

When Harry met Sally: different approaches towards Uber and AirBnB—an Australian and Singapore perspective

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Received: 27 June 2016 / Revised: 9 November 2016 / Accepted: 10 November 2016 /
Published online: 14 November 2016
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Abstract The sharing economy has transformed the tourism landscape, though different destinations have featured various levels of receptivity. Two of the main organisations, or disruptors, are AirBnB and Uber. These two organisations were examined and compared in terms of how they have featured within two countries, Australia and Singapore. Using a case study approach, online contents concerning AirBnB and Uber were analysed to elucidate tourism responses in the respective countries. Drawing from the theoretical frameworks of disruptive innovation and smart tourism ecosystems, this research amplified that governance structures influenced how these two organisations carried out their operations. For instance, AirBnB received for more access in Australia than Singapore. In contrast, Singapore was more receptive to Uber and other ridesharing organisations than in the case of Australia. Incidentally, tourism responses have been almost non-existent within the two countries. In order to steer strategy and governance concerning the sharing economy, there is an urgent need to re-align existing legislation and business models in order to realise the true potential of smart tourism ecosystems.

Keywords Disruptive innovation · Sharing economy · Governance

1 Introduction

The movie *When Harry Met Sally* provides the setting of a car ride offered by Sally to Harry to New York (Eckstein et al. 2012). This analogy lends a traditional view of ridesharing, which could include hitchhiking (Belk 2014). While Belk (2014)

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refers to hitchhiking in terms of the concept of trust between the driver and a passenger, the metaphor of ridesharing today has evolved to emaciate the notion of economic values ascribed to assets such as houses and vehicles. Therefore, ridesharing principles of the contemporary society provide further dimensions of metaphorical transfer (see Hunt and Menon 1995; Rentschler et al. 2012) concerning the term ridesharing. Uber has dominated headlines around the world with their business model of “ridesharing” within a sharing economy (Cohen and Kietzmann 2014). Hamari et al. (2016) defined a sharing economy to be an environment where goods and services are offered and consumed through community-based platforms. However, such a definition has been challenged by other authors, who argue that organisations such as Uber and AirBnB have profited from facilitating links between users and providers through informal arrangements. For this reason, an alternative term—the informal economy has been proposed to depict the current state of developments (Dredge and Gyimothy 2015; Witt et al. 2015). Even within the informal economy, some distinctive traits exist between Uber and AirBnB. Uber reflects what is known as the access based consumption, where Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) have conceptualised the term based on networks comprising hubs and nodes of distribution. In contrast, the *modus operandi* of AirBnB as an online platform is embedded within the concept of online relational communities, proposed by Pera et al. (2016).

Notwithstanding these distinctions, AirBnB and Uber have arguably transformed the service environment for sectors such as tourism. Guttentag (2015) highlighted AirBnB’s exponential growth since the organisation began operations in 2009. Likewise, Heo (2016) postulated that the developments surrounding Uber has impacted taxi operations significantly for many nations. The forays of AirBnB and Uber into the tourism scene have faced heightened resistance from accommodation and transport sectors due to an apparent lack of regulation related to legal, social and economic implications concerning their operations (Fang et al. 2016). These new entrants have circumvented existing legal and regulatory practices by linking provider to consumer, and bypassing governments and local authorities. For instance, hotel operators have to pay licensing and hospitality taxes to their relevant authorities, whereas AirBnB appears to have remained elusive on this matter (Oskam and Boswijk 2016). Likewise, taxi drivers face stringent security and vehicle checks, whereas Uber seemed to be ambivalent to such laws (Martin 2016). These differences have resulted in the need to reconfigure traditional forms of governance amidst a highly evolving operating environment (McCauley 2016; Morgan and Kuch 2015). Such disruptions also warrant a re-think of existing business strategies to compete in a technologically-mediated environment (Richard and Cleveland 2016). Amidst this backdrop, both AirBnB and Uber have charted their growth to many other destinations and have certainly disrupted incumbents within the tourism industry.

This paper investigates the approaches to regulating AirBnB and Uber from a cross-national perspective involving Australia and Singapore. These two countries were selected as the contexts for investigation as they are both well-known tourism destinations. Additionally, the main language spoken and written in both countries is in English, which allows for consistency in comparing online contents. This

reduces any potential risks involving translation and re-interpretation of contents, an area of concern when dealing with contents that feature more than one language (Larkin, de Casterle and Schotsmans 2007; Maclean 2007). Another key factor for the selection of these two countries is the familiarity and use of both AirBnB and Uber by the researcher in Australia and Singapore.

Guided by the theoretical frameworks of disruptive innovation and smart tourism ecosystems, the paper examines how AirBnB and Uber have mapped their progress to date within the two countries. The research was conducted by employing secondary data sources featuring news articles and government reports. The findings of the research contribute to existing theory and practice by showcasing where strategy and governance are in some cases integrated, and fragmented in others, to the application of the Resource-Based View theory in steering the sharing economy within tourism.

2 Background

This section will first present an overview of the two key frameworks that guide this research—Disruptive Innovation and Smart Tourism Ecosystems. Following this, the manner in which Uber and AirBnB are situated in the current scope of the theoretical frameworks are delineated from literature, as well as their operations in Australia and Singapore.

2.1 Disruptive innovation

The term disruptive innovation was proposed by Christensen (1997) to characterise the sudden, and often unforeseen developments that radically alter the competitive forces within a particular industry. This seemingly simple theory is not without its critique. For instance, Yu and Hang (2010) postulated that various studies have approached disruptive innovation from different angles, and argue that such diverse views should reflect a more nuanced perspective. Additionally, other scholars posit different conditions in order for disruptive innovation to flourish. For instance, Sandberg (2002) ascertained that there needs to be a condition of market-readiness to accept the proposed innovation. Likewise, Assink (2006) hypothesised that the demise of disruptive innovations can be a consequence of lack of a culture for change and internal misalignments. These considerations notwithstanding, Schmidt and Druehl (2008) built on extant literature to characterise disruptive innovation as low-end encroachment. In other words, the innovation is founded as a low cost model to depose of its competitors operating with a higher cost structure (Markides 2006).

One such exemplar in tourism is that of the low cost carriers (LCCs). For the major part of modern commercial aviation, airlines have competed across aircraft features, network connectivity and service delivery, only for the LCCs such as Southwest Airlines or RyanAir to reconfigure the competitive stance within the industry. The premise of LCCs is to strip down air travel to a bare minimum of a seat, while offering other amenities such as food, entertainment and luggage as add-

on costs to passengers needing such features (Aydemir 2012). Moreover, LCCs have managed to keep costs low by often having a single aircraft fleet types, technology-enhanced distribution channels and operating out of second tier airports (Graham 2013). These factors help LCCs to achieve economies of scale in their operations and ensure that their fleet is quickly turned around for the next scheduled service. The emergence of LCCs in the last two decades has impacted market shares of full-service airlines, which has necessitated a recalibration of their strategies, managerial practices and service (Alderighi et al. 2012; Chung and Whang 2011; Murakami 2011).

However, the contexts of AirBnB and Uber are not necessarily a good fit into the dominant discourse of low-end encroachment imminent in literature concerning disruptive innovation. Rather, using big data and online algorithms, AirBnB and Uber have transformed the practices of accommodation and transport sectors within tourism to shift from purely a Business-to-Customer (B2C) to a Customer-to-Customer (C2C) perspective. This is done by bringing together willing homeowners and drivers to offer their assets (houses and vehicles) to interested customers over mobile platforms. However, in order to derive the required critical mass for AirBnB and Uber to realise their potential, there is a need to better understand the role of smart ecosystems operating in tourism. The paper will next turn to a discussion of smart tourism ecosystems to help delineate the scope of the research.

2.2 Smart tourism ecosystems

The composite term of smart tourism ecosystems may be divided further into two terms—“smart tourism” and “ecosystems”. The origins of the term ecosystem are found in environmental science to characterise the inter-related processes of nature living in symbiotic relations (Ghilarov 2000; Stoddart 1965). Since its original form, the term ecosystems has been applied within other industries, such as “business ecosystems” (Pickett and Cadenasso 2002). Similarly, business ecosystems espouse the notion that there are many different agents each working to ensure that an organisation is aligned to internal and external stakeholders (Kandiah and Gossain 1998).

The strength of an ecosystem perspective is to emphasise that all stakeholders are able to, and help shape the manner in which change occurs and is operationalised (Hearn and Pace 2006). Such a conceptualisation shifts the focus from traditional linear perspectives of a supply chain to a contemporary mindset of highly interactive forms of engagement amongst different stakeholders. One of the enablers for ecosystems to thrive has been the speed of technological change (Adomavicius et al. 2007). Leveraging on the potential of technology use and adoption is at the essence of what is a smart tourism ecosystem, according to Gretzel et al. (2015). A smart tourism ecosystem espouses that technology fuels the creation of big data that are then analysed for use and co-created by all stakeholders.

In relation to this research, the two different cases of AirBnB and Uber are well situated within a smart tourism ecosystem. The *modus operandi* of AirBnB is to provide a platform for a consumer community seeking unique accommodation experiences offered by global residents and also other intermediaries such as online

or mobile payment providers. Likewise, Uber leverages on consumer insights related to transportation needs by having its drivers offer rides to potential clients, including tourists, over the use of their smart devices.

Whilst both companies have grown to become the “pin-up” models for disruptive innovation, very little is known as to how they have been successful or less successful across different tourism destinations (Cheng 2016). This is because each destination is likely to have its own norms, cultures and governance models towards such developments. This gap in literature is the justification to examine how AirBnB and Uber have engaged with the tourism landscapes within Australia and Singapore. The aim of this paper is to unpack if there are different approaches taken within the smart tourism ecosystem in each country to address the entry of AirBnB and Uber.

2.3 AirBnB

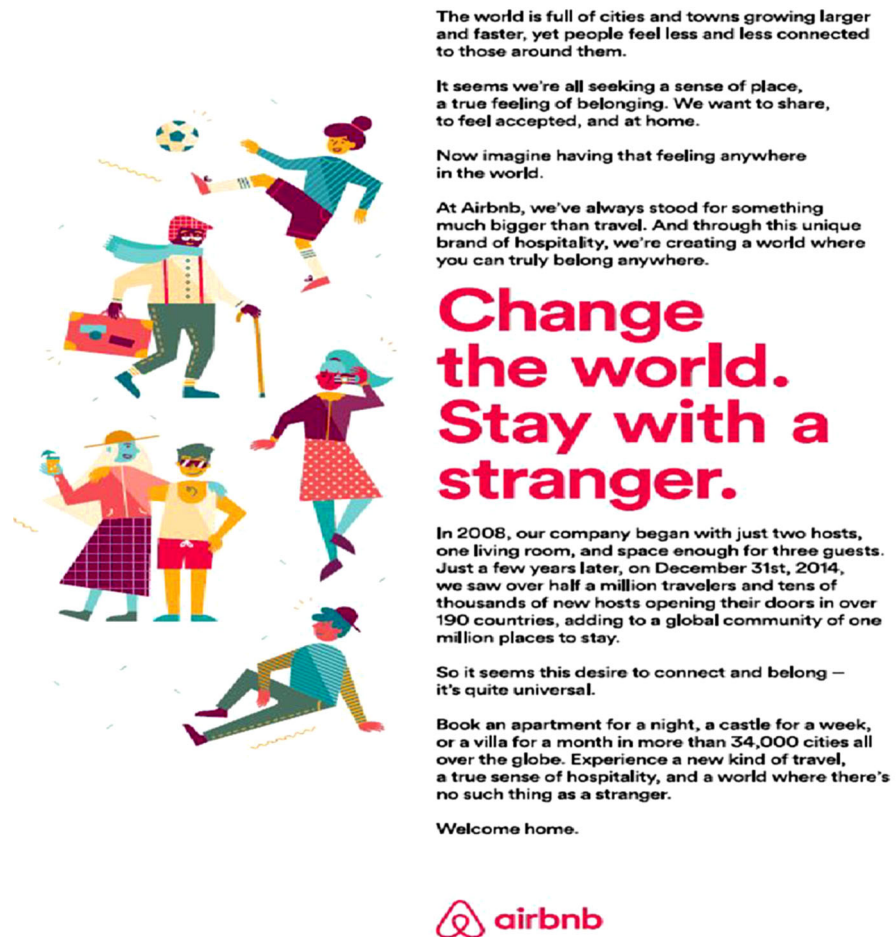
AirBnB entered Australia and Singapore towards the end of 2012 (Ong 2012; Yap 2012). Additionally, the organisation has set up office spaces in each country, Sydney in Australia (Khadem 2012), and its Asian headquarters in Singapore (Zachariah 2016). It is interesting to note that at the point when these offices were set up, the legality of AirBnB in these countries remained unclear. Notwithstanding this, the number of AirBnB listings in Australia is reportedly around 60,000 properties (Kaye 2016) and more than 6000 in Singapore (Lin 2016).

The uneven playing field for AirBnB has been voiced by traditional accommodation providers who have sought council and governments for advice regarding their position on the entry of AirBnB in Australia. In December 2013, the Melbourne City Council failed in their attempt at prohibiting the use of owner-occupied premises to host short-stay visitors such as those on AirBnB (Danckert 2014). However, a recent court ruling in Melbourne took the decision that AirBnB practices were deemed illegal (Lenaghan 2016). These different outcomes continue to paint a picture of the greyness of AirBnB operations and their presence in the country.

The case of Singapore is perhaps clearer as to the stance taken on AirBnB. Governments and local authorities have regularly clamped down on both public and private home owners who have attempted to undertake AirBnB and other types of short-term hosting activities. According to the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) of Singapore, private home owners who run afoul of the law concerning AirBnB type hosting activities may be fined up to \$200,000 and jailed for up to one year (Ng 2016). Two home owners also had their properties confiscated by the local government authorities for undertaking short-stay related to public housing (Bee 2014).

In Singapore, public housing refers to government owned residential properties (often in the form of apartment units) that are sold to owners for a period of up to 99 years that is then repossessed by the government for resale (Thong et al. 2000). Purchase of public housing is based on several criteria (such as income-testing), and accompanied by some form of home ownership grants and loans allotted to the home owners with low interest rates (Park 1998). All the same, more than 80% of Singapore’s population live in public housing (Haila 2000).

The explicit stance against AirBnB is very much emblematic of land-scarce Singapore, which treats housing as a privilege, rather than an entitlement. For this reason, local authorities are adamant that residential properties are for the exclusive consumption of the home owners, and not to be exploited as a means to generate income (Chua 2000). Nonetheless, AirBnB have sought further dialogue with the URA as to what the rules are in relation to short-term housing activities (Lee 2015). While this was happening, AirBnB have launched several advertisements in various Singaporean newspaper outlets. One such advertisement appeared to take a persuasive nature, as depicted in Fig. 1. The advertisement aims to elevate the value of staying with ‘strangers’ as a more authentic experience at a destination. Such a message further illuminates what Cohen and Cohen (2012) terms ‘hot’ authenticity, which describes how individuals construct what appears to be a real and unique



The world is full of cities and towns growing larger and faster, yet people feel less and less connected to those around them.

It seems we're all seeking a sense of place, a true feeling of belonging. We want to share, to feel accepted, and at home.

Now imagine having that feeling anywhere in the world.

At Airbnb, we've always stood for something much bigger than travel. And through this unique brand of hospitality, we're creating a world where you can truly belong anywhere.

Change the world. Stay with a stranger.

In 2008, our company began with just two hosts, one living room, and space enough for three guests. Just a few years later, on December 31st, 2014, we saw over half a million travelers and tens of thousands of new hosts opening their doors in over 190 countries, adding to a global community of one million places to stay.

So it seems this desire to connect and belong – it's quite universal.

Book an apartment for a night, a castle for a week, or a villa for a month in more than 34,000 cities all over the globe. Experience a new kind of travel, a true sense of hospitality, and a world where there's no such thing as a stranger.

Welcome home.




Fig. 1 AirBnB advertisement in Singaporean newspaper. Source: TODAY (2015)

tourism encounter based on the performance of interacting with the host and the setting (accommodation in this instance).

In comparison, the less stringent approach taken to AirBnB in Australia is perhaps a response to sluggish economic growth. In the last five years, Australia's Gross Domestic Product has grown by less than 1.2% annually (TradingEconomics 2016). Along with the downturn of the mining and manufacturing sectors, many Australian states have sought answers for economic growth within alternative sectors such as tourism (Smith 2015). However, the flow on effect from the reduced outputs in the exiting sectors have created two significant problems. One, the sudden excess capacity of houses once occupied by mining employees. Two, employees to their places of origin having been made redundant. There is arguably enormous pressure placed on governments to consider innovative outcomes for a sustainable future of the country (Dalitz and Toner 2016). By empowering individuals to supplement income from their home as an asset, some Australian states have welcomed AirBnB's entry (Jones 2016). Table 1 indicates the current state of AirBnB's operations in Australia.

From Table 1, it can be observed that with the exception of Victoria, the other Australian states and territories remain open as to the presence of AirBnB. The stringent laws surrounding Victoria may have been an outcome of high housing demand due to population increase and not wanting AirBnB to jeopardise the existing frameworks protecting operators such as management stratas and building insurance providers (Lenaghan 2015).

Despite the disparate treatment of AirBnB across the country, it is evident that tourism accommodation providers want a level playing field (Burke 2016; Harley 2015). However, as in the context of Singapore, there appears to be no quick formula to address AirBnB's foray as an informal accommodation provider.

Table 1 AirBnB operations in Australia

State/territory	AirBnB operations
Australian Capital Territory	No existing regulations surrounding AirBnB (Jericho 2016)
New South Wales	Seeking public consultation on how to integrate AirBnB to the state (Kozaki and Vernon 2016)
Northern Territory	No existing regulations surrounding AirBnB (McDonald 2015)
Queensland	No existing regulations surrounding AirBnB (Harbour 2016)
South Australia	Approved as at June 2016 (Government SA 2016)
Tasmania	Approved for durations of 6 weeks or less (Frankowski 2016)
Victoria	Governments have applied to the Supreme Court for AirbnB to be deemed illegal (Nightingale 2016) Exceptions made to allow AirBnB to house individuals affected by disasters (Premier of Victoria 2016)
Western Australia	Short term renting needs prior approval, but not enforced (Kakulas 2016) Councils deliberating on AirbnB regulations (Smithers and Farcic 2015)

Overall, the current landscape of AirBnB in both countries call for a more nuanced approach to governance models within a fast evolving smart tourism ecosystem.

2.4 Uber

Uber launched its ridesharing services in Singapore in 2013 (Yeung 2013), and commenced operations in Australia one year prior in 2012 (Russell 2012). As at October 2015, Uber reportedly have transacted more than 10 million rides in Australia (Remeikis 2015). Furthermore, a commissioned study by Deloitte Australia found that there were significant cost savings to users of Uber, with exponential rates of adoption (Deloitte 2016). While there appears to be no official tally of Uber vehicle fleet size in Singapore, the company has nonetheless ramped up their operations by placing more than 800 bids for the Certificate of Entitlement (CoE) in April 2016 (Tan 2016). In Singapore, the CoE is a government initiated tender system to regulate the number of vehicles in the country (May 2004). A CoE entitles a potential owner the right to purchase a new vehicle and operate it for a duration of ten years. A driver who wishes to own the car for subsequent years must re-apply for a new CoE. Data from the Land Transport Authority in Singapore show that at June 2016, each CoE costs at least US\$35,000, with less than 10,000 such certificates issued for the entire month (LTA 2016). Placed in perspective, Uber is investing to increase its presence in Singapore, despite the high costs associated with new cars in the country.

Australia, in contrast, has interfered more with Uber than it has with AirBnB. Since their entry to the country in 2012, traditional transport providers in the form of taxis have lobbied various governments to eradicate Uber from operating within the different states. Taxi drivers have launched street protests against Uber in the major cities of Melbourne and Sydney in response to Uber's presence (Dinham 2016; Spicer 2015). While this is not dissimilar to reactions in other parts of the world, the complication of governance in an Australian context is the strong union movement that represents the rights of taxi drivers in the country (Neilson 2009). Additionally, the cost of a taxi licence in Australia can cost approximately US\$300,000 (Potter 2015). This high entry cost acts as a barrier to entry for many, and forms the basis for licence holders to reap as much revenue as they can from daily operations. The entry of Uber has resulted in eroding the value of such licences, and thereby jeopardising taxi owners income streams (Utting 2015). In addition to petitioning their respective state governments, the Taxi Council of Australia has placed several



Fig. 2 Taxi Council of Queensland advertisement against Uber. Source: Author's own photo

advertisements in the country by placating the unsafe nature of Uber. Figure 2 is one such advertisement located within billboards in Brisbane.

Amidst this backdrop, Uber has created inroads into some states and territories. Table 2 indicates the current state of Uber operations within the country.

With the exception of the Northern Territory and Queensland, Table 2 has indicated that Uber has been approved to operate in the other Australian state and territories. These recent developments appear to be state governments being compelled to accept the disruptive innovations on the back of enormous growth associated with Uber adoption. Hence, existing strategies and governance models have been reconfigured to incorporate Uber within the local transport operating frameworks.

3 Method

This section discusses the approach taken to investigate how Australia and Singapore have responded in terms of addressing the entry of AirBnB and Uber to the tourism scene in these countries. Following the principles ascribed to qualitative data by Miles and Huberman (1984), the research method is undertaken via a four-stage process of data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification.

Table 2 Uber operations in Australia

State/territory	Uber operations
Australian Capital Territory	Legislation passed to allow Uber operations as of October 2015 (McIlroy 2015)
New South Wales	Legal to operate as of December 2015 (Wood 2015) Taxi licence owners to receive compensation of between US\$20,000–30000 (O'Sullivan 2015)
Northern Territory	Ban on operations as of February 2016 (Daly 2016) Opposition political parties promising to allow Uber if it wins August 2016 elections (Dunlop 2016)
Queensland	Illegal as at April 2016 (Barrett and Barrett 2016) Current review underway for a South-east Queensland regional approval (Branco 2016) Increase in fines for drivers of up to US\$1,700 and US\$17,000 for administrators (Burke 2016)
South Australia	Legal to operate with effect from 1 July 2016 (Novak 2016)
Tasmania	Approval in principle to operate following Taxi and Hire Vehicle Industries and Amendment Bill (Richards 2016)
Victoria	Pending government approval to operate (White 2016) Uber driver wins appeal against legal conviction (Carey 2016)
Western Australia	Legal to operate as of May 2016 (Kagi 2016)

In terms of data collection, secondary data are collated from news articles and industry reports concerning AirBnB and Uber in Australia and Singapore between October 2012 and June 2016. These data are selected as the timeframe for analysis based on AirBnB and Uber's launch in Australia and Singapore. Having stipulated the timeframes for analysis, sources employed to collate relevant data are from Australian library-subscription based databases, namely Proquest (<http://www.proquest.com>) and Factiva (<http://www.factiva.com>), as well as Google Singapore news archives. In this research, governance topics relating to rules, regulations and policies were included in the data for analysis. Guided by the research aims of seeking how governance is operationalised within the contexts of AirBnB and Uber in Australia and Singapore, the coding scheme employed was to elicit articles that were dedicated to discussing governance, and highlighting the roles of key stakeholders to this cause. This process mimics the work of Liu and Pennington-Gray (2015) in terms of framing news articles for research purposes. Table 3 denotes the volume of relevant news articles obtained for both AirBnB and Uber in Australia and Singapore.

Data display and conclusion drawing/verification will be presented in the next section on findings and discussion.

4 Findings and discussion

This section will present separate findings of AirBnB and Uber in Australia and Singapore before discussing where the strategy and governance responses have been similar or different, and why these approaches may have been undertaken.

4.1 Technological mediation

For both AirBnB and Uber, a common feature in Singapore and Australia is the role of technology as a mediator of the smart tourism ecosystem. The rate of technological development, coupled by high mobile adoption rates, are fuelling the processes within the digital tourism landscape in both countries. As such, the ease of transacting an AirBnB or Uber experience becomes commonplace in such a smart tourism ecosystem.

While having commonalities in terms of technological mediation, the research has provided some points of differentiation as to how technology is operationalised in Australia and Singapore. In charting the role of technology as positioning smart

Table 3 Breakdown of news articles on AirBnB and Uber in databases

Sources	AirBnB	Uber
Proquest	258 (Australia)	599 (Australia)
	7 (Singapore)	29 (Singapore)
Factiva	459 (Australia)	2,582 (Australia)
	38 (Singapore)	390 (Singapore)
Google news	211 (Singapore)	211 (Singapore)

cities, Singapore was ranked number one by Juniper Research (2016), beating the likes of Barcelona, London and San Francisco. This prominent position suggests that technology already underpins the manner in which the country operates, and showcases the immersive nature of networks to embed subsequent applications, or various sectors such as tourism (Neirotti et al. 2014; Vanolo 2014). However, Australia is confronted by a different set of challenges related to technological mediation. This may be attributed to its sheer geographic size and therefore having to address rising costs of technological constraints across spatial and market demand (Angelidou 2014). The consequence of such developments are a highly fragmented roll-out of technology, which thereby reduces the desired potential of smart city capabilities.

4.2 Political stability

Another distinctive feature that could suggest points of difference as to how governance has been operationalised in Australia and Singapore is the role of political stability. In this aspect, the ruling party in Singapore has been in power since its independence in 1965 (Low 2006). This has provided a stable platform for public and private investment in smart city infrastructure to be built around government policies and plans that can be carried to fruition (Mahizhnan 1999). In contrast, Australia has witnessed five different Prime Ministers from different political parties between 2010 and 2015 (Sandhu 2015). This constant change of governments and policies creates a highly disruptive environment to effect any long-term goals related to sector initiatives, such as tourism. Hence, it is vital that for any smart tourism ecosystem to be developed, the role of a long-term approach to governance is needed. Smart cities are not built overnight and need to be nurtured in an environment that embraces resilience and sustainability to shocks (e.g. economic, social) to the ecosystem (Aurigi 2006). Additionally, a smart tourism ecosystem espouses the need for governments to collaborate in terms of open innovation with all stakeholders, an area that has been extremely challenging to address given divisive political ideologies and vested interests (Paskaleva 2011).

4.3 A common good

Burkhalter et al. (2002) claimed that it is easier to unite stakeholders on the premise that changes will improve the status quo for the common good. The challenges are perhaps in persuading behavioural changes to accept differences to how such goals can be realised. In the case of AirBnB and Uber, their roles in the consumer community as conceptualised by Gretzel et al. (2015) are a feature of contemporary tourism trends. However, their presence has obviously caused much uneasiness to other stakeholders in the smart tourism ecosystem because they disrupt revenue streams, business processes, legal ramifications and ultimately, destination appeal (Boes et al. 2016).

Australia's stance on Uber has traditionally sided with the incumbent roles of the taxi industry. As previously discussed, the high prohibitive costs associated with obtaining a taxi licence in Australia has resulted in high commuter fares for both

locals and tourists. However, the taxi industry heavily regulates driver and vehicles and is also responsible for other insurance and licensing schemes. The taxi industry is also an influential stakeholder group in governments and have been successful in pushing through regulations and also lobbying actions to protect the rights of its union members (Selbert 2006). Moreover, the taxi industry is commissioned with the moral obligations of supporting war veterans and their families through the provision of concessionary transport arrangements (Dyson et al. 2012). Enabling Uber to operate in Australia would necessitate re-drafting of government instruments to ensure that the needs of such stakeholder groups are not compromised.

4.4 A climate of collaboration

A key ingredient to the effectiveness of the smart tourism ecosystem is a climate of collaboration (Del Chiappa and Baggio 2015). Despite the positive returns on collaboration, tourism scholars have indicated that suspicion and competition have resulted in ambivalent attitudes by stakeholders to collaborate on various agendas. While these conditions are likely to persist, it is also essential to note as to the parties involved in the collaboration. For instance, an attempt by Virgin Australia to collaborate with Uber have proved to be unpopular with the general public. The proposed collaboration was shut down within 24 h due to public backlash (Ironsides 2014). Other ancillary services such as banks have nonetheless adopted AirBnB as a tool to further promote the use of their credit cards, though the destination selected could be anywhere in the world.

4.5 Evolving governance frameworks

Some governance frameworks have already been initiated to address evolution of AirBnB and Uber. For example, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has published guidelines for hosts to keep records of income (Goods and Services Tax excluded) and expense receipts, showing clear intentions that AirBnB is a conduit of taxable income (ATO 2016). While these proposals remain insufficient to address the plethora of economic and social issues surfaced by various stakeholders, the proposals lend useful building blocks to reconfigure strategy and governance matters pertaining to AirBnB.

In the Singapore context, Uber did not face a prolonged period of resistance before the local governments decided to act. Not only did the Singapore government address Uber, but it also encouraged other Uber-like operators to engage in a consultative manner and re-write existing land transport regulations (Horwitz 2015). Under the new licensing frameworks, ridesharing drivers are required to undertake training, medical and character checks (Lim 2016). Collectively, the modifications are based on different stakeholder inputs to guide and revamp strategy and governance of Uber and other ridesharing operations in Singapore.

The treatment of Uber is in stark contrast to the strategy development and governance of AirBnB in Singapore. This distinction may be attributed to the disposition of the Singapore government to effecting Singapore as a smart nation. In

the country's narrative, one of the key challenges has been to provide an affordable, accessible and convenient transport system for the current and future generations (Haque et al. 2013). Prior to the existence of Uber, the taxi industry has toiled to ensure that demand and supply are well-managed, given the prohibitive costs associated with car ownership in Singapore (Han 2010). Furthermore, there have been numerous reports of the extreme pressures placed on the bus and rail networks that have resulted in costly fines due to an increased frequency of system breakdowns (Rahman 2013). These considerations have framed ridesharing options (such as Uber) in a favourable light to address pertinent transport challenges within the country, and uniting the stakeholders to the notion of a smart future for Singapore. A factor to the governance of Uber in Singapore is the weak strength of the Singapore Taxi Association as compared to the Australian context. This allows the government to initiate changes to the transport landscape more efficiently, and hence bring ridesharing options to fruition.

Collectively, the research has located different approaches used by Australia and Singapore to address AirBnB and Uber's developments in the respective countries. Australia's approach has been more fragmented, as different stakeholder groups are consulted and then steered towards managerial policies and plans. In comparison, Singapore's approach tends to be more integrated into the national agenda to enhance its smart nation status.

While the research has discussed the comparative treatment of AirBnB and Uber between Australia and Singapore, it is interesting to note that there appears to be little response from tourism practitioners to these disruptive innovations. It may be the case that most destinations are not sure as to how best to proceed with addressing such disruptive innovations, as any endorsement of what appears to be illegal activity may have negative repercussions on a destination's image and brand identity (Cheng 2016). Nonetheless, ten cities have decided to collaborate and develop a common framework to address the sharing economy (Mawad et al. 2016). Cities like Paris, New York and Seoul may be different in terms of culture and character, they nonetheless embody a smart tourism ecosystem involving strategy and governance across stakeholder groups.

5 Contributions, limitations and future studies

This research contributes to the extant work of Gretzel et al. (2015) in conceptualising the role of governance within a smart tourism ecosystem framework. While the work of Gretzel et al. (2015) is valuable insofar as to provide a snapshot of the different stakeholders operating within a smart tourism ecosystem, this research has elucidated further details as to how different considerations to governance underpin the smart tourism ecosystem framework.

Figure 3 showcases how different concepts underpin governance of a sharing economy in the context of AirBnB and Uber operating in different market conditions. Specifically, the governance model ascribes the need for reflective thinking towards the implementation and participation within a smart tourism

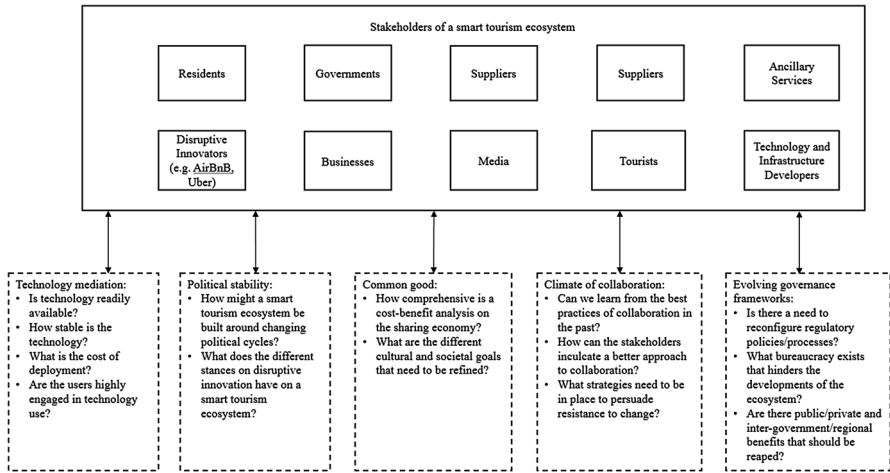


Fig. 3 A governance model for the sharing economy within a smart tourism ecosystem

ecosystem. This model reiterates the dynamic nature of an ecosystem and one that needs to be calibrated to the specific type of disruptive innovation, and the destination context in which such experiences are embedded. The aim of the model is to aid stakeholders operating within a sharing economy as to how they should envision themselves moving into the future in a fast evolving environment.

5.1 Limitations

As with any study, this research is not without its limitations. One limitation is that the research draws from solely secondary data sources, and so any claims will need to be validated with empirical data. A second limitation is that the data relates to just two organisations in two countries. The research outcomes may need to be corroborated with other sectors and destinations. Notwithstanding these limitations, the research has provided some directions for future studies.

5.2 Future studies

Future studies may involve primary data obtained from interviews or surveys with different stakeholder groups on the developments concerning the sharing economy. These could be further investigated using cross-sectional data and longitudinally. Other studies may wish to assess whether sectorial aptitude and attitude to the sharing economy affect the scope and nomenclature of different disruptors within tourism.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the sharing economy has transformed the tourism landscape. The modifications have been abrupt and have progressed far quicker than tourism responses in terms of strategic re-alignment and governance models. However, the developments of organisations such as AirBnB and Uber can no longer be ignored, due to the sheer volume and impact on tourism, as this research has shown. The findings show that different destinations are likely to have varied responses to disruptive innovations in tourism. Nonetheless, the research illuminates some considerations to embed governance theory within a highly interactive tourism ecosystem framework, as the management of disruptive innovation in tourism occurs non-linearly. This will ensure the next time when Harry meets Sally, the journey is one that is known, and that the stakeholders have a well-conceived idea of what the experience is like.

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