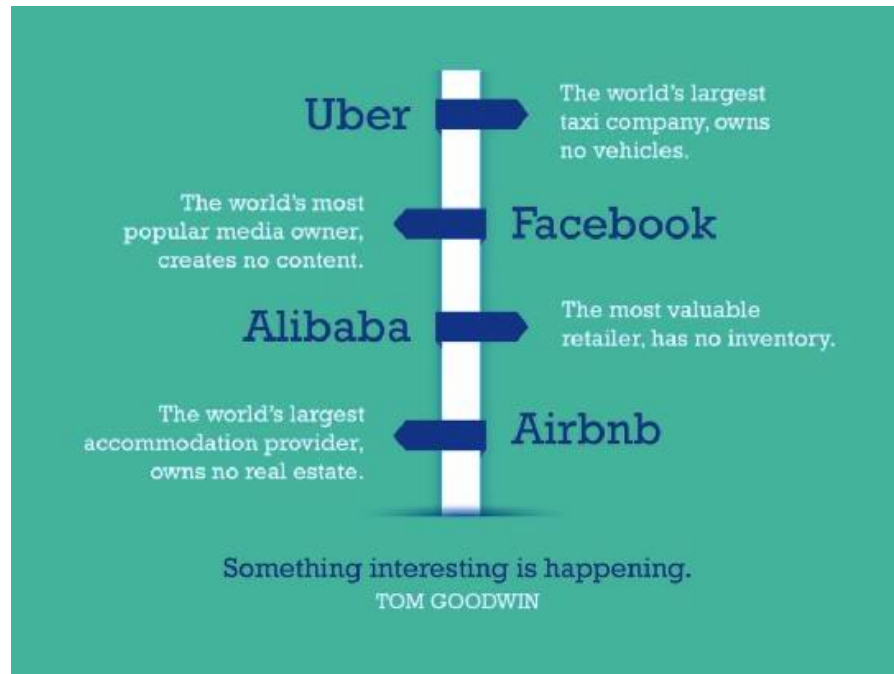
Innovators are young adults (many face limited economic opportunity)

Platforms can be Income Inequality -enhancing

Mean household income: top 20% and bottom 20%



sharing platforms as tech companies



“We are in the midst of a reorganization of our economy in which platform owners are seemingly developing power that may be even more formidable than was that of the factory owners in the early industrial revolution” (Kenney and Zysman 2016, 62).

The public sees “divergence” i.e. a new model

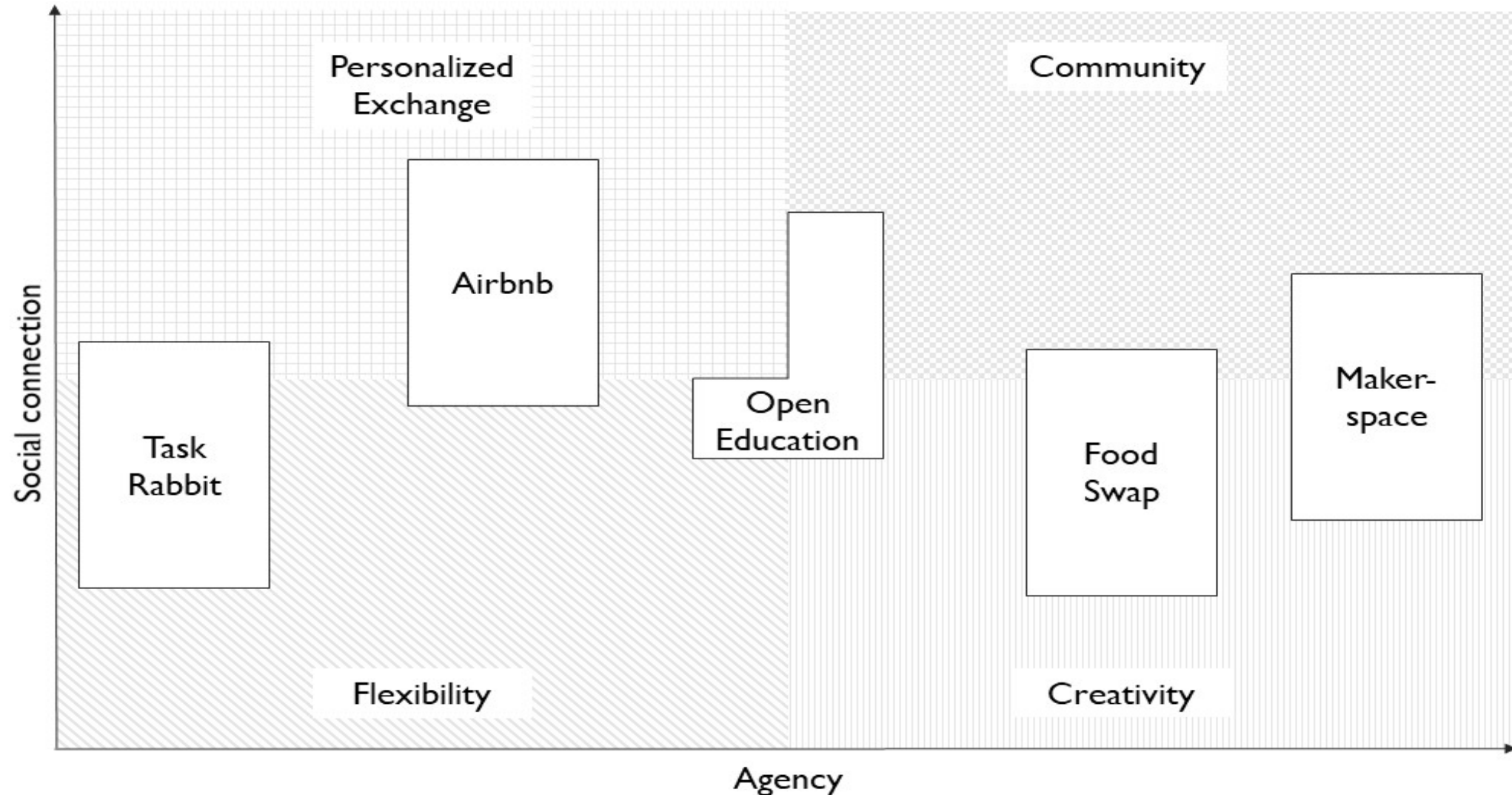
What Americans Think of the **Sharing Economy**



In 2014, the Center for a New American Dream conducted a national survey to determine American attitudes on wealth, sharing, materialism, and more.

View the complete results: www.newdream.org/poll2014

participants also feel that their participation is deepening cooperation



a cautionary example: durable goods borrowing and renting platforms

I do not need a drill.
I need a hole in the wall



the failure of the renting/borrowing platforms



CNAD survey: Would like to share more things, like tools and household items? Only 32% agree. About same disagree.

A good idea versus an economically compelling model



Is Europe different?

European sharing initiatives have more solidaristic aspects, and may be achieving more common good outcomes

Municipal governments are promoting commons and sharing initiatives (eg of Ghent)



Is it just Airbnb and Uber?

Other platforms not scaling. Many have closed.

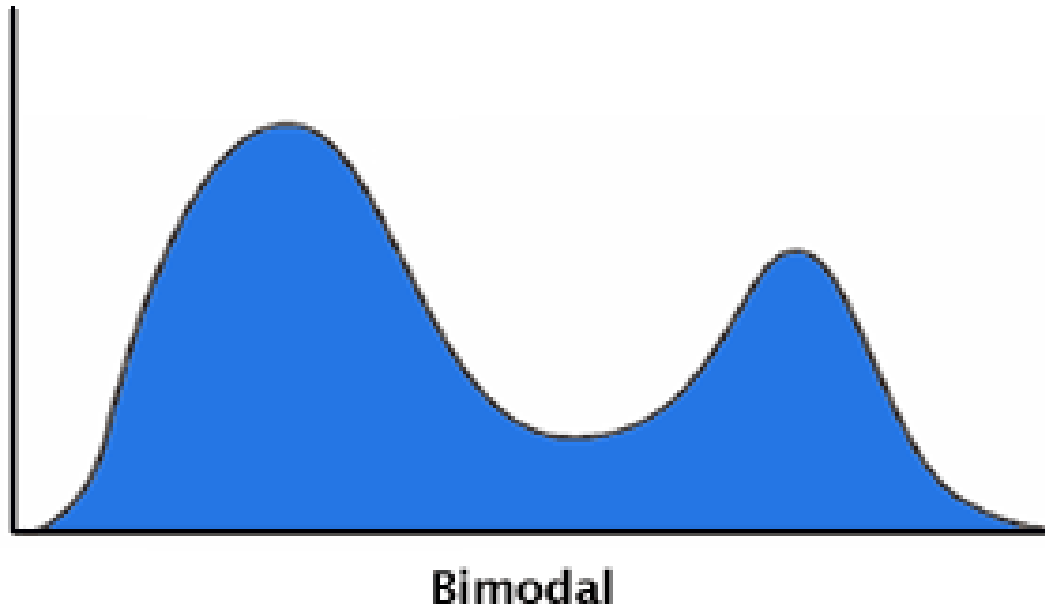
Airbnb being regulated. Will it be confined to one-property hosts?

Uber lost nearly \$5B last year. Does it have a viable business model?

How prevalent will these practices eventually become?

A bi-modal future?

A few large platforms scale and dominate, converge to “business-as-usual”



A smaller true sharing sector grows, especially where local governments support alternatives and where capital is scarce

Public policy should regulate the big actors and foster the small

Research topics

“Gig” labor experiences

Status dynamics in non-profits

Moral aspirations of participants

Culture of Airbnb hosting

Racial discrimination and gentrification on Airbnb

Impacts of platform labor on income inequality

Status identity dilemmas among Task Rabbits

New types of vulnerability among Uber and Lyft drivers

Systems of labor control on delivery apps

Dynamics of platform cooperatives