



# The role of municipalities in non-profit sharing schemes

A study of how municipalities can contribute to the establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes

Master's Thesis for the Environment and Society  
Studies programme

Nijmegen School of Management  
Radboud University  
July 2020

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## **Colophon**

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**Submission date:** July 14 2020

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## **Preface**

This master's thesis has been written as part of the Master's programme Environment and Society Studies and specialisation Local Environmental Change and Sustainable Cities at Radboud University in Nijmegen, The Netherlands. The research was conducted from February to July 2020, as part of an internship at Centre for International Climate and Environmental Research (CICERO) in Oslo, Norway. During the research and writing of this master's thesis I've been lucky to have many interesting conversations and deepened my knowledge about local governance of sustainability, which was the reason I choose to study this master's programme in the first place. For this, I have a few people to thank.

First, I would like to thank my two supervisors for their insightful recommendations and guidance in both the research process and on the topics of sharing and local governance. I really appreciate all the time my supervisor at CICERO, Hege Westskog, put into giving invaluable feedback, as well as all the interesting conversations about municipalities' work on local sustainability we ended up having.

I would also like to thank all the participants in the interviews for taking the time to contribute to my research. Without your participation this research would not have been possible. I learnt a lot about the work on the sharing economy during the interviews and am very happy that actors from different sectors in the sharing economy were able to be part of the research.

I also want to thank my husband for supporting me in so many ways throughout this process and for always motivating me when the process got a bit tough. Finally, I want to thank my parents and sister for always supporting me and sharing my excitement.

I hope you will enjoy the reading,

Malin Whittaker

## Summary

Transition to sustainable consumption and production patterns is a key part of the work towards sustainable development. The sharing economy is emerging all over the world and is showing promising signs of contributing to sustainable consumption and production. However, sharing in modern cities is still a rather new concept and the way to best design sharing schemes is still unclear. Literature on this is largely characterised by two opposing views: those that advocate for-profit sharing schemes and those that argue that for-profit sharing is contradictory to sustainable consumption and production and therefore support non-profit sharing schemes. At the same time, for-profit sharing schemes find it easier to establish, operate in the long-term and expand than non-profit sharing schemes. This thesis bases its assumption on the understanding that non-profit sharing schemes can contribute to sustainable consumption and production. Therefore, it is assumed that more non-profit sharing schemes need to establish and their operations need to expand.

Municipalities are seen as important actors in the development of the sharing economy and sharing schemes. The aim of this thesis is to analyse how municipalities, as important actors, can contribute to the establishment, long-term operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes. This is done through a multiple-case study of the two Swedish municipalities Gothenburg and Karlstad. Through semi-structured interviews with non-profit sharing schemes, municipalities, municipal housing companies and local political parties and document analysis of municipal steering documents, this thesis aims to answer the following research question: *How can municipalities contribute to the establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes, and what enables the municipalities' contribution?*

The results show that non-profit sharing schemes mainly need material, human and financial resources in order to establish and operate in the long-term. Few non-profit sharing schemes have expanded which led to no clear findings on this. While municipalities engage in different kinds of measures when governing non-profit sharing scheme, the provision of premises and financial support were found to most likely contribute to the material, human and financial resources needed by the non-profit sharing schemes. However, these municipal measures are not implemented on a large scale, which may have implications for contribution to sustainable consumption and production on a societal scale. Finally, it was found that the political orientation in the municipality, motivations of civil servants, laws and societal trends function as enabling or impeding factors for the municipalities' work.

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# 1. Introduction to the research

## 1.1 Research problem statement

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Human activity is increasing carbon dioxide emissions and the use of natural resources, which is changing the planet's climate to an extent that threatens human wellbeing (IPCC, 2018). Change in our consumption and production patterns has been identified as an important measure for reducing emissions and resource-use in order to combat climate change. In 2015, United Nations introduced the Sustainable Development Goals, which are global goals that should guide member countries' work towards a sustainable future. One of these seventeen goals is "Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns". However, there is still a worldwide annual increase in material consumption, with an increase from 87 billion tons in 2015 to 92.1 billion tons in 2017, causing continued overuse of natural resources and emissions (United Nations, 2019).

The sharing economy has emerged in cities around the world in the last decade, and is attracting attention for its possibility to provide sustainable consumption and production through sharing, lending and borrowing, instead of consuming and producing new things (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). The sharing economy consists of a wide range of actors, with sharing schemes being initiated and operated by business actors (for-profit schemes), civil society actors (non-profit schemes) and governmental actors (for example libraries) (Schor, 2014). It is still unclear how the sharing economy can best contribute to sustainable consumption and production; however, two opposing views exist on this in the literature. Some argue that for-profit sharing schemes contribute to sustainable sharing by creating economic growth while also contributing to aspects of environmental and social sustainability. Others mean that for-profit sharing is contradictory to environmental and social sustainability. This is due to that the current unsustainable consumption and production system is driven by profit and has proven to neglect environmental and social issues in its profit-maximation. Advocates for this latter view argue that sharing practices should mainly be motivated by environmental and social concern, and not by profit, in order to become sustainable (Martin, 2016 and Martin & Budd, 2015). It is on this latter view that this thesis bases its assumptions.

Non-profit sharing schemes are in this context attracting attention in the literature. The initiators and users of non-profit sharing schemes are often motivated by environmental and social concern, and these sharing schemes are therefore seen as having potential to contribute to sustainable consumption and production. While for-profit sharing schemes like Airbnb and Uber have grown and expanded rather easily, these non-profit sharing schemes are still small-scale (Schor, 2014 and Frenken, 2017). However, in order to contribute to sustainable consumption and production patterns on a wider societal scale, the number of non-profit sharing schemes need to grow and their operation need to expand (Martin, 2016). Therefore, there is a need for more non-profit sharing schemes to establish, operate and expand.

Municipalities are considered to have a key role in the development of the sharing economy, not just as initiators of sharing schemes, but also for their potential to encourage or discourage sharing schemes. Municipalities have the potential to implement measures that encourage sharing schemes such as provision of finances and partnerships (Zvolska et al, 2018 and Vith et al, 2019). At the same time, municipalities' ability to implement sustainability measures is influenced by both internal and external circumstances, such as the municipal organisation and the beliefs of the general population (Westskog et al, 2018).

This thesis unites the need for more non-profit sharing schemes to establish, operate and expand in order to contribute to sustainable consumption and production, and municipalities' ability to encourage sharing schemes. The research problem in focus is whether municipalities can contribute to the establishment, long-term operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes. The cases investigated are the Swedish municipalities of Gothenburg and Karlstad, where several non-profit sharing schemes operate and the municipalities actively work on the sharing economy.

## **1.2 Scientific relevance**

The sharing economy has caused disruptions in cities all over the world (Vith et al, 2019). With business models different to conventional businesses, sharing schemes do not always fit into existing regulations on labour rights, tax payment and protection of users' privacy. Much research on local governance of the sharing economy is therefore on how municipalities can regulate these disruptions. Brail (2017) argues that it is part of the municipalities' role as protector of the public interest to regulate these disruptions, as they cause negative externalities. Ganapati & Reddick (2018) also mean that governments need to focus their regulation on challenges caused by the sharing economy, such as workers' rights, security and trust issues for users.

Several case studies show that municipalities' work on the sharing economy often focuses on regulating these disruptions. Zvolska et al (2018) found that local governments in Berlin and London mainly impose regulations that protect their citizens from negative disruptions, for example by ensuring health standards in food sharing. Mont et al (2019) show that Amsterdam focuses a lot of their work on regulating disruptions caused by for example Airbnb. In 2016, the European Union put forward an agenda on the sharing economy, where it provides policy recommendations for its member states. This agenda focuses to a great extent on how member states need to regulate disruptions like evasion of taxes and user protection (European Commission, 2016). Previous literature also indicates that regulative measures for disruptions can prevent the emergence of sharing schemes. There are therefore calls for a balance between encouraging the sharing economy and regulating its negative consequences (Brail, 2017 and Ganapati & Reddick, 2018).

A rather small body of literature has emerged on ways that municipalities can encourage sharing schemes. Municipalities can do this by taking on the role as regulator, provider, enabler or self-governor. The few existing case studies on municipal measures aimed to encourage sharing schemes show that municipalities occasionally implement these measures.

Both Berlin and London show examples of providing premises, while Amsterdam has initiated several collaborations (Zvolska et al, 2018 and Mont et al, 2019).

This thesis contributes to existing literature by focusing on the less researched area of municipal measures that encourage sharing schemes, and specifically non-profit sharing schemes. Previous literature identifies municipal roles and measures that encourage sharing schemes. This thesis goes beyond identifying municipal measures, and investigates what non-profit sharing schemes need to establish, operate and expand, and how the municipal measures that are implemented contribute to their establishment, operation and expansion. It also investigates factors that enable the implementation of these municipal measures. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no previous research exists on this.

### **1.3 Societal relevance**

The current consumption and production patterns are causing several externalities, such as emissions, overuse of natural resources and income inequalities (Hobson, 2013). At the same time, the sharing economy has the potential to contribute to more sustainable consumption and production patterns. Municipalities all over the world are responding to this by starting to put forward strategies and action plans for the sharing economy. In 2015, Amsterdam municipality implemented an action plan for the sharing economy and two years later the city of Guelph put forward a guide for municipalities in the work on the sharing economy (ShareNL, 2016 and City of Guelph, 2017). Another example is Oslo municipality, who recently put forward a strategy for sustainable consumption of which sharing is a part. The strategy states that Oslo municipality should facilitate for more sharing practices, promote sharing schemes and implement and strengthen systems for sharing. However, their work on sharing is at an early stage and no measures have yet been implemented (Oslo municipality, 2018).

While several municipalities are starting to implement strategies and action plans, much work on the sharing economy is in its infancy. At the same time, the majority of the work focuses on regulating disruptions. Research shows that municipalities often struggle to govern new working areas, as they have little experience in the field and few forerunning examples to follow (Westskog, 2018). The governing of non-profit sharing schemes can be identified as a new working area for municipalities. Therefore, there is a need for more research and examples of forerunners in order for municipalities to include effective measures for encouraging non-profit sharing schemes in their strategies and action plans.

### **1.4 Research aim and research question(s)**

#### **1.4.1 Aim**

The aim of this research is three-fold. First, it aims to fill a research gap on how municipalities can contribute to the establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes. In this way, this thesis also aims to contribute to the small body of literature that exists on encouraging measures for the sharing economy. Second, it aims to provide recommendations to Oslo municipality on how to encourage non-profit sharing schemes. Third, it aims to provide recommendations on this to municipalities outside of Scandinavia. The inclusion of factors that enable the municipalities of Gothenburg and Karlstad to implement these measures is motivated by the third research aim. The hope is that these

enabling factors will facilitate the application of the findings to contexts and institutional settings different to Scandinavia.

#### 1.4.2 Research question(s)

The main research question of this research is: *How can municipalities contribute to the establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes, and what enables the municipalities' contribution?*

Sub-questions:

- *What are important factors for establishing, operating and expanding non-profit sharing schemes?*
- *What measures that encourage non-profit sharing schemes are possible for the municipality to implement?*
- *What enables the municipalities to implement the measures that encourage non-profit sharing schemes?*

#### **1.5 Further reading guide**

The next chapter provides a discussion on previous literature on the sharing economy and focuses on three areas that are particularly important for this research. Chapter 2 also presents the theoretical framework. In chapter 3, the methodology and research steps of this research are shown. In chapter 4, the results are presented. Finally, in chapter 5, the results are discussed in relation to previous literature. In this last chapter the sub-questions and the main question are addressed in order to provide an answer to the research question.

## 2. Literature review and theoretical framework

This chapter describes previous literature on the sharing economy, and focuses on three areas that are central to this research. The section on *sustainable development and the sharing economy* addresses the sharing economy's potential to lead to sustainable development and motivates the focus of this research. This is followed by the section on *non-profit sharing schemes and the sharing economy*, which defines non-profit sharing schemes and discusses important factors for their establishment, operation and expansion. Finally, the section on *municipalities and the sharing economy* discusses the literature on municipal measures for the sharing economy, as well as factors that may either enable or impede municipalities' work on sustainability measures. However, before elaborating on these three focus areas, this chapter starts with a short discussion on the definition of 'sharing'.

### 2.1 Definition of sharing

The definition of the sharing economy in the literature is at times broad and at times specific, however, many of the specific definitions contradict one another. Plewnia & Guenther (2018) aim for a broad definition of the sharing economy, by conducting an extensive literature review on its definition. Their findings show that the sharing economy includes sharing of products, services, knowledge and workforce, occurs both for non-profit and for-profit and take place between individuals, businesses and governmental actors. Frenken and Schor (2016) argue that only goods with excess capacity can be shared. With excess capacity, they mean goods that are not used at all times and that can be used by someone else at times when the owner does not use them. They therefore define lending and renting as sharing, but not buying. They also exclude services from their definition of sharing, which Plewnia & Guenther (2018) found being part of the sharing economy. However, in a previous article Schor does include change of ownership and services in the definition of the sharing economy (Schor, 2014). The broad, and at times contradictory, definition of sharing makes it a complex research area. As will be elaborated on in the methodology chapter, this thesis defines sharing in line with the definition made by the researched cases, Gothenburg and Karlstad.

### 2.2 Sustainable development and the sharing economy

This section presents previous literature on the sharing economy's ability to contribute to sustainable development. The literature suggests that the sharing economy should be in line with *strong sustainable consumption*, *scale-up* and be aware of *the rebound effect* in order to contribute to sustainable development.

#### 2.2.1 Non-profit sharing schemes as strong sustainability

Sustainable development is commonly defined as the integration of environmental, social and economic sustainability, and is a lodestar in the work on environmental and socio-economic issues such as overuse of resources, poverty and income inequalities. Sustainable development is often portrayed as three overlapping circles that each represents environmental, social and economic sustainability and where the overlapping middle represents the coveted integrated solution of these three dimensions (Robinson, 2003). However, the concept of sustainable development is criticised for trying to integrate contradictory goals; for example, economic development leads to overuse of resources and emissions, while environmental sustainability demands the complete opposite, reduction in

resource-use and emissions (Ibid). The debate on sustainable development, and mainly the debate on environmental sustainability, is also characterised by a division between strong sustainability and weak sustainability. Advocates for strong sustainability argue that natural capital can not be substituted by man-made capital, while advocates for weak sustainability suggest the opposite and that natural capital can be substituted by man-made capital. An example of man-made capital is technological innovation. Supporters of strong sustainability therefore consider there to be limits to how much natural capital can be used, while supporters for weak sustainability tend to see no limits as humans can create capital to replace the lost natural capital. The contradictory nature of sustainable development is causing varying interpretations and responses to environmental and socio-economic problems (Dobson, 2007).

Current consumption and production patterns cause both environmental and socio-economic problems. There is an annual increase in material consumption that degrade natural resources and cause emissions, while also increasing the income gap between rich and poor (Hobson, 2013). In response to this, sustainable consumption and production patterns are now part of the United Nations' work towards sustainable development. Sustainable consumption and production patterns have been defined as: *“The use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of further generations”* (United Nations, 2020). This definition contains all three aspects of sustainable development; environmental concern in minimizing use of resources, toxic materials and emissions, and social and economic concern in providing for basic needs and better quality of life. Similar to the concept of sustainable development, sustainable consumption and production consist of contradicting goals. Increased material consumption creates better quality of life, while also degrading natural resources (United Nations, 2020). When it comes to environmental sustainability, there is also a divide between advocates for strong sustainable consumption and weak sustainable consumption. Advocates of strong sustainable consumption praise changed consumption and production behaviour based on reduced consumption and decommodification. This is due to the belief that increased consumption degrade irreplaceable natural resources. On the other side, advocates for weak sustainable consumption argue for continuation of the current consumption and production system based on economic growth, however with an inclusion of resource efficiency measures and technological innovations. They argue that resource efficiency and technological innovations, as man-made capital, can replace the degraded natural capital (Grabs et al, 2016, and Hobson, 2013).

The sharing economy is considered as part of the solution to more sustainable consumption and production patterns. Through sharing, lending, borrowing and redistributing, instead of consuming, the sharing economy has the potential to contribute to environmental sustainability through less production, and with that less resource-use and emissions. The sharing economy is also praised for its contribution to aspects of social sustainability, for example by inclusion of decision-making power in consumption and production practices and increased income equality. The sharing economy can also contribute to aspects of economic sustainability, by creating economic activity, new jobs and new business models (Vith et al, 2019 and Martin, 2016).

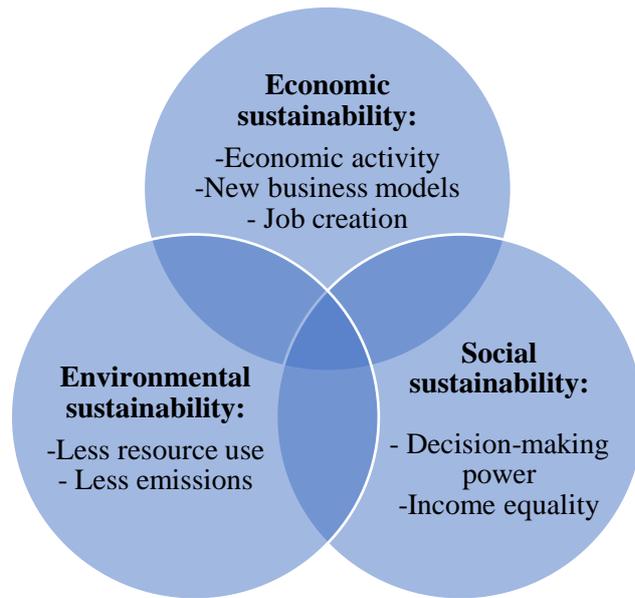


Figure 1. *The three parts of sustainable development; economic, environmental and social sustainability, and examples of ways the sharing economy could contribute to each of them.*

However, the sharing economy consists of similar contradictions as sustainable development and sustainable consumption and production. Some see the sharing economy as an opportunity for increased economic growth that will also contribute to aspects of environmental and social sustainability. Others mean that for the sharing economy to lead to environmental and social sustainability it needs to provide alternative consumption based on reduced consumption, and prioritise reduction of resource-use, emissions and income inequalities over economic growth. The latter argue that profit-driven sharing schemes may simply prioritise profit maximization over social and environmental concern, and with that conform their sharing practices to the current unsustainable consumption and production system. As the current consumption and production system is unsustainable, they argue that the sustainability potential for the sharing economy may get lost if it becomes too profit-oriented (Martin, 2016). An example is the profit-driven sharing scheme Airbnb, who's expansion all over the world has proven to create additional travel due to the priceworthy accommodation. However, as Airbnb is mainly driven by profit, they have not prioritised the environmental consequences of their expansion (Schor, 2014). Also, profit-driven sharing scheme Uber, along with Airbnb, have been criticised for evading tax regulations and workers' rights regulations, jeopardizing social sustainability (Martin, 2016). However, the means to the sustainable end for the sharing economy is still debated. The degree to which for-profit sharing schemes contribute to environmental and social sustainability demands more research (Schor, 2014). The debate is however characterized by the division of these two views; those that see for-profit sharing as a means to sustainable economic, social and environmental development, and those who argue that the fact that it is for-profit diminishes the potential for social and environmental sustainability (Martin, 2016). It is possible to see similarities between the critic of profit-driven sharing schemes and the idea of strong sustainable consumption, as both believe in the need for changed consumption behaviour based on values like reduced consumption and decommodification.

Non-profit sharing schemes have attracted attention due to the initiators of the sharing practices being motivated by social and environmental concern. Research has also found that users of non-profit sharing schemes are often motivated by environmental and social concern, and the hope for a different consumption and production system (Stark, 2017). It is shown that these bottom-up, voluntary initiatives contribute to aspects of social sustainability like increased income equality (Zvolska et al, 2018). Their contribution to environmental sustainability is still debated, but these non-profit sharing schemes are praised for providing an alternative consumption and production pattern, motivated by environmental and social concern instead of profit. Therefore, they are viewed to have the ability to provide sharing that contributes to environmental and social sustainability (Martin, 2016, and Frenken, 2017).

### 2.2.2 The need to scale-up

Another central theme in the literature on the sharing economy's potential for sustainable development is the need for sharing schemes to scale-up (Martin & Budd, 2015). Scaling-up can be defined as an increase in the number of sharing schemes or an expansion of existing sharing schemes, in number of users or to number of locations. This means that in order to contribute to sustainable consumption and production on a societal level, more non-profit sharing schemes need to establish, operate in the long-term and expand their operation (Seyfang, 2011).

The literature addresses non-profit sharing schemes in the context of social transition theory, with the non-profit sharing schemes being an example of a social innovation at niche level that need to diffuse into regime level in order to influence the consumption and production patterns (Martin & Budd, 2015). In the context of the multi-level perspective, the sharing economy niche's potential to expand depends on interactions and developments at regime and landscape level, in this context defined as for example the current consumption and production patterns and the prevailing beliefs in society (Geels, 2010). Non-profit, voluntary sharing schemes are often small-scale and find it difficult to expand or do not intend to. However, in order to truly change the current consumption and production patterns and contribute to sustainable development, the number of non-profit sharing schemes have to grow and their organisations need to expand (Martin and Budd, 2015). In this context, for-profit sharing schemes that are similar to conventional business models can more easily establish and expand and find little resistance at regime and landscape level due to their similarity to the current consumption and production patterns. As for-profit sharing schemes more easily expand, their impact could more easily be felt in society. Also, for-profit sharing schemes' willingness to increase profit may motivate them to expand, while non-profit sharing schemes that are motivated by environmental and social concern may be less likely to want to expand as they focus on the need of the local community (Frenken, 2017 and Martin and Budd, 2015).

### 2.2.3 Rebound effect

Another central issue that influences the extent the sharing economy can lead to sustainable development, and in particular less resource-use and emissions, is the rebound effect. The rebound effect occurs when the decrease of resource-use and emissions from efficiency measures are offset by increased use or consumption (Frenken, 2017). For example, energy efficiency technology in combustion engines leads to less petrol-use per kilometre, which in turn leads to less emissions per kilometre. The rebound effect occurs when the savings in

petrol use are offset by increased driving. The literature differentiates between direct and indirect rebound effect. Direct rebound effect takes place when efficiency measures reduce the cost of petrol which increases the demand for driving. Indirect rebound effect takes place when efficiency measures lead to cost-savings and with that enable consumers to spend the saved money on other things. When efficiency measures are implemented as environmental measures, the increased use of the thing or the saved money spent on other things can offset the environmental gains (Verboven & Vanherck, 2016).

In the sharing economy, both direct and indirect rebound effects can occur (Frenken, 2017). For example, car sharing may lower the cost of driving for users which make them drive even more, leading to direct rebound effect. Another example is users of tool libraries, who may save money on sharing tools instead of buying them and therefore end up spending money on other consumer goods. This would then lead to indirect rebound effect. Therefore, user behaviour is important for the sharing economy's ability to lead to sustainable development. Research finds that the many users of for-profit sharing schemes are motivated by economic gains, while many users of non-profit sharing schemes practice sharing due to a desire for environmental wellbeing and community (Stark, 2017). If users are motivated to share in order to contribute to less consumption, they might choose to not consume more and will therefore not cause the rebound effect. This could practically also imply users of for-profit sharing schemes; however, research finds that this is more likely to be the case for users of non-profit sharing schemes (Ibid).

### **2.3 Non-profit sharing schemes and the sharing economy**

This thesis is based on the assumption from previous literature that non-profit sharing schemes that prioritise social and environmental concern have good potential to become sustainable sharing. Therefore, it is assumed that the number of non-profit sharing schemes ought to grow and more of them need to expand. This section addresses non-profit sharing schemes and what they need to establish, operate and expand. Parts of this section will be used as theoretical framework, further elaborated on in the methodology chapter.

#### **2.3.1 Defining non-profit sharing schemes**

Non-profit sharing schemes are broadly defined in the literature, and vary from grassroots organisations to social movements, voluntary associations and cooperatives. The most prominent characteristic of non-profit sharing schemes in the literature is their sharing activities being motivated by social and environmental concern rather than profit. However, recurring descriptions of non-profit sharing schemes are also that they are bottom-up, operated on a voluntary basis and have inclusive decision-making (Martin and Budd, 2015 and Grabs et al, 2016). It is argued that non-profit sharing schemes offer alternative consumption and production that have the potential to create community, include marginalised people through low prices and reduce over-consumption (Ibid). Grabs et al (2016) mean that grassroots initiatives focus on decommodification and sufficiency and can therefore lead to sustainable consumption and production, were they to expand.

At the same time, research has found that non-profit sharing schemes at times do not intend to scale-up. These sharing schemes are motivated by the wellbeing of their community and may therefore simply focus on the community they are in (Martin and Budd, 2015). It has also been found that non-profit sharing schemes that expand often end up becoming profit-oriented. The current institutional setting is more accommodating to for-profit business

models. It is easier for them to accumulate essential resources such as early financial investments like venture capital (Ibid). Returning to the discussion on the multi-level perspective, this implies that the regime is currently more accommodating for for-profit sharing schemes than for non-profit sharing schemes. Therefore, the social and environmental motivations may mean non-profit sharing schemes will not survive, which pushes them towards for-profit models.

### 2.3.2. Important factors for establishment, operation and expansion

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, little research exists on what non-profit sharing schemes need to establish, operate and scale-up. Fjellander et al (2019) address important factors for operating successful sharing schemes, and analyse for-profit and non-profit sharing schemes simultaneously. From investigating ten sharing schemes in Sweden, they find that sharing schemes stress the importance of professional guidance. The sharing schemes struggle with issues like business development, applications for financial support and technological issues, and receiving professional support has facilitated their operation. Another central factor to the success of the sharing schemes is financial resources. For-profit sharing schemes find it easier to accumulate these, as they received venture capital and could use their income to develop their organisation. A few of the non-profit sharing schemes received project funding for limited time-periods but had to close when the funding stopped, while a few continued operating solely on voluntary basis. Other important factors are attracting volunteers, proper insurance possibilities and technology that can track the shared or rented products (Fjellander et al, 2019).

Grabs et al (2016) have identified factors that lead to successful grassroots initiatives for sustainable consumption. These grassroots initiatives are not solely on sharing. They define successful as completed creation, continued survival and potential to scale-up. These factors are motivations of the individuals who create and engage in the initiatives, organisational resources such as finances, workforce and infrastructure and skilled leadership that provide essential competences on how to develop grassroots initiatives, problem solving and awareness raising. In the same context, good relationships to other societal actors such as governments, funders and media are important in order to get access to important resources and competences. Finally, networking and having goals that are facilitated by the current institutional setting are of importance.

## **2.4 Municipalities and the sharing economy**

This section addresses municipalities' governance of the sharing economy as well as enabling factors for municipalities' work. Parts of this section will be used as theoretical framework, further elaborated on in the methodology chapter.

### 2.4.1 Municipalities as key actors

Local governments are considered key actors in the work on climate change mitigation. Many activities that cause emissions take place in cities and are therefore under the regulative control of municipalities. Examples of these are construction, energy use and transport. Municipalities have the ability to introduce measures like building codes or restrict creation of new parking places, which can influence whether construction and transport develop in a sustainable direction or not. Further, municipalities can implement measures that work as incentives for sustainable behaviour, such as fees and subsidises (Westskog et al, 2018).

Prominent measures that municipalities implement in the work for climate change mitigation are regulations and laws, provision of infrastructure and financial resources, information, education and awareness raising. They can also implement regulations within the municipal organisations, for example car-pools for employees (Bulkeley, 2010).

Municipalities are also highlighted as a central actor in the emergence of the sharing economy in cities (Frenken & Schor, 2016 and Vith et al, 2019). Zvolska et al (2018) found that municipalities implement similar measures when governing sharing schemes in cities as when governing climate change mitigation issues. They claim that municipalities have the potential to encourage or discourage sharing schemes in cities. The authors provide a conceptual framework on the roles that municipalities assume when governing sharing schemes, and measures they implement in these roles. The conceptual framework consists of four prominent roles: regulator, provider, enabler and self-governor. As regulator, local governments implement measures like laws, taxes and bans. As provider, they implement measures like financial support, or provide things to be shared as well as infrastructure. As enabler, they implement measures like promotion of sharing schemes and initiation of partnerships and networks. As self-governor, local governments share within the organisation in order to set a good example. Vith et al (2019) find similar measures in their research on local governance of sharing schemes. Prominent measures are regulation and enforcement of laws, promotion of sharing schemes, funding of sharing schemes, partnering with sharing schemes, informing about sharing schemes and provision of expert knowledge. Also, local governments provide sharing services and cooperate with other local governments. It is possible to see similarities between these municipal measures and the important factors for establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes, addressed in the section above, which indicate municipalities' ability to contribute to them.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, few case studies exist on how municipalities encourage sharing schemes. Much literature on governance of the sharing economy focuses on the need to regulate disruptions caused by the sharing economy in cities. The sharing economy is a new kind of consumption model, and does therefore not comply to existing regulations, which risks causing several side-effects. Some of the most common side-effects mentioned in the literature are unfair competition, exploitation of workers and safety and privacy issues for users (Vith et al, 2019, Brail, 2017 and Ganapati & Reddick, 2018).

Those case studies that do include encouraging measures analyse the municipal governance of for-profit and non-profit sharing schemes simultaneously. Zvolska et al (2018) test their conceptual model on local governments in Berlin and London. They find that these roles are assumed in both cities, with regulator being the most prominent. They have in this role implemented several regulations to prevent issues like market disruptions and unfair employment. The authors also find examples of the role of provider of infrastructure, such as parking places for shared cars in London, and provider of financial support to sharing schemes within funding programs that already support business start-ups and innovations. However, these examples of providing measures are rare (Zvolska et al, 2018). Mont et al (2019) apply the conceptual framework from Zvolska et al (2018) on the municipality's governance of both for-profit and non-profit sharing schemes in Amsterdam. They municipality of Amsterdam has regulated Airbnb in order to limit the number of days of rental, and therefore assumes the role of regulator. Amsterdam municipality has also implemented certain laws for parking for shared cars. They have also provided funding to

start-ups in the sharing economy as well as initiated workshops in order for sharing organisations to network and start collaborations. These measures are in line with the roles of provider and enabler.

Sulkakoski (2019) investigates how the municipalities of Gothenburg and Malmö govern urban sharing organisations while using the framework from Zvolska et al (2018). This paper covers both for-profit and non-profit sharing schemes. The findings show that the municipalities are mainly enabling by initiating partnerships and promoting sharing schemes on their website and through public lectures. While Malmö municipality is working actively to connect different stakeholders, Gothenburg municipality is also providing premises, funding and furniture to some sharing schemes. In contrast to Berlin and London, the municipalities of Gothenburg and Malmö do not regulate the sharing schemes to a great extent, as big for-profit sharing schemes like Airbnb and Uber are regulated by the Swedish national government.

#### 2.4.2 Enabling factors for municipalities' work on the sharing economy

While municipalities have been identified as important actors in the emergence of the sharing economy, municipalities' ability to implement sustainability measures are commonly dependent on internal and external factors. Westskog et al (2018) have identified a few prominent factors that have proved essential in the work on measures for climate change mitigation in Norwegian municipalities. These are material and human resources, level of institutionalisation, guidance and cooperation from the national state and regional offices, as well as support from politicians and the local population. The municipalities stress sufficient financial resources and competent personnel to work on climate change issues.

Institutionalisation implies that structures, habits and routines for climate work exist in the municipality, as this facilitates the work. At the same time, it is shown that these factors are interdependent. For example, the level of institutionalisation may influence the amount of material and human resources that are accessible. If working on climate change issues is part of the municipalities' structures, habits and routines, more material and human resources will be earmarked for this kind of work. In turn, lack of support from politicians and the local population can influence the level of institutionalisation. If the politicians do not support work on climate change mitigation, they might not make it part of the municipalities' structures, habits and routines. In that way, the political will can also influence whether material and human resources are earmarked for this work (Westskog et al, 2018).

Vith et al (2019) show that local governance of the sharing economy differs in cities around the world. The authors analyse the governance of the sharing economy in sixteen large cities around the world, and found that the measures that are implemented are determined by the cities' ethical standpoint. They found four prominent ethical standpoints that cities hold. The first one they call "societal endangerment", where cities are mainly concerned with protecting companies from unfair competition, employees from exploitation and consumers from privacy and safety issues. This is in line with the findings of Zvolska et al (2018) on Berlin and London. The second ethical standpoint they call "societal enhancement", where cities see the sharing economy as an opportunity for economic growth, job creation and social improvements, and also to some degree opportunities for less resource-use and emissions. The third ethical standpoint is "market disruption", where the cities see opportunities for economic activity, new business models and new innovations, but also market challenges like unfair competition, employee and consumer issues. And finally, the last ethical standpoint is called

“ecological transition”, where cities see the sharing economy as mainly an opportunity for less resource-use and emissions. The ethical standpoint of cities determines whether they implement measures that discourage or encourage the emergence of sharing schemes, or both. This can be related to Figure 1 and sustainable development, where city governments and the measures they implement could be determined by which type of sustainability they focus on.

## **2.5 Concluding remarks on previous literature**

This thesis unites the need for more non-profit sharing schemes to establish, operate and expand and the role of the municipality as an important actor in the emergence of sharing schemes. Previous literature has identified roles and measures that municipalities implement when governing sharing schemes, as well as important factors for the establishment, operation and expansion of sharing schemes and grassroot initiatives for sustainable consumption. However, this previous research is not focused specifically on non-profit sharing schemes. Further, previous literature does not investigate whether municipal measures can actually contribute to that which non-profit sharing schemes need to establish, operate and expand. This thesis aims to fill this research gap and identify whether municipalities are important actors for non-profit sharing schemes’ establishment, operation and expansion.

While previous literature indicate that non-profit sharing schemes can contribute to sustainable sharing, it also shows that many factors determine whether sharing becomes sustainable. The multi-level perspective portrays sharing schemes as a niche, whos’ expansion depends on trends at regime and landscape levels. These trends vary from infrastructure, political systems and belief systems. Therefore, non-profit sharing schemes’ ability to scale-up is dependent on many complex issues. This thesis aims to investigate one part of this complex puzzle, by analysing how municipalities as regime actors can contribute to the establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes, and what enables their contribution. However, in the work towards sustainable sharing it is important to recognise that many factors at regime and landscape level play a role. Even though many if these factors are outside the scope of this research, the findings will be discussion in relation to the multi-level perspective in the discussion and conclusion chapter. Another central issue addressed in the literature is the rebound effect. The consumption behaviour of users of sharing schemes determines whether sharing replaces mainstream consumption or becomes additional consumption. The behaviour of users is one of those trends that are outside the scope of this thesis, but in the work towards sustainable consumption, it is essential to recognise its importance.

This research will first investigate what non-profit sharing schemes need to establish, operate and expand will be investigated, defined as important factors for their establishment, operation and expansion. Thereafter, encouraging measures for non-profit sharing schemes that are possible for the municipalities of Gothenburg and Karlstad to implement will be investigated, as well as what factors enable the municipalities’ ability to implement these measures. Finally, these findings are brought together in order to answer the research question *“How can municipalities contribute to the establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes, and what enables the municipalities’ contribution?”*. The next chapter elaborates on how this research goes about, by presenting the methodology and research steps of this thesis.

### **3. Methodology**

This chapter presents the methodology of this research. It starts with a section on the research philosophy, followed by sections on research design, data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability of this research, and finally, ethical considerations.

#### **3.1 Research philosophy**

Research philosophy represents the assumptions of what reality and knowledge consist of. It therefore determines what is assumed to be possible to research and the methodological research steps that need to be taken to conduct the research. Research philosophy consists of ontological and epistemological considerations (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The ontology and epistemology of this research is therefore presented below.

##### **3.1.1 Ontology**

The ontology is the assumptions of what constitutes reality and the nature of that which constitutes reality. Two prominent ontological assumptions are objectivism and constructivism. Objectivism assumes there to be an external and observable reality, separate from human conception, while constructivism assumes reality to consist of human constructions that are always changing (Bryman, 2012). As the ontological choice determines what reality is, it also determines what is possible to research and how this can be researched, and setting the stage for suitable research questions, epistemological choices and methodological choices (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The ontology of this research is critical realism. This ontological view assumes there to be an objective reality that is observable; however, this reality is shaped by underlying structures and contexts that may not be fully observable. There may therefore be more to the objective reality than what is being observed. To fully understand reality, it is important to look for underlying factors that have shaped the objective reality (Saunders et al, 2016). How municipalities can contribute to the establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes is in this research assumed to be an objective reality, separate from human conception. However, the objective realities in Gothenburg and Karlstad are shaped by underlying factors. The enabling factors that will be investigated in this thesis can be seen as underlying causal factors. If any of these underlying factors or structures change, the objective reality can end up changing as well (Saunders et al, 2016). Therefore, if any of the enabling factors change in Gothenburg and Karlstad, the measures implemented by the municipalities may change. It is also essential to remain critical to the findings, as there may always be aspects of reality that is not being observed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

##### **3.1.2 Epistemology**

The epistemology addresses what knowledge is and the relationship between the researcher and that which is being researched (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The epistemology of this research is epistemological relativism. With an ontology that assumes an objective reality, this research assumes it to be possible to gain knowledge of an objective reality. However, according to epistemological relativism, knowledge of reality is constructed by the actors that live the reality and is therefore always specific to their context and circumstances. As actors

may miss certain aspects of reality, it is important to be critical and open to that there may be aspects of reality that is not observed. Therefore, it is important to aim for objectivity, which can be done by comparing the knowledge with previous knowledge in the same area and use several methods in order to see if similar results are found (Saunders et al, 2016). The same way as epistemological relativism assumes that knowledge of reality is influenced by the actors involved, the process of retrieving knowledge can be influenced by the researched. Therefore, as a researcher it is essential to be aware of biases and assumptions during the research process (Ibid).

### **3.2 Case study research design**

The research design that best facilitates the research of this thesis is multiple-case study design. Case study research design facilitates in-depth research, which enables extensive and thorough findings of the specific case. This research design is suitable for answering “how” and “why” questions, and with that include contextual factors, which is what this research aims to do. Multiple-case study design is also chosen as it provides extensive data, meaning that if two cases show similar findings, there is more data to support the findings (Yin, 2009).

#### **3.2.1 Case selection**

The multiple-case study consists of two cases; the Swedish municipalities of Gothenburg and Karlstad. The selection of cases is based on the research question and the research aim, and is therefore based on purposive sampling (Bryman, 2012). It is assumed that municipalities with experience in working with non-profit sharing schemes are best suited to answer the research question and therefore cases that work on these sharing schemes were selected. To answer the research question, non-profit sharing schemes are included as units of analysis and therefore the case selection is also based on cases where non-profit sharing schemes are operating.

A comparison of municipalities that work on non-profit sharing schemes with municipalities with greater focus on for-profit sharing schemes could potentially reveal factors that could be important in the municipalities’ contribution to non-profit sharing schemes. However, this research aims to investigate possible supportive measures for non-profit sharing schemes, and therefore assumes that municipalities with experience working on these can best answer the research question.

As the second research aim is to provide recommendations to Oslo municipality, cases with institutional settings similar to Norway were sought in order to facilitate application of the findings to Norwegian municipalities. Initially, Oslo was considered a case. However, from email communication with civil servants at Oslo municipality it was found that their work on the sharing economy is in its infancy, making this an unsuitable case (Oslo municipality, personal communication, December 9 2019). This does however reinforce the aim to provide recommendations to Oslo municipality.

Therefore, suitable cases in other Scandinavian countries were sought due to their similarities to the Norwegian institutional setting (Sellers and Lidström, 2007). Through internet search, literature review and contact with civil servants in municipalities, the Swedish municipalities of Gothenburg and Karlstad were selected. They are both working on the sharing economy at the municipal level, and are both either supporting or collaborating with non-profit sharing

schemes, to one degree or another. Also, several non-profit sharing schemes are operating in Gothenburg and Karlstad which offers the opportunity to include them as units of analysis. The Swedish municipalities of Malmö, Stockholm and Umeå are also working to a great extent on the sharing economy. They were however excluded from this research due to their focus being more on for-profit sharing schemes, difficulties finding non-profit sharing schemes in these cities and/or the municipalities working less on sharing than the two chosen cases (Sharing Cities Sweden, 2019, Sulkakoski, 2019 and Umeå municipality, personal communication, March 4 2020).

The selection is therefore based on literal replication, as the cases are chosen due to their similarities. These similarities are their work on the sharing economy and the presence of non-profit sharing schemes in these cities. It is therefore expected that these two cases will provide similar results. The multiple-case study has an embedded case study design, meaning that several units of analysis are included (Yin, 2009). The embedded case study design is chosen as it is assumed to be inadequate to analyse solely the municipality's work on sharing. Other actors that are involved in the work with non-profit sharing schemes are also included, and these are further discussed below in the section "Units of analysis".

### 3.2.2 Case description

This section describes a few features that are central to the municipality's work on the sharing economy in both Gothenburg and Karlstad. These features are the *Swedish decentralised political system, local politicians who steer the municipality, municipal housing companies, association support* and *Sharing Cities Sweden*. A description of these features is provided in order to facilitate understanding in the results chapter and discussion chapter, as some of them are unique to Swedish municipalities.

#### 3.2.2.1 Swedish municipalities – common features for Gothenburg and Karlstad

Scandinavian countries have *decentralised political systems*, where municipalities have political and administrative responsibility for several national goals. This means that Swedish municipalities have quite a few resources at their disposal and considerable political independence in their decision-making (Granberg and Elander, 2007). Swedish municipalities are responsible for obligatory tasks such as education, health care, housing, waste management and public transportation (SKR, 2020). Apart from the municipal obligatory tasks, many Swedish municipalities engage in voluntary tasks such as climate change mitigation and culture. These voluntary tasks are called "strategic work". For both Gothenburg and Karlstad, the work on the sharing economy falls into strategic work (Karlstad municipality, personal communication, 21-04-2020 and Gothenburg municipality, personal communication, 31-03-2020).

Swedish municipalities are governed by elected *local politicians*. The politicians who steer the municipality make up the town council, called "Kommunfullmäktige". The town council have decision-making power regarding the municipal budget and the orientation of the municipalities' strategic work. The budget and political orientation is presented in the municipalities' steering document, which guides the work of the municipal civil servants (SKR, 2020).

Another common feature of the Swedish municipal organisation is *municipal housing companies*. These companies are owned by the municipality and manage approximately half of the rental housing in Sweden. With about a third of Sweden's population living in rental housing, these municipal housing companies manage a great extent of housing in Sweden. The municipal housing companies are commissioned to provide inclusive housing for people with various income and backgrounds. They are also supposed to contribute to societal goals such as environmental and social issues. The municipal housing companies need to be based on market principles, in order to not compete with private housing companies (Allmännyttan, 2020). Gothenburg, as Sweden's second largest city with 570 000 inhabitants, has eight municipal housing companies while Karlstad, as Sweden's twentieth largest city with 93 000 inhabitants, has one municipal housing company (Göteborgs stad, 2020 and Karlstad kommun, 2020).

Another central feature of Swedish municipalities is *association support*. Association support is financial support provided to non-profit associations. This funding is often provided on an annual basis, but the aim is often to keep the funding going in long-term basis. However, in order to receive this support, organisations have to live up to certain criteria. Even though the criteria vary a bit in different municipalities, association support is often earmarked for non-profit associations working on activities for children, youth, disabled and elderly people (Göteborgs Stad, 2020 and Karlstad kommun, 2020).

Finally, both Gothenburg municipality and Karlstad municipality are part of the national program *Sharing Cities Sweden*. This program is funded by the state agencies Vinnova, Formas and the Swedish Energy Agency. The aim of this program is to develop test-beds for the sharing economy and promote cooperation in the work on sharing. While the funding goes to several partners in each city, both Gothenburg municipality and Karlstad municipality receive funding to work on the sharing economy through Sharing Cities Sweden (Sharing Cities Sweden, 2020).

### 3.2.3 Units of analysis

Units of analysis are the entities within the case that are studied, and are selected as they will likely provide answers to the research question (Yin, 2009). The units of analysis in both Gothenburg and Karlstad are non-profit sharing schemes, the municipalities, municipal housing companies and local political parties. The non-profit sharing schemes are assumed to provide answers to the sub question "*What are important factors for establishing, operating and expanding non-profit sharing schemes?*" while the municipalities, municipal housing companies and political parties are assumed to provide answers to the sub questions "*What measures that encourage non-profit sharing schemes are possible for the municipality to implement?*" and "*What enables municipalities to implement the measures that encourage non-profit sharing schemes?*".

The units of analysis were mainly selected through purposive sampling and to some degree snowball sampling (Bryman, 2012). As mentioned above, the sharing economy have many varying definitions and this thesis defines sharing in line with the definitions made by Gothenburg and Karlstad municipalities. Both Gothenburg and Karlstad municipalities have mapped all sharing schemes in their cities on an online platform called The Smart Map

(Kollaborativ Ekonomi Göteborg & Göteborg kommun, 2020). Therefore, it was assumed that all sharing schemes on The Smart Map are defined as sharing by these two municipalities. The Smart Map was used as a basis for the selection of non-profit sharing schemes, where all sharing schemes that operate on a non-profit basis were contacted. These were therefore selected through purposive sampling. Four non-profit sharing schemes from Gothenburg and three non-profit sharing schemes from Karlstad were willing to participate in the research. The municipalities were also selected through purposive sampling, and this selection was based on their experience working on the sharing economy.

In the interviews with the non-profit sharing schemes and the municipalities, it was found that municipal housing companies and local political parties appeared to be important actors in determining the extent of which municipalities can contribute to non-profit sharing schemes. Therefore, through snowball sampling, these actors were included based on recommendations from the initial interviews (Bryman, 2012).

Due to limitations, only a few of the eight municipal housing companies in Gothenburg were contacted. This selection therefore differed from that of the other units of analysis, and was based on random sampling (Bryman, 2012). Three in Gothenburg and the one in Karlstad were willing to participate in the research. Two political parties from each case was selected through purposive sampling that was based on that the political parties consider themselves as green, with one of them being in government and one in opposition.

### **3.3 Data collection**

This section addresses the selected research methods semi-structured interviews and document analysis, as well as the operationalisation of the theoretical framework that will guide the data collection. Qualitative research methods are selected due to the opportunity to do in-depth research. Triangulation means that more than one research method is used, which is considered to provide stronger proof of the findings. If several methods lead to the same findings, there is stronger proof (Bryman, 2012). The epistemological assumption of this research calls for the researcher to be critical and objective in their search for knowledge, and means that using several methods is a way of doing this (Saunders et al, 2016). This motivates the use of more than one research method.

#### **3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews**

This section describes the semi-structured interviews and the selection of the interviewees from each unit of analysis: non-profit sharing schemes, municipalities, municipal housing companies and local political parties.

##### **3.3.1.1 Non-profit sharing schemes**

Actors that operate or have previously operated the non-profit sharing schemes were invited for interviews. The sampling was therefore purposive (Bryman, 2012). In total, twelve actors from seven non-profit sharing schemes participated with at least one actor from each sharing scheme. Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted. One of the interviews had two participants., while one participant replied to questions on email. This interview was therefore conducted in a more structured way (Ibid). The majority of the interviews lasted for 50

minutes, with a few of them lasting for 30 minutes and one for 75 minutes. All interviews were conducted over the phone due to travel restrictions, and were recorded.

#### 3.3.1.2 Municipalities

Civil servants working on the sharing economy were invited for interviews from both municipalities. This sampling was therefore also purposive (Bryman, 2012). In each municipality, two civil servants work on these questions and were both invited for interviews, however, one civil servant from each municipality had the possibility to participate. Therefore, two interviews were conducted with civil servants working on the sharing economy in the municipalities, one from Gothenburg municipality and one from Karlstad municipality. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted for 50 minutes. All interviews were conducted over the phone due to travel restrictions, and were recorded.

#### 3.3.1.3 Municipal housing companies

Four interviews were conducted with employees at municipal housing companies, one from each participating company. Their position within the municipal housing association varied from environmental controller to sustainability and quality manager, accommodation developer and management developer. The municipal housing companies decided who was going to be interviewed based on their knowledge. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted for 20-30 minutes. All interviews were conducted over the phone due to travel restrictions, and were recorded.

#### 3.3.1.4 Local political parties

Five interviews were conducted with four local political parties. Two persons were interviewed from one local political party, due to the fact that one person was not certain they could give a complete answer. Their positions within the local political parties varied from leader of the party to politician and political secretary. The local political parties decided who was going to be interviewed based on their knowledge. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted for 40-50 minutes. All interviews were conducted over the phone due to travel restrictions, and were recorded.

#### 3.3.4 Document analysis

Document analysis was conducted on the steering documents in both municipalities, as well as on the proposed steering document by the opposition in Gothenburg. This was done in advance of the interviews with the municipalities, municipal housing companies and local political parties in order to prepare interview questions. The document analysis was also conducted after the interviews, in order to collect more data and use triangulation.

Table 1. *Documents in the document analysis*

Name of document	Description of document
Budget 2020 för Göteborgs Stad (Moderaterna, Liberalerna, Centerpartiet och Kristdemokraterna)	Steering document of Gothenburg municipality for 2020
Budget 2020 för Göteborgs Stad (Vänsterpartiet, Miljöpartiet och Feministiskt Initiativ)	Proposed steering document for Gothenburg municipality by the opposition
Strategisk plan – en del av styrmodellen	Steering document for Karlstad municipality

### 3.3.5 Operationalisation

In order to answer the main research question: “*How can municipalities contribute to the establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes, and what enables the municipalities’ contribution?*” the data collection aims to answer a few sub-questions. For each sub-question, a few indicators are developed. These indicators guide the data collection in the document analysis and the semi-structured interviews. As these indicators are developed from the sub-questions and not from existing theories, this research is mainly inductive rather than deductive (Bryman, 2012). In order to facilitate the data collection a few sensitizing concepts are developed to provide a general direction of the research. These sensitizing concepts are developed from previous literature, presented in the literature chapter. While the data collection is mainly inductive and open to alternative explanations outside the previous literature, these sensitizing concepts provide some kind of framework (Ibid).

In Table 2, the operationalised theoretical framework is presented. Each row shows a sub-question, the operationalised indicators for that sub-question and the sensitizing concepts from previous literature that guide the data collection. The operationalised sensitizing concepts are concepts that are assumed to be applicable to the governance of non-profit sharing schemes. For example, the role of self-governor identified by Zvolska et al (2018) has been excluded as the municipal measures in that role are assumed to not contribute to the encouragement of non-profit sharing scheme, but rather to sharing practices within the municipal organisation.

Saunders et al (2016) argue that an inductive approach leaves more room for alternative explanations than a deductive approach, which limits the analysis to already determined theoretical concepts. Governance of the sharing economy is a rather new research area and few theoretical frameworks exist on the municipalities’ governance of sharing. The same goes for research on enabling factors for municipalities’ work on sharing and research on important factors for non-profit sharing scheme. For example, previous literature addresses enabling factors for municipalities work on climate change issues and not specifically on the sharing economy. Therefore, this thesis seeks to not limit the analysis to the few existing theoretical frameworks, but instead ask open-ended questions that may lead to answers outside of the existing theoretical frameworks

Table 2. Operationalisation of the theoretical framework

Sub-question	Indicators	Sensitizing concepts from previous literature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are important factors for establishing, operating and expanding non-profit sharing schemes?</li> </ul>	<p>Important factors</p> <p>Challenges</p>	<p>Resources (funding, infrastructure, volunteers)</p> <p>Cooperation with other societal actors: for resources and competence</p> <p>Professional advice and guidance</p> <p>Accommodating institutional setting</p> <p>Individual motivations</p> <p>Access to useful technology</p> <p><i>Source:</i> Fjellander et al, 2019, and Grabs et al, 2016</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What measures that encourage non-profit sharing schemes are possible for the municipality to implement?</li> </ul>	<p>Measures on the sharing economy</p> <p>Measures on non-profit sharing schemes</p>	<p>Regulative measures: laws, taxes and bans</p> <p>Providing measures: financial support, provision of things and infrastructure,</p> <p>Enabling measures: promotion, expert knowledge and initiation of partnerships and networks</p> <p><i>Source:</i> Zvolska et al, 2018, and Vith et al, 2019</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What enables municipalities to implement the measures that encourage non-profit sharing schemes?</li> </ul>	<p>Enabling factors for measures on non-profit sharing schemes</p> <p>Impeding factors for measures on non-profit sharing schemes</p>	<p>Material and human resources</p> <p>Level of institutionalisation,</p> <p>Guidance and cooperation with national state and regional offices</p> <p>Political will</p> <p>Support from local population,</p> <p>Municipality's ethical standpoint (societal endangerment, societal enhancement, market disruption, ecological transition)</p> <p><i>Source:</i> Westskog et al, 2018 and Vith et al, 2019</p>

Below, Figure 2 shows each step of the data collection process. First, non-profit sharing schemes were interviewed, followed by the municipalities and the municipal housing companies, and finally the local political parties. Document analysis was conducted prior to the interviews with the municipalities in order to prepare interview questions. As Figure 2 indicates, document analysis was also conducted after the interviews in order to collect more data. At this step, the codes and themes developed in the semi-structured interviews were used in order to collect more data. Even though the research is mainly inductive, the last step of the document analysis has therefore more of a deductive approach.

Figure 2 also shows the main questions that were posed during the interviews for each unit of analysis. These questions were developed from the indicators in the second column in Table 2. These questions indicate the inductive approach as they have an open-ended nature. However, in the interviews with the municipalities, municipal housing companies and local political parties, the question on whether “the municipality can contribute to those factors that are important for non-profit sharing schemes' establishment, long-term operation and expansion” was posed. These factors were also found as codes and themes during the interviews with the non-profit sharing schemes, and are therefore used as more deductive concepts in the interviews with the municipalities, municipal housing companies and political parties.

Finally, there were some difficulties in booking interviews with all non-profit sharing schemes in advance of the other interviews. Therefore, eight out of twelve interviews with the non-profit sharing schemes took place in advance of the interview with the municipality. However, it was assumed that this provided enough data to develop codes and themes on the important factors for non-profit sharing schemes' establishment, long-term operation and expansion, which were used in the interviews with the municipalities, municipal housing companies and political parties.

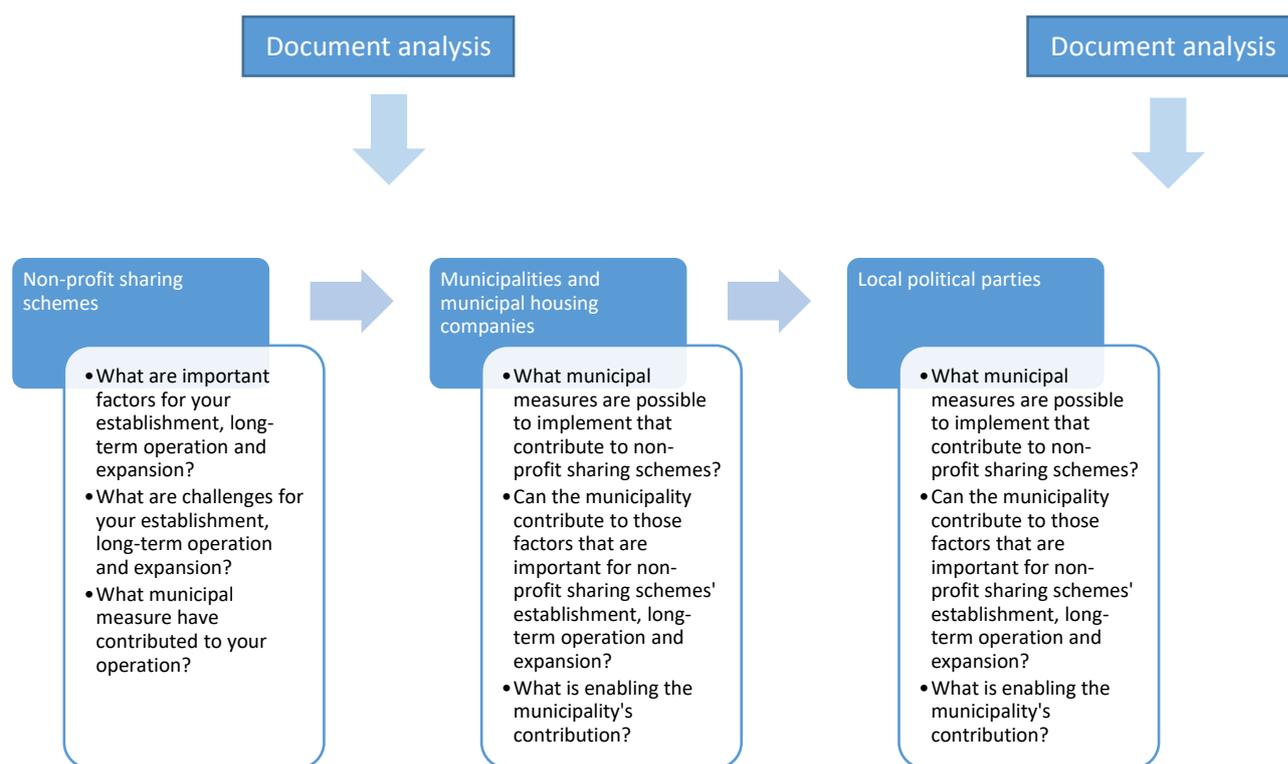


Figure 2. *The data collection process*

### 3.4 Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed, analysed and coded in Nvivo. The operationalised indicators and the sensitizing concepts shown in Table 2 guided the coding. Therefore, also the analysis has an inductive approach. All text units that were in line with the indicators were coded. In a deductive approach, all text units that correspond to the operationalised theory is coded (Bryman, 2012), but as this has an inductive approach all text units that were in line with the indicators operationalised from the sub-questions were coded. Finally, all codes were compared in order to find themes in the findings. The most prominent codes were identified as important factors for non-profit sharing schemes, possible encouraging measures for municipalities and enabling factors for the municipalities' work.

### 3.5 Validity and reliability

In case study research, it is important to take into account internal, external and construct validity. Internal validity addresses whether causal relationships in research findings are accurate, or if there are alternative explanations to the findings (Yin, 2009). This research uses two research methods, and with that triangulation, in order to maintain internal validity. If more than one research method leads to similar findings on causal relationships, there is more evidence to its accuracy. The findings will also be discussed in relation to previous literature. If the findings are similar to previous research, this can also strengthen the internal validity. External validity is about whether the findings can be generalised to other cases, or whether they can only be applied to one case (Ibid). Case studies are commonly criticised for their findings being specific to that very case and difficult to generalise to other settings (Harrison et al, 2017). Multiple-case study design is used in order to strengthen external validity. If similar findings are found in both cases, this indicates that the findings can be applicable to

several cases (Yin, 2009). However, political systems function differently in different countries and that which is applicable to Swedish municipalities may not be applicable to municipalities in other countries. As one research aim is to provide recommendations to Oslo municipality, the findings in the Swedish municipalities are assumed to be applicable to Norwegian municipalities due to the similar political systems in the two Scandinavian countries. Application to municipalities in other countries is hoped to be facilitated by identifying what enables the Swedish municipalities to implement the measures.

Construct validity addresses the extent that the researcher's operationalised measures actually measure that which it is supposed to (Yin, 2009). This research is supposed to measure important factors for non-profit sharing schemes, possible encouraging municipal measures and what enables their work. Also construct validity can be met by using several research methods (Ibid). This is done through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Reliability addresses the question of whether the research can be replicated, and if so, does it lead to similar findings (Ibid). This thesis aims to strengthen the reliability by documenting the research steps as clearly as possible in the methodology chapter.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

Bryman (2012) addresses a few ethical aspects that should be considered during the research process. These are "harm to participants", "lack of informed consent", "invasion of privacy" and "deception". This research has not caused harm to the participants. One central issue regarding potential harm to participants is maintaining confidentiality. The participants were informed beforehand about all recordings being kept confidential. The anonymity of participants in this research is safeguarded in several ways. The location of the non-profit sharing schemes, the name of the civil servants, the name of the municipal housing companies and the name of the local political parties are not mentioned in order to keep the participants anonymous. In those cases when it could be possible to identify the participants, the participant has been offered the opportunity to approve the content where they have been quoted.

Before the interviews, all participants received an information sheet on email where they could find all necessary information about the interview. Before recording the interviews, all participants were asked for consent to record. In these ways, this thesis has aimed to safeguard informed consent. Invasion of privacy did not occur during the research. The questions did mainly address their experiences in relation to their occupation, and did not address privacy sensitive issues like for example religion. As the participants were informed beforehand about the general content of the interviews, they were likely aware of the content of the interviews as well. The final ethical aspects addressed by Bryman (2012) is deception. Again, the researcher aimed to clearly inform the participants about the content of the interview and the thesis in the information sheet that was sent out.

## 4. Results

This chapter presents the findings from the semi-structured interviews and the document analysis. The first section of this chapter presents the findings on important factors for establishing, operating and expanding non-profit sharing schemes. The second section presents the findings on the most prominent encouraging measures that were addressed by the municipalities. Each municipal measure is presented in its own section, along with the enabling factors for that specific measure.

### 4.1 Establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes

This section presents the findings on establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes, in order to answer the first sub-question. The section starts with a description of the seven non-profit sharing schemes, followed by the findings.

#### 4.1.1. Description of non-profit sharing schemes

- *Toy library*: This non-profit sharing scheme lends toys to members. They have three paid employees and finance their operation by project funding and membership fees.
- *Car cooperative*: This cooperative offer car sharing. Three board members operate the cooperative and are paid for their work of approximately four to five hours per months. The cooperative is financed with membership fees.
- *Store for free exchange of things*: This non-profit sharing scheme offers free drop-off and/or collection of things. They are open two hours per week, and is operated on voluntary basis. They are not financed.
- *Lender of sports equipment*: This sharing scheme lends donated second-hand sports- and outdoor equipment and is part of a nationwide association who operates in several cities in Sweden. The operation is similar to that of a franchise. This sharing scheme started out as a non-profit sharing scheme, which motivates their inclusion in this research. However, since 2019 they are operated by the municipality. From the very start, the sharing scheme has been funded by the municipality.
- *Lender of cultural equipment*: This sharing scheme lends donated and currently used cultural equipment to cultural actors. They mainly operate on a voluntary basis, but have one part-time employee of 20 %. They are funded by project funding.
- *Makerspace*: This makerspace offers access to shared machines and tools for their members. They are operated by the members with a board consisting of six persons, all on voluntary basis. They are financed by membership fees.
- *Sewing atelier*: This sewing atelier offers sewing machines to their visitors, and has as their aim to make used garments into something new. They operate on a voluntary basis and are not financed.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Establishment and long-term operation

##### 4.1.2.1 Premises

Several non-profit sharing schemes consider access to premises essential to their establishment and long-term operation. Many of the non-profit sharing schemes are premises-

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<sup>1</sup> The location of the non-profit sharing schemes is not mentioned in order to keep them anonymous.

dependent as they lend or share actual things, and therefore need a physical place where these things are stored and collected. Similar goes for the makerspace and the sewing atelier, which both need premises for their equipment and where people can come to use it.

*“Well, one factor is that, well we are rather premises-dependent, so that is an important factor, that we could get access to premises and had money to pay rent, because we have a lot of stuff. So that is probably the most crucial thing, I would say.”* – Lender of cultural equipment

*“(…) it was really good that we had these premises from the very start of the project, because it is, well, the foundation you could say, this is not an internet-based service.”* – Toy library

While a few non-profit sharing schemes started to develop their organization prior to having access to premises, the majority of the non-profit sharing schemes could not operate the actual sharing and lending until they had a physical location. The lender of cultural equipment considered being solely an internet-based platform where cultural actors could share equipment with each other. This could practically function so that the cultural actors organize the storing and collecting between themselves. However, the lender of cultural equipment realized that it is important that they themselves provide the premises and the time for storing and collecting the equipment.

*“You could say that the original idea was to develop a platform where cultural actors could share their things, but we have been in contact with both small and big cultural actors and asked them about this, and they were like, they thought it would be difficult for them to find time to potentially reply to requests, give away things, retrieve things and so on”.* – Lender of cultural equipment

In order to keep their premises long-term, the non-profit sharing schemes stress the need to finance the premises. The toy library and the lender of cultural equipment are funded with project funding, which covers rent and salaries. Project funding is time-limited funding and earmarked for assisting the establishment of the non-profit sharing scheme, and help them develop self-sustaining operation models. The toy library is funded by the municipality, within the national program Sharing Cities Sweden, and through a national government fund for non-profit associations. However, the toy library is struggling with how to finance their operation in the long-term.

*“So that is a great worry for us, because we have project funding for one more year, but after that we need to keep afloat without project funding.”* – Toy library

The lender of cultural equipment is funded through the region, also for a limited time-period. For the future, the lender of cultural equipment hopes that the region or the municipality will consider their operation beneficial to society and culture and therefore provide them with long-term funding. The toy library has looked into potential long-term funding, but mean that their operation does not fit any available long-term funding from the municipality or region.

The store for free exchange of things is granted premises free of charge by a municipal housing company. They share these premises with another sharing scheme that was initiated and operated by the municipality, however, this sharing scheme recently got cancelled and the

store for free exchange of things soon has to start paying rent for their premises. They have not yet figured out how to do this, but are considering applying for funding from the same national government fund as the toy library. The sewing atelier is granted premises free of charge from The Church of Sweden and was previously granted premises free of charge in a second-hand store.

The makerspace and the car cooperative both finance their premises with membership fees. For this to work in the long-term, there is a need for constant in-flow of members that pay membership fees, however, neither of them considers this a major problem. The car cooperative was established in 1999 and has rarely had any problems with financing their operation. For the makerspace, external funding has never been considered a long-term solution but is rather viewed as something that could jeopardize their continued operation.

*“One keystone in (this makerspace) is that we should remain independent, we should be economically independent. What do you call it, yeah but we should not be dependent on receiving cash from an external actor, and if we don’t receive it the operation is over. That is a strategy of ours.”* – Makerspace

While they have occasionally been sponsored, they describe this as “the icing of the cake” and amounts that would not determine their continued survival if it got taken away.

Both the toy library and the lender of cultural equipment charge membership fees, but not large enough sums to finance their premises. Neither of them finds raising the membership fee suitable as that would mean too high cost for their members to pay for the sharing service they provide. The makerspace charges a higher membership fee, and the ability to finance premises with membership fees may therefore depend on the sharing service you provide and what is a reasonable membership fee to charge.

Being located in premises that suit their needs and that are located in convenient locations to their users is another important factor for the non-profit sharing schemes. The makerspace needs premises that offer space for all their machines and tools, and find their specific needs a challenge when looking for premises. Same goes for the lender of cultural equipment, who is currently located on the second floor of a building without elevator, which is not very suitable for heavy equipment coming in and out on a regular basis. With more and more things being donated, they are also in need of bigger premises that fit all the things. To find these kinds of premises in a suitable location for their membership base has been a challenge.

*“We can’t be located too far away from our membership base, I mean it wouldn’t work for us to have premises in an outskirts municipality or similar, that would make it difficult for the public and our members to get to us, and that would, then probably the whole operation would implode.”* – Makerspace

*“(…) we need to be located in an accessible area, both for vehicles but mostly for access to public transport, many of our members are often small cultural actors that rarely have access to a car.”* – Lender of cultural equipment

#### 4.1.2.2 Workers and volunteers

Several non-profit sharing schemes find committed volunteers or the ability to finance employees' salaries important for establishing and operating their non-profit sharing scheme. Also, the amount of time spent on the operation determines the quality of the scheme and therefore a few non-profit sharing schemes stress the importance of the number of hours put into the work.

The lender of sports equipment and the toy library are operated by employed workers. Since the very start, the municipality is financing salaries for the lender of sports equipment and as a sharing scheme with staffed opening hours the presence of workers is essential. The financial support for covering rent and salaries from the municipality is something they therefore highlight as important for their long-term operation.

*"I mean, it's a security to have the support of the municipality."* - Lender of sport equipment

The toy library finances salaries with project funding, which as previously mentioned is time-limited. They are now trying to figure out how to continue the operation long-term. Occasionally volunteers come to help, and they are now considering that the operation would solely rely on volunteers.

*"It's also for the survival, that we have a few people that come (to volunteer), at the moment we are not sure how we will run this in the future, but if we can't receive enough funding for salaries, then it is all dependent on people coming here to volunteer."* – Toy library

The toy library finds it important to operate the sharing scheme on a full-time basis in order to be able to provide the quality and service they envision for the sharing scheme. However, getting committed volunteers who put enough time on the operation has proved to be a challenge. In order to operate the sharing scheme, the way they want to, the toy library is dependent on consistent work from volunteers or employees.

The lender of cultural equipment has developed their sharing scheme during two years time, and is now about to start the operation. For them, the fact that most work was done on a voluntary basis meant that the development work took quite some time.

*"It has only been possible for one or two persons to get paid for the work during certain periods, so we have worked on a voluntary basis whenever we have had time for it, and it just had to take the time it takes when you are not able to work on it 100 %."* – Lender of cultural equipment

For the sewing atelier, the most important factor for their establishment and long-term operation is the commitment of those who engage in the sharing scheme. The sewing atelier has become a meeting place for people that may not have any other occupation, and a place for community and learning Swedish. It is run by one person on voluntary basis. On the question of what has been most important for the, the sewing atelier answered:

*"Love, nothing more (...) I want to do something for the society that has done so much for me, and still does."* – Sewing atelier

The car cooperative also highlights commitment from those involved as important for operating their sharing service.

*“It takes engagement, you need to think, you need to be able to calculate, and you must think about how to rationalise.”* – Car cooperative

#### 4.1.2.3 Things to be lent or shared

Several non-profit sharing schemes mention availability of things to share and lend as important factors for establishing and operating the sharing scheme. The lender of sports equipment, which bases their operation on lending out second-hand sports gear, is dependent on donations.

*“If we don’t receive any donations, I mean that is the most important, if we don’t have any things (to lend) we can’t run the operation, in that case we don’t need salaries or anything.”*  
– Lender of sports equipment

The lender of sports equipment does not lack donations. Within their premises they store 3 400 items, but have during their few years in operation received between 15 000- 16 000 items which have been transferred to their sister-organisations in other municipalities. In order to facilitate all donations, they are about to move to premises twice the size of the current ones. The lender of cultural equipment is also almost outgrowing their premises due to the number of donations they receive from businesses, institutions and individuals. For them, the availability of equipment was an important factor for establishing the sharing scheme.

*“That is kind of the reason we started this, that we in contact with institutions in other contexts have heard that they have some issue with these questions, that there is no good system for how they can make sure the things they don’t use any longer get used again.”*  
– Lender of cultural equipment

According to the lender of cultural equipment, there are strong incentives for cultural actors to donate and share their equipment. Many of the big cultural institutions are operated by the region and are supposed to “contribute to the free cultural life”. Donating their unused equipment is for several cultural institutions a way to do this. At the same time, there is a wide understanding for the need for cultural equipment for small cultural actors, as many employees at bigger cultural institutions started out as small, independent actors and therefore find it meaningful to donate.

The toy library, on the other hand, buys most of the toys and therefore need to finance this somehow. At the moment, these are also financed by time-limited project funding. They have received a few donations, but the quality has not always been the best. For the car cooperative, access to leased cars was an important factor for the establishment.

*“There was a lot of talk about car cooperatives back then, which made some of the big sellers of cars interested in leasing their cars to us. This gave us the opportunity to lease without a deposit, and we leased the cars with guaranteed second hand value. The leasing cost got a bit higher, but it was a safe economic settlement for us.”* – Car cooperative

#### 4.1.2.4 Continued user base

The makerspace and the car cooperative stress the importance of a continued user base, as they finance their operation with membership fees. If the number of members would suddenly drop, their operation is at risk.

*“There are several challenges for the survival of this operation. One is the economic bit, we need to pay rent, we need to be able to cover our expenses, that is a fundamental prerequisite for continued existence, and in order to do that we need the right number of members as that covers our costs.”* – Makerspace

The car cooperative had from the very start a stable income from users, as the employees of a municipal housing company used the cars during working hours. This provided them with a stable economic foundation for many years.

*“The support (from the municipal housing company), that is probably the explanation to the long-term survival of this car cooperative.”* – Car cooperative

A few years ago, the municipal housing company withdrew their employees as users which caused some uncertainty for the car cooperatives continued income. However, they managed to solve the situation by reducing their number of cars which stabilised the economy.

#### 4.1.3 Expansion

Several of the non-profit sharing schemes experience that the number of users has grown since their establishment, and even though many of them market themselves on social media, the majority of them believes that word of mouth is what consistently gives them new users. One of the non-profit sharing schemes stresses the importance of consistent marketing, however, for most non-profit sharing schemes including the makerspace and the car cooperative, the number of users has grown or remained stable without much marketing work.

The lender of sports equipment works as a franchise to a national association that operates in 86 municipalities all around Sweden. This national association has therefore managed to expand to several locations. They explain this successful expansion as a result of their operation contributing to several important issues that municipalities work on. Out of the 86 lenders of sports equipment that exist in Sweden, 76 are operated by the local municipality. Many municipalities are therefore willing to operate this sharing scheme as they contribute to municipal goals like increased exercise, less resource-use and support for local sports associations as increased access to sports equipment make more people join sports associations.

*“We aim to work as a catalysator for other organisations, everyone should benefit from our existence, you could say. That has been one of our success factors.”* – National association for lending of sports equipment

While the franchised lender of sports equipment included in this research started out as a non-profit sharing scheme, the municipality eventually took over the operation.

None of the other non-profit sharing schemes included in this research has expanded to other locations. A prominent thought on this is that a non-profit sharing schemes need to be bottom-up and initiated by people that know the local area. This is because there needs to be a demand in the area where the sharing scheme is established and only locals know of this demand. Also, the non-profit sharing schemes find it hard to imagine that they could establish a non-profit sharing scheme in another location due to having to focus their time and money

on their own sharing scheme. Several of the non-profit sharing schemes have been contacted by interested people in other areas of Sweden who ask for advice in establishing similar sharing schemes in their home towns, and most of the non-profit sharing schemes are positive to advice and guide others in establishing similar non-profit sharing schemes. The toy library is for example developing a handbook that similar non-profit sharing schemes can use.

## **4.2 Possible municipal measures for encouraging non-profit sharing schemes**

### **4.2.1 Information provision, guidance and cooperation**

The main focus of the municipality's work for non-profit sharing schemes, in both Gothenburg and Karlstad, is to provide guidance to the sharing schemes and to inform the inhabitants about the sharing schemes' existence, as a way to raise awareness. Together with the non-profit association 'Kollaborativ Ekonomi Göteborg', Gothenburg municipality has produced an online platform showing all sharing schemes in Gothenburg, called The Smart Map, which aims to inform about sharing schemes that operate all around the city.

*"This is perhaps our most important tool, The Smart Map, as we see it as a way to make the sharing economy in Gothenburg visible. With it, we facilitate for sharing schemes as we inform about sharing schemes that individually do not have very much capacity to promote themselves."* – Gothenburg municipality

Both Gothenburg and Karlstad are part of the national program Sharing Cities Sweden, in which they are funded during the project period of four years to develop test-beds and cooperation on the sharing economy. Within this national program, Karlstad municipality focuses on three tasks: network and guidance within the municipality and among other municipalities, develop sharing services, and communicate the sharing economy to inhabitants, businesses and decision-makers within the municipality. Karlstad municipality has recently implemented The Smart Map as well. When it comes to developing sharing schemes, Karlstad municipality is mainly focusing on guidance and support, rather than financial funding.

*"Gothenburg and us are funded from the same place, we are both part of Sharing Cities (Sweden). Gothenburg has a budget of, well, I don't know but several times our budget, and we have a budget of 2 million SEK (192 000 euro). Therefore, we can't financially fund sharing schemes like they can. We can guide and support them."* – Karlstad municipality

The municipal commissioner in one of the political parties also highlights Karlstad municipality's work on awareness raising and guidance for other municipalities.

*"They are very active with spreading information and about the work on sharing all around Karlstad, but also in other areas. They are working with other municipalities on this and guide them and try to encourage this."* – Political party in Karlstad

A few of the non-profit sharing schemes also mention that the municipality in both Gothenburg and Karlstad has assisted them in awareness raising. The toy library has been noticed by centres for families within the municipality, which has been a good way to reach out to their target group. The car cooperative states that they have been invited to sharing events hosted by the municipality in order to market their sharing scheme to their target group.

*“They have often made sure that we are invited to things like clothing swaps where we can inform about our cars.” – Car cooperative*

While Gothenburg considers The Smart Map one of their most important tools in working with the sharing economy, the municipality encourage the sharing economy and non-profit sharing schemes in more ways. Within the program Sharing Cities Sweden, Gothenburg municipality assists fifteen participating actors from the public sector, businesses and civil society in developing partnerships and self-sustaining business models. Much focus in the Sharing Cities Sweden program is on cooperation and learning through common activities such as workshops and meetings. Even though Gothenburg municipality has provided funding to one non-profit sharing scheme within the Sharing Cities Sweden project, the main focus within this program is on these cooperation and learning activities.

#### 4.2.1.1 Enabling and impeding factors for information provision, guidance and cooperation

The engagement from the civil servants working on sustainable consumption in the municipality, along with political will, have enabled both Gothenburg and Karlstad to work on the sharing economy. These factors enable the municipalities’ ability to work on the sharing economy, and therefore also influence the information provision, guidance and cooperation as these are the most prominent measures by the municipalities.

The department in Gothenburg municipality responsible for sharing is commissioned to work on sustainable consumption, and chose to focus some of the work on the sharing economy.

*“(…) you could say that it is person-dependent, if it would have been someone else (working in the municipality), maybe it would have been someone who was interested in food issues, sometimes it's a bit like that, by chance.” – Gothenburg municipality*

When evaluating their environmental work, the civil servants in Karlstad municipality found that the greatest part of the city’s emissions come from consumption. They therefore addressed this to the politicians who soon after added a sustainable consumption goal in the municipality’s steering document. The civil servants then chose to work on the sharing economy within that goal.

*“We suggested that we need to work more on consumption and the sharing economy, and now we have this overall goal to work towards. So, it’s us (civil servants) that applied for external funding to specifically work on the sharing economy.” – Karlstad municipality*

The Smart Map was created in collaboration with the association ‘Kollaborativ Ekonomi Göteborg’ and the civil servant in Gothenburg municipality highlights the interest and engagement that exist for the sharing economy among the civil society in Gothenburg.

Further, the civil servant in Gothenburg municipality means that the fact that the politicians included specifically the sharing economy in the city’s steering document a few years ago enabled their work. It was easier to justify and get people on board when sharing was in the steering documents.

*“(…) it made me have something to lean against and say, it is in the budget, then we can do it.” – Gothenburg municipality*

Similarly, one of the political parties in Gothenburg stresses the importance of the content of the steering documents in what gets done in the municipality.

*“The civil servants follow the budget carefully.”* – Political party in Gothenburg

The political orientation in the municipality influences the content of the steering document, but also how much resources in terms of money and personnel that are allocated to a certain area. The work on the sharing economy is considered strategic work in both Gothenburg and Karlstad and is not part of the municipalities’ core tasks. Strategic work needs political support in order to be implemented. Also, if the political orientation is to focus on the municipality’s core tasks or if there is a recession that demands cuts, strategic work like the sharing economy is likely to be cut back on.

*“It’s about how much you can work strategically in a municipality, that is, whether there are civil servants who have time to work on these issues, if you have to focus all your work on the municipality’s core task and don’t have any ability to work strategically.”* – Political party in Karlstad

*“It’s obviously also about the political vision and what is stated in the politics. It’s along those lines that the budget and how much gets allocated is determined.”* – Political party in Gothenburg

*“I mean, it’s important to get support from the politicians, and that they see the importance of working on this. And that you are allowed the time to do the work.”* – Karlstad municipality

In terms of stable access to resources, both Gothenburg and Karlstad have benefitted from participating in the national program Sharing Cities Sweden. Even though the municipalities worked on sharing before they joined the program, the way and the extent they work on sharing is different.

*“It has meant a lot, we (all partners in Gothenburg) now have a budget of just over 24 million SEK (approx. 2 300 000 euro) for a time-period of three years, so it’s quite a lot of money, before I had a budget on about 50 000 SEK (approx. 4 800 euro), so the money is one thing, but also that it gets national attention.”* – Gothenburg municipality

Occasionally, Karlstad municipality applies for external funding for strategic work when the municipality’s tax income is not enough to cover the cost, and for the work on sharing the external funding is therefore important for them as they otherwise would not have been able to work on a project-based level as they do now.

#### 4.2.2 Provision of premises

The municipality provides premises to non-profit sharing schemes in both Gothenburg and Karlstad, to one degree or another. In Gothenburg, the two municipal housing companies that manage residential buildings have both provided premises free of charge or to a reduced price to residents or associations who run different projects, among them non-profit sharing schemes. These premises are often bike storages or basement facilities in residential buildings that are no longer in use. One municipal housing company says the following on whether they provide premises to non-profit associations.

*“We do this, not to a great extent, but we do this.”* - Municipal housing company in Gothenburg

The other municipal housing company states that there are not many unused premises available, but that most neighbourhoods have at least one or two premises for this purpose.

Whether the premises are free of charge or rented out for reduced price varies, but one municipal housing company means that they often lend out premises free of charge.

*“What normally happens is that we provide premises free of charge, as we see that it is a very good thing that we want to work with.”* – Municipal housing company in Gothenburg

The municipal housing companies encourage tenants to come together in neighbourhood associations and work on issues that benefit the neighbourhood, such as gardening or sharing activities. The municipal housing companies then support and finance these neighbourhood associations, and providing premises is one way of doing so. Neighbourhood associations are rather prevalent in Gothenburg, with 100 of them active within one municipal housing company. However, whether any neighbourhood association work on sharing depends on the interest of those initiating the association.

Similarly, the other municipal housing company states that the reason they provide premises to a few non-profit sharing schemes is that they were contacted by these types of initiatives, but if another type of initiative had contacted them, they might as well have provided the few premises they have to those initiatives.

*“It’s not that we have decided to work on the sharing economy and non-profit sharing schemes specifically.”* – Municipal housing company in Gothenburg

The municipal housing companies and the civil servants working on the sharing economy in the municipality are in contact about the potential to provide premises to more sharing schemes, both non-profit and for-profit ones.

*“For example, they can open up certain premises in residential buildings if for example a property manager has a free room for exchange of things (...). But it’s now about how they could scale-up these small initiatives, that we will work on more strategically.”* – Gothenburg municipality

The third municipal housing company in Gothenburg manages many commercial premises at the town squares and the central parts near restaurants. Therefore, they differ from the previous two municipal housing companies as they do not manage buildings for residential housing. This municipal housing company has recently started looking into the potential for providing premises to non-profit sharing schemes, and is also in contact with the civil servants in the municipality.

*“I think renting out to a reduced cost is most likely. However, I’ve been to a course about calculating social sustainability, and you dream that in a few years we might be able to calculate the positive social effects, like, if we have empty premises and no one is renting them, why can’t we just let someone be there for a year free of charge. I hope that’s what we are heading towards, but we are not quite there yet.”* – Municipal housing company in Gothenburg

When speaking about the number of premises that may be available, they say the following:

*“Let’s say, we might have around fifty premises at town squares, and if one or two of these were earmarked for this area, that would be a good number. But in five years we might think that five of those premises is a good number.”* – Municipal housing company in Gothenburg

Many residential areas managed by the municipal housing company in Karlstad have premises designated to different activities for the tenants. Some activities are hosted by the municipal housing company, while other are initiated and run by the tenants. These premises are used by several tenants each week, and are therefore possible to borrow for a few hours.

Karlstad municipality is currently providing premises for a lower rent to an initiative that works on re-use of materials, and the plan is to gradually increase the rent each year as the initiative becomes self-sustaining. According to the political parties, they are looking into how the municipality could provide more premises to initiatives within the circular and sharing economy, for example in a similar way as with the initiative on re-use or by opening up classrooms to associations during after school hours.

Some of the non-profit sharing schemes are located in premises granted by the municipality free of charge or to a reduced price. Both the car cooperative and the toy library are located in premises for a reduced rent, while the store for free exchange of things started out in basement facilities in their residential building, granted by their municipal housing company.

#### 4.2.2.1 Enabling and impeding factors for provision of premises

While the two municipal housing companies that manage residential buildings speak of a lack of unused premises, the municipal housing company that manages premises that are intended for commercial operations experience a different societal development. As online-shopping increases, more and more stores abandon the premises at the town squares which has had a huge effect on the number of people that visit the squares. An enabling factor for them working on provision of premises to sharing schemes is the need to attract more people to the town squares.

*“(...) for us, it’s important to keep the town squares safe and attractive, and we experience that if a square is very empty, it gets quite dull and few people visit, which in turn makes it easier for criminal gangs to hang around, so we see that with more stores filled up, and with more people circulating around the squares, the safer it will be. If we fill up these premises, we might be able to reduce security measures.”* – Municipal housing company in Gothenburg

As municipal organisations, the municipal housing companies are supposed to work on societal goals set by the municipality, and are therefore actively working on several issues relating to environmental, social and economic sustainable development. All municipal housing companies work on maximising the well-being and value of the neighbourhoods, but are also working towards the environmental targets of the municipality. One of them sees the provision of premises to sharing schemes as a part of the work towards the environmental targets.

*“On the one hand, we are motivated by the environmental benefits, we have worked a lot on waste management, (...), and now we are trying to work more on waste reduction instead, and are looking at how we can work on this, and this has also to do with us being a municipal organisation, Gothenburg municipality has goals around these things, that we should reduce waste. And we see this as a way to do so.”* – Municipal housing company in Gothenburg

The political orientation of the municipality influences the work the municipal housing companies can do on this. Since they work towards the societal goals set by the municipality, the inclusion of the sharing economy in the steering document can matter. In the same way

that the municipality has core tasks, like schools, health care and elderly care, the municipal housing companies have certain core tasks that do not get affected by a political orientation, such as maintenance and gardening. However, the provision of premises is not part of the core tasks.

*“There is a 10 % chance of something happening compared to a 100 % chance if it’s something that the municipality wants. We have many core tasks, and to squeeze in new projects that cost money and time, I mean, that’s not easily done.”* – Municipal housing company in Gothenburg

While the political orientation matters, most municipal housing companies mean that the commitment and engagement of the civil servants and the property managers in the neighbourhoods determine whether they provide premises or not. It depends a lot on whether they take the initiative to connect sharing schemes with unused premises.

However, a few of the political parties find it hard to imagine an increase of provision of premises to non-profit sharing schemes, free of charge or to a reduced price. With the need for more residential housing the number of unused premises is unlikely to rise.

*“There are not that many unused premises available.”* – Political party in Karlstad

A prominent issue with providing premises to non-profit sharing schemes, which is raised by the municipalities, the municipal housing companies and the political parties, is that the municipality is not allowed by law to favour certain actors over others.

*”After all, as a public actor you must make sure to offer everyone the same opportunity and not prioritise a certain actor.”* – Gothenburg municipality

*“We can’t favour certain associations and let one actor pay less rent than another, that would almost be close to corruption. So, we have to keep fairness in mind.”* – Political party in Gothenburg

#### 4.2.3 Financial support

Both municipalities have provided financial support to non-profit sharing schemes, however, this has occurred at rare instances. Within the national program Sharing Cities Sweden, Gothenburg municipality is providing financial support to one non-profit sharing scheme during a time-period of three to four years. However, Sharing Cities Sweden is mainly a program for cooperation and learning and not for financial support. In 2018, Gothenburg municipality also made available 2 million SEK (approx. 192 000 euro) for non-profit sharing schemes working on bike reparations. Different actors working on bike reparations got to apply for this funding. The political party in Gothenburg who was part of the steering coalition at that point in time explains that the politicians do not actively search for associations to fund, but occasionally hear about non-profit associations that do good in society, and they then contact them in order to see how these associations could scale-up, and what they need in order to do so. This was the case for the non-profit sharing schemes working on bike reparations. However, this support got cancelled the year after when a new steering coalition was elected. Karlstad municipality has provided financial support to one of the non-profit sharing schemes included in this research, and considers this something they would like to do more of if they had more financial resources.

Municipalities grant so called association support to certain non-profit associations; however, many sharing schemes fall outside the current criteria to receive this kind of support. Gothenburg municipality is now considering if the criteria for association support could be extended and applied to non-profit sharing schemes.

*“(...) something we have considered, I don’t have a good answer for it, but for example sports and culture associations receive various kinds of grants from the municipality, but it’s not as easy for other kinds of operations to receive this kind of grants. So that’s something we are looking into, how we can address this to the politicians.”* – Gothenburg municipality

However, there are opposing views on the possibility to provide association support to non-profit sharing schemes. The political parties in Gothenburg address the possibility for non-profit sharing schemes to receive this kind of funding from the municipality. One party means that the criteria and framework for association support could change to include these associations, while the other party means that non-profit sharing schemes could receive association support if they are in line with the existing criteria and framework.

*“What the municipality considers an association, what kind of association that can receive grants, we work a lot on trying to broaden this.”* – Political party in Gothenburg

*“As long as it’s within the existing framework and models.”* – Political party in Gothenburg

On the potential for non-profit sharing schemes to receive association support, one political party in Karlstad states the following:

*“Unfortunately, I can’t see that happening at the moment.”* – Political party in Karlstad

A few of the political parties see it as more likely that non-profit sharing schemes could receive time-limited project funding, rather than long-term association support. There is a general understanding that sharing schemes mainly struggle in the beginning and especially non-profit sharing schemes as they might struggle to be sponsored.

*“I experience that the most difficult part is the start (...) to get help to get past that first threshold, like, here you have some project funding, maybe that opens opportunities to be on leave for six months and really process your ideas and see if you can get established, I think that is much more useful.”* – Political party in Karlstad

*“I think, perhaps, those kinds of schemes are financed through project funding rather than through association support.”* – Political party in Gothenburg

A third possible way to receive financial support is through a so called Idea-based public partnership (IOP). In these partnerships, actors from the public sector and actors from civil society go together in order to work for a common societal cause. Through this partnership, non-profit sharing schemes could receive some funding from the municipality.

*“On one hand, there is association grants for non-profit associations. It can also be done through so called IOP, Idea-based public partnerships, which is a type of agreement where non-profit associations may run a project on behalf of the municipality and receive some financial compensation for this.”* - Political party in Gothenburg

The Smart Map, addressed above, was created through an Idea-based public partnership between the municipality and the non-profit association “Kollaborativ Ekonomi Göteborg”. The municipality financed and collaborated with this association to create The Smart Map.

#### 4.2.3.1 Enabling and impeding factors for financial support

Whether the municipality can provide funding and to what extent is determined by the political orientation in the city. As previously mentioned, the work on sharing is considered strategic work and the political orientation therefore determines the amount of resources that are allocated to this work. This determines not only how much is spent on personnel, but also how much can be spent on sharing schemes. The funding from Gothenburg municipality to non-profit sharing schemes working on bike reparations in 2018 got cancelled when the new political coalition took over. This political coalition argued that Gothenburg municipality should focus on their core tasks, and instead support non-profit sharing schemes by finding ways for them to operate independently of the municipality.

*“We are careful not to cancel sharing schemes, but are trying to find different models for them to keep operating.”* – Political party in Gothenburg

The other political party in Gothenburg means that providing financial support to non-profit sharing schemes should be possible for the municipality.

*“After all, this is not big money. Gothenburg has an annual budget of about 30 billion SEK (approx. 288 000 000 euro), and I mean these sharing schemes, they do not cost very much in relation to the benefits they provide.”* – Political party in Gothenburg

Another central factor that influence how much financial support the municipalities can provide are the Swedish Local Government Act and the EU Law on State Aid. These laws state that state actor cannot provide financial support to actors if this goes against fair competition. If there are private actors that may be willing to operate a sharing business, it is against the law for municipalities to support non-profit sharing schemes in the same sharing practice. While municipalities can provide association support to culture and activities for children, and even to the development of the online platform The Smart Map as there was no interest from private actors to develop this, they cannot financially support all kinds of sharing.

*“It’s important to not take the market from someone else. There should be private actors that can do this, but in certain areas we find that profitability is difficult, while there is still great societal benefit, that’s where the municipality can step in. But we can’t steal an idea from a commercial actor. There needs to be market shortages.”* – Karlstad municipality

These laws are currently impeding the municipalities to provide financial support to a great extent to non-profit sharing schemes. However, were the laws to change they could enable more of this kind of financial support.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this research was to fill a research gap on how municipalities encourage sharing schemes and in particular how they can contribute to the establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes. The aim was also to provide recommendations to Oslo municipality as well as municipalities different to the Scandinavian institutional setting. This research was motivated by a call in the literature for more non-profit sharing schemes to establish, operate and expand in order for sharing to lead to sustainable consumption and production, as well as municipalities being important actors in the sharing economy's development. Through semi-structured interviews with non-profit sharing schemes, municipalities, municipal housing companies and local political parties, and document analysis of the municipalities' steering documents, this research has aimed to answer the following main research question:

*“How can municipalities contribute to the establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes, and what enables the municipalities' contribution?”*

To guide the research, the following sub-questions were posed:

- *What are important factors for establishing, operating and expanding non-profit sharing schemes?*
- *What measures that encourage non-profit sharing schemes are possible for the municipality to implement?*
- *What enables municipalities to implement the measures that encourage non-profit sharing schemes?*

This chapter aims to answer the main research question. This will be done by discussing each sub-question separately in relation to previous literature and theoretical framework. After this, the findings from the sub-questions are merged into answering the main research question. This chapter will also discuss the findings from a broader societal perspective in relation to the multi-level perspective. In line with the research aim, it will also provide recommendations to Oslo municipality as well as municipalities outside of Scandinavia. This chapter ends with a discussion on limitations of the research process and research results.

### 5.1 Discussing the sub-questions

#### 5.1.1 Sub-question 1: *What are important factors for establishing, operating and expanding non-profit sharing schemes?*

In previous literature, Fjellander et al (2019) discuss important factors for for-profit and non-profit sharing schemes simultaneously, while Grabs et al (2016) address important factors for grassroots initiatives for sustainable consumption. This thesis has focused on non-profit sharing schemes. While both Fjellander et al (2019) and Grabs et al (2016) present important factors for both establishment, operation and expansion simultaneously without distinguishing them, the findings in this thesis show similarities between important factors for establishment and operation, but fails to identify important factors for expansion. This is due to that few of the non-profit sharing schemes have expanded.

As the important factors for establishing and operating non-profit sharing schemes were found to be very similar, these are presented together. The most prominent need among the non-

profit sharing schemes is access to premises that suit their operation and that are located in convenient locations for their users. The core issue addressed is the need to finance these premises. While a few sharing schemes finance their premises with membership fees, others depend on external funding or premises granted free of charge. The second important factor is the need for committed volunteers or employees. A few non-profit sharing schemes also stress the importance of having people that work often and consistently on the sharing scheme, as this improves the quality of the operation. The third important factor found is things to be lent or shared. Several non-profit sharing schemes are dependent on donations or the ability to purchase the things that should be shared. Finally, the last found important factor is the need for continued user base. The non-profit sharing schemes that stress this factor need continued user base in order to finance their operation with membership fees. All of these four factors can be defined as material, human and financial resources.

The findings on important factors from Fjellander et al (2019) and Grabs et al (2016) are operationalised in Table 2. These are resources (financial, infrastructure and volunteers), cooperation with societal actors in order to get access to these resources, professional guidance, accommodating institutional setting, individual motivations and access to useful technology. The findings in this thesis show that the important factors for non-profit sharing schemes revolve around material, human and financial resources. The findings are therefore in line with the first operationalised factor on resources. However, Fjellander et al (2019) and Grabs et al (2016) show that sharing schemes and grassroots initiatives need cooperation with societal actors to access resources. Few of the non-profit sharing schemes stress this as important. This may indicate that municipalities' contribution to non-profit sharing schemes is minimal, as few of them highlight support or cooperation with the municipality as important. At the same time, the findings show that a few non-profit sharing schemes do receive premises from the municipality, as well as financial support.

Apart from cooperation with societal actors, previous literature highlights important factors like professional guidance and accommodating institutional setting. This is not mentioned by the non-profit sharing schemes. It is not clear what this depends on, but as previous literature includes important factors for expansion it might imply that cooperation with societal actors, professional guidance and accommodating institutional setting is mainly important for expansion. Also, previous literature includes for-profit sharing schemes and grassroots initiatives for sustainable consumption. Therefore, it could also be that these types of schemes need professional guidance and accommodation institutional setting. The findings in this thesis contribute to previous literature in that non-profit sharing schemes mainly highlight access to material, human and financial resources as important for their establishment and operation.

When it comes to expansion, the majority of the non-profit sharing schemes means that their number of users has grown rather effortlessly. One non-profit sharing schemes stresses the importance of marketing for getting enough users, while others mean that word of mouth is key. Lack of time and resources is a central explanation among the non-profit sharing schemes for them not expanding to other locations. They need to focus all resources on the one scheme they currently operate. Even though there are not enough findings to support any conclusion on what the non-profit sharing schemes need to expand, this indicate that availability of more time and resources may also facilitate an expansion to more locations. Another prominent thought is that non-profit sharing schemes need to be established by local

people who know the local area. While a few sharing schemes do not plan to expand, a few of them show interest in expansion. Previous literature argue that non-profit sharing schemes have difficulties expanding or do not intend to. The findings indicate that some may struggle to expand due to lack of resources, while others simply do not want to expand.

However, one of the non-profit sharing schemes have expanded to several locations. The lender of sports equipment is operated quite differently to the other schemes, as they are kind of a franchise of a nationwide association. As a non-profit sharing scheme, they were funded by the municipality and eventually started to be operated by the municipality. They therefore stress the municipality, as an external societal actor, as important for their establishment, operation and expansion. However, being the only example, this does not make up an important factor for expansion of non-profit sharing schemes.

#### 5.1.2 Sub-question 2: *What measures that encourage non-profit sharing schemes are possible for the municipality to implement?*

Previous literature identifies several measures that municipalities use to govern the sharing economy. These are regulations like laws and taxes, providing measures like financial support and provision of infrastructure, enabling measures like promotion and initiation of partnerships and self-governing measures where the municipalities share within the municipal organisation. While the few case studies that exist on the governance of sharing schemes do not differ between for-profit and non-profit sharing schemes, this thesis focuses on non-profit sharing schemes.

The findings show that both Gothenburg and Karlstad municipalities mainly implement enabling measures to encourage non-profit sharing schemes. Gothenburg's most prominent measure to encourage non-profit sharing schemes is to inform about the sharing schemes on the online platform The Smart Map. Karlstad municipality is also implementing The Smart Map, and regularly hold lectures about the sharing economy in the city. Both municipalities also provide guidance to non-profit sharing schemes as well as initiate cooperation, which is also in line with enabling factors from previous literature.

Gothenburg municipality is also implementing providing measures. They do this by providing premises and to some extent financial support. Gothenburg municipality provides a few basement facilities and is looking into the possibility of providing commercial premises free of charge at the town squares. They are currently looking into how to scale-up this provision of premises. Karlstad municipality provide premises in the form of activity rooms, which can be used at certain times of the day as they are shared by several actors. Karlstad municipality is granting premises to reduced rent to an initiative working on re-use of materials, where they will increase the rent for each year in order to help them start up. While some mean that non-profit sharing schemes may be included in these kinds of measures, others mean that the number of unused premises will not grow in the coming year, making it less likely for the municipality to grant premises in Karlstad.

Both Gothenburg and Karlstad municipality have provided financial support to non-profit sharing schemes on occasion. These rare instances are often project funding for a limited time-period. While some mean that this type of project funding is more likely for non-profit sharing schemes, others argue that it could be possible to provide long-term funding as well. Municipalities provide long-term financial funding through association support, however, few non-profit sharing schemes fit the criteria to receive this kind of support today. While some

argue that these criteria could be changed to include sharing schemes, others mean that they can only receive association support if they fit current criteria. Another way for municipalities to fund non-profit sharing schemes is to enter an idea-based public partnership.

These findings therefore show that the municipalities of Gothenburg and Karlstad are mainly using enabling and providing measures when governing non-profit sharing schemes.

However, the provision of premises and financial support do not take place on a large scale. Both Zvolška et al (2018) and Mont et al (2019) found that cities like Berlin, London and Amsterdam occasionally implement enabling and providing measures for sharing schemes. The findings in this thesis show that enabling and providing measures for non-profit sharing schemes are not more frequent, but also occur on an occasional basis. Sulkakoski (2019) investigated the governance of both for-profit and non-profit sharing schemes in Malmö and Gothenburg, and their findings also show enabling measures like promotion and initiation of partnerships are most common.

While much previous literature shows that municipalities mainly take on the role of regulator when governing disruptions, these findings indicate that implementation of regulations like laws could function as an encouraging measure for non-profit sharing schemes. If the Swedish Local Government Act and the EU Law on State Aid were to change, this could lead to more financial support to non-profit sharing schemes and therefore more encouraging measures for non-profit sharing schemes.

### 5.1.3 Sub-question 3: *What enables municipalities to implement the measures that encourage non-profit sharing schemes?*

The most prominent factor that enable Gothenburg and Karlstad municipalities to implement these measures is the political orientation in the municipality. The political orientation determines how much financial and human resources is earmarked for the work on the sharing economy. The more financial and human resources, the more possibility to spend time and money on informing about sharing schemes, guiding sharing schemes, initiating cooperation, providing premises and providing financial support. The civil servants in the municipalities and the municipal housing companies work according to the political steering documents. Therefore, the orientation of these steering documents also influences whether they work on the sharing economy or not.

Westskog et al (2018) discuss important factors for Norwegian municipalities in their work on climate change mitigation. They find that resources are essential for municipalities' work. However, they mean that the amount of resources available depends on the institutionalisation of climate mitigation work. In turn, the level of institutionalisation depends on the political will to work on climate change issues. In that way, the enabling factors are interdependent as the political will influences habits and routines as well as resources within the municipality. These interconnections between political will and amount of available resources can be identified in Gothenburg and Karlstad municipalities' work on non-profit sharing schemes, as the political orientation determines amount of financial and human resources. Also, the inclusion in the national program Sharing Cities Sweden enabled access to more resources. Westskog et al (2018) also show that cooperation with national levels may enable municipalities' work, which this nationally funded program can be seen as.

The findings also show that the initiative from civil servants functions as an enabling factor in the municipalities' work on the sharing economy. Civil servants in the municipality initiate

the information provision, guidance and cooperation and civil servants in the municipal housing companies initiate provision of premises to some extent. The Local Government Act and the EU Law on State Aid limit who the municipalities can provide financial support to. Also, as a municipal organisation they cannot prioritise certain actors when it comes to provision of premises either. Currently these laws are impeding the municipalities' contribution, however, were they to change they could work as enabling factors.

When it comes to the municipality's ability to grant premises to non-profit sharing schemes, the availability of unused premises sticks out as an enabling factor. The societal development points to less unused premises in residential buildings, due to an increased need for housing, while the societal development for commercial premises points in another direction, with more unused premises available due to increase in online shopping.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge no previous literature exists on what factors enable municipalities to implement encouraging measures for non-profit sharing schemes. The findings of this thesis show that similar factors enable the work on sharing as the work on climate change issues in Norwegian municipalities.

Vith et al (2019) show that ethical standpoints in cities determine the orientation of municipalities' work on sharing. If municipalities regard sharing as a disruption, they may focus their work on regulating these disruptions and focus less on encouraging sharing schemes. The ethical standpoint can be viewed as similar to the political orientation, as it is the orientation the local government chooses to take in the work on the sharing economy. Gothenburg and Karlstad municipalities appear to view the sharing economy as "societal enhancement" and "ecological transition" as they do implement measures to encourage non-profit sharing schemes. However, current laws limit how much financial support municipalities can provide to non-profit sharing schemes while making sure that fair market competition is maintained. Changing these laws may therefore lead to disruptions, by creating unfair market competition. This implies that current laws make sure that non-profit sharing schemes will not cause disruptions.

## **5.2 Answering the main research question**

This section provides an answer of the main research question: *How can municipalities contribute to the establishment, operation and expansion of non-profit sharing schemes, and what enables the municipalities' contribution?*

The findings show that municipalities provide premises and provide financial support to non-profit sharing schemes. The municipalities can therefore contribute to several of the important factors for establishing and operating non-profit sharing schemes. By providing premises, they contribute to the import factor of access to premises. However, the non-profit sharing schemes stress the importance of premises that are conveniently located and suit their operation. The municipalities provide unused premises, such as basement facilities or unused commercial premises. In that way, only non-profit sharing schemes whose operation suit these kinds of premises may benefit from these premises.

By providing financial support, the municipalities can contribute to financing premises, workers and things to be shared or lent. However, much of the current available funding is time-limited and earmarked for the start-up. Therefore, it is more likely for the non-profit sharing schemes to receive financial support for their establishment than their long-term

operation. However, several non-profit sharing schemes stress the importance of long-term funding in order to operate in the long-term. While Gothenburg municipality is looking into the criteria for long-term association support, most non-profit sharing schemes do not fit the current criteria.

Municipalities can therefore best contribute to the establishment and operation of non-profit sharing schemes in the role as provider. However, the findings show that the provision of premises and financial support do not take place on a large scale. Even though the municipalities have the ability to implement these providing measures, they only do this on occasion.

Several factors enable the municipalities' contribution to the establishment and operation of non-profit sharing schemes. The political orientation in the municipality determines whether the municipalities can implement these providing measures. If the political orientation accommodates sharing, more resources and time are put into this work. Further, it was shown that motivation of civil servants and the trend of more available commercial premises work as enabling factors for providing premises. It was also found that laws on who state actors, such as municipalities, can provide financial support to influence the municipalities' ability to provide financial support.

While the municipalities focus their work mostly on enabling measures like information provision and guidance for the sharing schemes, few of the non-profit sharing schemes highlight these as important factors for their establishment, operation and expansion.

Too few of the non-profit sharing schemes have expanded in order to identify important factors for their establishment. However, the need to put all their resources and time into their current sharing scheme was commonly seen as a reason to not expand to other locations. At the same time, the nationwide association of the lender of sports equipment has expanded due to municipalities' will to operate them. These findings indicate that financial support from the municipality could potentially contribute to the expansion of non-profit sharing schemes.

### **5.3 The broader perspective: Are municipalities contributing to the upscaling of non-profit sharing schemes?**

Previous literature shows that more non-profit sharing schemes need to establish, operate in the long-term and expand in order to contribute to sustainable consumption and production on a societal level. However, the providing municipal measures that can contribute to the establishment and operation of non-profit sharing schemes are not implemented on a large scale. This implies that the municipalities are currently not contributing to the number of non-profit sharing schemes growing or their operations expanding. Previous literature identifies municipalities as important actors in the emergence of the sharing economy. The findings in this thesis indicate that municipalities are important actors in the establishment and operation of non-profit sharing schemes, as they do contribute. However, the extent of their importance can be discussed as they do not contribute to their upscaling. On the other hand, several trends at regime and landscape level influence both the ability of non-profit sharing schemes to scale-up and the municipalities' ability to implement encouraging measures. Therefore, it is not solely up to the municipalities how they can contribute.

Several of the enabling factors for the municipalities' contribution to non-profit sharing schemes are big societal issues and outside of the municipality's control. Enabling factors like

the political orientation, EU laws and societal trends of available unused premises can be defined as trends at regime and landscape level. If these enabling factors change, the municipalities could perhaps contribute even more. However, a changed political orientation, EU laws and societal trends are dependent on many complex factors at regime and landscape level.

#### **5.4 Recommendations to Oslo municipality and application to other countries**

This thesis aimed to provide recommendations to Oslo municipality in their work on encouraging sharing schemes. It also aimed to provide recommendations to municipalities outside of Scandinavia. Firstly, the recommendations to all of these municipalities would be to aim to provide premises and financial support to non-profit sharing schemes, as this contributes to some of the important factors for their establishment and operation. Even if this cannot be done on a wide scale, it does contribute to the establishment and operation of these sharing schemes. However, municipalities need to apply these measures to the conditions of their municipal organisation. The enabling factors for the municipal measures were included in this research in the hope of facilitating an application to other municipal settings. The political orientation, motivation of civil servants, existing laws on financial support and societal trends were found to enable or impede the work.

However, as presented in the case description in the methodology chapter, certain aspects that are unique to Swedish municipalities influence their governance of sharing schemes. For example, municipal housing companies are not as prominent in Norway as in Sweden, with 80 % of the Norwegian population owning their house and 75 % of the existing rental market being private (Boverket, 2011). This might affect the ability of Oslo municipality to provide premises. The decentralised political system in Sweden, also present in Norway, mean that these municipalities have much resources available (Sellers and Lidström, 2007). The scope of action for municipalities may vary depending on how many resources they have at their disposal. These aspects also have to be taken into account when applying these findings to municipal settings outside of Sweden.

#### **5.5 Limitations and reflections on the research process**

The governing of the sharing economy is a rather new research area. This is in particular true for encouraging measures. This meant that a rather limited body of literature was available with few suitable theoretical frameworks. This resulted in not all theoretical frameworks used in this thesis being specifically on non-profit sharing schemes and sharing. They were on important factors for for-profit and non-profit sharing schemes simultaneously and grassroot initiatives for sustainable consumption, as well as on enabling factors for municipalities work on climate change issues. However, this motivated the more inductive approach of the research. By using sensitizing concepts, these theoretical frameworks guided the research but did not limit it to frameworks that were not specifically on non-profit sharing schemes and sharing.

The sharing economy is also a rather new area of work for municipalities. This may have implications for the results in several ways. While the municipalities have implemented a few measures, much of their work is still plans for how they would like to work on the sharing economy. Therefore, the results may look different if this study was to be conducted in a few

years' time when the municipalities have more experience in this work. This may also be the reason that few providing measures have been implemented so far.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted during April and May 2020. Due to the corona pandemic, travel restrictions between Norway where the researcher lives and Sweden where the interviewees operate were in place, which meant that the interviews had to take place over the phone. This removed some of the benefits of doing research face to face. Also, the recordings of the interviews were not of as good quality as they would have if they were conducted face to face. However, only a few segments of the recordings were not possible to hear and did not influence the findings in any major way.

While the hope of this research was that the enabling factors for the municipal measures would facilitate application to institutional contexts outside of Scandinavia, the scope of this research may not be extensive enough to easily apply the findings to other countries. Also, the found enabling factors are big societal issues such as EU laws and societal trends which are not within municipalities' control. However, hopefully they provide an indication of what is needed to be in place in order for municipalities to be able to contribute to the establishment and operation of non-profit sharing schemes.

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