



Envisioning the ‘Sharing City’: Governance Strategies for the Sharing Economy

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Abstract

Recent developments around the sharing economy bring to the fore questions of governability and broader societal benefit—and subsequently the need to explore effective means of public governance, from nurturing, on the one hand, to restriction, on the other. As sharing is a predominately urban phenomenon in modern societies, cities around the globe have become both locus of action and central actor in the debates over the nature and organization of the sharing economy. However, cities vary substantially in the interpretation of potential opportunities and challenges, as well as in their governance responses. Building on a qualitative comparative analysis of 16 leading global cities, our findings reveal four framings of the sharing economy: ‘societal endangerment,’ ‘societal enhancement,’ ‘market disruption,’ and ‘ecological transition.’ Such framings go hand in hand with patterned governance responses: although there is considerable heterogeneity in the combination of public governance strategies, we find specific configurations of framings and public governance strategies. Our work reflects the political and ethical debates on various economic, social, and moral issues related to the sharing economy, and contributes to a better understanding of the field-level institutional arrangements—a prerequisite for examining moral behavior of sharing economy organizations.

Keywords Sharing economy · Public governance · Urban governance · Global cities · Governance strategies · Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (f-s QCA)

Introduction

There has been a lot of optimism for the transformative power of the sharing economy regarding a number of economic, social, and environmental issues: a new ‘paradigm’ that uses resources more efficiently, creates new spaces

for collaboration, has the “potential for greater equality” (McLaren and Agyeman 2015b, p. 3), and with a culture of ‘what’s mine is yours’ enables people to “become active citizens once again” (Botsman and Rogers 2011, p. xvi). Nonetheless, more recently, calls for regulating the sharing economy have become stronger (e.g., Calo and Rosenblat 2017; Edelman and Geradin 2016), especially after negative newspaper coverage of incidents involving flagship sharing economy organizations. Much debated examples were, for instance, the surge pricing of Uber after a hostage crisis in Sydney’s CBD (e.g., Lapowski 2014; Vinik 2014), or the experience of the couple from Calgary who rented out their apartment via Airbnb to find it trashed after a “drug-induced orgy” (Yuhus 2015).

The current trend towards sharing has created novel challenges for societies. Sharing of resources regularly touches upon public interest and public goods as well as social impact (including, but not limited to, the ‘tragedy of the commons’ which describes the problem of self-interested individuals exploiting shared resources [Hardin 1968; Ostrom 1990]), with important implications not only for

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sharing economy organizations and their clientele but also for policy-makers and public sector actors. It brings to the fore questions about regulatory frameworks addressing (un-) fair competition, tax regime/discipline, socio-ethical aspects such as labor standards in sharing economy organizations, and consumer protection, safety, and privacy (e.g., Ranzini et al. 2017; Lutz et al. 2017). These questions have made visible a number of governance gaps (Etter et al. 2017) and led to intense debates on the necessity of public intervention and suitable means to do so (e.g., Schor 2014; Morozov 2013; Mason 2015; McLaren and Agyeman 2015a; Sundararajan 2016).

Cities around the globe have become both *locus* of action and central *actor* (Brandtner and Suárez 2017) in the debates over the nature and organization of the sharing economy (Kornberger et al. 2018). Modern forms of sharing are a deeply urban phenomenon as the vast majority of sharing economy services are offered in metropolitan areas. This makes city governments and governing authorities key players who need to actively and strategically engage with the sharing economy. City governments have to fulfill a balancing role in the face of multiple—sometimes irreconcilable—interests and claims. Governing the sharing economy confronts cities with moral dilemmas resulting from the fact that the idea of sharing challenges established economic and social structures as well as the stabilized constellation of vested interests. Public policies and governance strategies to address these moral dilemmas reflect the ethical position city governments take with regard to the sharing economy. Moreover, these policies and governance strategies shape the local, field-level institutional context in which other actors—first and foremost sharing economy organizations and their clientele—engage with the sharing economy.

Still, what cities label as ‘sharing economy,’ and how they interpret the phenomenon and its ethical questions, differs considerably even within the same cultural setting (see, for example, Dupuis 2018 for a comparison of different policy narratives around the sharing economy in the United States). Consequently, the assessments of potential opportunities and/or challenges of the sharing economy as well as appropriate governance responses equally vary. It is against this backdrop that our research is interested in the spectrum of interpretations (including their definitions, diagnoses of the situation, and the prospects with opportunities and challenges) that urban policy- and strategy-makers harbor with regard to the sharing economy and what kind of governance responses they consider appropriate. In particular, we aim at detecting specific configurations of interpretative *framings* of the sharing economy and proposed *public governance strategies*. Empirically, we build on a comparative case study of 16 leading global cities and their positioning towards the sharing economy. We qualitatively analyze position papers (sometimes also labeled as ‘action

plan,’ ‘development strategy,’ or ‘white paper’); we then use factor analysis (e.g., Lawley and Maxwell 1971) to identify framings, as well as fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (f-s QCA) methods (e.g., Ragin 2000, 2008; Schneider and Wagemann 2012) to identify the patterned relationship between these framings and public governance strategies.

Our empirical analyses reveal four framings of the sharing economy—‘societal endangerment,’ ‘societal enhancement,’ ‘market disruption,’ and ‘ecological transition’—and show that each of them is likely to be associated with a specific set of public governance strategies. Although there is considerable heterogeneity in cities’ combinations of public governance strategies, we are able to identify specific configurations of framings and public governance strategies: ‘societal endangerment’ is associated with ‘regulation,’ ‘societal enhancement’ with ‘provision,’ ‘market disruption’ with ‘alignment,’ and ‘ecological transition’ with ‘information’ strategies.

Our work is among the first to systematize the knowledge on opportunities and challenges that are attributed to the sharing economy in a transnational context, and highlights and reflects the political and ethical debates on the various economic, social, and moral issues related to governing the sharing economy. It focuses on the crucial role city governments play in this respect—something that has hitherto received very little scholarly attention—and contributes to a better understanding of the field-level institutional arrangements, which is prerequisite for the examination of moral behavior of sharing economy organizations.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows: in the next section, we expand on the phenomenon and the conceptual orientation of our study. Subsequently, we outline sample, data, and methods before reporting our empirical results. We, then, discuss and theorize central findings derived from our empirical analyses. A concluding section highlights core contributions and limitations.

The Sharing Economy: Urban Phenomenon and Governance Issue

Sharing Economy as a Governance Concern

Policy-makers and public sector actors around the globe have been confronted with questions that accompany the emergence and unprecedented growth of the sharing economy; these questions entail governance concerns on multiple levels. For one, challenges arise as some business practices are so novel that the regulatory regimes in place do not fit (e.g., Biber et al. 2017; Cortez 2014). The production mode of co-creation and the blurring boundaries between producers, consumers, and employees often associated with sharing organizations (e.g., Sundararajan 2016, 2017) make it

difficult for policy-makers to apply existing regulation (see, for instance, the debate whether providers of services, such as Uber drivers, are employees or not; e.g., Newlands et al. 2017). Governance gaps also result from technological developments being 'faster' than regulation and enabling practices that were unanticipated by regulators (e.g., Zhou and Piramuthu 2013; Martin and Freeman 2004). Policy disruptions also arise due to the deliberate exploitation of 'ambiguous laws' or 'legal loopholes' (Biber et al. 2017). In addition, governance gaps emerge due to the non-territorial nature of many sharing economy organizations (e.g., Ruggie 2008 on governance gaps for transnational organizations). As Whelan et al. highlight, multinational corporations' (MNCs) rights and capacities "have far outpaced the construction of regulative frameworks that might control them" (Whelan et al. 2009, p. 374), and the practices of MNCs such as Airbnb or Uber are "often not immediately subject to any sort of meaningful regulation or democratic legitimation" (Whelan 2017, p. 138).

However, on some occasion, existing regulations provide unintended obstacles for (social) innovations that could enhance or substitute established public goods or public services (for instance, urban gardening promises to fulfill a similar role as public parks), while for other innovations the impact on public service is yet unclear or contested (for instance, the effect of car sharing on public transportation). Existing regulation reflects the views of the regulating body at the time the regulation was written (Biber et al. 2017) and the high speed of emergence and adaption of new business models as well as the varied nature of these models renders it very difficult for policy-makers to address the phenomenon in a comprehensive way.

The governance issues debated comprise property rights, employment relationships, data privacy and security, complemented by safety and health, licensing, and taxation (European Commission 2016; Thorne and Quinn 2017). Consequently, the sharing economy touches upon multiple policy fields and areas of law, such as labor, ownership, consumer protection, data protection, liability and insurance, trade, competition and antitrust, anti-discrimination, and taxation. Depending on the specific area of operation, sharing economy services might have to consider a number of additional legal regulations (for instance, the food and hygiene code in the case of food sharing; the transportation code in the case of car sharing; or the planning and building code in the case of home sharing). Besides the question of scope and applicability of existing regulation, governing authorities are confronted with the complex task of law enforcement (for instance, the local-level collection of taxes from global providers and platform operators; see also Kourola et al. 2019).

Issues of governance go hand in hand with a debate whether all that is commonly labeled as 'sharing economy'

can be subsumed and theorized under one concept. Eckhardt and Bardhi (2015) conclude that "the sharing economy isn't about sharing at all." Others advocate more fine-grained definitions. Belk (2014, p. 7), for instance, distinguishes "true sharing" from "commodity exchanges wrapped in a vocabulary of sharing." This so-called 'pseudo-sharing' can be distinguished, according to Belk, by for-profit orientation, expected reciprocity, and the absence of feelings of community. Consequently, the most prominent examples of the sharing economy such as Airbnb or Uber would not count as 'true sharing.' In a similar vein, Dobusch (2016) discusses two facets of the sharing economy (a commons-based vs. a market-based sharing economy) but argues that the main differentiation does not lie so much in practices but in the organization of sharing: In a market-based sharing economy the direct reciprocal exchange is mediated by a platform, whereas in a commons-based sharing economy private property and forms of personal coordination are employed. Other scholars, such as Bucher et al. (2016), analyze people's motives for participating in practices of sharing. They find that—even in platform-mediated forms of sharing—moral motivations are the second strongest determinant of sharing attitudes (after social-hedonistic motives but trumping monetary motivation). Etzioni (2017) points at the interesting and growing discrepancy between trusting strangers in cyberspace and distrusting offline institutions. By assessing networks of attributes that describe different business models within the sharing economy, Oberg et al. (2016) identify three distinct types: 'traditional sharing,' 'grassroots sharing,' and 'platform sharing.' While in traditional sharing employees still produce the central value, in grassroots sharing the value is created by volunteering of community members; platform sharing, then, separates the service delivery (mainly by community members) from the intermediation and community management (mainly by employees).

Not surprisingly, the implications of the sharing economy are discussed and assessed rather differently as well. Some scholars highlight the opportunities: Schor (2014), for instance, regards sharing as an intermediate stage to a fairer and more people-centered economy, and Mason (2015) even diagnoses an 'end of capitalism' that is to be followed by a transition to a better society. Others, to the contrary, regard the sharing economy as a step to a more dehumanized economy. Morozov (2013), for instance, describes the sharing economy as 'neoliberalism on steroids' and calls Silicon Valley billionaires its main beneficiaries. Moore and Robinson (2016), with a focus on flexible workplaces which are typical for the gig economy, stress that the working conditions that go along with these new business models rely on 'cold' quantification and will consequently lead to more precariousness and intensified competition. Whelan (2018) emphasizes how the rise of online (sharing) platforms

entails intense digital surveillance and infringes the privacy of users; Martin (2018) attests an erosion of the ‘norms of exchange’ that can also harm trust in established institutions. For specific sharing services, the potential external effects and trade-offs are debated. For instance, while tourists and local ‘micro-preneurs’ may benefit from home sharing, it leads, at the same time, to significant pressure on prices on the housing market (e.g., Lee 2016). Codagnone et al. (2016) grouped and categorized existing narratives on the sharing economy, which display different possible paths for its evolution: great transformation, regulated sustainability, growth-oriented globalization, and barbarization. Additional attempts to systematize different perspectives on the sharing economy have been pursued by Gruszka (2017) who analyzed sharing economy activists and Martin (2016) who assessed the social media and online discourse surrounding the sharing economy.

Sharing Economy as an Urban Phenomenon Evoking Ethical Tensions and Moral Dilemmas

Different from its more traditional variants, such as agricultural cooperatives (e.g., Becker and Mosmann 2017), contemporary sharing is predominately an urban phenomenon (Davidson and Infranca 2016). With this, cities and metropolitan areas have become a central arena in which issues concerning the sharing economy are debated, negotiated, and addressed. City governments face manifold challenges, which are only partially covered by national regulation (e.g., Mazzucotelli Salice and Pais 2017). The majority of governance issues surface on the urban level and regulatory authority regarding these issues is often fragmented and unclear (e.g., Katz 2015). In addition, a lack of knowledge and experience on the side of governing authorities has been attested (e.g., Cohen 2016; Gori et al. 2015).

The multifaceted nature of what is generally subsumed under ‘sharing’ and the divergent set of vested interests fuel the governance challenges on the urban level as cities are confronted with moral dilemmas. These dilemmas result from the fact that the idea of sharing challenges established economic and social structures. First of all, the notion of ‘sharing’ itself contains a moral connotation of being superior to traditional ownership-oriented forms of economy (Belk 2007, 2010; Gudeman 2001). Kornberger et al. (2018) go a step further in characterizing the sharing economy as a ‘balancing act’ involving social, economic, and moral concerns: As a novel form of collective action, the authors argue, what enables and holds together all instances of sharing is a shared moral concern. Second, resources are limited and individual as well as collective actors are committed to different values. This leads to a clash of conflicting interests and priorities in the urban space where the sharing economy primarily unfolds.

Cities face considerable moral dilemmas in policy-making because they need to balance these interests and priorities. This results in ethical questions of what “governments ought to do or ought not to do” (Boston et al. 2010, p. 1). Hence, it becomes clear that governing the sharing economy has an inherently politico-ethical dimension (see also Kornberger et al. 2018). Yet, as Jonsen and Butler (1975, p. 19) note, “those concerned with policy making—the politicians, the bureaucrats and the technicians—generally avoid discussing ethics. [...] [Ethics] seems out of place in their world of constituencies, interest groups, power blocs, insistent demand, and limited resources.” However, regardless of whether addressed explicitly or not, any policy choice goes hand in hand with conscious or unconscious ethical considerations and decisions as they affect social arrangements and comprise moral trade-offs (Jonsen and Butler 1975). Public policies and governance strategies therefore reflect the ethical position city governments take with regard to the sharing economy.

Cities as Strategic Actors: Issue Framing and Governance Response Strategies

All this makes city governments and governing authorities key players who (need to) actively and strategically engage in the debate and praxis of the sharing economy. In some instances, they are called to action by particular stakeholders; in other instances, they proactively engage in the ‘politics of signification’ (Hall 1982) of new urban topics very early on. ‘Strategic city actorhood,’ according to Brandtner and Suárez (2017), means that governing authorities of metropolises consciously and often strategically engage rather than simply react to demands from constituencies. City administrations commonly address complex issues by crafting strategy documents or position papers that are acts of ‘performative communication’ (Christensen et al. 2013) and prescribe the aspired governance approach (Brandtner et al. 2017). Kornberger and Clegg (2011) emphasize that, besides socially negotiated meanings, such strategy also communicates who has voice and legitimate and illegitimate forms of action.

With a diversity of manifestations and forms, unclear boundaries, and unknown implications, the sharing economy makes strategizing more complex than issues that can be easily assigned to a specific policy field. The interpretation of what is part of the sharing economy and what is not as well as the opportunities and challenges that come with it—i.e., the way they frame “what is at issue” (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, p. 3)—are central ‘ingredients’ for how city governments approach the phenomenon and which governance solutions they craft. Frames are schemata of interpretation (Goffman 1986); they “locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large”

(Snow et al. 1986, p. 464). Framing not only diagnoses what is a problem; it also contains moral and ethical positions and suggests possible solutions (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow and Benford 1988). The role of framing and strategic action in policy debates is illustrated, for example, by Hoffman and Ventresca (1999) with regard to environmental policies in general, or by Lefsrud and Meyer (2012) concerning climate change, more specifically.

On a practical level, city governments have available a set of policy instruments that they may choose from in order to steer society (e.g., Pierre and Peters 2000; Le Galès 2010)—in our case, to respond to and govern the sharing economy. With regard to the available tool box, Bemelmans-Videc et al. (1997) distinguish between economic, legal, or informational policy instruments. Simplified, they refer to 'carrots' in terms of incentives for appropriate behavior, 'sticks' as punishment (based on laws and regulations) for unwanted behavior, and 'sermons' in order to influence the debate and public opinion. The actual choice of policy instruments reflects the cities' framing of the phenomenon (Houle and Macdonald 2011).

Yet, we currently know little about the way in which 'policy problems' and 'policy tools' are matched by governing authorities with regard to the sharing economy. Hence, our study conceptually and empirically engages with which framings and related opportunities and challenges of the sharing economy city authorities draw on, and which combination of governance strategies they apply. We aim at *patterned* governance responses, that is, specific *configurations* of framings and public governance strategies. Moreover, we argue that policies and governance strategies will shape the field-level institutional context for sharing economy organizations and their clientele.

Data and Method

Sampling and Data Sources

Following Brandtner et al. (2017), we consider government-issued strategy documents to be appropriate for studying governance concerns. For our context, in addition to strategy documents focusing on the sharing economy, we argue that position papers and information websites published by governing authorities are equally well suited to analyze cities' interpretations of the sharing economy and to extract the governance strategies they regard as an adequate response. These documents are usually created in a broader process, have to pass defined release procedures, and are therefore formal statements of public sector officials on behalf of the city government or municipal agency. They are means of self-positioning and often serve as a compass and guiding orientation given a still rather vague phenomenon (Brandtner

et al. 2017). In these texts, governments combine their diagnosis and prognosis of the issue with a proposed course of actions. As we regard them as self-contained and useful snapshots of the cities' position, the strategy documents and position papers themselves serve as our unit of analysis.

We opted for a comparative research design encompassing 16 leading global cities (see Table 1 for details). Our sample is based on A. T. Kearney's (2017) Global Cities Index.¹ We included all cities from the index that have so far issued one or several official documents on the sharing economy or a more comprehensive strategy document (such as a city development plan) with a specific section devoted to the sharing economy. For the selection of our cases and discursive material, we applied a broad working definition of 'sharing' and 'sharing economy.' Following Botsman and Rogers (2010, p. 30; these authors also coined the term 'collaborative consumption'), we were interested in cities' perspectives and standpoints towards "systems of organized sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting, and swapping," including sharing practices among people but also (platform) organizations providing or facilitating these practices. In addition, Bucher et al. (2016) provide an excellent overview on definitions of the sharing phenomena in academic research which also comprises a list of specific examples (e.g., carpooling, couchsurfing, sharing of communally owned goods, borrowing and lending items of everyday life) that helped to delimit the phenomenon. 13 of the 16 selected cities are ranked in the top 25 of the Global Cities Index 2017; the remaining 3 are ranked between 26 and 50 and are all included in the Global Cities Outlook 2017 which evaluates a city's potential to become one of the world's most prominent cities.

Method of Data Generation

We analyzed and coded our sampled documents with regard to (a) perceived *opportunities and/or challenges* and (b) the *public governance strategies* that are proposed in response (for an overview, see Table 2). The coding categories we used are based on insights from a qualitative pilot study in which we compared the position papers of a limited sample using qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2014) in order to inductively develop a comprehensive coding scheme. Interestingly, the categories for framing the sharing economy as either opportunity or challenge broadly resemble the triple bottom-line framework (Elkington 1997) of social, economic, and environmental aspects frequently used in discussions of sustainability and social responsibility. The

¹ The Global Cities Index is published annually and ranks the most influential cities worldwide according to their performance on five dimensions: *business activity*, *human capital*, *information exchange*, *cultural experience*, and *political engagement* (A. T. Kearney 2017).

Table 1 Sample of cities

| City | Position paper or information website on the sharing economy ^a | GCI ^b |
|---------------|--|------------------|
| New York City | 'NYC reuse sector report' (New York City 2017) | 1 |
| London | 'London: The circular economy capital' (London Waste & Recycling Board 2015) | 2 |
| Paris | 'White paper on the circular economy of Greater Paris' (Mairie de Paris 2015) | 3 |
| Hong Kong | 'Regulation of sharing economy platforms involving illegal commercial activities' (Government of Hong Kong 2017) | 5 |
| Chicago | 'House-sharing reforms and protections' (City of Chicago 2016) | 7 |
| Los Angeles | 'Sustainable city plan' (City of Los Angeles 2015) | 8 |
| Seoul | 'Sharing city, Seoul' (Seoul Metropolitan Government 2014) | 12 |
| Berlin | 'Von der geteilten zur teilenden Stadt' (Berlin Projekt Zukunft 2016) | 14 |
| Toronto | 'The sharing economy' (City of Toronto 2017) | 16 |
| Sydney | 'Share Sydney' (City of Sydney 2013); 'The Collaborative Economy in NSW' (NSW Government 2015) ^c | 17 |
| Vienna | 'Wir machen in Wien die Share zur Fair Economy' (Stadt Wien 2016) | 20 |
| Amsterdam | 'Action plan sharing economy' (City of Amsterdam 2016) | 22 |
| Barcelona | 'The impetus plan for the social and solidarity economy' (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2016) | 24 |
| Vancouver | 'Greenest city—2020 Action Plan' (City of Vancouver 2015); 'Zero Waste 2040' (City of Vancouver 2016) | 35 |
| Copenhagen | 'Regional growth and development strategy' (Greater Copenhagen 2017) | 42 |
| Milan | 'Milano sharing city' (Comune di Milano 2014) | 43 |

^aThese are our main data sources which we coded in detail and used for the subsequent analyses. We investigated additional information provided on the websites of governing authorities and press releases for sensitizing of the coding and for a better contextualization of the statements in our main sources

^bRank according to the A. T. Kearney Global Cities Index 2017

^cThe document 'The Collaborative Economy in NSW' technically is not issued by the City of Sydney but by the New South Wales Government, covering, however, much of the greater Sydney metropolitan area

Table 2 Coding scheme for opportunities, challenges, and public governance strategies with regard to the sharing economy

| Opportunities | Challenges |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public opportunities, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Macro-economic growth and job creation – Social and societal improvements ● Market opportunities, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Economic diversity, new business models, and innovation – Increased consumer choice ● Environmental opportunities, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conserving natural resources – Reducing emissions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public challenges, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Safeguarding public interest and stability – Employee protection and social security ● Market challenges, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Protection of existing companies and market participants – Consumer protection and issues of safety ● Environmental challenges, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Additional resource usage – Rebound effects |
| Public governance strategies | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promotion and funding of desired initiatives ('promotion') ● Regulation by creating and enforcing laws ('regulation') ● Information and involvement of citizens ('information') ● Alignment and exchange with other governments ('alignment') ● Expert knowledge and workgroups ('expertise') ● Technology as governance mechanism ('technology') ● Partnering with sharing economy organizations ('partnering') ● Provision of sharing services by the government ('provision') | |

categories for public governance strategies encompass the well-known policy instruments 'promotion,' 'regulation,' and 'information' (Bemelmans-Videc et al. 1997) as well as 'partnering' (see also Steurer 2010), but also contain additional ones such as 'alignment,' 'expert knowledge,' 'technology,' and 'provision.'

We coded each text according to the above-mentioned categories using fuzzy-set scales; multiple categories per text were permitted. According to Ragin (2007), fuzzy-set scales provide a middle way between quantitative and qualitative measurement by indicating a degree of membership in a focal category. We used six qualitative measures to assess

set membership: in the target set (1.0); mostly but not fully in the target set (0.8); more in than out of the target set (0.6); more out than in the target set (0.4); mostly but not fully out of the target set (0.2); and out of the target set (0.0). For each of these scores, we defined clear indicators in the coding guidelines. Two members of the research team coded the entire dataset independently; all cases of disagreement were discussed and subsequently resolved.

Methods of Data Analysis

We applied factor analysis to identify cities' interpretative framings of the sharing economy within a strategy document or position paper. We made use of the maximum-likelihood factor analysis routine provided by the 'R' software suite (e.g., Lawley and Maxwell 1971). This procedure helped us to condense the various opportunities and challenges into four central framings that are employed throughout our empirical material.

For the following steps, we applied fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (f-s QCA; e.g., Ragin 2000, 2008; Schneider and Wagemann 2012). The set coincidence analysis for the eight strategies (see Table 2) confirmed their independence (see "Appendix A"). Therefore, all eight strategies were included in the subsequent analyses. Patterns of governance responses were identified by analyzing the co-occurrence of responses across the cases. We, then, brought together interpretative framings and proposed public governance strategies in order to find specific configurations of framings and governance strategies.

Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (f-s QCA) enables the systematic comparison of multiple cases in complex situations by investigating similarities and differences across these cases. QCA is both a research approach and a set of tools and techniques (Rihoux and Lobe 2015). The method is well suited to detect and break-down complex relationships as it facilitates the identification of recurring patterns and alternative pathways that lead to the same outcome (Fiss 2007).

QCA can be used in situations where there are too few cases to apply conventional statistical tools by combining elements of qualitative and quantitative analysis (e.g., Ragin 2000). It differs from conventional statistical methods as it is based on Boolean algebra and on the idea that relational conditions can be understood in terms of set-theoretic relations rather than correlations (Ragin 1987, 2000). The focus on set-theoretic relations in QCA allows addressing questions of necessity and sufficiency separately, and, at its core, of 'equifinality'—different configurations that result in the same observed outcome. QCA is an iterative process, involving rounds of within-case analysis and cross-case comparisons as well as inductive and deductive logics of theory development (for a fine-grained f-s QCA application in the

field of CSR, see Halme et al. 2018). The rigorous process and the different proven tools help to make analyses more reliable and comprehensible (e.g., Scholz et al. 2016).

There are examples of studies combining QCA with a number of other methods for the discovery of structural similarity and difference. For instance, Haynes (2014) and Hotho (2014) combine cluster analysis with QCA; yet they do not use the output of one method as the input for the other, but rather process and compare the same data twice with different methods in order to check for reliability. In our study, we use the key factors identified through factor analysis as a variable for QCA. It is important, however, to note that—based on the data we use in this study—we did not assume that these factors—which stand for different diagnostic and prognostic framings of the sharing economy—can be causally related to cities' governance responses. Rather, we assume that in practice both, interpretations of the sharing economy and public governance strategies, are the result of in-depth considerations prior and during the production of the strategy documents and position papers and mutually influence each other. Therefore, the QCA distinction of 'causal condition' (~independent variable) and 'outcome' (~dependent variable) is for mathematical reasons and we will interpret our configurations as co-occurrence rather than as causality. We calculated consistency and coverage values according to Ragin (2008) and applied the Quine–McCluskey minimization technique using the software suite fsqca 3.0.

Empirical Results

Framing the Sharing Economy in Terms of Opportunities and Challenges

Our analysis, in a first step, yields results for the co-occurrence of perceived opportunities and challenges within cities' interpretations of the sharing economy. By running several factor analyses for a varying number of factors we were able to isolate and capture two key factors that explain such co-occurrence. Table 3 shows the detailed results of the two-factor analysis that we opted for.²

To capture the meaning of the two factors, we looked closely at all variables with a loading value above 0.3 or below -0.3 . Each factor can be interpreted in two ways (i.e., also including its inversion), resulting in four central framings of the sharing economy in terms of opportunities and challenges.

Factor 1 captures public challenges (i.e., safeguarding public interest and stability, employee protection, and social

² 'Environmental challenges' were not included in the factor analysis due to their extremely low occurrence across the sample.

Table 3 Two-factor analysis for opportunities and challenges

| | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|
| Public opportunities | -0.629 | 0.113 |
| Market opportunities | -0.057 | 0.996 |
| Environmental opportunities | -0.320 | -0.505 |
| Public challenges | 0.908 | 0.272 |
| Market challenges | 0.789 | 0.385 |

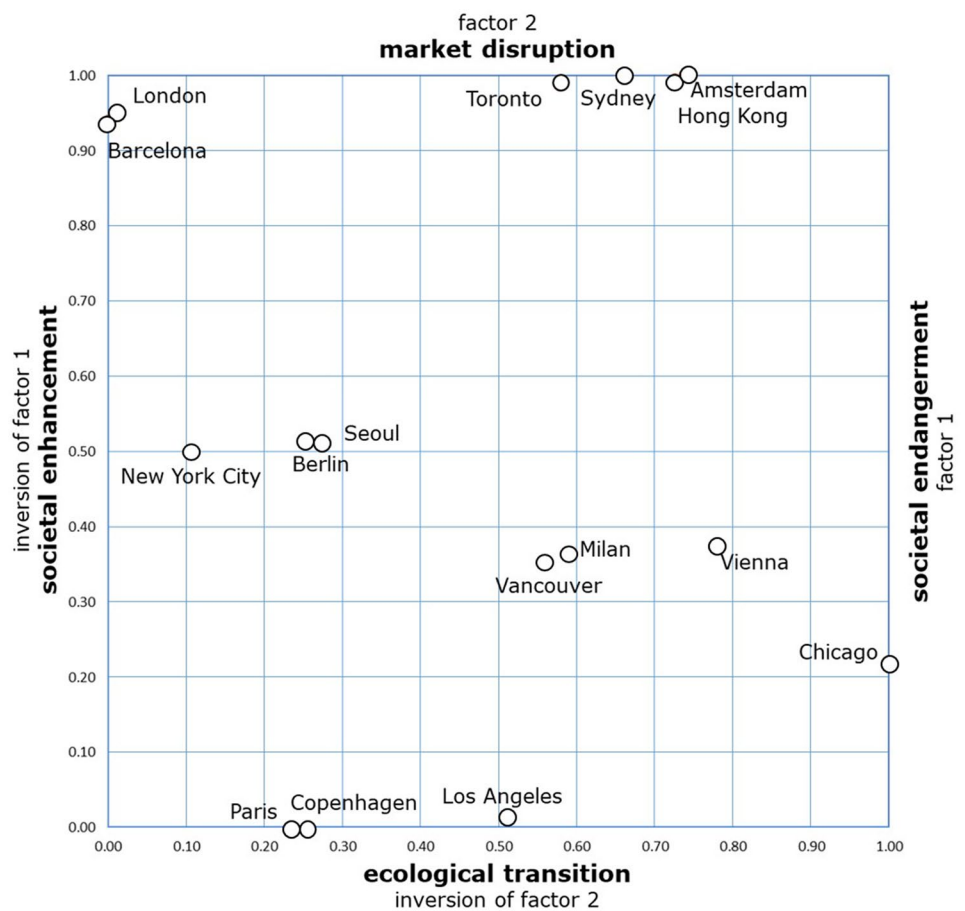
security) and market challenges (i.e., protection of existing companies and market participants, as well as consumer protection and issues of safety). In addition, factor 1 reflects the absence of public and environmental opportunities. Therefore, factor 1 can be interpreted a city’s awareness of ‘societal endangerment.’ The *inversion of factor 1* aggregates public opportunities (i.e., macro-economic growth and job creation as well as social and societal improvements) and—to a lesser extent—environmental opportunities (i.e., conserving natural resources and reducing emissions). It further reflects the significant absence of public and market challenges. The inversion of factor 1 can be interpreted as a city’s belief in the potential of the sharing economy for ‘societal enhancement.’

Overall, factor 1 indicates a general assessment of the phenomenon stressing a social/societal dimension.

Factor 2 captures market opportunities (i.e., economic diversity, new business models, and innovation as well as increased consumer choice) and, most interestingly, also market challenges (i.e., protection of existing companies and market participants, as well as consumer protection and issues of safety). In addition, it integrates the absence of environmental opportunities. We therefore interpret factor 2 as a city’s assessment of the potential of the sharing economy in terms of ‘market disruption.’ The *inversion of factor 2*, then, reflects environmental opportunities (i.e., conserving natural resources and reducing emissions). It further captures the absence of market opportunities and challenges. Hence, the inversion of factor 2 can be interpreted as a city’s belief in the sharing economy as an opportunity for ‘ecological transition.’ Overall, factor 2 indicates a general assessment of the phenomenon juxtaposing economic and ecological issues.

Figure 1 displays the two factors that emerge from cities’ discursive engagement with the sharing economy. On the x-axis we see ‘societal endangerment’ and ‘societal enhancement’ as opposites. On the y-axis, ‘market disruption’ (i.e.,

Fig. 1 Framing the sharing economy



x-axis: factor 1; y-axis: factor 2
 cities’ factor scores are re-calibrated as fuzzy-scores between 0.00 and 1.00; see also “Appendix B”

including both economic opportunities and challenges) is placed against 'ecological transition.' In Fig. 1, all cities of our sample are plotted according to the way in which they score on these two factors in their strategy documents.

To illustrate how these divergent framings of the sharing economy are combined in the cities' strategy documents and position papers, we provide two vignettes. The City of Amsterdam (2016) describes the sharing economy as follows:

"Under the banner of the sharing economy, the College [of Mayor and Alderpersons] sees new companies emerge that provide for an acceleration of innovations regarding goods and services, which often provide easier and cheaper access to goods and services for the consumer. [...] This can add to the diversity of supply, which is good for the market. It remains a task for the government to preserve this fair and level playing field. [...] In the face of rapidly growing companies, it is an important duty of the government to prevent the emergence of monopolies and cartels. [...] The traditional labour model, in which people are employed by an organisation or earn standard hourly wages, often does not apply when working for or via a sharing platform. [...] This is clearly relevant to the matter of protecting social security and labour rights."

The Amsterdam statement draws on a (positive) 'market disruption' framing and a 'societal endangerment' framing. In contrast, the Mayor of Paris (Mairie de Paris 2015) who uses the term circular economy draws on an 'ecological transition' and a 'societal enhancement' framing:

"The purpose of the circular economy is to end the uncoupling that has occurred between growth and environmental protection, between goods and resources and between exchange values and values in use. By substituting a logic that favors reuse over replacement, this economy allows each individual to renew, in the broadest sense, those fragile links with his or her environment without which any wealth creation must entail a depletion of resources. [...] It is an economy that encourages new forms of production and consumption, as well as sociability, sharing and democracy, as opposed to a short-term profit and consumerist diktat. It also holds the promise of new business sectors with strong regional roots and quality jobs that will not be relocated."

Public Governance Strategies in Response to the Sharing Economy

In order to assess the association of framings and public governance strategies, we conducted an analysis of what is

technically referred to as 'necessary' or 'sufficient' conditions.³ Table 4 shows the results of this analysis.

High consistency with necessity (cn) for the presence of a strategy—i.e., cn-scores for presence above 0.8—indicates that a focal strategy is very likely to appear with a particular framing; cn-scores between 0.7 and 0.8 highlight potentially necessary strategies. The same applies to the interpretation of the cn-scores for the absence of a strategy. We find, for instance, that cities which strongly rely on a 'societal endangerment' framing are very likely to apply the governance strategy 'regulation by creating and enforcing laws' (cn = 0.91 for *presence*). Our results also show that the same cities are very likely *not* to refer to 'provision of government sharing services' (cn = 0.86 for *absence*) in their position papers. In contrast, cities that strongly rely on a 'societal enhancement' framing are very likely referring to 'promotion and funding of desired initiatives' (cn = 0.81 for *presence*). Consistency with sufficiency (cs) is an indicator for the distinctiveness of a strategy for a particular framing. We will interpret cs-scores in "[Discussion of Key Findings](#)."

The truth table analysis (TTA), which is a core procedure of QCA, produces a minimalized set of solutions that help understand the typical combinations of public governance strategies for each framing. This allows us to systematically investigate configurations of framings and public governance strategies. A simplified account of the underlying data can be found in "[Appendix B](#)." We report results for each framing below.

Public Governance Strategies Associated with a 'Societal Endangerment' Framing

Cities that frame the sharing economy as a 'societal endangerment' typically apply, in their governance responses, one or more of the following combinations of public governance strategies:

- (a) 'regulation' while explicitly not referring to 'alignment' or 'provision';
- (b) 'information' while explicitly not referring to 'partnering' or 'provision';
- (c) 'promotion' in combination with 'alignment' while explicitly not referring to 'expertise.'

Table 5 shows the detailed results of the TTA for 'societal endangerment.' The consistency score is an indicator for the accuracy of the predicted strategy combination; the coverage scores are indicators for its frequency. Cities often apply several strategy combinations simultaneously; the closer the unique

³ We do not refer to necessary and sufficient conditions in form of a causal but contingency relationship.

Table 4 Analysis of necessity and sufficiency of focal public governance strategies

| Public governance strategy | Framing of the sharing economy as ... | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|------|-----------------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------------------|------|--|
| | Societal endangerment | | Societal enhancement | | Market disruption | | Ecological transition | | |
| | Factor 1 | | Inversion of factor 1 | | Factor 2 | | Inversion of factor 2 | | |
| | cn | cs | cn | cs | cs | cs | cn | cs | |
| Promotion | | | | | | | | | |
| Presence | 0.65 | 0.44 | 0.81 | 0.65 | 0.71 | 0.57 | 0.64 | 0.44 | |
| Absence | 0.49 | 0.68 | 0.30 | 0.51 | 0.30 | 0.50 | 0.37 | 0.52 | |
| Regulation | | | | | | | | | |
| Presence | 0.91 | 0.61 | 0.69 | 0.55 | 0.75 | 0.60 | 0.75 | 0.50 | |
| Absence | 0.33 | 0.47 | 0.51 | 0.87 | 0.37 | 0.64 | 0.40 | 0.57 | |
| Information | | | | | | | | | |
| Presence | 0.63 | 0.52 | 0.65 | 0.64 | 0.53 | 0.52 | 0.75 | 0.61 | |
| Absence | 0.56 | 0.58 | 0.51 | 0.62 | 0.60 | 0.74 | 0.41 | 0.42 | |
| Alignment | | | | | | | | | |
| Presence | 0.66 | 0.55 | 0.63 | 0.63 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 0.49 | 0.41 | |
| Absence | 0.56 | 0.56 | 0.55 | 0.66 | 0.41 | 0.49 | 0.60 | 0.60 | |
| Expertise | | | | | | | | | |
| Presence | 0.60 | 0.51 | 0.63 | 0.63 | 0.58 | 0.58 | 0.67 | 0.57 | |
| Absence | 0.57 | 0.56 | 0.52 | 0.61 | 0.58 | 0.68 | 0.51 | 0.50 | |
| Technology | | | | | | | | | |
| Presence | 0.56 | 0.52 | 0.65 | 0.71 | 0.50 | 0.55 | 0.75 | 0.69 | |
| Absence | 0.69 | 0.62 | 0.56 | 0.60 | 0.72 | 0.78 | 0.51 | 0.46 | |
| Partnering | | | | | | | | | |
| Presence | 0.52 | 0.49 | 0.67 | 0.75 | 0.53 | 0.60 | 0.61 | 0.58 | |
| Absence | 0.74 | 0.65 | 0.59 | 0.57 | 0.63 | 0.66 | 0.57 | 0.50 | |
| Provision | | | | | | | | | |
| Presence | 0.34 | 0.50 | 0.46 | 0.80 | 0.37 | 0.64 | 0.34 | 0.49 | |
| Absence | 0.86 | 0.57 | 0.71 | 0.56 | 0.70 | 0.56 | 0.76 | 0.50 | |

Consistency scores are calculated according to Ragin (2008)
cn consistency with necessity, *cs* consistency with sufficiency

Table 5 Truth table analysis for ‘societal endangerment’

| Typical public governance strategy combinations | (a) regulation* ~alignment*~provision | + | (b) information* ~partnering*~provision | + | (c) promotion*alignment* ~expertise |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| Consistency | 0.84 | | 0.79 | | 0.73 |
| Raw coverage | 0.47 | | 0.52 | | 0.32 |
| Unique coverage | 0.18 | | 0.14 | | 0.13 |
| Cases with greater than 0.50 membership in term | Chicago (1.00, 1.00) Vancouver (0.80, 0.56) Milan (0.60, 0.59) | | Vienna (0.90, 0.77) Chicago (0.80, 1.00) Milan (0.80, 0.59) Sydney (0.60, 0.66) | | Amsterdam (1.00, 0.73) Sydney (0.60, 0.66) |

Solution coverage: 0.86; solution consistency: 0.78 (Algorithm: Quine–McCluskey; parsimonious solution; consistency cutoff: 0.94)
 ~ signals the absence of a strategy; * logical AND (conjunction of strategies); + logical OR (substitutable/equifinal paths)

coverage is to the raw coverage, the more exclusive is the usage of a particular strategy combination. The last line of the table lists the cities in our sample that apply the focal combination.

The first value in the brackets shows the set-membership score with the strategy combination, and the second value shows the set-membership score with the focal framing.

Table 6 Truth table analysis for 'societal enhancement'

| Typical public governance strategy combinations | (d) provision*information | + | (e) ~regulation* ~provision | + | (f) expertise* promotion*alignment |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| Consistency | 0.98 | | 0.91 | | 0.89 |
| Raw coverage | 0.38 | | 0.41 | | 0.43 |
| Unique coverage | 0.12 | | 0.18 | | 0.11 |
| Cases with greater than 0.50 membership in term | New York City (0.80, 0.90) Paris (0.60, 0.74) Berlin (0.60, 0.73) Barcelona (0.60, 0.99) | | Copenhagen (1.00, 0.74) London (0.80, 1.00) Toronto (0.51, 0.42) | | Paris (0.90, 0.74) Berlin (0.80, 0.73) Seoul (0.70, 0.73) Toronto (0.60, 0.42) |

Solution coverage: 0.79; solution consistency: 0.90 (Algorithm: Quine–McCluskey; parsimonious solution; consistency cutoff: 0.92)
 ~ signals the absence of a strategy; * logical AND (conjunction of strategies); + logical OR (substitutable/equifinal paths)

Table 7 Truth table analysis for 'market disruption'

| Typical public governance strategy combinations | (g) regulation* ~expertise* ~provision | + | (h) alignment* ~information* ~provision |
|---|---|---|---|
| Consistency | 0.86 | | 0.83 |
| Raw coverage | 0.34 | | 0.33 |
| Unique coverage | 0.16 | | 0.16 |
| Cases with greater than 0.50 membership in term | Hong Kong (1.00, 1.00) Sydney (0.60, 1.00) | | London (0.60, 0.94) Hong Kong (0.60, 1.00) Toronto (0.60, 0.99) |

Solution coverage: 0.50; solution consistency: 0.83 (Algorithm: Quine–McCluskey; parsimonious solution; consistency cutoff: 0.91)
 ~ signals the absence of a strategy; * logical AND (conjunction of strategies); + logical OR (substitutable/equifinal paths)

Public Governance Strategies Associated with a 'Societal Enhancement' Framing

Cities that frame the sharing economy as a 'societal enhancement' typically apply one or more of the following combinations of public governance strategies:

- (d) 'provision' in combination with 'information';
- (e) the absence of 'regulation' in combination with the absence of 'provision';
- (f) 'expertise' in combination with 'promotion' and 'alignment.'

As the typical combinations in (d) and (e) are partly contradictory, it is not likely that these two both appear together. The combinations in (d) and (f), as well as (e) and (f), are complementary and can therefore overlap. Table 6 shows the detailed results of the TTA for the 'societal enhancement' framing.

Public Governance Strategies Associated with a 'Market Disruption' Framing

Cities that frame the sharing economy as a 'market disruption' typically apply one or both of the following combinations of public governance strategies:

- (g) 'regulation' while not referring to 'expertise' or 'provision';
- (h) 'alignment' while not referring to 'information' or 'provision.'

Table 7 shows the detailed results of the TTA for the 'market disruption' framing.

Public Governance Strategies Associated with an 'Ecological Transition' Framing

Cities that frame the sharing economy as an 'ecological transition' typically apply one or more of the following combinations of public governance strategies:

- (i) 'information' while not referring to 'alignment' or 'provision';
- (j) 'promotion' in combination with 'partnering' while not referring to 'information' or 'regulation';
- (k) 'regulation' in combination with 'expertise' while not referring to 'partnering' or 'provision.'

Table 8 shows the detailed results of the TTA for the 'ecological transition' framing.

Table 8 Truth table analysis for ‘ecological transition’

| Typical public governance strategy combinations | (i) information* ~alignment* ~ provision | + | (j) promotion*partnering* ~information* ~ regulation | + | (k) regulation*expertise* ~partnering* ~ provision |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| Consistency | 0.75 | | 0.69 | | 0.66 |
| Raw coverage | 0.36 | | 0.20 | | 0.41 |
| Unique coverage | 0.11 | | 0.11 | | 0.17 |
| Cases with greater than 0.50 membership in term | Chicago (0.80, 0.78) Milan (0.80, 0.64) Vancouver (0.80, 0.65) | | Los Angeles (0.60, 0.99) | | Vienna (1.00, 0.63) Chicago (0.60, 0.78) Milan (0.60, 0.64) |

Solution coverage: 0.68; solution consistency: 0.65 (Algorithm: Quine–McCluskey; parsimonious solution; consistency cutoff: 0.90)

~ signals the absence of a strategy; * logical AND (conjunction of strategies); + logical OR (substitutable/equifinal paths)

Discussion of Key Findings

The motivation for our research was of dual nature. First, we were interested in the spectrum of interpretations by urban policy- and strategy-makers with regard to the phenomenon of the sharing economy. Second, we intended to examine the interplay of their framings of opportunities and challenges and the governance responses they regard as adequate. In particular, we were interested in typical combinations of strategies and configurations of framings and governance strategies.

Four Ways of Making Sense of the Sharing Economy

We found four framings that are grouped in two pairs: ‘societal endangerment’ versus ‘societal enhancement,’ and ‘market disruption’ versus ‘ecological transition.’ Our results are in line with prior research by Codagnone et al. (2016) but provide additional insights. In particular, we add the perspective of governing authorities.

Codagnone et al. (2016) label a first approach towards the sharing economy ‘regulated sustainability.’ Here, the sharing economy is re-embedded in the traditional economy through regulatory interventions. The equivalent framing in our study is ‘societal endangerment’ that is highly visible (factor score > 0.70) in the documents by Chicago (1.00 = total consistency), Vienna (0.77), Amsterdam (0.74), and Hong Kong (0.73). A second approach reported by Codagnone et al. (2016) is labeled the ‘great transformation’—a sharing movement that is guided by new values of consumption and the provision of public goods. In such a mindset, regulatory intervention seems not required. This is much in line with our ‘societal enhancement’ framing that is highly visible in the documents by London (1.00 = total consistency), Barcelona (0.99), New York City (0.90), Paris (0.74), Copenhagen (0.74), Berlin (0.73), and Seoul (0.73).

Codagnone et al. (2016) name two additional pathways: ‘growth-oriented globalization’ and ‘barbarization.’ Both paths are characterized by minimal government intervention

and rather uncontrolled market forces. These two partly overlap with our framing of ‘market disruption’ that is referred to by Amsterdam (1.00 = total consistency), Hong Kong (1.00), Toronto (0.99), Sydney (0.99), Barcelona (0.94), and London (0.94). Our fourth framing of ‘ecological transition’ has no pendant in the study of Codagnone et al. (2016). It is referred to by Copenhagen (1.00), Paris (1.00), Los Angeles (0.99), and Chicago (0.78).

Overall, these varied approaches reveal the considerable ethical conundrum for strategy- and policy-makers when it comes to facing phenomena that have emerged with the rise of the sharing economy. The framing of the sharing economy as ‘market disruption’—which includes aspects of both opportunity and challenge—is in line with the work of various scholars and policy advisors who have highlighted innovation and the market catalyzing function of the sharing economy due to disruptive technologies; in addition, increased social impact and benefit for consumers have been emphasized (e.g., Allen 2015). One fiercely debated question is whether an innovation- and market-friendly sharing economy approach is at odds with state regulation. Some scholars such as Koopman et al. (2015) emphasize the sharing economy’s self-regulatory power that alleviates the need for top-down regulation. Others, like Długosz (2014), distinguish between a general lack of regulation and regulation that inhibits sharing. In addition, Ranchordás (2016) emphasizes that the timing of state intervention matters. Our empirical insights add yet another aspect: We argue that it is not merely about the presence or absence of regulation—but that one needs to probe deeper into which other governance instruments regulation is combined with in order to understand the overall approach towards the sharing economy.

While there exists research on approaches and framings employed by sharing economy service providers and users (e.g., Gruszka 2017) as well as on the general discourse on the sharing economy (e.g., Martin 2016), we here examine the so far under-researched perspective of policy-makers and a specific focus on the urban level. We preliminarily conclude that while issue framing might be different for each actor

group, for governing authorities it needs to be understood as a co-evolving process including the choice of suitable means of intervention (i.e., public governance strategies)—with ample implications and consequences for other actors.

Patterned Governance Responses

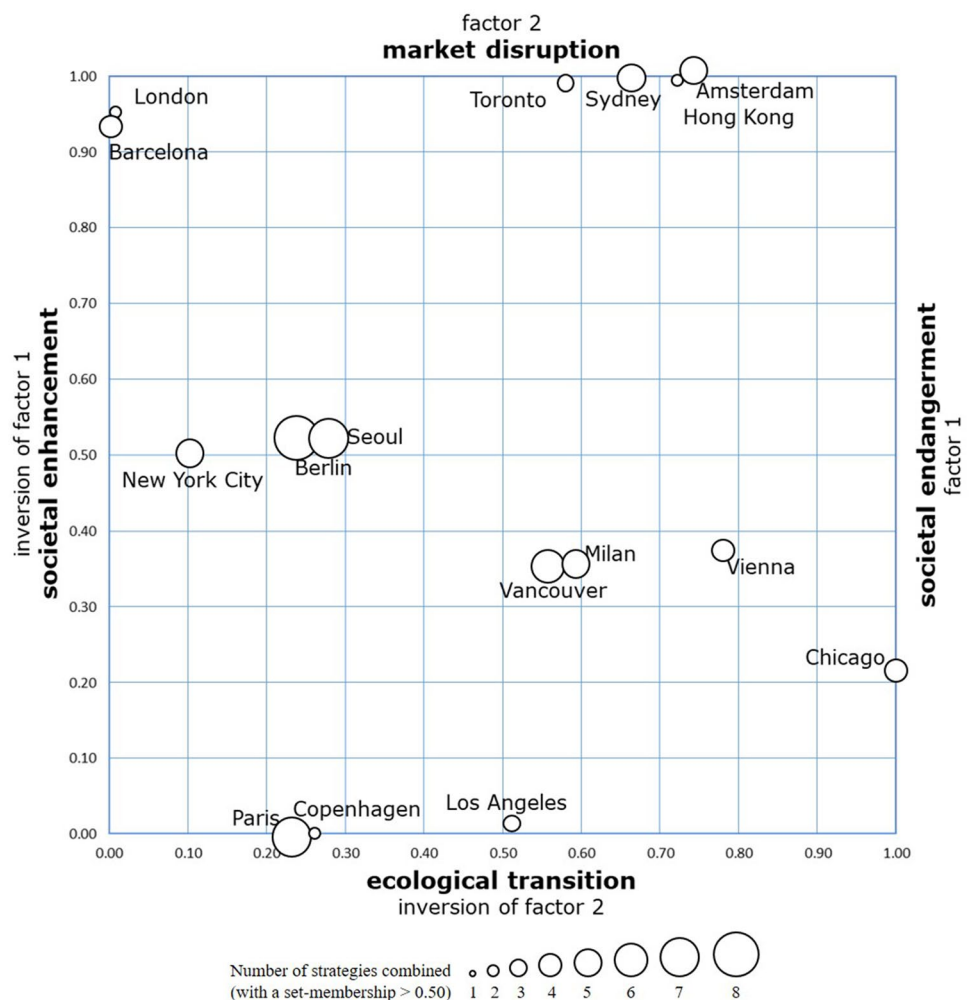
Heterogeneity in the Combination of Public Governance Strategies

Our empirical results indicate that cities regularly refer to, and combine, a number of different public governance strategies. In “Public Governance Strategies in Response to the Sharing Economy,” we analyzed the typical combinations of public governance strategies given a focal framing of the sharing economy. None of the governance strategies is associated with all framings, but some with multiple. Figure 2 illustrates the number of public governance strategies combined relative to the framings of the sharing economy.

Interestingly, but not unexpectedly, cities that draw on distinct framings seem to focus more and apply less variety

in public governance strategies (see Fig. 2). In contrast, cities with a tendency to the factor crossing point seem to combine more public governance strategies—and also strategies which seem to be drawing in different directions, such as regulation and promotion. This is much in line with the observations of Houle and Macdonald (2011) in the context of climate change policy. The authors state that public spending (promotion) and instances of regulatory norms (regulation) are the most frequently used strategies and often intertwined—even though this may seem somewhat counter-intuitive at first sight. In our case, ‘promotion’ and ‘regulation’ are each applied by eleven cities, while eight cities apply both simultaneously (see “Appendix B”). The combination of these two strategies might refer to the “development of [a] new industry” (Houle and Macdonald 2011, p. 14) which requires both rule-setting and nurturing. In the case of the sharing economy, we can observe that cities try to enforce the adoption of traditional business norms (e.g., fair competition, payment of taxes) with regulative means, on the one hand, and to foster and cultivate innovation and specific business models (e.g., by providing support for start-ups,

Fig. 2 Combination of many or few strategies by cities



promoting certain organizations via official media channels), on the other.

Another explanation for the combination of multiple strategies is that cities relying on more than one framing might be in need to balance conflicting expectations and demands from constituencies that have to be addressed with different means of governance. An example for such a case, within one sector of the sharing economy, is the regulation of commercial actors (such as Uber) while partnering with non-commercial actors (for instance, with private peer-to-peer car sharing initiatives). Meyer and Höllerer (2016) describe this as ‘intra-institutional’ complexity (as opposed to ‘inter-institutional’) and emphasize ambiguity as way to deal with such complexity. In addition, heterogeneous responses can also origin from different subunits of the city administration being confronted with different demands from their environment (Binder 2007), such as the planning department of a city versus the tax office. Cities employing a non-complementary set of multiple framings (ending up close to the factor crossing point in our Figures) are more likely to build on the governance response of ‘expertise’ as a way of either justifying or resolving complexity.

Configurations of Framings and Public Governance Strategies

Heterogeneity and the combination of public governance strategies is one interesting insight from our data. An equally relevant insight concerns individual public governance strategies (within the set of strategies a city applies) that appear in specific configurations with framings. We investigate this by contrasting the typical strategy combinations for ‘societal endangerment’ versus ‘societal enhancement’ as well as for ‘market disruption’ versus ‘ecological transition’ (based on the truth table analyses, see “[Public Governance Strategies in Response to the Sharing Economy](#)”). Tables 9 and 10 compare, line by line, the public governance strategies that are part of the typical strategy combinations of the respective framings. We were interested in the distinctiveness of certain strategies and used the consistency scores (as reported in Table 4) for our interpretation.

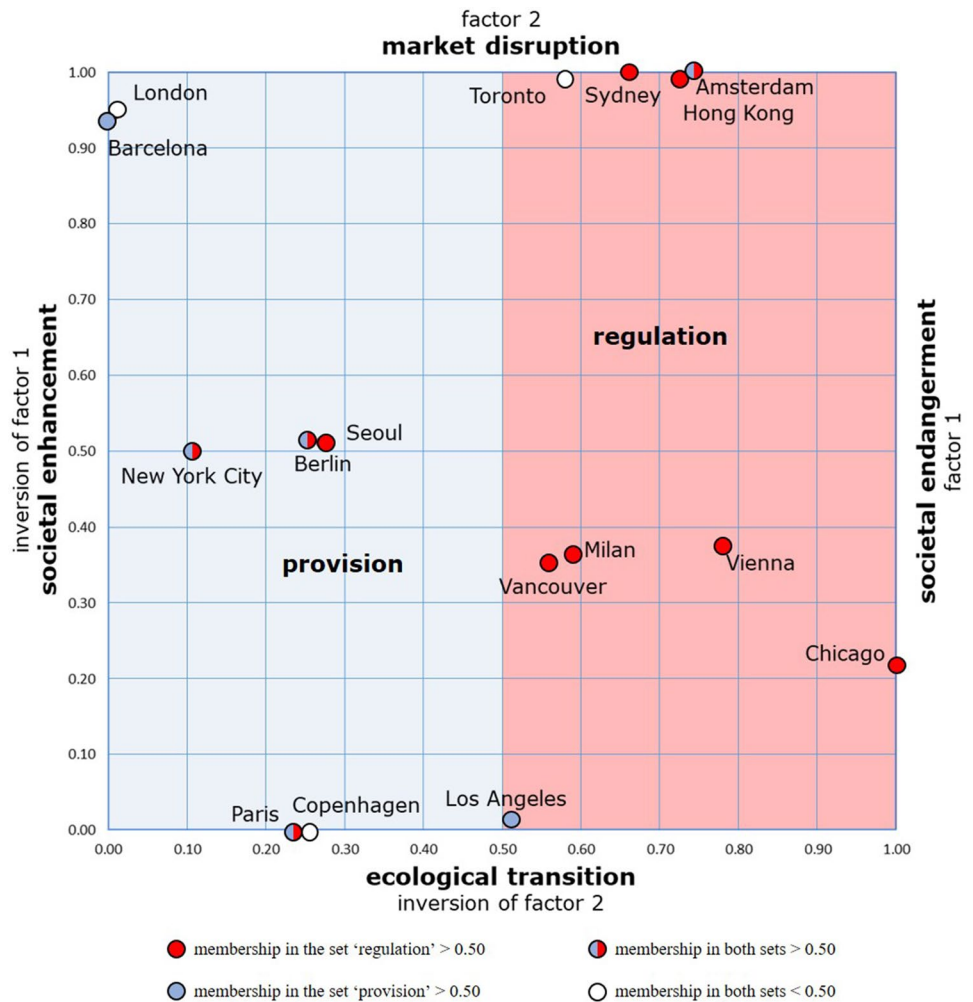
Nurture or Restrict: ‘Provision’ Versus ‘Regulation’ Strategies The comparison of governance strategies associated with a ‘societal endangerment’ framing in contrast to a ‘societal enhancement’ framing is shown in Table 9. The strategies ‘alignment,’ ‘information,’ and ‘promotion’ are

Table 9 Comparison of strategy combinations for ‘societal endangerment’ versus ‘societal enhancement’

| Strategies | Societal endangerment | Societal enhancement | Interpretation |
|-------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---|
| Regulation | ✓ | | Predominantly applied in ‘societal endangerment’ |
| Expertise | | ✓ | Predominantly applied in ‘societal enhancement’ |
| Alignment | ✓ | ✓ | Applied in both framings (therefore, potentially explainable by factor 2) |
| Promotion | ✓ | ✓ | Applied in both framings (therefore, potentially explainable by factor 2) |
| Partnering | | | Not characteristic for framings |
| Information | ✓ | ✓ | Applied in both framings (therefore, potentially explainable by factor 2) |
| Provision | | ✓ | Predominantly applied in ‘societal enhancement’ |
| Technology | | | Not characteristic for framings |

 Typical strategy combinations based on the TTA
 ✓ Explicit presence of a strategy in a typical strategy combination
 (we do not show the explicit absence of strategies in strategy combinations)

Fig. 3 'Provision' versus 'regulation' strategies



present in typical combinations of both framings; hence, their presence is not distinct for either of the two framings. For a framing of the sharing economy as 'societal endangerment,' 'regulation,' as a single governance strategy, is distinct. In contrast, 'provision' and 'expertise' are distinctively associated with a framing of the sharing economy as 'societal enhancement.'

The argument that 'regulation' is distinct for the 'societal endangerment' framing is further supported by the analysis of consistency with sufficiency. 'Regulation' has a higher sufficiency score ($cs=0.61$) for 'societal endangerment' than for the other three framings. For 'societal enhancement,' a consistency with sufficiency analysis of 'provision' and 'expertise' indicates that both scores are higher than the respective scores in the other three framings. As provision has a much higher score ($cs=0.80$) than expertise ($cs=0.63$), we further propose that 'provision'—as individual strategy—has the highest distinctiveness for this framing. Figure 3 places the cities in our sample with regard to the four framings and shows their usage of 'regulation' and 'provision' as governance strategies.

For the cases included in our study, this general choice between either nurturing and providing public sharing services or restricting with laws and regulations reflects the way in which government defines its own role as either creator or regulator of the sharing economy. Clearly, such self-definition of role and 'role identity' through strategy choice influences the 'counter-roles' of other actors (e.g., sharing economy organizations) and their possibilities to relate and interact (e.g., Jancsary et al. 2017).

Typical cases of cities with a restricting governance approach are Chicago and Vienna—both strongly draw on a 'societal endangerment' framing and apply a 'regulation' strategy. In contrast, New York City and Berlin strongly draw on a 'societal enhancement' framing and apply a 'provision' strategy. Specific accounts of why public authorities rely on the framing of 'societal endangerment' combined with 'regulation' strategies as well as 'societal enhancement' combined with 'provision' strategies are beyond our empirical study. Yet, several potential explanations seem plausible. First, the basic orientation of a city administration with regard to public service delivery can strongly influence its

position towards an issue. For instance, Barcelona—which exhibits a distinct provision strategy for the sharing economy—also makes efforts for a stronger re-municipalization of other public services (TNI 2017). Second, attempts at regulation require a focal government authority to have the political and legislative power to create and enforce new laws for the issue at hand. Third, institutional and cultural factors, among them different national or regional ‘administrative traditions’ (e.g., Knill 2001; Painter and Peters 2010; Meyer and Hammerschmid 2010; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Kuhlmann and Wollmann 2014) as well as the specific administrative reform paradigms and governance regimes in place are expected to have substantial influence on framing and choice of governance strategy. Administrative traditions and reform agendas are based on the legal heritage and the conceptualization of government and citizenship which may vary remarkably from country to country—and sometimes even within.

Being Guided or Guiding Others: ‘Alignment’ Versus ‘Information’ Strategies The comparison of strategies associated with a ‘market disruption’ framing in contrast to the ‘ecological transition’ framing is shown in Table 10. ‘Regula-

tion’ is present in typical combinations of both framings; hence, it is not distinct for either of the two. For a framing of the sharing economy as ‘market disruption,’ ‘alignment,’ as a single strategy, is distinct. In contrast, ‘information,’ ‘promotion,’ ‘partnering,’ and ‘expertise’ are distinctively associated with the ‘ecological transition’ framing.

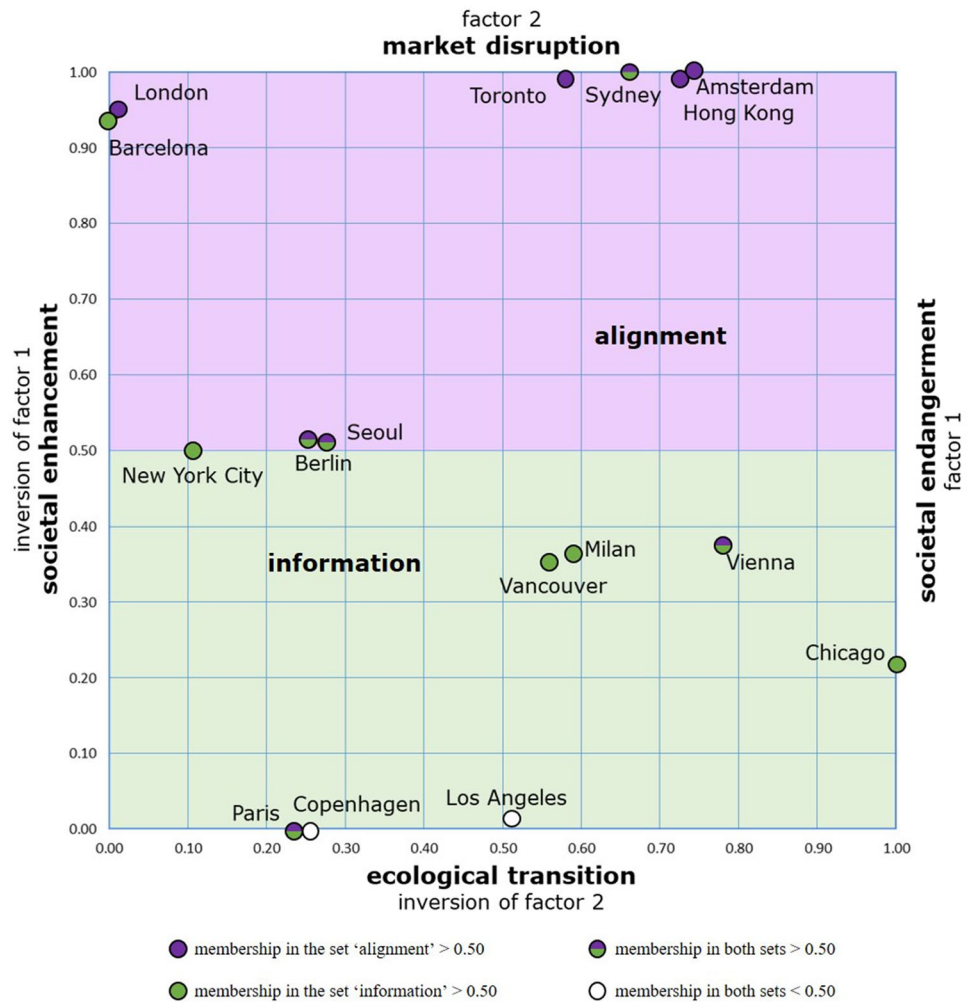
The argument that ‘alignment’ is distinct for the ‘market disruption’ framing is further supported by the analysis of consistency with sufficiency. Alignment has a higher sufficiency score ($cs = 0.67$) for ‘market disruption’ than for the other three framings. For ‘ecological transition,’ further analysis indicates that ‘information’ has the highest sufficiency ($cs = 0.61$) as well as necessity scores ($cn = 0.75$) among the four strategies. In addition, the scores are recognizably higher in the ‘ecological transition’ framing than in the opposing ‘market disruption’ framing. We therefore propose that ‘information’—as individual strategy—is the most distinct strategy associated with ‘ecological transition.’ Yet, all four strategies serve rather similar purposes as they indicate active engagement and foster intensified information flow. Figure 4 places the cities in our sample with regard to the four framings and shows the usage of ‘alignment’ and ‘information’ as governance strategies.

Table 10 Comparison of strategy combinations for ‘market disruption’ versus ‘ecological transition’

| Strategies | Market disruption | Ecological transition | Interpretation |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Regulation | [- - - -] ✓ | [- - - -] ✓ | Applied in both framings (therefore, potentially explainable by factor 1) |
| Expertise | | [- - - -] ✓ | Predominantly applied in ‘ecological transition’ |
| Alignment | [- - - -] ✓ | | Predominantly applied in ‘market disruption’ |
| Promotion | | [- - - -] ✓ | Predominantly applied in ‘ecological transition’ |
| Partnering | | [- - - -] ✓ | Predominantly applied in ‘ecological transition’ |
| Information | | [- - - -] ✓ | Predominantly applied in ‘ecological transition’ |
| Provision | | | Not characteristic for framings |
| Technology | | | Not characteristic for framings |

[- - - -] Typical strategy combinations based on the TTA
 ✓ Explicit presence of a strategy in a typical strategy combination
 (we do not show the explicit absence of strategies in strategy combinations)

Fig. 4 'Alignment' versus 'information' strategies



Typical cases of cities that strongly draw on a 'market disruption' framing and apply an 'alignment' strategy are Amsterdam and Sydney. Milan, Paris, and Vancouver strongly draw on an 'ecological transition' framing and apply an 'information' strategy.

We hold that the distinction between 'alignment' strategies (such as the search for global formulas of success and identification of 'role models' in exchange with other governing authorities) and proactive 'information' strategies both reflect a perception of uncertainty regarding the issue—on the side of government in the first instance, and on the side of stakeholders and the general public, in the second. In addition, ecological benefits (i.e., under the ecological transition framing) are probably easier to communicate to a public audience than complex and ambivalent economic effects (created by market disruption, often involving actors and market forces located beyond the area of influence of city governments).

Moral Judgement and Institutional Arrangements

The multifaceted nature of 'sharing' and the divergent set of rationales at play—together with often irreconcilable vested interests and power positions—fuel public policy debates and public governance challenges on the urban level. As Buchholz and Rosenthal (2004, p. 151; building on Preston and Post [1975]) state, the "public policy process is the means by which society as a whole articulates its goals and objectives, and directs and stimulates individuals and organizations to contribute [...] and cooperate." However, government is not "just another stakeholder, [...] it is far more than that because it is the major player in the public policy process" (Buchholz and Rosenthal 2004, p. 148): Governments have to choose (a set of) governance instruments, or tools, in order to steer society towards policy goals.

Our findings show that public governance strategies are intertwined with the framing of focal issues and phenomena, such as the notion of 'sharing' and the sharing economy more broadly. Consequently, issue framing has an effect on the choice of strategy and vice versa, but, ultimately, also

on government itself as framing, self-positioning, and strategy choice are inevitably connected. As with other complex policy processes, framing the sharing economy contains a moral judgement about what is good and what is bad. Ethical considerations of governments are reflected in their practices and choices as well as in deliberate acts of omission (Boston et al. 2010) and come to the fore in their strategic governance responses.

With a focal government defining its role, the roles of others, as well as the ‘rules of the game,’ it sets the playing field and the boundaries for all actors involved. The patterns we observe in the configuration of framings and governance strategies are indicative of field-level institutional arrangements that also define, for instance, appropriate organizational forms and practices, or legitimate business models. For sharing economy organizations, these arrangements become a crucial part of their environment—one that they actively try to shape in their favor by corporate political activity (e.g., Hillman et al. 2004; Eberlein 2019) or explicit corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies (e.g., Matten and Moon 2008).

The Current State of Affairs: ‘Similarity Cum Variation’

We originally started this research endeavor with the assumption that the global debate and the increasing existence of position papers on the sharing economy is a sign for the worldwide spread of a global idea (e.g., Strang and Meyer 1994; Czarniawska and Sevón 1996; Drori et al. 2006). However, our findings demonstrate that, at this point in time, cities vary considerably in their interpretation of the sharing economy as well as in their respective governance responses. Such heterogeneity could be due to the short duration of the global debate on the sharing economy, with no dominant theorization as of yet. In the long run, we expect that either isomorphic tendencies (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) will lead to more homogeneity in issue framing and governance responses or that the sustained processes of glocalization will lead to only imperfect instantiations of the idea—that is, to ‘similarity cum variation’ (Drori et al. 2014; Höllerer et al. 2017) including fragmented public policy debates and partial governance approaches.

Betting on the second prediction, we assume that the different framings of the sharing economy will continue to mirror the different institutional environments in which local-level governments are embedded. As McLaren and Agyeman (2015a, p. 84) state, “different cultures seem to place different weight on competition and cooperation, and indeed more broadly on the concepts of individualism and collectivity”

which influences the local receptivity of the idea of sharing and of the sharing economy more broadly. In this respect, for instance, it comes as little surprise that Vienna—embedded in the strong corporatist tradition of Austria and exposed to the continental European stakeholder governance model—frames the sharing economy in reference to the objective of transforming the “share” to a “fair economy” by balancing the interest of all relevant stakeholders involved (Stadt Wien 2016; Vith and Höllerer, in press); or that Sydney—influenced by the Anglo-American administrative tradition and having undergone far-reaching deregulation and market-oriented reforms in the public sector—states as its main goal “supporting a culture of innovation” for sharing economy organizations, explicitly referring to the creation of micro-enterprises and self-employment (NSW Government 2015).

However, our findings also illustrate that the configuration of framings and governance strategies brings together otherwise rather different, geographically and culturally disconnected cities: Amsterdam and Hong Kong have similar approaches towards the sharing economy; London and Barcelona; Seoul and Berlin; Paris and Copenhagen; as well as Vancouver and Milan. More research is needed to investigate whether additional contextual factors, such as demographic features of the population, size of administration, political orientation of government, or various socio-economic features, can further explain these similarities and differences.

Contribution and Concluding Remarks

Our study aspired to record and understand the ways in which governing authorities interpret the sharing economy, deal with the political and ethical debates on the various social, economic, and moral issues related to the sharing economy, and link these interpretations to explicit public governance strategies. With our research, we make three major contributions. A first contribution is to the literature on the sharing economy. Our article is among the first to systematize the knowledge on perceived opportunities and challenges that are attributed to the sharing economy in a transnational context, as well as directly addressing the resulting governance responses. We draw attention to cities as central actors in the governance of important policy concerns. Prior research on policy-making and business ethics focuses mostly on the national level and/or on the work of NGOs while cities have frequently slipped under the radar. By mapping the framings global cities draw upon, we provide a point of reference for future scholarly work as well as for policy-makers in order to assess and reflect their cities’ positioning.

Second, we stress the central importance of the ethical and political dimension inherent in both the praxis of sharing as well as the governing of the sharing economy in a fair and responsible manner. In fact, the question of broader social impact and societal benefit—and, with this, of a 'good' sharing economy—depends much on the ascribed opportunities and challenges. Cities directly and indirectly apply ethical considerations and moral judgement in their interpretations of opportunities and challenges that come with the sharing economy. These judgements are intertwined with their governance responses and strategies, and together create the institutional arrangements that enable and delimit agency of other actors. We hold that a number of core ethical questions regarding the sharing economy therefore need to be addressed taking this institutional setting seriously. Our study provides an example of the importance of the urban governance level, where many decisions are made that affect the everyday lives of people as well as the economic framework for local market structures and participants.

Third, and going beyond the confines of the phenomenon of the sharing economy, our work contributes to a better understanding of public governance strategies by proposing a more generic framework of how distinct public governance strategies co-occur with specific interpretations of issues. This adds to the picture painted by, for instance, Bemelmans-Videc et al. (1997) and theorizes the set of policy instruments in relation to the framing of a focal issue. We call for future research on other policy debates in order to corroborate our conceptual findings and to jointly develop a more applicable framework for policy-related governance strategies and instruments that are able to engage with morally complex issues.

As with any empirical study, ours is not without limitations. Boundary conditions, for instance, are positive selection (i.e., only those cities that are proactive in addressing the sharing economy) and an unintended bias towards the Global North. Even though we tried to include all cities in the sample that were in the A. T. Kearney Global Cities top-25-ranking and published a strategy paper, we might have overlooked documents due to language barriers. This seems unfortunate as the comparison across different cultural settings would be particularly interesting. Another limitation is our empirical disregard of institutional factors that might influence the framings of and strategic governance responses towards the sharing economy (such as law and administrative tradition, level of municipal autonomy as well as other dimensions of organizational and administrative design, political and ideological history, socio-economic factors). Our findings are further based on discursive material that could be substantiated by investigating actual governance practice within the various empirical settings. In addition,

our sampling of documents mirrors the heterogeneity in the terms that are associated with sharing—e.g., sustainability, collaboration, circularity. Clearly, the choice of label is not coincidental and may already cue a particular framing. Interestingly, a very recent "Sharing Cities Declaration" (Sharing Cities Summit 2018), signed by 31 cities (7 of them in our sample), concurs on 'platform economy,' a label that plays little role in the cities' strategy documents.

Future research could also assess the medium-term impact of public governance strategies on the further development of the sharing economy. Eventually, such research on the real-life effects of governance instruments could contribute to the formulation of practical governance implications. Finally, assessing the position of city governments towards the sharing economy in general, we disregarded any particular positions towards specific companies usually associated with the sharing economy (such as Airbnb and Uber)—which might contrast their overall take on the issue. Although we acknowledge that position papers only represent a snapshot while governments have ongoing policy discussions that may alter their framings and governance responses, we could not include dynamics over time.

In closing, it is our hope that our work here is seen as complementary to other studies that focus more on the micro-level phenomena of sharing and sharing economy organizations. Considering the political and ethical debates on the various social, economic, and moral issues related to the sharing economy, our article contributes to a better and in-depth understanding of the field-level institutional arrangements that is prerequisite for the examination of moral behavior, social responsibility, and societal accountability of sharing economy organizations on the micro-level.

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Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest All authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

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Appendix A: Set coincidence analysis of strategies

| | Promotion | Regulation | Information | Alignment | Expertise | Technology | Partnering | Provision |
|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Promotion | | | | | | | | |
| Regulation | 0.57 | | | | | | | |
| Information | 0.55 | 0.64 | | | | | | |
| Alignment | 0.52 | 0.58 | 0.38 | | | | | |
| Expertise | 0.48 | 0.58 | 0.58 | 0.45 | | | | |
| Technology | 0.50 | 0.53 | 0.54 | 0.38 | 0.53 | | | |
| Partnering | 0.58 | 0.39 | 0.36 | 0.43 | 0.39 | 0.44 | | |
| Provision | 0.46 | 0.31 | 0.32 | 0.30 | 0.21 | 0.28 | 0.49 | |

Appendix B: Factor scores and occurrence of strategies per city

| Cities | Factor scores: Framing of the sharing economy as... | | | | Public governance strategies | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | Societal endangerment | Societal enhancement | Market disruption | Eco-logical transition | Promotion | Regulation | Information | Alignment | Expertise | Technology | Partnering | Provision |
| London | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.94 | 0.06 | ○ | ○ | ○ | ● | ● | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Barcelona | 0.01 | 0.99 | 0.94 | 0.06 | ● | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ | ○ | ● | ● |
| New York City | 0.10 | 0.90 | 0.50 | 0.50 | ● | ● | ● | ○ | ○ | ● | ○ | ● |
| Paris | 0.26 | 0.74 | 0.00 | 1.00 | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ○ | ● |
| Copenhagen | 0.26 | 0.74 | 0.00 | 1.00 | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ● | ● | ○ |
| Berlin | 0.27 | 0.73 | 0.51 | 0.49 | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Seoul | 0.27 | 0.73 | 0.51 | 0.49 | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ○ |
| Los Angeles | 0.51 | 0.49 | 0.01 | 0.99 | ● | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ● | ● |
| Vancouver | 0.56 | 0.44 | 0.35 | 0.65 | ● | ● | ● | ○ | ● | ● | ● | ○ |
| Toronto | 0.58 | 0.42 | 0.99 | 0.01 | ● | ○ | ○ | ● | ● | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Milan | 0.59 | 0.41 | 0.36 | 0.64 | ● | ● | ● | ○ | ● | ● | ○ | ○ |
| Sydney | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.99 | 0.01 | ● | ● | ● | ● | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ |
| Hong Kong | 0.73 | 0.27 | 1.00 | 0.00 | ○ | ● | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Amsterdam | 0.74 | 0.26 | 1.00 | 0.00 | ● | ● | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ | ● | ● |
| Vienna | 0.77 | 0.23 | 0.37 | 0.63 | ○ | ● | ● | ● | ● | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Chicago | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0.22 | 0.78 | ○ | ● | ● | ○ | ● | ● | ○ | ○ |

The displayed factor scores are based on the factor analysis and reveal to what extent a city is relying on the two factors that are described in detail in the section “Empirical Results.” The scores are re-calibrated as fuzzy-sets in order to be used for the f-s QCA. As part of the re-calibration, the minimum value was set as 0.00, the maximum value was set as 1.00, and the mean value as 0.50. All city scores were then re-assigned while retaining the relative distances in the primary positive (> 0.50) and in the primary negative array (< 0.50)

The occurrence (set-membership value 0.51 to 1.00; symbolized by ●) or non-occurrence (set-membership value 0.00 to 0.50; symbolized by ○) of a strategy displays in a simplified way whether a city applies a strategy or not

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