Sharing Cities for Urban Transformation: Narrative, Policy and Practice

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Abstract

Commercial sharing platforms have reshaped the transportation and housing sectors in cities and raised challenges for urban policy makers seeking to balance market disruption with community protections. Transformational sharing seeks to strengthen the urban commons to address social justice, equity and sustainability. This paper uses Transformative Social Innovation theory to develop a comparative analysis of Shareable's Sharing Cities Network and Airbnb's Home Sharing Clubs. It argues that narrative framing of the sharing economy for community empowerment and grassroots mobilisation have been used by Shareable to drive a "sharing transformation" and by Airbnb through "regulatory hacking" to influence urban policy.

1. Introduction

The city has become an important battleground for the sharing economy as commercial platforms like Uber and Airbnb leverage network effects and urban clustering through two-sided marketplaces. This poses a range of complex urban policy challenges for Australian governments especially in relation to infrastructure planning, public transport, housing affordability and inequality. These commercial sharing platforms continue to disrupt legacy services, raise tensions between private and public sector interests, intensify flexible labour practices, and put pressure on rental vacancy rates (Gurran and Phibbs 2017).

Bold experiments for transformative urbanism like the Sharing Cities Network, launched by Shareable in 2013, tell a new story of the sharing economy. This transnational network was created to inspire community advocates to self-organise across dozens of local nodes and run MapJams (asset mapping) and ShareFests (sharing festivals) to make community assets more visible, help convene local actors, offer policy solutions to local governments and re-frame the sharing economy's potential to drive transformational urban change (Johnson 2013a). At the same time "sharing cities" (McLaren and Agyeman 2015) have gained formal support from various municipal governments including Seoul (Johnson 2014) and Amsterdam (Miller 2015) through policies and programs that leverage shared assets, infrastructure and civic participation to create economic and social inclusion.

Narrative framing of the sharing economy by different actors plays an important role in shaping urban policy. The Sharing Cities Network has developed a narrative of the sharing economy as a transformational global movement founded on inclusive sharing and support for the urban commons to address social justice, equity and sustainability. Airbnb claims to "democratise capitalism" to support the "middle class" in its story of the sharing economy and uses this to mobilise hosts to influence urban regulatory regimes amidst a growing backlash against commercial home sharing's impact on housing affordability (van der Zee 2016), racial discrimination (Edelman *et al.* 2017) and "corporate nullification" or intentional violation of the law (Pasquale and Vaidhyanathan 2015), arising from its business practices.

This paper uses Transformative Social Innovation theory to analyse the Sharing Cities Network and its efforts to drive transformative urban experiments through various acts of doing, organising, framing and knowing (Haxeltine *et al.* 2016a). The Sharing Cities Network encourages actors to replicate trans-local experiments through face-to-face and digital interactions in multiple cities simultaneously that connect diverse stakeholders including individuals, community groups, sharing enterprises and local governments. New urban experiments in transformative social innovation remain open to cooptation and contestation from commercial sharing platforms with thousands of staff, millions of users and sophisticated public policy coordination at their disposal. These co-shaping forces and impacts on urban governance will be explored through a comparative analysis of the Sharing Cities Network with Airbnb's competing "Shared City" narrative and "grassroots movement" of Home Sharing Clubs, which have mobilised hosts and guests in over 100 cities to lobby government for platform-friendly home sharing legislation through "regulatory hacking" and community organising.

2. Commercial Sharing Platforms

In a few short years commercial sharing platforms like Uber and Airbnb have radically altered the transportation and housing landscape in cities, which has left regulators scrambling and disrupted incumbents in the taxi and hotel industries. These platforms have skilfully leveraged the agglomeration benefits of proximity, density and amenity of shareable assets in cities to make the sharing economy a uniquely "urban phenomenon" and driven the massive take-up of new peer to peer services (Davidson and Infranca 2016). Commercial platforms, commentators and academics alike have developed a

narrative of the sharing economy which promotes the benefits of "access over ownership" and the ability to unlock the idling capacity of "lazy assets" like a spare bedroom, car or tools for community building and extra income generation through a new era of "crowd-based capitalism" (Botsman and Rogers 2010, Sundararajan 2016). At the same time as Uber and Airbnb have risen to prominence an alternative sharing economy story has emerged that prioritises inclusive forms of sharing that support the urban commons through community gardens, tool libraries, repair cafes and platform co-operatives (Shareable 2017). Critics of commercial sharing platforms argue that Silicon Valley startups have co-opted the "socially transformative" vision of sharing and its principles of solidarity, democracy and sustainability, to further their own business interests (Schor 2014, p. 9).

Commercial sharing platforms have scaled rapidly through a variety of competitive advantages and consumer benefits that include price, convenience and trust, the key drivers of sharing transactions according to research by Vision Critical (Owyang and Samuel 2015). The ride-hailing app Uber, active in over 450 cities and with a market valuation of around $70 billion, has elicited a spectrum of policy responses from outright bans in Italy (Segreti 2017), to strategic partnerships with Dubai's roads and transport authority (Aswad 2017). Cities are forced to confront commercial platforms on multiple fronts and face accusations of supporting "dead-weight vested interests" and "antiquated business models" while stifling digital innovation (Corcoran 2014), despite a noticeable lack of consultation by platforms with city officials (Wharton 2012). McNeill (2016) has shown how Uber and Airbnb have taken venture capital funds to develop "populist advertising" and use "highly paid lobbyists" to campaign against local housing and taxi regulations. The autonomy of cities to self-govern and set long-term policy settings is also constrained by other levels of government. The City of Austin passed legislation requiring Uber and Lyft to follow driver fingerprinting rules (Solomon 2017), only to have the Texan Governor take responsibility for ride-hailing legislation into the hands of the state government (Osbourne 2017).

In recent years commercial sharing platforms have influenced urban governance by employing political campaigning and community organising tactics to mobilise support from customers and hosts to lobby cities for soft-touch regulations. Airbnb which claims to operate in 65,000 cities across 191 countries has used "grassroots" campaigning to lobby for favourable commercial home sharing regulations. In 2015 the short-stays platform hired former Clinton advisor and crisis communications expert Chris Lehane to successfully lead a "host advocacy" campaign that defeated Proposition F, a 2015 ballot to restrict short-term rentals in San Francisco (Somerville 2017). Lehane was subsequently appointed head of Airbnb's global policy and public affairs division to make the platform's case for "democratizing capitalism and helping tackle economic inequality" with other cities (Fox 2016).

3. The Emergence of Sharing Cities

As the sharing economy began to garner mainstream attention through texts on "collaborative consumption" (Botsman and Rogers 2010) and "the mesh" (Gansky 2010), other actors focused specifically on its relationship to cities. Shareable, the world's leading news site for the sharing economy was co-founded by Neal Gorenflo in 2009 and describes itself as a "non-profit news, action and connection hub for the sharing transformation".1 Gorenflo has led the development of a progressive narrative of the sharing economy with the transformative potential to restore community life, distribute power relations and create social impact (Pick and Dreher 2015). Gorenflo's framing of a "sharing transformation" articulates a new societal vision and story for the sharing economy:

> The sharing community has two choices. It can ignore this opportunity. It can develop a narrow vision for the sharing economy and offer one among many competing visions. Or, it can develop a vision that shows how the sharing economy addresses the world's greatest challenges and offers a new, inspiring way forward

> for society. We have the opportunity to develop the vision, the one that defines "what it means to live the good life." (Gorenflo 2012)

Shareable began advocating for sharing cities in 2011 when it convened ShareSF, the first sharing economy summit with an urban focus, that brought together commercial platforms, city government and communal sharing advocates to discuss new approaches to "strengthen the Bay Area as a platform for sharing" (Gorenflo 2011a). The summit catalysed two world firsts: the formation of the City of San Francisco's Sharing Economy Working Group in 2012 with the support of Mayor Lee (City of San Francisco 2012); and *Policies for Shareable Cities* published in 2013 which provided a detailed set of city policy proposals in the areas of transportation, housing, co-operative development and food sharing (Orsi *et al.* 2013). Shareable then launched the Sharing Cities Network in 2013 using MapJams to mobilise, inspire and connect other sharing innovators around the world and re-frame the urban conversation around questions of shared resources, participatory governance, democratic ownership and social justice (Luna 2014a). To date 50 cities have joined this international network which functions as a social learning platform that provides community organisers with a comprehensive toolkit, including how to guides and model policies to develop local sharing city initiatives that support the urban commons in their communities.2

In 2012 Mayor Park Won-soon launched the Sharing City Seoul initiative, a world-first city-led program that encompasses public awareness, startup funding, new regulations and public access to the city's underutilised assets including 800 public buildings (Johnson 2014). Seoul was influenced by the San Francisco Working Group and Shareable's policy primer in the creation of its Sharing City initiative which it developed to address a variety of social, economic and environmental issues and to help recover communities lost to intense urbanization and industrialization (Johnson 2013b). Seoul's Amsterdam which formally declared itself Europe's first sharing city in early 2015 (van Sprang 2015).

4. Transformative Social Innovation

Transformative Social Innovation (TSI) theory will be used to analyse the development of the Sharing Cities Network, an experimental form of social innovation. The TRANSIT project is a four-year research project co-funded by the European Commission that has developed a hybrid approach to the empirical study of social innovation networks using a combination of transition, social movement and institutional theory.3 TSI theory is a nascent field of research to emerge from the TRANSIT project which empirically analysed the dynamics of 20 transnational networks for social change in relation to systemic change including Transition Towns, the Slow Food movement and Shareable's Sharing Cities Network (Haxeltine *et al.* 2016a). TRANSIT researchers do not categorize social innovations as "transformative" or "non-transformative" but view it as an "emergent outcome" of context-based interactions between the social innovations in question with other actors and institutions:

> Social innovations *become transformative* when they challenge, alter, replace or produce alternatives to well-established social relations, and ways of doing things. In their journeys, social innovations are subject to pressures for change themselves. They thus need to learn how to maintain autonomy and integrity and resist capture, especially from government and other powerful actors. (Dumitru *et al.* 2017, p. 2)

TSI theory looks at how different agents of transformative social innovations "work together to create new social relations, and innovate new forms of doing, organising, framing and knowing" (Haxeltine *et al.* 2017, p. 12). These include the performance of practices and use of technologies (doing); how the social innovation is configured or governed (organising); how issues are defined and imaginaries created (framing); and the use of cognitive resources and competencies (knowing) (Haxeltine *et al.* 2016b, p. 9). Figure 1 illustrates how TSI practices co-evolve through (dis)empowering social relations amongst new and incumbent social actors, institutions and social fields between the dynamics of transformation and capture. Aspects of the TSI framework will be used to develop a comparative

analysis of Shareable's Sharing Cities Network alongside Airbnb's Home Sharing Clubs which co-opts the sharing cities movement and uses community mobilisation to influence urban policy. The various challenges this raises for the regulation and governance of the sharing economy by city government will also be discussed.

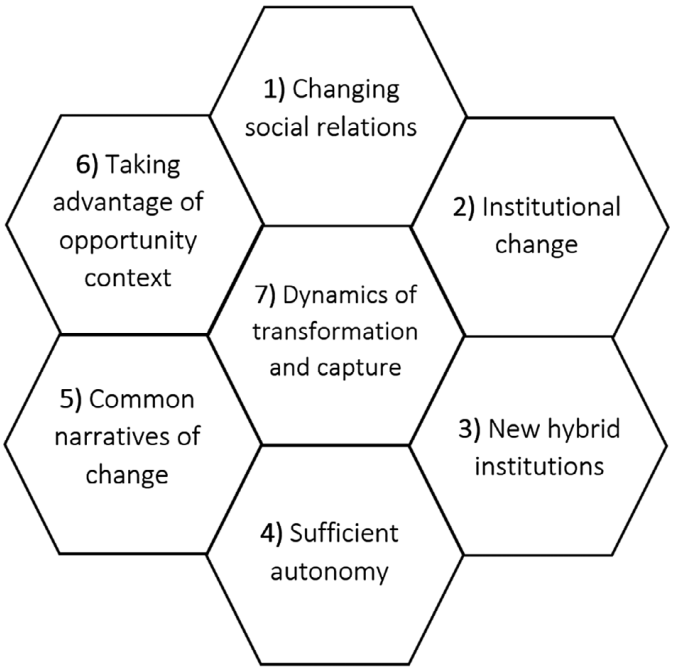

Figure 1. Transformative social innovation - *Seven insights for practice.* Source: Adapted from Haxeltine *et al*. (2017).

5. Social Action to Build a Movement (Doing)

The Sharing Cities Network was officially launched by Shareable shortly after the release of the policy primer in September 2013 as "a grassroots network for sharing innovators to discover together how to create as many sharing cities around the world as fast as possible" (Luna 2013a). The network's first action, announced to coincide with the launch, was the Sharing Cities MapJam held between 12–26 October 2013, with a target of mapping the sharing economies of 25 cities supported by local teams (ibid). Shareable used its website and newsletter to promote the first MapJams and sent direct invitations by email to potential local hosts that were followed up by conference calls with the organising director. A host guide was also circulated with information on how to host a MapJam including practical advice on event recruitment, technical details for creating an online map and post-event promotion of map outputs (Luna 2013b). The number of first MapJams exceeded initial goals and eventually took place in 55 cities across North America, Europe, Australia, Africa and the Middle East through a combination of in-person and online events (Johnson 2013a). The Melbourne MapJam occurred 23rd October 2013 at a local coworking space and was attended by 20 people from the sharing start-up and civic technology communities (Tawakol 2016). This was the first time a sharing cities map of Melbourne was developed and included links to toy libraries, farmer's markets, coworking spaces and a maker lab.4

According to Parker (2006, p. 472), community mapping projects are collective attempts to create new spatial relations at a local scale that "strive to be inclusive, empowering, and transparent", with concern for the process of working together as much as the product of the map itself. Grassroots community building is at the heart of the various MapJam actions that have taken place. MapJams are a form of asset-based community development (ABCD), a strength-based approach pioneered by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) to catalyse endogenous responses from local actors to make existing

resources within communities visible and available. In the wake of the MapJams success, Shareable ran a crowdfunding campaign and raised $54,000 through small donations from supporters.5 In early 2014 Shareable then partnered with the Centre for a New American Dream to inspire grassroots actors to run their own ShareFests which took a variety of forms including open space sessions, workshops, and demonstration activities like skillshares to "kickstart the sharing movement" in cities around the world (Luna 2014b). The Melbourne ShareFest took place on 29th May 2014 and brought 25 sharing economy leaders together to discuss local challenges and opportunities for the sharing economy, and develop the vision for Melbourne as a sharing city (Sharp 2014).

The Sharing Cities Network emerged at a time when the commercial platform Airbnb was encountering widespread regulatory pushback from numerous city governments including Barcelona, New York and Berlin (Coldwell 2014). In 2013 Airbnb began using grassroots lobbying tactics through the industry-funded organisation Peers that it co-founded and co-funded with other for-profit sharing economy companies (Kamenetz 2013). Peers used Airbnb hosts to lobby New York state lawmakers, with similar efforts taking place in other jurisdictions in coordinated attempts to modify hotel laws in favour of short-stays home sharing (Hempel 2014). Airbnb honed its experiments in mobilising grassroots support in San Francisco where it funded a successful campaign to defeat the Board of Supervisors Proposition F ballot to, amongst other things, cap the number of nights a unit could be rented on shortstays platforms to a maximum of 75 nights per year (Alba 2015). Airbnb spent over $8 million to defeat the ballot using a sophisticated blend of mixed media advertising, door knocking and host activation, as political organiser Nicole Derse from *50 + 1 Strategies* who co-led the "No on F" campaign observes:

> The campaign had all the modern bells and whistles you'd expect of an effort backed by a Silicon Valley giant. Still, we also ran one of the most aggressive field campaigns San Francisco has ever seen. Over the course of 11 weeks, our staff and volunteers knocked on more than 300,000 doors, made some 300,000 phone calls and had over 120,000 conversations with real voters. We got more than 2,000 small businesses to oppose Prop. F. In fact, our Airbnb hosts took the lead in this campaign, hosting house parties, organizing their friends and neighbors, and leading dozens of earned media events. (Derse 2016)

These campaign tactics draw on social movement theorist Marshall Ganz's "snowflake model" of distributed leadership and small-group community organising that were used to great effect during Obama's 2008 election campaign (Ball 2015). Washington DC-based startup incubator and seed fund *1776* have described Airbnb's approach to defeat Proposition F in San Francisco as "regulatory hacking": "a strategy combining public policy and alternatives to traditional marketing for startups to successfully scale in the next wave of the digital economy".6 Chris Lehane, former Bill Clinton aide, was hired by Airbnb to orchestrate the "No on F" campaign and give it the appearance of a grassroots effort that made hosts "the face of its defense" (Newcomer 2015). Stephen Mills (2016), reflecting on the contemporary Australian landscape, observes how political campaigning has been supplanted from its electoral roots and cultivated by the private sector, government and civil society to become the "dominant form of collective political activity" but is beset with tensions over the appearance of being "grassroots-driven" while being "managed from the centre". Airbnb's shrewd use of regulatory hacking through political campaigning and community mobilisation strategies to prevent commercially-damaging regulatory change, raises numerous challenges for urban policy makers in the governance of the sharing economy. Not least of which the need to balance evidence-led arguments for zoning reform and changes to housing laws, with measures to protect the public realm, local amenity and access to affordable housing.

6. Trans-local Replicating Networks (Organising)

As the Sharing Cities Network took shape in early 2014, Shareable built an online hub to give local

sharing advocates the ability to create and manage their own free community pages with links to city-based resources, events, news and sharing maps for 50 cities (Feliciano 2014). City administrators had the autonomy to manage the content of their respective nodes and were provided with training via web conference and how-to guides. These administrators were comprised of volunteers from around the world who were either invited by Shareable to join or self-nominated via a survey. Shareable created the online hub as platform for grassroots organisers to coalesce around the sharing cities movement but does not coordinate the activities of local city actors. As Tom Llewellyn, strategic partnerships director for Shareable makes clear:

> anybody that shows me a sharing event, can post an event to our website. And then, we have someone that moderates them, to make sure that they are actually in line with the idea. […] if the event has something to do with anything we publish about. Then we allow it to be on the website. (De Majo *et al.* 2016, p. 29)

This approach to organising can be understood through TSI theory as "distributed agency" whereby social innovations deemed as "situated collective configurations" that start as local experiments can become "connected and standardised trans-locally and/or transnationally across multiple different sites in space and time." (Haxeltine *et al.* 2016b, p.10). The Sharing Cities Network, as a translocal organisation, also used temporal synchronization to hold the MapJams and ShareFests within a clearly defined timeframe to amplify collective reach and impact across highly dispersed cities. Swarm organising, developed by the Swedish Pirate Party to help it win seats in the European Parliament, has influenced the form and function of the Sharing Cities Network. The swarm model, according to Pirate Party founder Rick Falkvinge (2013), centres on the activation of a decentralised and autonomous movement of volunteers through the web around a world changing story that is "tangible, credible, inclusive and epic" (p. 34). Shareable, with a core staff of three people, used swarm organising to build a global movement of volunteer sharing city advocates connected via an online hub that has self-organised dozens of MapJams, ShareFests and other events under the Sharing Cities Network banner (De Majo *et al.* 2016, p. 80).

As Airbnb's disagreements with city governments over violations of local regulations began to intensify, the company put forward the argument that as a platform it wasn't responsible for breaking housing laws, while also encouraging hosts to follow the relevant laws of the land (Kessler 2013). As discussed, Airbnb's approach to policy engagement took a decidedly political turn in 2015 following its successful campaign to defeat Proposition F in San Francisco. Buoyed by the "No on F" campaign's success, Chris Lehane swiftly announced Airbnb's plans to kickstart a global political movement, made up of its millions of hosts and guests, through the launch of 100 Home Sharing Clubs by the end of 2016, to be set up and paid for by the company (Kulwin 2015). At the launch press conference Lehane described them as "independent clubs to be run by hosts and guests" with the company providing staff and resources: "We're going to build on the momentum coming from San Francisco … to give our community access to the finest grassroots training, tools and support" (Said 2015). Lehane's presentation portrayed Airbnb's host and guest community as a "formidable constituency" with similar influence on public policy as lobbying networks like the National Rifle Association, Sierra Club and the National Education Association (Alba 2015).

In the 18 months since the announcement, over 140 Home Sharing Clubs have become operational in cities around the world through the Airbnb Community Centre platform where vetted hosts can create custom club pages for their community, communicate through forums and coordinate events using the Airbnb meetup tool.7 Members are trained in how to advocate for Airbnb-friendly home sharing laws in their city and provided with various toolkits to advance this agenda. The perspective of Airbnb hosts and guests, and their motivations for campaigning has received little attention in the literature and is worthy of further research. Noteworthy here are the dynamics of transformation and capture between the Sharing Cities Networks' online hub and Airbnb's Home Sharing Clubs. Both use

peer to peer networking technologies to mobilise supportive actors in the service of their respective agendas. In Shareable's case through transformative social innovation to forge a new direction for urban communities that is inclusive, democratic and socially just. And in the case of Airbnb, through regulatory hacking to remove policy blockages in key city markets in the lead up to its rumoured public launch on the New York Stock Exchange in 2018 (Thomas 2017).

7. Changing the Story (Framing)

George Lakoff has been at the forefront of research into how frames shape politics by tapping into the "cognitive unconscious" of individual and public life through language that activates neural associations with deep implications for policy:

> Frames are mental structures that shape the way we see the world. As a result, they shape the goals we seek, the plans we make, the way we act, and what counts as a good or bad outcome of our actions. In politics our frames shape our social policies and the institutions we form to carry out policies. To change our frames is to change all of this. Reframing is social change. (Lakoff 2014, p. xii)

As Lakoff's book title *Don't think of an elephant* ingeniously suggests, negative framing works to activate the frame in question, and strengthen it, even when it undermines one's own argument (ibid).
To illustrate this further take Lakoff's (2017) discussion about how the word "regulation" is framed in policy terms from a corporate perspective as "limitations on freedom", whereas when reframed as "protection" it shifts the emphasis on to community wellbeing and changes public discourse in the process. As Lakoff (2014, p. xiii) points out: "Reframing is more a matter of accessing what we and like-minded others already believe unconsciously, making it conscious, and repeating it till it enters normal public discourse."

Narratives are key to making sense of how frames are applied through storytelling to enact social change. TSI theory sees "narratives of change" as instrumental to transformative social innovation initiatives as they reveal key ingredients to the social construction of "why the world has to change, who has the power to do so and how this can be done":

> More often than not, social innovation initiatives play on the ability of words to convince individuals, unite groups, frame reality and evoke imagination: stories do not simply recount experiences but open up novel ways of looking at things and new possibilities for action. They reflect and at the same time create reality …(Wittmayer *et al.* 2015, p. 2)

At the heart of Shareable's narrative lies the "sharing transformation" and the call for local communities to improve the state of the world through authentic sharing:

> What's the sharing transformation? It's a movement of movements emerging from the grassroots up to solve today's biggest challenges, which old, top-down institutions are failing to address. Behind these failing industrial- age institutions are outmoded beliefs about how the world works—that ordinary people can't govern themselves directly; that nonstop economic growth leads to widespread prosperity; and that more stuff leads to more happiness. Amid crisis, a new way forward is emerging: the sharing transformation. The sharing transformation is big, global, and impacts every part of society. (Llewellyn and Gorenflo 2016, p. 6)

The Sharing Cities Network narrative is framed as an autonomous peer to peer movement that doesn't rely on "the government or big banks" to succeed and where people don't have to "beg leaders for change" (Luna 2013a). Its narrative developed over time through observation of already existing social innovations that communities around the world were enabling and then amplifying these changes through storytelling, MapJams and ShareFests to bring dispersed actors together through transformative movement building for systemic change. Gorenflo (2013) discusses this in terms of a new social contract coordinated via the Internet that eschews hierarchies and focuses on lateral engagement in local communities to create a new society, politics and economy. Shareable's Sharing Cities Network disseminates a generative narrative of the sharing economy that is grounded in personal and urban transformation by democratising local economies through strengthening the commons,

support for social justice and ecological sustainability. Shareable's co-founder Neal Gorenflo framed it in the following terms:

> Imagine a city where everyone's needs are met because people make the personal choice to share. Where everyone can create meaningful livelihoods. Where fresh, local food is available to all. Where affordable housing and shared transportation are abundant. Where the people decide how the city budget is spent. Where the people own the utilities and the banks, and even create their own currencies. Imagine a city where the more we share, the more we have. That's a sharing city.8

In March 2014 Airbnb CEO and co-founder Brian Chesky penned a blog post from his personal *Medium* account that on the surface appeared to offer an olive branch of sorts to city regulators. It was Airbnb's attempt to develop its own "Shared City" narrative laden with platitudes, wholesome imagery and language that borrowed heavily from Shareable's vision:

> Imagine if you could build a city that is shared … Imagine a city that fosters community, where space isn't wasted, but shared with others … We are committed to helping make cities stronger socially, economically, and environmentally … We are committed to supporting local small businesses. We are committed to fostering and strengthening community … To honor these commitments, and to realize a more enriched city, today we are announcing Shared City … our initiative to help civic leaders and our community create more shareable, more livable cities through relevant, concrete actions and partnerships. (Chesky 2014)

This signalled the start of Airbnb's city partnerships program which it inaugurated with the City of Portland, Oregon. Under this deal Airbnb agreed to let hosts donate money earned through its platform to local causes, provide free smoke detectors, work with the tourism bureau on joint campaigns and most significantly, "collect and remit taxes to the city on behalf of its hosts" (Gallagher 2014). The pragmatic nature of Airbnb's partnership agreement with Portland failed to match the rhetoric of Chesky's "Shared City" narrative, but was nonetheless a very public demonstration of the company's new approach to deal making with cities willing to formalise and legitimate commercial home sharing.

In 2015 Airbnb's narrative and framing changed tone significantly in the wake of its hard fought "No on F" campaign in San Francisco. Chesky's earlier homilies about how Airbnb supports local small business were transformed by Chris Lehane and team into an argument about "working families" taken straight from the political campaigning playbook. According to Airbnb (2015a), the defeat of Proposition F in San Francisco was a "victory for the middle class" to use home sharing as an "economic lifeline" and signalled the birth of a "movement". This astute reframing shifted the focus from Airbnb, a multi-billion-dollar company with thousands of staff, to its host community who were put forward as the face of home sharing. Nicole Derse explains how the "No on F" campaign reframed the narrative to counter opposition arguments that Airbnb was raising the cost of housing in San Francisco:

> Against those opponents, we knew that we needed to frame the issue first. It wasn't about Airbnb. It was about the thousands of middle-class hosts in San Francisco who needed the extra money they made from renting out a spare room in their house to make ends meet. They were putting roofs on their homes, taking care of their sick parents and sending their kids to college with the money they earned from renting out a spare room. Our campaign was buoyed by their stories. (Derse 2016)

8. Liberating Regulation of the Sharing Economy (Knowing)

At the ShareSF summit in 2011 Lawrence Grodeska from the Department of Environment encouraged the group of leaders from the business, government and civic sectors in attendance to "draft a sharing manifesto with concrete policy proposals" for the City of San Francisco to consider (Gorenflo 2011b). Shareable then partnered with the sharing economy lawyer Janelle Orsi and the Sustainable Economies Law Centre to develop a 15-part policy series to further broaden its vision of a "sharing transformation" with city government:

> Together the proposals represent the underpinnings of a larger vision in which the common wealth in cities is

> made accessible to all residents; where the free flow of resources among citizens is aided by law, the built environment, culture, nonprofits, government, and business; and where citizens are free to co-create great lives for each other in a vivifying cooperative framework. (ibid.)

This series became the basis for a world-first report titled *Policies for Shareable Cities: A Sharing Economy Policy Primer for Urban Leaders* (Orsi *et al.* 2013) which laid out detailed policy proposals for inclusive forms of sharing in areas of transportation, food, housing and jobs, including support for a range of affordable housing initiatives. The report also framed the sharing economy as an opportunity for city government to "step into the role of facilitators of the sharing economy by designing infrastructure, services, incentives, and regulations that factor in the social exchanges of this game changing movement" (ibid., p. 6). Building on this, Shareable (2017) published *Sharing Cities: Activating the Urban Commons* with 137 case studies and model policies to support commons-based forms of sharing in cities.

Meanwhile Airbnb was pursuing more platform-friendly policies to scale its operations and remove regulatory blockages to short-term accommodation rentals in cities. As the Home Sharing Clubs program rolled out from November 2015, Airbnb (2015b) released its *Community Compact* that spelled out its intention to treat "every city personally" through a series of commitments around host payment of local hotel taxes, transparency on home sharing activity and a policy to address long-term rental availability by "listing only properties that are permanent homes on a short-term basis". In late 2016 Airbnb released its *Policy Tool Chest* with a range of toolkits that encouraged hosts to contact local lawmakers and advocate for "fair rules for home sharing".9 The *Policy Tool Chest* is the company's attempt to follow through on its commitments spelled out in the *Community Compact* and contains information for policy makers to consider when drafting regulations around commercial home sharing. It centres on Airbnb's collection and remittance of hotel taxes; its "one host, one home" policy to protect permanent rental stock including limits on entire home listings; and guidance on sustainable tourism related to scaling accommodation options during major events like the World Cup (Airbnb 2017).

The policy leadership of Sharing City Seoul provides insights into how city governments can embrace the innovation of the sharing economy and use it to drive inclusive community outcomes. Mayor Park Won-soon's approach to the sharing economy prioritises Korean startups that develop local solutions, all centred on his vision of "restoring a sense of community" (Ramirez 2017). Seoul's *Ordinance on the Promotion of Sharing* provides lessons for urban policy makers and city governments in Australia and beyond.10 Sharing City Seoul acknowledges the private sector's role in driving the sharing economy but uses policy, infrastructure and funding to support local entrepreneurs and community organisations "committed to solving urban problems" like congestion and cost of living pressures (Creative Commons Korea 2015). The City of Seoul is also strong on enforcement and has taken Uber to task over its violations of local driver regulations and required Airbnb to delete 1500 illegal listings from its platform (Ramirez 2017).

City governments must engage with a diversity of sharing economy actors, from ride-hailing apps and short-stays platforms to urban agriculture and platform co-operatives. McLaren and Agyeman (2015, p. 14) have put forward a "sharing paradigm" to broaden the scope of sharing beyond economic transactions along an axis from commercial to communal that incorporates modes of governance and the co-management of shared resources. They argue that:

> Any meaningful concept of Sharing Cities must go beyond the "sharing economy", and explore approaches that are more cultural than commercial, more political than economic, and that are rooted in a broad understanding of the city as a co-created urban commons. (McLaren and Agyeman 2018, p. 326)

This reframing can assist the development of more nuanced policy responses and actions by government to better leverage the full potential of sharing in cities. Europe's first Sharing City, Amsterdam, has convened a network of ambassadors from the commercial, government and knowledge

sectors to develop a program of activities to support the local sharing economy and pilot a range of projects (Miller 2015). The City has developed an Action Plan and "process wheel" checklist to evaluate the social and economic impacts of local sharing initiatives and determine if government intervention is required.11

The Sharing Cities profiled offer lessons for urban policy makers in Australia seeking to define a more collaborative multi-stakeholder approach to regulation, and mobilise collective municipal responses to counter commercial sharing platforms encroachment into cities regulatory sovereignty. To this end, the Sharing Cities Alliance formed in May 2017 with founding members Seoul, New York, Toronto, Amsterdam and Copenhagen having agreed to strengthen cooperation in areas of entrepreneurship, labour rights, public safety, carbon reductions, fair access and data protections (Seoul Metropolitan Government 2017). Seoul and Amsterdam's leadership in urban governance of the sharing economy reveal pathways that bring industry, government and community together to drive economic opportunity and socially inclusive outcomes which other cities could emulate.

9. Conclusion

This paper has described how Shareable's Sharing Cities Network used narrative and grassroots mobilisation to catalyse a transnational collective of sharing cities organisers. The creation of the Sharing Cities Network and related experiments in transformative social innovation can be interpreted as an attempt to overcome what Gorenflo (2010) identified as a "collective action problem" endemic to a fragmented social activism and nonprofit sector that struggled to compete against the lobbying power of corporate capitalism.

It has been shown that the Sharing Cities Network created the conditions for grassroots actors to demonstrate that another sharing economy grounded in co-operation, solidarity and support for the urban commons was already underway through a "sharing transformation" in communities around the world. At the same time, Airbnb used "regulatory hacking", political campaigning and grassroots mobilisation to remove policy blockages to commercial home sharing in key city markets to further its growth ambitions. The Sharing Cities Network succeeded in framing a new story about the sharing economy based on community empowerment that was co-opted by Airbnb's Shared City narrative and its development of Home Sharing Clubs.

The role of transformative social innovation and regulatory hacking in co-shaping urban policy for the sharing economy requires greater interrogation from researchers and policy makers alike. City governments must contend with new pressures from transformative social innovations that drive support for inclusive sharing, alongside well-funded regulatory hacking campaigns which build capacity for supporters to lobby regulators through collective action on the commercial sharing sector's behalf. These developments have ongoing implications for the future of urban policy and governance of the sharing economy in a period characterised by intense disruption and experimentation in cities which shows no signs of slowing.

Notes

1. http://www.shareable.net/about
2. http://www.shareable.net/sharing-cities-network
3. http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/about-transit
4. https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1q7Ya9oyC5VY6u1s_K-piecv9PD4&ll=-37.78649268900908%2C144.9110498039795&z=14
5. http://www.shareable.net/contribute
6. https://www.1776.vc/regulatory-hacking/
7. https://www.airbnbcitizen.com/clubs/
8. https://www.wired.com/2013/12/join-them-in-building-the-shareable-cities-network/
9. https://multifamily.withairbnb.com/hoa/fair-home-sharing.html
10. https://legal.seoul.go.kr/legal/english/front/page/law.html?pAct=lawView&pPromNo=1191
11. https://www.slideshare.net/shareNL/amsterdam-actionplan-sharing-economy

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