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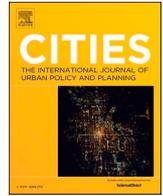
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Sharing neighbourhoods: Analysing forms and neighbourhood conditions of non-commercial sharing in European cities

Carsten Keller^{a,*}, Floris Bernhardt^a, Helena Cermeño^a, Andrew Belfield^b, Denise Goff^c, Alexander Hamedinger^c, Emma Holmqvist^d, Florian Koch^e, Doina Petrescu^b, Meike Schalk^f

^a Department of Urban and Regional Sociology, University of Kassel, Gottschalkstraße 22, 34127, Kassel, Germany

^b School of Architecture and Landscape, University of Sheffield, Arts Tower, Western Bank, Sheffield, S10 2TN, United Kingdom

^c Institute of Spatial Planning, Centre of Sociology, Vienna University of Technology, Forschungsbereich Soziologie, TU Wien, Karlsplatz 13/ E280-06, 1040, Wien, Austria

^d Institute of Housing and Urban Research, University of Uppsala, Box 514, 751 20, Uppsala, Sweden

^e Department of Real Estate Management, Urban Development and Smart Cities, University of Applied Sciences Berlin, Campus Treskowallee, TA Gebäude C, 439, Treskowallee 8, 10318, Berlin, Germany

^f KTH School of Architecture, Royal Institute of Technology, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Osquars Backe 5, SE-100 44, Stockholm, Sweden

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ABSTRACT

A basic idea of the *Sharing City* concept is that non-commercial forms of sharing have particular potential for sustainable and socially inclusive urban development. While there is much research on commercial sharing in the context of the *Sharing Economy*, non-commercial sharing and its local setting remain largely unexplored. In this article, we draw on research in neighbourhoods of seven European cities to examine characteristics of non-commercial sharing and the role of the neighbourhood. Based on a quantitative survey with 1,032 residents and 71 expert interviews, we point out that non-commercial sharing clearly differs from commercial practices in terms of content, motives, organisation, and actors. The neighbourhood emerges as a key entity of non-commercial sharing. We point out differences of actors, their perspectives on and organisation of sharing between the poorer and peripherally located neighbourhoods and the more socially mixed inner-city quarters of our sample.

1. Introduction

The *Sharing Economy* proliferated in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2007/8, particularly as an urban phenomenon (Davidson & Infranca, 2016). Even though the organisation of sharing probably has its historical roots in rural areas and agriculture, it finds conducive conditions in cities, where resources and people are concentrated in limited space (Barile et al., 2021). Its rapid increase in importance over the past fifteen years has been associated with trends such as digitisation and a change in consumption and value patterns (“access and usage instead of ownership”) (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). Many expectations and hopes have been formulated that the *Sharing Economy* would contribute to sustainable urban development and empower civil society. In the meantime, however, the concept has come under more critical

scrutiny (Frenken, 2017). Parts of the *Sharing Economy* are now, for instance, referred to as “platform capitalism”, with *Airbnb* and *Uber* among its most prominent examples (Hübscher & Kallert, 2023).

The notion of the *Sharing City*, which emerged at the beginning of the 2010s, was formulated from the outset as a critique of the commercial *Sharing Economy* (McLaren & Agyeman, 2015; Sánchez Vergara, Ginieis, & Papaoikonomou, 2021; Shareable, 2018). In contrast to profit-oriented models, the potential for sustainable and just urban development is attributed primarily to non-commercial or “commoning” practices. Along these lines, some authors – most prominently Belk (2007) – go as far as to exclude commercial practices from the very definition of sharing. Although, sharing remains a somewhat fuzzy concept, given the heterogeneity of tangible and intangible goods and services, the diversity of organisational forms, and the varying

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: carsten.keller@uni-kassel.de (C. Keller), f.bernhardt@gmx.de (F. Bernhardt), hcermeno@asl.uni-kassel.de (H. Cermeño), andrew.belfield@sheffield.ac.uk (A. Belfield), denise.goff@gbstern.at (D. Goff), alexander.hamedinger@tuwien.ac.at (A. Hamedinger), emma.holmqvist@ibf.uu.se (E. Holmqvist), florian.koch@htw-berlin.de (F. Koch), d.petrescu@sheffield.ac.uk (D. Petrescu), meike.schalk@arch.kth.se (M. Schalk).

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geographical scales involved, the distinction between commercial and non-commercial offers is quite established (e.g. Ryu et al., 2019). This distinction might reflect an empirical divide between, on the one hand, a profit-oriented economy dominated by big players operating at (inter-)national levels through digital platforms, and, on the other hand, locally rooted, non-profit-oriented forms of sharing (Maurer & Oberg, 2020).

While the Sharing Cities discourse acknowledges the limitations and risks of commercial sharing models, much of the empirical research remains focused on commercial sharing from a macro-level perspective, such as the scale of a city or a nation. As a result, non-commercial sharing practices and their multiplicity of formal and informal occurrences in local settings – despite being seen as more aligned with the ideals of sustainable and just urban development – remain largely unexplored. Our study directly addresses this gap by examining how non-commercial sharing is practised and shaped within local neighbourhood contexts across different European cities. In doing so, we contribute both to the scholarship on Sharing Cities and related debates and to its critical reflections by foregrounding the often-overlooked neighbourhood-level dynamics of sharing beyond market logics.

Our study draws on research conducted in neighbourhoods of cities in Austria, France, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom to examine the characteristics of non-commercial sharing and the role of the neighbourhoods in which these practices take place. We question what the characteristics of non-commercial sharing practices in neighbourhoods are and if the locality is a relevant entity in shaping and enabling sharing. For the concept of sharing, we draw, as a starting point, on Belk's (2007) definition which describes it as both the act of giving and taking as well as the joint use and organisation of goods. We acknowledge that this definition of sharing might ontologically be close to broader notions of solidarity and helping and that these categories often overlap in practice. Yet we follow Belk (2007) in treating sharing as analytically distinct, implying some form of joint access, provision, or co-use of resources, which can go beyond one-sided acts of helping. In this context, we then turn our attention to the neighbourhood, that we conceptualise as a spatially manageable, coherent small-scale environment of one's own place of residence, usually within walking distance, connected with the social structures and networks that result from the residential environment, its inhabitants and their proximity to each other (Hamm, 1998).¹

Based on a survey among residents in different European cities, we point out that non-commercial sharing clearly differs from practices associated with the commercial Sharing Economy in terms of content, motives, organisation, and actors. In addition, the neighbourhood emerges as a key entity of non-commercial sharing in our study. We then draw on semi-structured interviews conducted with public actors, associations, housing companies, and civic initiatives to address whether sharing is on their agenda and whether the different types of neighbourhoods produce specific sharing practices. Here we find differences in the actors involved, their views on, and organisation of, sharing between the poorer and peripherally located neighbourhoods and the more socially mixed inner-city quarters in our sample.

The article begins with a theoretical overview (Section 1) in which we present research on (non-)commercial and neighbourhood sharing. Subsequently, Section 1.1 presents the empirical methods and is followed by a description of the results (Section 2). The results are then discussed in Section 3, and finally, we summarise the contribution of our research in the conclusion.

¹ In addition, we use the term neighbourhood for small to medium-sized urban areas along administrative boundaries for our qualitative and quantitative case selection (see Section 1.1). In the questionnaire of the survey, however, neighbourhood was defined as the walkable area around the place of residence.

1.1. Current studies on (non-)commercial and neighbourhood sharing

Some studies suggest that a large proportion of sharing organisations and practices are not commercially oriented and operate locally on a limited spatial range, such as the neighbourhood level (Labaeye, 2019; Maurer & Oberg, 2020). Research on sharing so far, however, has concentrated mainly on commercial offers, often from a macro perspective that does not take locality into account. Important findings concern the *social selectivity* as well as *motives* for participation in the Sharing Economy and, in the case of commercial residential sharing, also the *spatial effects*.

Sharing is often socially selective in relation to age and education, as many studies indicate younger and formally higher-educated people as main participants (Bäro et al., 2022; Konrad & Wittowsky, 2018; Ranzini et al., 2017). This bias is related to the relevance of digital media and the Internet as key tools for organising sharing and establishing contact between participants. Research on motives in turn, shows that concern for sustainability or building social relationships plays a role, but is subordinate to motives of economic benefit and cost savings as well as convenience (Andreotti et al., 2017; Gazzola et al., 2019). On the basis of a quantitative survey in Amsterdam among suppliers and users of the Sharing Economy, Böcker and Meelen (2017) point out also that motives vary in relation to the content of sharing and that generally the concern of sustainability is higher among suppliers than among users. More recently, Bei (2025) highlights rather the varying spatial impacts of commercial residential sharing and underscores the importance of political regulation.

Bringing a commercial and a non- or less-commercial accommodation-sharing platform in comparison, Petruzzi et al. (2021) reveal that the commercial platform exhibits more characteristics of exchange (such as money relevance and calculation), whereas the non-commercial platform emphasises social bonds and a sense of joint ownership. Furthermore, Ribera Jemio et al. (2024) identify that, for non-commercial sharing of household goods in a university context, ecological impact and enjoyment are at least as important as economic motives in driving sharing.

What becomes clear in the review of the scholarship of sharing is that studies on the neighbourhood level remain scarce, predominantly address neighbourhood sharing organised through digital media and platforms (Akin et al., 2021; Dillahunt & Malone, 2015; Santala & McGuirk, 2022; Schor, 2014; Szymańska, 2021; Vaskelainen & Piscicelli, 2018) and often blur the line between commercial and non-commercial activities. Similar to studies at the macro-level, this body of work points to the relevance of trust between participants as a condition of sharing. Yet, at the neighbourhood level, motives appear more socially driven, particularly in terms of building and maintaining relations with neighbours. Akin et al. (2021), for instance, conclude in their study of the Norwegian sharing platform "Nabohjelp" that one facilitator of sharing is the sense of trust in neighbours, since users feel safer interacting with neighbours than with strangers. Interestingly, Vaskelainen and Piscicelli (2018) point out that neighbourhood sharing based on digital platforms reproduces already existing networks of relationships rather than building new communities. In contrast, Cho et al. (2019) find that shared residential living has a positive effect on community building in Seoul. Furthermore, both, Huber (2022), in a comparative study of two housing projects in Germany, and Slingerland et al. (2019), in a qualitative investigation of a neighbourhood in the Netherlands, indicate that available and purposively designed spaces are important conditions for enabling neighbourhood sharing practices.

Among the few studies that focus explicitly on neighbourhood sharing beyond digital platforms is Westskog et al.'s (2020, 2021) investigation of a suburban community in Norway. The authors distinguish two logics of sharing in the neighbourhood, *reciprocity* and *redistribution*. The logic of reciprocity is based on mutual, trustful acquaintances and interactions between neighbours and takes place among friends, relatives, and close neighbours. Examples include

lending tools or providing mutual services. They argue that the logic of redistribution, in turn, is related to institutions, e.g., the town hall. Through this institution, activities can be organised like a swap day or a festival, but also items might be offered for sharing within the neighbourhood. Westskog et al. (2020) conclude that interactions between neighbours, which create mutual acquaintances, and trusted institutions are the main conditions which should be promoted for sharing in the neighbourhood. In a similar vein and based on an explorative study of a participatory process in the “Sharing City” of Milan, Salvia and Morello (2020: 11) also hint at the importance of trustful relationships between local actors and the municipality for sharing practices. In turn, Huber et al. (2024) point out, on the basis of their study of three housing projects in Germany and France, at infrastructural arrangements promoting neighbourhood sharing.

While trust might indeed be stronger among individuals in the same neighbourhood and can stimulate sharing even between strangers, it remains unclear whether the neighbourhood constitutes a significant factor in itself or merely represents a spatial setting in which sharing takes place. It also seems likely that neighbourhoods differ in the frequency, main actors, and the organisation of sharing. Such differences may depend not only on the intensity of social interactions and the presence of trusted institutions, but also on the neighbourhood's social structure and the availability of suitable spaces and infrastructures.

Overall, the existing studies provide important insights into the social selectivity, motives, and conditions of commercially organised sharing. However, they still provide only partial knowledge of the actors, content, motives, and organisation of non-commercial sharing, as well as the role of the neighbourhood. Moreover, these studies rarely engage with the ontological ambiguity of the concept – namely, whether certain practices are best described as sharing, or whether they are more appropriately understood in terms of solidarity or mutual help. While acknowledging this conceptual fuzziness, we employ *sharing* as our primary analytical category in order to emphasize practices of joint use, provision, or co-creation of a wide range of tangible and intangible resources. In this sense, our study does not aim to resolve the ontological debate about where sharing ends and solidarity or helping begins, but it takes the fuzziness of the concept seriously: We treat sharing as a heuristic lens for examining how non-commercial practices of sharing tangible and intangible resources are organised at the neighbourhood level.

Against this background, the paper is guided by two main research questions: first, what are the characteristics of non-commercial sharing practices in the neighbourhood? And second, how do different neighbourhood conditions shape sharing practices? With non-commercial sharing, we focus on practices involving the provision, joint use, or co-creation of resources organised outside or at the margins of a profit-oriented market logic. These practices typically involve no or minimal monetary costs and can occur in diverse informal and formal settings, ranging from informal networks and associations to cooperatives and socially-oriented enterprises.

2. Methodology

The presented research consists of two empirical investigations with an explorative, parallel mixed methods approach (Hagenauer & Gläser-Zikuda, 2022; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2015). To examine characteristics of non-commercial sharing and the role of the neighbourhood, a quantitative survey with residents in seven neighbourhoods of cities in Austria, France, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom was carried out. Parallel to that, semi-structured expert interviews with actors from the municipality, housing companies, associations and civic initiatives were conducted in these neighbourhoods. The interviews with these actors evaluated to what extent sharing is on their agenda and how they perceive practices and conditions of non-commercial sharing within the neighbourhoods. The research process started with explorative interviews among the same actor groups to elucidate concepts,

stakeholders, and spatial aspects, as well as to develop informed guidelines for the expert interviews and the questionnaire of the survey. As described below (Section 2.1), it was only possible to realise a sufficient quantitative sample for four of the seven neighbourhoods. The triangulation of the survey and the qualitative interview data was limited in this respect.

Building upon the reviewed literature, we approached non-commercial sharing as practices of joint use, provision, or co-creation of resources that take place outside of direct market exchange (Belk, 2007). To ensure comparability, the survey and interviews provided concrete examples (e.g., lending and borrowing household goods, shared information, or the use of common spaces) to guide respondents' understanding. At the same time, we are aware of the potential conceptual ambiguities of the term sharing. We therefore included exploratory interviews, pre-tests of the survey and careful coding procedures to reduce variation and to reflect critically on these ambiguities in our analysis. With regard to the neighbourhoods studied, case selection was driven by the idea of comparing conditions and forms of non-commercial sharing across two types of neighbourhoods: a) urban inner-city areas with a socio-economic mixed population and b) peripheral urban areas with a more impoverished population. In terms of this categorisation,² the neighbourhoods of Poplar (London, UK), Bagneux (Île-de-France, France), and Gottsunda (Uppsala, Sweden) represent peripherally located areas with a socio-economically more disadvantaged population. In contrast, Südliche Luisenstadt (Berlin, Germany) and Stuttgart-Mitte (Stuttgart, Germany) typify inner-city areas with socio-economically more mixed resident groups. Inner parts of the district Ottakring – namely, Brunnerviertel and Neulerchenfeld (Vienna, Austria) – and Nord-Holland (Kassel, Germany) occupy intermediary positions. Ottakring, situated in the West of Vienna, embraces inner-city neighbourhoods, stretching to the surrounding green belt of the city, while particularly the neighbourhoods close to the centre are characterised by a weaker socio-economic profile. Nord-Holland stretches from the city centre to the northern outskirts of Kassel and hosts predominantly a socio-economically disadvantaged population.

These differences in location and resident composition provide a foundation for a comparative analysis of sharing practices within these neighbourhoods, enabling a focused examination of the respective roles played by urban context and resident demographics. In the analysis of this article, we do not evaluate the influence of the macro level, that is, the different national contexts, which might influence the sharing practices on the studied neighbourhood level.

Table 1 provides a comparison of the key characteristics of the studied neighbourhoods.

2.1. Survey

The quantitative survey among residents of the studied neighbourhoods was carried out from September 2021 to April 2022. The areas were demarcated according to the respective municipal boundaries. Due to unequal resources among the national research teams, the sampling process yielded sufficient data for neighbourhood-level insights only in Berlin, Kassel, Stuttgart and Uppsala. Therefore, in the survey analysis, we refer only to data from Südliche Luisenstadt (Berlin), Nord-Holland (Kassel), Stuttgart-Mitte, and Gottsunda (Uppsala). 2.000 postal letters were sent to randomly selected residents in each demarcated

² Due to significant variations in data availability regarding the socio-economic characteristics of residents in the neighbourhoods, various sources are utilised. These sources include the percentage of inhabitants receiving transfer payments, who are unemployed and/or low-income groups (Stadt Kassel (Fachstelle Statistik), 2022; Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart (Statistisches Amt), 2022; Bezirksamt Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, 2020, Tower Hamlets council, 2014, Insee, 2023, Stadt Wien, 2023, Molina et al., 2020, Polisen, 2015).

Table 1
Neighbourhood characteristics.^a

	Südliche Luisenstadt (Berlin)	Stuttgart Mitte (Stuttgart)	Nord-Holland (Kassel)	Ottakring (Vienna)	Bagneux (Île-de-France)	Poplar (London)	Gottssunda (Uppsala)
Inhabitants	26,000	23,712	17,165	102,444	~42,000	~21,000	~8600
Area	~1,45 km ²	~3,60 km ²	~3,52 km ²	~8,67 km ²	4,19 km ²	~1,26 km ²	n.a.
Density	~18,200 P/km ²	~6300 P/km ²	~4700P/km ²	~12,000 P/km ²	~10,000 P/km ²	~17,100 P/km ²	n.a.
Housing structure	Wilhelminian storey-buildings; retail and offices in first storeys/ground floors	Range from Wilhelminian structures to buildings from the 50s–60s	Wilhelminian multi and 60s–70s multistorey buildings, with ground floors used for commercial purposes and living	Wilhelminian storey buildings, retail and offices in the ground floor zone	Mix of high-rise buildings, low-rise buildings, and single-family houses	Mainly mid-rise apartment development (3–5 storey 1950–80s) Increasing high-rise tower re-developments	High-rise buildings, low-rise buildings, and single-family houses
Migration background	~50%	~32%	~69%	Ottakring in total: 48% persons with 'foreign origin' (2021)	~45%	~60%	~50%
Socio economic status of residents	Mixed	Mixed	Low	Mixed	Low	Low	Low
Social housing rate	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High	High	High ^b

^a Numeric data in the table refers to: statistik.atlas.kassel.de, 2023; Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart (Statistisches Amt), 2022; Bezirksamt Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, 2020; Tower Hamlets council, 2014; Stadt Wien, 2023; Molina et al., 2020; Insee (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques), 2023, Uppsala Kommun, 2022.

^b Public housing (*Allmännyttan*) is managed by municipal housing companies and open to all income levels.

neighbourhood, inviting them to participate in an online survey (with a reminder after four weeks). The questionnaire was available in ten languages (Arabic, Bulgarian, English, German, Italian, Serbian, Swedish, Turkish, and French) and structured into thematic blocks asking for practices, contacts, motives, and resources of sharing, usage and belonging to the neighbourhood, and socio-demographic variables.

In the introduction to the questionnaire, the term 'sharing' was briefly described for participants in simple terms: giving something to others, taking something from them, and borrowing, exchanging, or using something together on a non-commercial basis. Examples were provided to illustrate both tangible and intangible shared resources: objects such as tools, books, bikes, and cars, but also flats or places in the neighbourhood (e.g., community gardens), as well as activities and knowledge. This operationalization sought to ensure a basic common understanding of sharing and was intended to guide participants' responses.

After a first question on the use of commercial sharing, participants were informed that all subsequent questions referred to non-commercial sharing, where money does not play a role. Three categories of non-commercial sharing were differentiated and shortly explained: sharing of items, space and activities/services/information. The questionnaire contained only a few open-ended questions, which mainly focused on the sharing of spaces. As a result, no further distinctions beyond these three categories, nor detailed descriptions of the non-commercial practices reported by respondents can be drawn from the survey. Additionally, the questions explicitly addressed forms of sharing *between* households, not *within* the same household. Where questions explicitly referred to sharing within the same 'house' this meant sharing with other households living in the same building, typically multi-story houses in the neighbourhoods examined (cf. e-Component Questionnaire Survey).

Due to low response rates – apart from Uppsala – and an underrepresentation of certain social groups, alternative sampling strategies were employed. These included asking established institutions to disseminate the invitation to the survey, incentive-supported recruiting in public spaces, and paper-pen (due to language barriers or illiteracy) researcher- and or self-administered questionnaires in single- or group-sessions. A total of 1.032 persons aged 17 and older participated in the survey. Given the varied sampling methods (random and purposive sampling),

the sample has limited statistical representativeness (Table 2).

In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, the sample of the four neighbourhoods differs to a greater or lesser extent from the data available from municipal statistics and other surveys. Overall, however, the survey reflects the social composition of the neighbourhoods and their differences quite well. A comparison shows particularly an overrepresentation of women, older individuals, and higher socio-economic status levels (income, occupation, and educational status). While municipal statistics document an almost even distribution of women and men, in all four neighbourhoods, more women have participated in the survey (58,4% of all valid responses, with only slight differences between the four neighbourhoods). An overrepresentation of older participants in the survey (average age 50,4 years) is observed in all neighbourhoods except Nord-Holland: Participants are on average about ten years older than municipal statistics indicate. Only limited official data are available regarding income, occupation, and education. In the absence of detailed data, we cautiously assume a slight overrepresentation of higher status levels in our sample. However,

Table 2
Survey samples.

	Random	Stakeholder	Snowball	Total
Berlin	106	51	21	178
-	59,6 %	28,7 %	11,8 %	100,0 %
Kassel	94	30	8	132
-	71,2 %	22,7 %	6,1 %	100,0 %
Stuttgart	117	36	22	175
-	66,9 %	20,6 %	12,6 %	100,0 %
Uppsala	547	0	0	547
-	100,0 %	0,0 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
Total	964	117	45	1.032
-	83,7 %	11,3 %	4,3 %	100,0 %

differences between the neighbourhoods are well captured, indicating Nord-Holland and Gottsunda as neighbourhoods with lower educational, occupational, and income levels, while Stuttgart-Mitte has the highest status profile.

The data analysis primarily relied on descriptive statistical techniques, including mean comparisons, correlations, and percentage breakdowns. Additionally, factors and indices were generated to simplify models and enhance clarity, helping to assess the quality and quantity of sharing activities.

2.2. Qualitative expert interviews

The qualitative interviews were conducted with three actor groups: civic organisations (initiatives, associations, and cultural clubs), municipal representatives (those involved in planning and governance), and housing sector professionals (employees of housing companies and property owners). The guidelines for the semi-structured interviews included questions about the experts' organisations, the neighbourhood, sharing practices, and the relationships between sharing actors. The interviews were complemented differently by the national research teams through focus group discussions (in Ottakring), participatory mapping (in Südliche Luisenstadt and Bagneux), observations, and walkthroughs across the research areas (e.g., a documented site visit with a group of planners was conducted in Gottsunda).

In total, 71 expert interviews (Table 3) were conducted, supplemented by four group interviews. For the analysis, the interviews were transcribed (with only a few logged). These transcripts were then coded by local teams and collectively analysed, using Mayring's (2022) content analysis framework.

3. Results

3.1. Non-commercial sharing through the lens of the survey: a focus on non-tangible goods, personal relations, and the neighbourhood

3.1.1. What do people share and how often?

Regarding the content and frequency of non-commercial sharing, activities, services and information – that is, non-tangible goods – appear to be shared most frequently (see Table 4). More than a quarter of the survey respondents stated that they do this regularly, and about one-fifth of respondents also reported sharing items at least monthly. Private spaces are shared least often, though one-fifth of respondents regularly use spaces jointly. Overall, non-commercial sharing practices are quite common in the sample. The use of commercial sharing is reported by around a quarter of respondents, primarily in the areas of mobility and home-sharing. Unexpectedly, the analysis of all four neighbourhoods shows a weak negative correlation between commercial and non-commercial forms of sharing (Spearman's Rho: -0,170, Sig.: 0,001).³ However, when looking at the individual neighbourhoods, no systematic correlation can be found. Thus, the use of paid services such as car or home sharing, does not allow any conclusions to be drawn about practices in which activities, objects, or spaces are shared with others at no cost.

3.2. Significance of social relations: organisation, motives, and networks of sharing

When asked about contact points for organising non-commercial sharing, respondents highlighted the relevance of personal contacts (Table 5). Around two-thirds of respondents value these as important or very important for the organisation of sharing. In contrast, digital media

³ Spearman's Rho is a correlation measure for ordinal variables and has a range of values from 1 to -1, with a value between 0,2 and -0,2 indicating no or an extremely weak correlation.

and tools such as the internet or chat groups play a secondary role: they are indicated as (very) important by just under 30% of respondents, about the same percentage as the neighbourhood. In turn, more traditional media such as newspapers or bulletin boards, play no substantial role in organising sharing.

Personal contacts are not only essential for organising sharing, they are also considered as a central motive. When asked about the motivation for sharing, maintaining and expanding social contacts, moral values such as commitment and sustainability, and the expansion of activities or the usage of resources emerge as the three most important motives. The statement "When I share with others, I do it..." was responded by 75% with "because I like them" and by 52% with "to meet and get to know other people." The value-related motives: "because it is the right thing to do" and "to live in a more sustainable and environmentally friendly way", each received nearly two-thirds of agreement. In third place, with 54%, is the answer "to use or to do things I could not otherwise". That this statement points to the intrinsic motive of an expansion of options for action and use and not to economic constraints is supported by the fact that "monetary reasons" (36%) and the need to share (15%) ranked among the lowest of (eleven) possible answers. These findings align with Ribera Jemio et al.'s (2024) study concerning ecological motives and motives of individual well-being, but diverge from their results considering economic benefits as an important driver for sharing.

Regarding the quality of contacts, non-commercial sharing most often takes place with friends (52% answered "often" or "always"), followed by relatives (36%) and acquaintances (26%). Strangers play only a minor role (6%). A comparison of the four study areas shows that in neighbourhoods with higher frequencies of sharing (Berlin and Kassel), respondents also report a higher proportion of acquaintances and unknown persons among their sharing contacts (compared to Stuttgart and Uppsala).⁴ In contrast, the proportion of relatives remains almost constant among the four neighbourhoods. One could hypothesise that the frequency of sharing within neighbourhoods increases the proportion of acquaintances and strangers within sharing networks.

In the survey, respondents were asked, on the one hand, whether the persons they share with are similar to them in terms of socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, income, nationality, and specific interests and activities. On the other hand, the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents were collected to test whether these characteristics influence their sharing activities. Results for the latter show that socio-economic status (education, income, and occupation) has no influence on the frequency of sharing. Also, nationality and religion show no influence.⁵ Only gender and age display a weak effect: women and younger persons report slightly higher levels of sharing activity. When asked about the characteristics of the people with whom they share, respondents reported that status (education, income, and occupation), as well as nationality, religion, and gender are irrelevant. Age, language and cultural background, in turn, were considered important by at least 35% of the respondents, along with political interests and hobbies. Respondents' sharing networks thus exhibit a certain selectivity bias with regard to age, language and cultural and political interests. Overall, however, the results point to a low social selectivity in non-commercial sharing networks.

3.2.1. Sharing at the neighbourhood level

Respondents indicated their houses as the most important spatial

⁴ Sharing frequency is calculated as a mean index of nine sharing items, each with the same five-point scale (1 - never, 2 - less often than once a year, 3 - several times a year, 4 - several times a month, 5 - several times a week), with three items each asking about the provision, receipt or shared use of either spaces, goods or services.

⁵ The variables nationality, religion, and cultural background could not be collected in Sweden.

Table 3
Interviews by city.

	Berlin	Kassel	London	Paris	Stuttgart	Uppsala	Wien
Civic society and initiatives	8	7	6	8	6	3	5
Municipality and politics	2	4	/	3	3	2	4
Housing sector	3	3	/	/	3	/	1
Total	13	14	6	11	12	5	10
Other	/	/	1 GI ^a	/	/	1 NP ^b	3 GI ^a

^a Group interview.

^b Neighbourhood perpetration.

Table 4
Content and frequency of sharing – (case-cities Berlin, Kassel, Stuttgart, Uppsala).

Content and frequency of sharing	N	1 – Never	2 – Less than once a year	3 – A few times a year	4 – A few times a month	5 – Several times a week
I share spaces by ...						
... providing them to others.	773	61,7%	11,3%	15,5%	6,5%	5,0%
... getting them from others.	745	57,3%	14,6%	19,1%	5,2%	3,8%
... using them jointly with others.	793	48,2%	12,5%	18,4%	9,5%	11,5%
I share items by ...						
... providing them to others.	805	33,3%	12,9%	35,3%	12,5%	6,0%
... getting them from others.	770	35,7%	17,8%	32,9%	9,4%	4,3%
... using them jointly with others.	771	43,8%	17,0%	23,0%	8,6%	7,7%
I share activities, services and information by ...						
... providing them to others.	799	31,8%	12,8%	29,4%	17,8%	8,3%
... getting them from others.	778	33,5%	16,2%	28,8%	14,4%	7,1%
...organising them jointly with others.	784	44,6%	16,5%	22,3%	10,2%	6,4%

Table 5
Contact points for organising sharing – (case cities – Berlin, Kassel, Stuttgart, Uppsala).

Which of the following social networks and contact points are important for ...						
... organising the forms of sharing you indicated?	N	1 - Not important	2 – Slightly important	3 – Moderately important	4 – Important	5 – Very important
Internet forums and online groups, apps	664	30,4%	19,4%	21,2%	16,3%	12,7%
Personal contacts	679	5,2%	8,4%	19,7%	38,9%	27,8%
Newspapers, magazines, and advertisements	649	53,2%	23,1%	12,3%	8,5%	2,9%
Neighbourhood (e.g., events, swap shelves, neighbours)	662	23,0%	25,1%	26,0%	16,9%	9,1%
Other	404	56,4%	19,3%	14,4%	5,4%	4,5%

unit for sharing (Table 6).⁶ This emphasis on the immediate neighbourhood is underscored by the finding that contacts for sharing at the

⁶ Questions relating to one's house addressed explicitly sharing outside the own household, but with other households living in the same building (cf. Section 1.1).

neighbourhood level are first and foremost established within one's own house (Table 8, second column).

The survey included questions about the usage of infrastructure and the sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. Generally, public space is the most frequently used infrastructure, followed by local associations (Table 7). The use of infrastructures is significantly related to the sharing frequency of residents, as shown by a correlation analysis in the same Table.⁷ The more actively residents use their neighbourhoods, the more pronounced their sharing activities are. This correlation is stronger for the use of local associations and community gardens. At the same time, the examination of the four neighbourhoods reveals differences between them. The correlation of sharing frequency in Gottsunda (Uppsala) is particularly strong with the use of community gardens, while in Nord-Holland (Kassel), sharing frequency is strongly related to the use of public space and in Südliche Luisenstadt (Berlin), with district meeting places. There is also a significant correlation between sharing frequency and respondents' identification with the neighbourhood, although this correlation is less strong than with the usage of infrastructure.

As mentioned, non-commercial sharing is practised to a different extent in the four neighbourhoods. This is demonstrated by the different mean values of the sharing frequency (within a scale of 1 to 5): 2.74 in Berlin, 2.59 in Kassel, 2.19 in Stuttgart, and 2.07 in Uppsala. The inner-city neighbourhood in Berlin presents the highest, and the peripheral neighbourhood in Uppsala the lowest sharing frequency. One influential difference between the neighbourhoods is the varying degree of infrastructure within which sharing contacts are made. When comparing the neighbourhoods with the highest and the lowest sharing frequency, Südliche Luisenstadt (Berlin) and Gottsunda (Uppsala), this becomes particularly clear: In Berlin, a variety of places such as stores, festivals or markets are important in addition to one's own house, whereas in Uppsala, only a few sharing contacts are made in the neighbourhood beyond one's own house/building (Table 8).

3.3. Evidence from the interviews: sharing as a tool of community building and sustainability in different actor constellations

3.3.1. Sharing as a means to address neighbourhood challenges: community building and sustainability

Moving forward, we now turn to the question of whether the discourse of the *Sharing City* has permeated key actors in the

⁷ See Footnote 2 for the calculation of the sharing-frequency.

Table 6
Sharing action radius – (case cities – Berlin, Kassel, Stuttgart, Uppsala).

People I share with ...	N	1 – Never	2 – Rarely	3 – Sometimes	4 – Often	5 – Always
... live in my house.	645	31,6%	17,8%	22,2%	14,7%	13,6%
... live in my neighbourhood.	729	35,0%	20,3%	28,4%	12,2%	4,1%
... live in the district where I live.	725	35,7%	22,6%	26,6%	12,1%	2,9%
... live in the city where I live.	718	28,1%	25,5%	29,9%	12,1%	4,3%
... live further away.	706	40,5%	29,7%	20,1%	7,9%	1,7%

Table 7
Usage of neighbourhood infrastructure – (case cities Kassel, Berlin, Stuttgart, Uppsala).

How often do you use spaces outside your house in the neighbourhood (such as gardens or neighbourhood centres) that are free of charge and where you can meet others?						
	Community gardens	District meeting places	Public places	Associations	Religious meeting places	Other
N	714	705	713	704	708	570
Mean	2,1	2,9	3,1	2,2	1,8	1,7
Correlation	,406**	,353**	,348**	,409**	,249**	,395**

Mean value within a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (several times per week) (Frequency of use was asked on a 6-point scale. Two “Never” items (“Never, because not available” and “Never, other reasons”) were combined for averaging. The scale ranges accordingly from 1 to 5, with 1 representing “Never” and 5 “Several times a week”) – Correlation with sharing frequency.

Table 8
Meeting places - (case cities Kassel, Berlin, Stuttgart, Uppsala).

How did you get to know the people with whom you share goods or services and spaces in your neighbourhood?	Total of all four cities	Berlin	Uppsala
I don't know anyone	11,8%	6,3%	14,2%
In the house you're living in	60,6%	70,3%	57,7%
Via advertisements (e.g., Newspapers)	2,2%	2,3%	2,6%
Shops	14,0%	35,9%	6,8%
Institutions (e.g., schools)	18,9%	27,3%	12,1%
At festivals or markets	15,3%	42,2%	4,2%
In public (e.g., in parks, streets or playgrounds)	30,0%	50,0%	22,0%
Via social media	13,20%	18,8%	11,0%

neighbourhoods, and whether sharing is pursued as an explicit goal. Interviews with representatives of the municipality, housing companies, associations, and civil society initiatives show that sharing does not represent a central, action-guiding goal for them. In none of the neighbourhoods is sharing pursued as an overarching goal or as a value in itself, nor is it explicitly linked to the concept of the Sharing City. Instead, actors tend to frame sharing as a means to achieve other goals, particularly in response to perceived neighbourhood challenges: For the peripheral neighbourhoods of Bagneux, Gottsunda, Poplar, as well as for the inner-city neighbourhood of Nord-Holland, sharing is mainly seen as a means to empower and socially integrate a widely poor and disadvantaged population. In Südliche Luisenstadt and the research area of Ottakring, both inner-city neighbourhoods, non-commercial sharing is embedded in the objectives of maintaining a socially mixed population and promoting alternative, sustainable lifestyles – particularly as a means of countering the threat of gentrification. In Stuttgart Mitte, sharing is seen as a means to develop and reclaim public spaces from the widespread traffic infrastructure. Similarly, Sánchez Vergara, Papaioannou, and Ginieis (2021) found that the term “Sharing City” within municipalities of Barcelona is seen more as an instrument for overarching goals rather than as an autonomous concept.

The notion of sharing appears therefore to be subordinated to specific goals and challenges within the neighbourhoods. A common denominator, however, is the *social dimension* inherent in objectives such as empowerment, maintaining social mix and creating public space. Interviewees often use the concept of sharing to describe how residents are expected to create or maintain community, mainly through the sharing of activities, services, information and space. As a member of an initiative in Stuttgart Mitte, active in a public space project, explained:

“How private is public space? Should we better share this space and use it or leave it as it is? So sharing is a must. We're trying to use and share the space with others.” (Ini-ST.11) The focus on sharing of space is particularly evident in the neighbourhood in Stuttgart; it is, however, also prominent in interviews across all seven case studies, alongside the sharing of activities, services, and information. Respondents also mention sharing time, skills, visions, moods, as well as responsibility and learning, as expressed by a member of a co-housing project in Berlin: *“Sharing is, at the same time, the responsibility to share learning as a process (...) and sharing spaces.”* (Ini-BL.10) Space sharing is often addressed as a basis for sharing activities, information, and items.

The sharing of items is somewhat less prominent in the interviews. In this context, the objective of sharing is less about community building and more about supporting disadvantaged groups. While most evident among interviewees from the poorer neighbourhoods of Gottsunda, Nord-Holland, and Poplar, the sharing of items is also mentioned in the socially more mixed areas. For example, a member of a bicycle project in Ottakring explains: *“Bicycle is freedom! And I think it's important that everyone should have the opportunity to have a bicycle if they want to. We also give away bicycles, even if people don't have money and don't have a bicycle or don't have much money.”* (Ini-V.01) Apart from mentioning projects or associations that explicitly organise the sharing of items, the interviewees point to informal forms of sharing. A participant from a socio-cultural association in Poplar states: *“There's a lot of unspoken sharing which takes place in the stairwells (of apartment blocks), sharing of unwanted things... we once gave away all my dad's mechanic tools as we didn't have use for them.”* (Ini-L.04).

Beyond the social aim of creating networks and communities among inhabitants and supporting them with resources, sharing is also connected to the notion of sustainability, particularly in relation to the sharing of items. Similarly, gardening projects, key features of the peripheral neighbourhoods of Bagneux, Gottsunda, and Poplar, are associated with sustainability goals and a closer relationship to nature. Overall, however, interviewees tend to frame sharing as a means subordinated to other objectives. During the research process, it was sometimes even necessary to describe what we (as researchers) meant by sharing, especially in Gottsunda and Kassel Nord-Holland, where a member of a socio-cultural association stated: *“I can describe it (...) as sharing, but we have always described it more as making available and enabling.”* (Sca-KS.13). That said, most interviewees were familiar with the notion of sharing. The closest connection to sharing emerged among municipal actors in Vienna, one of whom noted that *“providing spaces for sharing (is) part of municipal duties”* (Pol-V.10).

3.3.2. Actor constellations and alliances

The picture that emerges from the interviews on non-commercial sharing differs considerably concerning the main actors involved. In the peripheral neighbourhoods with poorer populations (including Kassel Nord-Holland), sharing is described as being mainly initiated by actors from the municipality, housing companies, and associations. These actors provide spaces such as neighbourhood centres; they organise courses, counselling services, cultural events, markets, and festivals. Within the framework of these offerings, which tend to follow a top-down logic, sharing practices develop between locals. Civic engagement by residents and bottom-up initiatives is described as relatively low, primarily attributed to residents' lack of resources. In comparison, in the inner-city neighbourhoods with more heterogeneous populations, the interviewees refer more often to the engagement of civil society initiatives in sharing, and note how these groups enter into alliances with actors from the municipality, different associations, and housing companies.

Due to the property structure of housing, actors from housing companies and the municipality are particularly important in neighbourhoods with a high degree of public housing, such as the peripheral estates of Bagneux, Gottsunda, and Poplar. These actors initiate sharing, on the one hand, by providing an infrastructure base, e.g., spaces, services, and events for residents. On the other hand, housing companies and municipalities form alliances with professional intermediary actors from social and cultural associations. Because civic engagement is described as low in these neighbourhoods, alliances with bottom-up initiatives are difficult to establish. An exception, however, is found in gardening projects within these three neighbourhoods. In Bagneux, many interviewees refer to a large complex urban gardening project and hub, "Agrocité", initiated by an architectural collective and now managed by users. Underlining the (needed) support for civic engagement here, a representative of the town hall states: "*We must continue to support and protect the Agrocité so that it develops further towards even more sharing practices. The shared garden is insufficient; people only come to cultivate their individual plot.*" (Pol-P.01) At the same time, the strong influence of actors from the municipality and housing companies in these neighbourhoods leads to a feeling of dependency and even control among actors from associations and civil society, as stated by a member of a local cultural organisation: "*Historically in Bagneux, associations have always been encouraged, but as soon as something emerges spontaneously, the town hall tries to absorb it and take control.*" (Sca-P.01). This feeling of dependency and even restriction is also noticeable among the few bottom-up organised projects in Gottsunda – an urban gardening project in particular – and in Nord-Holland, although in the latter the influence of actors from the communal housing sector is lower.

Within the inner city neighbourhoods of Ottakring, Stuttgart Mitte, and Südliche Luisenstadt, alliances between civil society and actors from the municipality, housing companies, and associations are reported to be more balanced. In Ottakring, in Vienna, the urban renewal office, which is part of the political-administrative system of the city, enables sharing by providing spaces and other resources, for instance in the well-known project "Garage Grande" – a temporarily repurposed parking lot – which relies on cooperation between a private housing investor and diverse civil society organisations. Civic engagement and bottom-up initiatives are also significant in Stuttgart Mitte and Südliche Luisenstadt in Berlin. In both neighbourhoods, mutual alliances between grassroots initiatives and other actors, including the municipality, are reported, as stated by a member of an initiative in Stuttgart: "*I think the best thing is to have good contacts in politics. If you have any ideas, you can ask someone on the district council directly how they see it. They then recommend some strategy on how to handle the bureaucracy better and stuff like that.*" (Ini-ST.11).

Interestingly, participants in initiatives reclaiming public spaces in Stuttgart do not necessarily live in the neighbourhood, and their ideas arise primarily from scholarly circles. In contrast, civic actors in the Berlin case, show a stronger attachment to the neighbourhood, with

initiatives largely composed of local residents who express a strong sense of belonging rooted in the neighbourhood's long history of activism, squatting, and migration. Since the 1980s, Kreuzberg's distinctive "flair" has led to urban developments that allow considerable freedom for non-commercial initiatives, including using vacant spaces in artistic experimental ways. Today, however, as mentioned by all interviewees, gentrification threatens this unique atmosphere. There is a far-reaching consensus that increasing rents for both housing and commercial premises must be countered. In this context, political actors sympathise with urban initiatives and try to support civil society actions with public resources.

4. Discussion

As the results of the quantitative survey among residents show, forms of non-commercial sharing clearly differ from practices in the context of the commercial Sharing Economy. Non-commercial sharing has a different content focus, which is on activities, services and information (mainly intangible goods), in contrast to car and home sharing, which dominate paid offerings. While in the Sharing Economy social media and internet platforms play a central role in the dissemination and organisation of sharing practices, digital media take a subordinate position compared to personal contacts in non-commercial sharing. Among personal contacts, friendships are most important, but the more sharing practices exist in the neighbourhoods studied, the more acquaintances and strangers are included in these networks. Furthermore, sharing motives are less focused on economic and pragmatic reasons such as cost savings and convenience, which are highlighted in studies on the Sharing Economy (Andreotti et al., 2017; Böcker & Meelen, 2017). Instead, social and value-related motives such as maintaining and establishing contacts, sustainability, and a moral obligation are emphasised as determining reasons. Finally, while participation in the Sharing Economy is typically associated with younger and more educated groups (Bäro et al., 2022), we observe greater openness in non-commercial sharing, especially concerning social status. Common interests, language, and age are more likely to play a role.

The findings of the survey support the hypothesis that the neighbourhood constitutes a core site for non-commercial practices of sharing, which are largely decoupled from commercialized forms. They also posit that the use of facilities and activities in the neighbourhood, and the sense of belonging, are related to residents' sharing activities. The most important spatial level at which contacts are made is one's own building. However, a comparison between the four study areas of the survey also shows that sharing is more frequently practised where there are opportunities for contact beyond one's own house in the neighbourhood, including stores, markets or festivals, institutions like schools or public spaces such as parks.

The qualitative interviews with experts from the municipality, housing companies, associations, and civil society initiatives allow us to refine the insights obtained from the survey and reveal different conditions of non-commercial sharing within the neighbourhoods. First of all, given the finding of the survey that sharing at the neighbourhood level is quite a widespread practice among residents, it is somewhat surprising that for the interviewed experts, sharing does not constitute a central, action-guiding discourse. They generally do not view sharing as a goal in itself, but rather as a means of addressing neighbourhood-related challenges. Even when they subordinate sharing to different goals like social integration in the more disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Bagneux, Gottsunda, Nord-Holland, and Poplar), or the preservation of an alternative lifestyle and the creation of more accessible and inclusive public spaces in the socially more mixed areas (Stuttgart Mitte, Südliche Luisenstadt, and Ottakring), there are common motives, too. Similar to the participants of the survey, the interviewed experts see community building and sustainability as driving motives for sharing. While creating a sense of community through the sharing of activities, information and space is viewed as a means for empowerment against

poverty, gentrification, or the scarcity of public space, the notion of sustainability is more closely associated with the sharing of items. When it comes to item sharing, the experts also mention, at least implicitly, another moral motive of sharing, highlighting its function to provide poorer residents with access to goods they might not otherwise be able to afford.

More than the survey, the expert interviews point out that the sharing of spaces plays a key role in enabling other forms of sharing in the neighbourhood. In the quantitative survey, the role of space is indicated primarily through respondents' reporting that it is relatively frequently used jointly with others. The qualitative interviews, however, address space as a basis on which other forms of sharing can develop and take place. This perspective is shared across all interviewed stakeholder groups. Civil society initiatives see available space as a prerequisite for their actions, while housing companies, stakeholders of the municipality, and associations often refer to space as one of the key resources they provide residents for meetings and a differentiated range of cultural or social offerings.

Expert interviews conducted in neighbourhoods with poorer populations highlight the top-down logic of providing space and offers through municipal actors and housing companies to enable sharing among residents. This applies particularly to the peripheral neighbourhoods, even if there are self-organised projects in these neighbourhoods like "Agrocité" in Bagneux or an urban gardening initiative in Gottsunda. Where civic engagement by residents and initiatives was described as low, it has been primarily attributed to their lack of resources. Following [Botsman and Rogers \(2010\)](#), it could be said that residents lack the "idling capacity" necessary for sharing. In contrast, in the neighbourhoods Südliche Luisenstadt in Berlin, Mitte in Stuttgart, and Ottakring in Vienna, expert interviews emphasised the role of transformative and value-oriented actors in developing sharing practices. These forms of sharing are characterised by a bottom-up logic. In addition, civil society actors form alliances with institutional actors, who, unlike in the poorer neighbourhoods, are not described as hierarchical.

Our qualitative study thus illustrates that different types of neighbourhoods indeed produce different sharing practices. More precisely, it shows how initiating and organising sharing differ among the studied areas due to the influence of specific actors and how they enter into alliances. In the poorer and peripheral neighbourhoods, the influence of institutional actors (such as the municipality and the welfare state) on sharing practices seems to be much stronger than in the more socially mixed inner-city quarters. This observation somewhat contradicts the survey's finding that social status is not relevant for non-commercial sharing and instead aligns with the finding reported for the commercial sector that people with higher formal education share more frequently ([Bäro et al., 2022](#)). However, the expert interviews are partially limited and do not allow precise statements about the frequency and range of sharing among residents. Possibly, large parts of sharing practices, particularly among disadvantaged inhabitants, remain invisible to them. The survey itself is not conclusive in this respect: On the one hand, sharing is by far the least frequently practised among residents of the peripheral estate Gottsunda and is most widespread in Südliche Luisenstadt. On the other hand, we find a relatively high sharing frequency among inhabitants of Kassel Nord-Holland, where a poorer population occupies a significant portion of the area.

With the reviewed existing studies on neighbourhood sharing in mind, our investigation confirms the relevance of trusted institutions and interactions between neighbours for sharing activities ([Westskog et al., 2020](#)), as well as trustful relations between local actors and the municipality ([Salvia & Morello, 2020](#)). However, we can state that the so-called redistributive logic of sharing related to institutions becomes secondary when the (more) reciprocal logic of sharing between residents and through bottom-up initiatives is more frequent within the neighbourhood. The social status of residents might play a role in the frequency of these interactions. However, we can certainly say that the

diversity of opportunities to meet outside one's own building stimulates sharing activities among neighbourhood residents. Our study also reveals the importance of available, non-commercial space as a basis for sharing activities to develop, in line with [Huber's \(2022\)](#) findings (on a smaller scale) in his comparison of two housing projects. In addition, we see that a community spirit and a sense of belonging among residents and stakeholders support sharing in the neighbourhood. As we have shown for the Südliche Luisenstadt, the studied quarter with the most widespread sharing activities, actors involved in sharing practices often relate to a specific narrative and historical context of the neighbourhood, which also seems to foster alliances between different types of actors.

5. Conclusion

Drawing on quantitative and qualitative research in seven neighbourhoods across cities in Austria, France, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, we have examined the characteristics of non-commercial sharing and the role of the neighbourhood. The quantitative survey among residents highlighted well-grounded differences between non-commercial and commercial sharing, which have not been systematically explored thus far. These differences concern not only the varying motives for sharing, which are relatively well researched in the existing literature, but also the content, organisation, and actors involved in sharing practices. We could then find strong evidence that the neighbourhood is a central location for non-commercial sharing, and that sharing in the neighbourhood is only partially related to digital tools and neighbourhood platforms, which had been the main focus of previous research. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with public actors, associations, housing companies, and initiatives, we discussed the observed differences in neighbourhood sharing regarding their organisation, frequency and facilitating conditions. The distinction between reciprocal sharing among neighbourhood residents and redistributive sharing through institutions made by [Westskog et al. \(2020, 2021\)](#) has proven to be a valuable analytical tool for describing differences in the organisation and main actors of sharing between poorer, primarily peripheral urban settings and more socially mixed inner-city neighbourhoods in our sample. Our research also affirms that the two factors identified by [Westskog et al. \(2020, 2021\)](#), i.e., the interaction among residents and the existence of trusted institutions, are key facilitating conditions for sharing. It further points to the importance of "Third Places" ([Oldenburg, 1997](#)) in the neighbourhood, as well as a sense of belonging and common narrative among residents and stakeholders, a condition that might be referred to as a "geographical community" ([Gusfield, 1975; McMillan & Chavis, 1986](#)).

The research underlines the untapped potential of non-commercial sharing for sustainable and socially inclusive urban development, as stakeholders rarely support sharing as an explicit goal, even though they acknowledge its potential for community building, sustainability, and improving access to goods. Alliances and non-hierarchical cooperation between different types of stakeholders, particularly between public and civic actors, could promote and spread neighbourhood sharing, which is rooted primarily in residential buildings. Taken together, these findings contribute to broader theoretical debates on Sharing Cities ([Koch et al., 2024; Labaeye, 2019; McLaren & Agyeman, 2015; Sánchez Vergara, Gineis, & Papaoikonomou, 2021](#)). Although not always framed as part of an explicit Sharing City agenda, our study shows that non-commercial neighbourhood-based sharing can be understood as an assemblage of situated practices shaped by local socio-spatial dynamics and actor alliances. Furthermore, expanding beyond previous research on the social ecologies of platform-based sharing practices (e.g., [Santala & McGuirk, 2022; Schor, 2014](#)), our study demonstrates that non-commercial sharing is much more closely connected to personal contacts than to digital platforms. In this way, it constitutes a form of embedded social capital that both reflects and reinforces local community ties and a sense of belonging at the neighbourhood level. Additionally, the observed

intrinsic motivation for neighbourhood sharing, as shown in the questionnaires, contributes to broader discussions on the sharing economy (e.g., Barron et al., 2018; Frenken & Schor, 2017; Ribera Jemio et al., 2024; Rutkowska-Gurak & Adamska, 2019; Schor, 2014; Vith et al., 2019).

Finally, our analysis of sharing practices also intersects with wider debates on urban commons (e.g., Polko, 2024; Petrescu et al., 2022; Ferguson, 2014; Foster & Iaione, 2016), illustrating that while many of the observed practices may not intentionally produce urban commons, they do align with the ethos of collectively maintained resources and reciprocal care at the neighbourhood level. However, for many respondents, non-commercial forms of neighbourhood sharing do not appear to be a strategic choice aimed at living more sustainably. Instead, they are perceived as everyday practices and an integral part of neighbourhood life that contribute to individual well-being. In light of the multiple challenges our cities face today, urban policy should therefore consider how such inherent forms of interaction at the neighbourhood, can be recognised and supported to enable co-produced neighbourhood resilience (Stevenson & Petrescu, 2016).

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Carsten Keller: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Floris Bernhard:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation. **Helena Cermeño:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration, Investigation, Funding acquisition. **Andrew Belfield:** Writing – review & editing, Investigation, Data curation. **Denise Goff:** Writing – review & editing, Investigation, Data curation. **Alexander Hamedinger:** Writing – review & editing, Project administration, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation. **Emma Holmqvist:** Writing – review & editing, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Data curation. **Florian Koch:** Writing – review & editing, Project administration, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation. **Doina Petrescu:** Writing – review & editing, Project administration, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Data curation. **Meike Schalk:** Writing – review & editing, Project administration, Investigation, Funding acquisition.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2026.106883>.

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Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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