Explaining Car Sharing Diffusion Across Western Europe

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Authors: Karla Münzel, Wouter Boon, Koen Frenken, Jan Blomme, Dennis van der Linden
Innovation Studies, Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University
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Why we select this research?

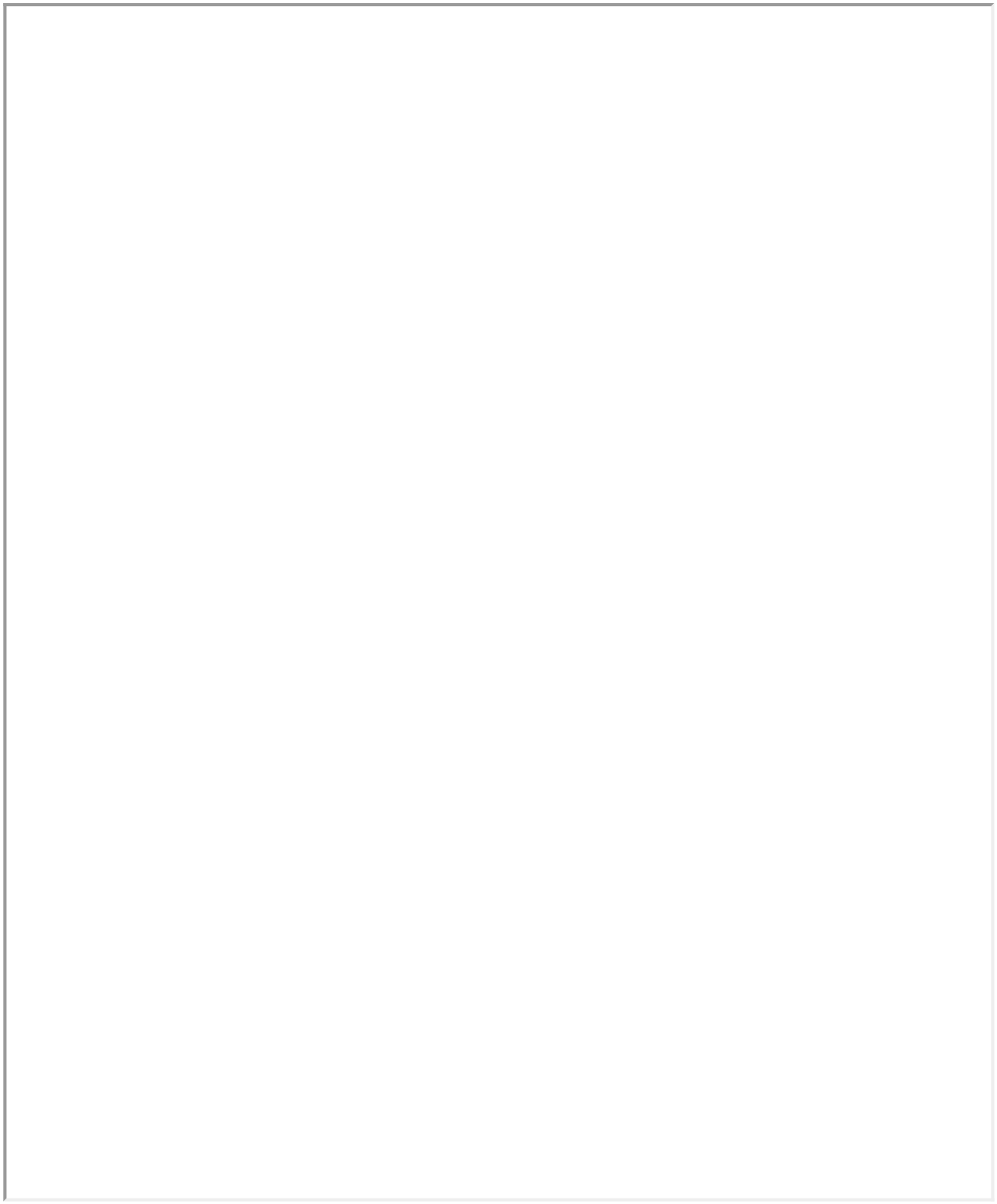
Carsharing can partially replace private ownership of vehicles with a service that allows the use of a car temporarily on an on-demand basis. It has the potential to satisfy individualized transportation demands in a sustainable and socially beneficial way and reduces urban problems like traffic and parking pressure in growing cities. This is the first study that explains the number of shared cars present in a city, while distinguishing between the traditional business-to-consumer (B2C) business model and the more recent peer-to-peer (P2P) business model.

Key findings

The authors find that carsharing per capita is highest in the largest cities. Moreover, carsharing is popular in cities with high educational level and many green party votes, and less popular in cities with many car commuters. A particularly interesting finding holds that countries also differ in the specific type of business model that is most popular. Notably, P2P sharing is especially booming in French cities, while German and Belgian cities are leading in B2C carsharing. German cities are especially leading in the Oneway carsharing type with German car manufacturer backed carsharing operators present with large fleets in several cities. In particular, P2P carsharing has been hampered by strict insurance regulations in the United Kingdom. The striking differences suggest that there is ample room for policies to support carsharing diffusion, both at the municipality level and at the national level.

All in all, the results make clear that carsharing diffusion differs substantially between cities and between countries, and between the older B2C variant and the more recent

P2P variant. To understand the future potential of carsharing as an environmental innovation that supports the transition towards a sustainable mobility system, one thus needs to understand the transition process geographically and at different spatial (neighborhood, city, country) levels. It becomes clear that besides physical and socio-demographic factors, political orientations and institutions as well as national markets and industries are greatly influencing the diffusion of carsharing.



Reference

Münzel, K., Boon, W., Frenken, K., Blomme, J., & van der Linden, D. (2017). *Explaining Carsharing Diffusion Across Western European Cities* (No. 17-03). Utrecht University, Department of Innovation Studies.