

Governing Sharing Cities: A Comparative Case Study of Nine European Cities

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Why did we select this research?

This comparative case study describes how and why city authorities govern the sharing economy differently. The lack of empirical research into political activities to govern the sharing economy limits the space for a rational governance debate. This master thesis addresses this lack by inquiring the policy discourse and governance actions of nine European cities with strategic plans to address the sharing economy. The study gives an elaborate description of how pioneering cities respond to the sharing economy, these in-depth case studies are very interesting for other cities and policymakers.

Key findings

City authorities govern the sharing economy with a patchwork of different approaches, actions and roles. How city authorities frame and govern the sharing economy is influenced by:

- **National traditions and politics:** The city authorities of Copenhagen and Vienna operate respectively in a welfare and highly regulated state and act more conservative.
- **Prior urban strategies and policies:** Especially smart city strategies revealed to guide strategic plans to govern the sharing economy.
- **The path dependent socio-cultural and economic context:** In Ghent and Barcelona past social movements influenced their current focus on the commons. Bremen and Ghent frame the sharing economy in line with their pre-existing economic specialization (automobile industry).
- **Unplanned historical events:** In Milan the Expo 2015 catalysed an early awareness and growth of the sharing economy.

- **The current political context:** Left-wing governments focus more on social and welfare aspects while right-wing governments revealed to focus on digital advancements and protecting/stimulating the local economy.

Urban governance of the sharing economy does not happen in a vacuum. Throughout history cities develop a city-specific context which influences how city authorities frame and govern the sharing economy. The city's historical, economic, socio-cultural and political pathways proved to shape discursive framings and set the stage for possible governance paths in the future.

Reference

Eijnden, L. van den (2017). *Governing Sharing Cities: A Comparative Case Study of Nine European Cities* (Master Thesis). Utrecht University.
