

Car-sharing in the Netherlands: trends, user characteristics and mobility effects

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The goal is to gain insights into the trends in the use of different forms of car-sharing, the factors that influence these trends and associated opportunities and constraints, and to explore the possible effects of these developments on car ownership, mobility, sustainability, the use of space and economic welfare.

Why did we select this research?

The report provides insights about the car-sharing market in the Netherlands, and what can be learned from other countries' example. The government's perspective is taken, and useful insights are provided about the effects that car-sharing can have on the travel behavior of the Dutch population, and thus on the accessibility and sustainability of the transport system in the Netherlands.

Key findings

The number of shared cars in the Netherlands has increased rapidly over the past few years. In the Netherlands there are currently more than 14,000 shared cars available for use by private individuals, 15% of which are 'traditional' rental cars and 77% are 'peer-to-peer' cars. About 1% of the Dutch population aged 18 and over has used one or more types of car-sharing service. This amounts to about 90,000 car-sharers in the Netherlands, who account for 0.02% of all car trips made in the Netherlands. Car-sharers drive about 80% of the total distance they did before they started car-sharing. Because car-sharing leads to a reduction in car ownership, it reduces the associated CO2 emissions in the Netherlands by an average of 8–13%. It also reduces the amount of parking space by an estimated

120,000 m², about the area of 24 football pitches.

A total of six key factors were identified for car-sharing successfully implementation: 1) clear local parking policy in favor of car-sharing 2) variety of shared-cars on offer in relation to high-density areas 3) convenience and flexibility of the service 4) coordination and linkage with public transport 5) marketing to specific target groups 6) set up car-sharing services as social enterprises or cooperatives

Interesting insights come from the Austrian example, where research showed that car-sharing was only interesting to households that drive fewer than 15,000 km per year in their own car. This limits the group of potential users to 69% of households. However, besides rational arguments there are also more diffuse (saving money), subjective reasons for car-sharing are considered, such as the car always being available.

About 8% of Dutch households participate in the sharing economy, which accounts for less than 0.01% of Dutch GDP. The Dutch appear to be more attached to their possessions than other Europeans. Even if it is not known how the growth curve of car-sharing will grow, the report gives an indication of the future potential of car-sharing in the Netherlands, which would mean a seven-fold increase in the current number of shared cars. If the number of people per shared car remains the same, about 10% of drivers would then be using car-sharing schemes. This in turn amounts to a reduction in CO₂ emission of 0.2-0.3 megatonnes.

