



Collaborative Consumption & Cultural Diversity:

*The Impact of Meal Sharing Experiences
on Social Capital & Cohesion
in Amsterdam*

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Dedicated to Alan Hall

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Abstract

Collaborative consumption platforms have rampantly increased societies usage of online Peer-2-Peer sharing systems, resulting in new virtual networks and infrastructure that augment previous societal integration and cultural adaption processes. However, despite the increasing ‘super diversity’ of city’s like Amsterdam, no evident line of research has analyzed the impacts of different sharing economy platforms on social capital and cohesion. In turn, this thesis employed a case study approach and a grounded theory methodological framework to investigate the various narratives being endorsed by Amsterdam municipality’s Sharing Economy Action Plan, its main design partner Share NL, and a 127 collaborative consumption platforms currently operating in Amsterdam. In turn, the theoretical sampling process derived from qualitative coding and semi-structured interviews, provided substantial evidence that the Tasty Talks meal sharing platform diverged from the Action Plan and other sharing economy sectors in its capacity and motivation to strengthen the city’s societal fabric. More specifically, Tasty Talk experiences harness Amsterdam’s historical development trajectory, open and tolerant urban imaginary, and current majority-minority demographic profile, through the creation of personal home dining experiences that foster intimate, interethnic, collaborative cooking activities and cultural learning opportunities. Subsequently, this demonstration of collective agency and enhancement of participants social cognitive capacities, aids in the development of social cohesion by improving societal integration and cultural adaption processes.

“A collection of human beings does not become a society because each of them has an objectively determined or subjectively impelling life-content. It becomes a society only when the vitality of these contents attains the forms of reciprocal influence; only when one individual has an effect, immediate or mediate, upon another, is mere spatial aggregation or temporal succession transformed into society” (Simmel, 1972).

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1. Introduction

Collaborative consumption, expected to grow to be a \$235 billion industry by 2025 and suggested as being the “third great economic revolution”, has rampantly increased societies usage of online Peer-to-Peer (P2P) sharing systems, resulting in new virtual networks and infrastructure that have augmented the processes and tools individuals use to obtain social capital and develop social cohesion (Botsman, 2010; Bardhi F. E., 2016; Benoit, 2017; Petroczi, 2007). Each of the 127 platforms operating in Amsterdam, from Airbnb and Couchsurfing, to Peerby, TaskRabbit, Home Cooked and Tasty Talks, support different sharing practices and experiences, with varying levels of face-to-face interaction, monetization and opportunities for inter-ethnic contact, cultural learning, and exercising collective agency, often blurring the lines between market-oriented exchanges and intentional prosocial practices (Bardhi F. E., 2012; Benkler, 2004; Jarvis, 2019). Subsequently, this diversification of sharing practices has resulted in contestations against the growing phenomena of ‘pseudo’ sharing, characterized as the act of corporations appropriating the positive identity of “true sharing”, which involves the empathetic caring for others and contributes to the creation and reinforcing of supportive communities, and disguising such as commodified transactions, like short-term renting and leasing (Belk, 2014, p. 56; Bardhi F. E., 2012; Schor, 2017; Plewnia, 2017).

While numerous studies have questioned the potential of commodifying formerly altruistic, ‘neighbourly’ interactions, to result in “hyper-Neoliberalization” processes that exacerbate existing inequalities, no evident line of research has analyzed the different impact collaborative consumption experiences have on social cohesion versus social capital, despite the former being a prominent benefit endorsed by institutions and the private sector alike. Understanding how different sharing economies impact levels of social capital and cohesion, through their endorsement of individual or collective benefits, functionality, and objective, is becoming increasingly important in city’s such as Amsterdam due to the combination of the increasing ‘super diversity’ of such transnational service hubs, and the global trend of neoliberal structural adjustments, which challenge past welfare systems and labor stability. Amsterdam’s majority-minority demographic profile has increased the complexity of societal integration and cultural adaption, while privatization measures and cuts to social services have dissolved many of the tools that support such processes.

Although, traditional, ‘true’, sharing practices often provide space for both cultural learning and social support, Amsterdam Municipality’s Sharing Economy Action Plan, the first of such in Europe to guide the disruptive nature of collaborative consumption, has embraced a free-market approach, contributing to a capital intensive sharing economy that bolsters individualism. In contrast, as illustrated by this thesis, Amsterdam’s historical development trajectory, combined with its intensely ethnically diverse population and set of social norms that value ‘openness’ and ‘tolerance’, have contributed to the formation of a unique foundation for meal sharing experiences to emerge as a novel societal integration and cultural adaption tool. More specifically, Tasty Talks embraces diversity and strives to accentuate such by providing intimate spaces for people to connect through cooperative cooking processes that inspire collective agency. In turn, these meal sharing experiences demonstrate the capacity to improve social cohesion by fostering dynamic inter-ethnic interactions that incorporate cooperative activities and cultural learning, resulting in ‘true’ collaborative consumption experiences.

2. Literature Review

i. Social Capital

Social capital's origins are rooted in an economic system of thought, as Loury (1977) and later Bourdieu (1986), defined such as an individual trait born from the resources gained by having membership to multiple social networks, and turning this 'social capital' into other types of capital, such as cultural, political and especially, economic (Richardson, 2008; Pugno, 2012). In turn, social capital, like human capital, often presumes a micro perspective as the aggregate of resources are "linked to the [individual] *possession* of a, diverse and rich durable network...for future returns", illustrating the value of the collective investment is for the development of an "individual asset" (Klein, 2013, p. 893). In turn, this conceptualization resulted in a theoretical foundation for social capital which historically, emphasized capital accumulation, class theory and a generally Marxist overtone, creating a lens of social network development based on class relations (Portes A. V., 2011; Klein, 2013, p. 894).

Putnam (2000) continued this train of thought, noting that, like physical and human capital, social networks also have value, as such increases access to knowledge needed for innovation, resources, and customer networks (Jenson, 2010). This lens supports Fromm's claim, that social capital is more related to 'having' rather than 'being', as with social cohesion, and the former is something one obtains and uses for a purpose, most often, material gains (Portes A. V., 2011; Klein, 2013; Carrasco, 2016). Although, this perspective was further developed by Putnam and Lin who conceptualized also social capital against a backdrop of capital accumulation and expanding one's personal class position, an augmentation occurred as the phenomena was became more widely understood as a collective asset as well as individual, and the importance of trustful networks and shared norms was heightened (Coleman, 1988; Williams, 2007; Portes, 1988; 2000).

Coleman produced an alternative concept of social capital which expanded beyond that of class relations and was embedded within all social relations, as he defined social capital as one's ability to work and collaborate harmoniously with their neighbors, in organizations, and the like, towards a common purpose (Coleman, 1988). Moreover, social capital was viewed as "inherent in the structure of relations between actors", mainly that of trust between ties, sound information channels, and the existence of shared norms and collectively agreed upon sanctions (Coleman, 1988). Although Coleman's broader theorization seemed to align social capital indicators with those of social cohesion, as it conveys social capitals value in wider-societal conditions and as a reflection of democracy, social organizations and the like, Putnam's position, which this thesis also supports, is that social capital is a more "narrow concept that is more tightly defined" and is "one crucial ingredient in social cohesion" (Portes, 2000; 2011). Portes elaborated on this argument from a different angle by critiquing social capital as being too all encompassing and as being a "synonym for all that is good in society", especially that which is related to ownership as society's dependence on private property, capital accumulation and materialism intensified after the post-1980 global political shift (Carrasco, 2016, p. 129). Although Cockerham continued this line of capital intensive discourse by defining such as an "investment people make in society" by actively engaging with community organizations, civic institutions and the like, the aspect of improving one's health and wellbeing was added, however, notably still on an individual perspective, in comparison to the 'common good' view of a societal outlook on the collective benefits of social cohesion (Cockerham, 2007, p. 181).

Important to acknowledge with regards to the engagement of citizens within one's community and neighborhood residents, and their levels of social capital, is the locations demographical characteristics, as such influences the level of strong and weak ties, and bonding and bridging that occurs, and in turn, the norms and values regarding sharing practices, trust, and generalized reciprocity (Forrest, 2001). Various academics acknowledge the correlation between the socioeconomic status of a neighborhood, its ethnic homo/heterogeneity, and the social networks which develop (Forrest, 2001; Vervoort, 2011). While for "blue collar workers" strong ties in one's local arena are often formed, those higher on the socioeconomic ladder usually have a higher number of strong ties in disturbed areas (Vervoort, 2011, p. 891). In terms ethnic diversity, a more complex picture emerges as studies have argued that such can constrain or promote the formation of weak and strong ties, and strengthen or diminish social capital and cohesion, depending on the types of relationships analyzed, the political and economic context of the neighborhood, city and state, and the macro demographic profile (Vervoort, 2011, p. 898).

According to Putnam's constrict theory, ethnic diversity creates challenges for "developing and sustaining social capital in urban settings...and decreases social cohesion and reduces social interactions among community residents" as citizens often have "less confidence in government, have fewer friends, and spend less time" engaged in civic and community activities" (Wickes, 2013, pp. 51, 53). Vervoort (2011) contributes further in a Dutch study that concluded the greater the ethnic concentration in a neighborhood, the less often ethnic minorities have social ties with Dutch natives" and strong ties more generally" (Vervoort, 2011, p. 896). Accordingly, this thesis will aim to understand the role the sharing economy, specifically, food and meal sharing, play in navigating Amsterdam's majority-minority population and the challenges posed by the "diversity-distrust association", and how inter-ethnic, cooperative cooking activities provide a bridge that helps develop both strong and weak ties (Wickes, 2013, p. 72).

ii. Social Cohesion

Differing from the individualistic nature of social capital, social cohesion, a collective experience, is conceptualized from a macro perspective, originating from a system of thought directed toward fostering shared values and positive mental well-being by overcoming shared challenges, resulting in the need to continually question the types of contact and interactions that support cities in their attempts to retain a relatively steady state of social cohesion amongst a constantly changing and diversifying population (Forrest, 2001; Portes A. V., 2011). Therefore, before delving into the roots of social cohesion, it is important to recognize the contributions of both the contact hypothesis and conflict theory (Wickes, 2013). Firstly, the contact hypothesis claims that "automatic assumptions and related prejudice" against different ethnic groups are reduced by "*equal status* contact" between majority and minority members (Wickes, 2013, p. 53). Through the lens of the conflict theory, this type of contact is viewed as vital in neighborhoods with increasing ethnic minority populations, as "competition for resources and cultural values rises", and in turn, the exacerbation of negative views towards immigration and cultural integration (Wickes, 2013, p. 54; Vervoort, 2010). Although this is often referred to in terms of "casual contact" based on general proximity (Wickes, 2013, p. 55), as this thesis will illustrate, meal sharing experiences that accentuate the majority-minority population of Amsterdam, provide new spaces for different, more in-depth, types of contact, adding to the complexity of social dynamics and relationships that emerge from collaborative consumption, and the processes toward creating, maintaining and improving social cohesion.

The usefulness and importance of social cohesion and in learning ways to foster such in society was most notably first recognized by Emile Durkheim's conceptualization in 1951, which acknowledged the phenomena as the presence of social bonds which "constitute the fabric of society" and is a critical factor in ensuring positive mental health and wellbeing, especially in regards to fighting isolation and preventing suicide (Durkheim, 1951). Durkheim's main elements included trust, equality, and social inclusion, with regards to institutions, society and one's community (Durkheim, 1951; Carrasco, 2016). This foundation has been built upon further through the examination of the flows of power and social relations that influence "solidarity, trust, and, reciprocity" and specifically, how these elements allow cohesive groups to acquire their own source of power and space, key for "empowerment-based community mobilizations", especially for that of marginalized groups (Carrasco, 2016, p. 129; Rost, 2011). This theorization portrays social cohesion as a collective asset which provides the psychosocial space for the shared norms, values and practices that intrinsically promote a balance of both bonding and bridging, and possibly, of sharing in and out practices, as a sense of collective agency, mutual support for shared responsibility and success for the group forms (Carrasco, 2016).

Since Durkheim (1951), social cohesion has been interpreted by a variety of academics in various fields, however, the majority relate such to the social relationships, "their importance, proximity and strength in society and how they are embedded between individuals, groups and place" (Mulunga, 2014; Portes A. V., 2011). Contrarily, this leaves ample space for interpretation, especially in terms of the contextual elements of various contact and interaction types which occur throughout all parts of society. Subsequently, this has been addressed by many through the common view of social cohesion manifesting within the following three levels (Portes A. V., 2011; Rost, 2011; Mulunga, 2014). More specifically, the levels are noted to consist of dimensions of: 1. Civic norms and values which convey democratic trust, 2. Social order and solidarity that is derived from minimal class conflict and inequality, and lastly, 3. People's "sense of identity" which incorporates senses of place attachment, social bonds, social history, and their ideas, culture and values (Mulunga, 2014; Council of Europe, 2005).

While these categorizations aid in the organization of social cohesion elements, these classifications have been critiqued for being a macro-focused view of social cohesion that fails to adequately acknowledge the micro-level behavior, especially that of an individuals connections, social network reach and quality, experiences of individual integration, and network norms in terms of solidarity, identity, reciprocity and trustworthiness (Chan, 2007; Berman, 2004; Daniel, 2008; Willer, 2012). Accordingly, to Easterly, who defined social cohesion as the nature and extent of social and economic divisions within society, this means understanding and overcoming issues relating to ethnic diversity, income distribution, and societal trust (Jenson, 2010). Zhu's conceptualization of cross-cultural space addresses these hurdles on the individual level by implying that by developing a comprehensive set of social cognitive skills that aid one in identifying cultural differences in communication, language use, and social norms, more harmonious neighborhoods can emerge due to reductions in information asymmetries, prejudices and other social barriers (Zhu, 2007; Pietila, 2010). In turn, enhancing one's cultural space through inter-ethnic contact, cooperative task completion and sociocultural learning, fosters the building of relational empathy, shared values, practices and goals and subsequently, broadens an individuals professional and socio-cognitive space by expanding their "social stock of knowledge" (Zhu, 2007, p. 4).

In order to address the dynamic culturally diverse social systems which emerge through meal sharing experiences, and their impact of social capital and cohesion, it is important to acknowledge the modes of agency within the social cognitive theory, which states that people produce, and are a product of their social environment, as each play differing rolls depending on the situation, motivation of participant, and infrastructure of the platform (Bandura, 2002). More specifically, in addition to direct personal agency, in which people act to influence their lives directly, more important to this thesis are the elements of proxy, and collective agency (Bandura, 2002). Proxy agency, associated with social capital, is socially mediated, as people attempt to gain access to people and resources, otherwise out of reach, to “secure the outcomes they desire” (Bandura, 2002, p. 271). However, as many goals are only achievable through collaborative efforts, like societal integration and cultural adaption, collective agency, the third mode, is employed as the process of people “pooling their knowledge, skills, and resources, to provide mutual support, form alliances, and work together to secure what they cannot accomplish on their own” (Bandura, 2002). While daily life requires a constantly changing blend of each of these agentic processes, as this thesis will explain, differing sharing economy platforms evoke varying levels of each, depending on their specific attributes, which in turn, influences the impact the platform has on social capital and cohesion.

Lastly, when considering Amsterdam as the case study for analysis, and its ethnic majority-minority demographic status, the varying agentic social cognitive processes become more complex, as each are culturally influenced, resulting in more complicated types of contact, and as will be proven, a broader range of integration and adaption possibilities. In this context, culture will be referred to as a “system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviors and customs shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and that serve as the basis for further interactions” (Teras, 2007). As explained by (Teras, 2007), intercultural activities, such as meal sharing, are “dynamic, collective processes” which are motive-driven, “rooted in local historical contexts, and operate between cultures and people” (p. 38). Accordingly, collaborative consumption processes can be argued to carry a high potential for creating unique types of (inter-ethnic) contact in which varying participants must exhibit collective agency by cooperating and pursuing a shared goal, enhancing their ability to form a balance between social capital and cohesion, limiting the negative effects that can occur from an intensification towards one or the other (Jenson, 2010).

iii. History of Sharing

Sharing, claimed by scholars to be as old as humankind and “essential for our survival”, is a complex, culturally rooted behaviour that is constantly under pressure and influx due to changing ideologies and social value sets and is a key factor which influences the physical and social organization of human life (Belk, 2010; Davies, 2017; Schor, 2017; Munger, 2016). The roots of sharing practices develop in families, first with mothers who share nutrients with their infants before birth, and then afterward as instances of “sharing in” become the norm, for most families, as they work as a unit for the success of the whole (Belk, 2017, p. 250). Such instances of sharing in includes meals, childcare and possessions and is characterized as the empathetic caring for others (Belk, 2010). While this phenomenon is most common amongst family members, kin and close friends, others have argued that digitally mediated technologies have the potential to expedite this process, depending on the implementation approach (Belk, 2010; Jarvis, 2019). For these reasons, sharing in practices are claimed to foster the creation and reinforcement of strong bonds, group identity and solidarity, and trust, which leads to group members developing a shared sense of moral

responsibility for the well-being of other members, coined ‘relational empathy’, establishing the social infrastructure required for a strong culture of sharing, collaboration and collective agency (Willer, 2012; Caprariello, 2013).

Additionally, this sense of moral responsibility paired with the strengthening of relationships, trust, and group solidarity increases the probability that augmentations and expansions may occur with regards to the senses of materialism and boundaries of sharers Aggregate Extended Self (AES), and therefore, the parameters of common ownership, potential for collaborative lifestyles, and improvements to social capital and cohesion (Belk, 1988; 2017). Materialism has been defined with three dimensions, including: using possessions as an indicator of success, their centrality to one’s life, and the belief they lead to happiness (Promislo, 2017). Not only do each of these contribute negatively to well-being but each dimension perpetuates and reinforces “sharing out” practices, defined as the “dividing of resources among discrete economic interests” out of self-interest (Belk, 2010). Such practices work to preserve the self/other boundary rather than encourage the expansion of one’s AES, hindering instances of collective agency, sharing in and common ownership, and promoting a sharing mindset based on personal gains and social capital (Belk, 1988; 2010; Shrum, 2014).

However, in order to divulge into the multidimensional characteristics of social capital and cohesion and their connection to the sharing economy, it is important to reflect on how society’s perception of the concept of personal identity, and how the boundaries of such have been altered due to the increased relation between a sense of self and material possessions (Belk R. 1988). Over the last century, the sense of individual identity has become increasingly a reflection of, and connected to, the material possessions one owns, promoting the idea, “we are what we own” (Belk, 1988, 2016). This led to the theorization of the “Aggregate Extended Self” (AES), which includes not only the individual, but a sense of self which incorporates possessions as well (Belk, 1988). Moreover, depending on the context, one’s AES can include a range of actors from the individual, family and close kin to national and supranational levels, in addition to possessions, ideas and physical environments (Belk R. , 2016). Therefore, one’s AES is conceptualized as a culturally dependent, non-static, and dimensionally complex range of spheres which incorporates various social arrangements (Belk, 1988). These multiple selves act as various boundaries which dictate who people share with, and what they share, due to different levels of moral hazard, trust, and emotional attachment to the item, or the relationship with the recipient (Belk R. , 1988; Frechette, 2016). Therefore, understanding the way inter-ethnic contact, cultural learning, and cooperation, challenges current perceptions of one’s AES, aids in providing a more in-depth analysis of how collaborative consumption can either solidify boundaries or increase their malleability and permeability, elevate levels of social capital and cohesion, or diminish such.

However, because sharing practices are motivated by a range of cultural, social and economic factors, they are not always inspired by altruistic behaviour like studies which illustrate the prosocial sharing of young children, and the normative everyday use of the term which assigns it attributes such as “fairness, equity and supportive group dynamics” (Davies, 2017, p. 211). For instance, the “sharing paradigm” as conceptualized by Agyeman and McLaren in their book on *Sharing Cities*, outlines the complex dimensions of sharing which include different forms of (co)ownership, can be done simultaneously, or sequentially, be rivalrous or non, and be monetized or not, without expectations of direct reciprocation (Agyeman, 2013; Davies, 2017; Belk R. , Sharing, 2010; Benkler, 2004). Additionally,

sharing can include experiences, time, items or services, and can be between different interests from public to private (Agyeman, 2013; Davies, 2017). Importantly to this study, is the way in which the alternative sharing practices promoted by the Social Web has drastically expanded and augmented the types and number of sharing options, the details of which will be outlined in the following section. However, first it is important to further illustrate the influences of broader social, economic, and ideological systems of thought have influenced instances of sharing in and out. Subsequently, this will lay the foundation for understanding the emergence of the way in which varying collaborative consumption systems work in a transformational manner that opposes current power structures and mainstream growth narratives or contribute to the reinforcing of such structures.

The Scientific Revolution ushered in a new wave of sharing, as the sharing of knowledge, rather than hoarding secret theories, became the standardized practice for its immeasurable ability to inspire innovation. However, the technological development which followed, prompting the industrial revolution and rampant urbanization rates in addition to the more prominent ideological integration of liberal capitalism into social and economic structures, created a rippling affect which began altering peoples perception of their AES, specifically the permeability and malleability of their sharing boundaries (Belk R. W., 1988; Promislo, 2017; Martin J. C., 2016). The idolization of the ‘self-sufficient’ individual, whose societal value is measured by their material wealth and private property has led to the prioritization of possessions over intimate relationships, exacerbating urban loneliness and isolation (Frechette, 2016; Caprariello, 2013). The emphasis on independence and social capital rather than interconnectedness and cohesion was further strengthened with the rise of the nuclear Fordist suburban family due to its reliance on, and promotion of, a consumer-driven, materialistic lifestyle (Bardhi F. E., 2012; Belk R. , 2007). Such heightened levels of materialism and possessiveness, which can be observed within households and between family members, as people obtain their own private televisions and the like, are argued to hinder true sharing practices and decrease well-being, as possessions, which are most often enjoyed in isolation, became prioritized over relationships (Bardhi F. E., 2012; Shrum, 2014; Belk, 2007). In turn, this has resulted in more intense restrictions and borders to individuals AES, especially in terms of permeability and malleability, perpetuating barriers to sharing and network development which were further strengthened during the post-1980 era of neoliberalism.

Globalization and the neoliberal era laid the appropriate political and socioeconomic infrastructure for the sharing economy to flourish, as the flexibilization of the workforce, high levels of privatization and a more extreme prioritization of the importance of the individual, which led not only to a subordination of intimate bonds, but also to the monetization of people’s network, normalized a more intense commodification of everyday life (Cockayne, 2016; Benoit, 2017). More specifically, the flexibilization of the workforce and the rise of the ‘gig economy’ has reduced wages and employees socioeconomic security, due to the transfer of risk of market fluctuations from the employer to the employee (Friedman, 2014). This increase in contract-based work, especially in creative industries, and in levels of employment precarity, amplified the competitiveness of society while welfare systems were dissolved. In turn, when combining these socioeconomic changes with the global interconnectivity of the internet, a solid foundation was formed for the sharing economy and as some argue for a micro-Neoliberalization process which “turns us into perpetual hustlers” as everything we own, from “our thoughts to our possessions and our home” are perceived and conceptualized as something to be monetized and used for personal, material gain, rather

than allocated jointly to promote a stronger, sustainable and more resilient community, city and society (Hobson, 2016, p. 19; Matthew, 2017).

iv. Unpacking the Sharing Economy

In contrast to the socioeconomic structural changes which have challenged more traditional conceptions of ‘sharing in’, the widespread use of the internet beginning in 1992, and the formation of the Web 2.0, or the “Social Web”, less than a decade later, has led to a new wave of consumption possibilities and sharing practices, blurring the lines between Belk’s theory of sharing in and out (Bardhi F. E., 2012; Belk, 2014, 2017; Cockayne, 2016; Munger, 2016; Guyader, 2018). While Belk (2007) suggests, “Why not share rather than own?”, as noted by Davies et al. (2012), the intense complexity of current sharing practices requires an explanation that transcends the dichotomy of sharing in and out, or true and pseudo, to further understand the diversity in motivations and influences of people’s sharing behavior, the contextual manifestations of such as it applies to different spheres of one’s AES and how such augments levels of social capital and cohesion. Subsequently, a more comprehensive analysis of the ways in which different sharing ecosystems, or “sharing economies” (Davies, 2017, p. 211), influence peoples willingness to not only share, but to support one another in achieving a common goal, will help academics, policymakers and urban planners alike, to make more informed decisions in how best to manage and navigate the individual and group behavioral changes arising alongside the sharing economy through design and planning, especially on the household and neighborhood scales.

The infrastructure of the Social Web which first enabled the sharing of content has been appropriated to varying degrees, and utilized to construct the sharing economy, built on systems which allow users to share resources, decreasing their idle time, and therefore, providing more sustainable consumption choices which connect people (Belk, 2014; Miskelly, 2015; Plewnia, 2017; Martin, 2016; emphasis added as the validity of these results are subject to further investigation). From the original systems for data sharing such as Myspace, Napster, YouTube, Facebook and Craig, and second life systems like eBay and Craigslist, all of which dissolved geographical distances and time barriers while providing new network connections which enable the expansion of one’s extended self and transaction network, was born an ever expanding range of sharing economies (Davies, 2017). Consequently, an array of applications and systems which enable the sharing of data, time, skills, space, possessions and ideas, with a global network society, have been integrated into everyday life, not only augmenting the sphere of public and private, in addition to the various forms of (co)ownership, but such apps also challenge the AES specifications as originally noted by Belk (1988) while further contributing to a definition of sharing that relates to historical conceptualizations of social capital (Bourdieu, 1988).

Currently, the sharing economy and collaborative consumption are used as umbrella terms to include: The access-based economy (Bardhi F. E., 2012), the access economy (Acquier, 2017), the gift economy (Frechette, 2016), platform capitalism (Cockayne, 2016), the gig economy (Friedman, 2014), the platform economy (Piscicelli, 2018) and product service systems (Schaefer, 2016). Each of these conceptualizations relies on the linking of Businesses-to-Consumers (B2C) or Peers-to-Peers (P2P), in order to construct a broader network of resource access opportunities and distributions which transform traditional linear production and supply chains (Acquier, 2017). The broad range of services include transportation systems, such as ridesharing apps like BlaBlaCar, Uber, SwapCar and Lyft, bike sharing apps like Velo and Ofo,

and for scooters such as Lime and Wind. Additionally, food and meal sharing, and anti-waste systems include organizations like ShareYourMeal, ShareDnD, Olio, Thuisgekookt, and Foodcloud, while entrepreneurial apps for labor include TaskRabbit and WeWork and item sharing apps include Peerby, Freecycle and Neighborly.

Each of these platforms provides different dimensions for sharing based on varied combinations of upcycling, re-selling, re-using, lending, borrowing, renting, and leasing, yet all subscribe to the term ‘sharing’. This intense diversification and rapid expansion of sharing economies into many spheres of life combined with their projected potential growth illustrates the need to more fully understand how these models of collaborative consumption influences users’ perceptions and practices of generalized reciprocity, and contribute to a sharing balance that includes motives related to both social capital and cohesion. If indeed the “global call for sharing” is as suggested, a revolution to shift consumption practices in a way which “shatters the foundations of our economic system” and paves the way for a collaborative commons, it is imperative to be critical of how sharing is practiced and defined by governmental institutions, platform creators and users (Huber, 2017, p. 54). More specifically, if the new sharing paradigm only increases monetized activities which fall under the categorization of sharing out, and therefore, lacking in their ability to transform the system and instead reinforce current economic structures, the revolution may only lead to more intense Neoliberalization processes, and not to improvements in social cohesion and engagement, but more so towards social capital and private accumulation.

v. True vs Pseudo Sharing & ‘Sharewashing’

As theorized by Belk (2010, 2014, 2017), and elaborated on by numerous others (Acquier, 2017; Botsman, 2010; Frechette, 2016; Jarvis, 2019), the Web 2.0 and the sharing economy has led to the emergence of “pseudo sharing” and “sharewashing”, defined as businesses which hide market-oriented commodity exchanges, like short-term renting and leasing, in a vocabulary of altruistic sharing, community and sustainability (Hawlitschek, 2018; Belk, 2014, p. 42). Belk’s lens implies a complex web of ideological and definitional obfuscations are illuminated as the diversity of ecosystems greys the area between profit-maximization, self-interest and utilitarianism, and non-market, prosocial practices that prioritize intentional togetherness, generalized reciprocity, and the ‘common good’ (Guyader, 2018; Bardhi F. E., 2012; Matthew, 2017; Miskelly, 2015).

As acknowledged by Jarvis, a wider variety of “hyper local” applications have been created with the intent of “recreating a sense of community, proximity, and togetherness by replicating the nostalgic idea of neighborly interactions” (Jarvis, 2019, p. 260). Belk equates such monetized, impersonal and self-interested versions of pseudo sharing to his earlier theory of “sharing out” in contrast to “sharing in”, and true sharing activities done without expectations of direct reciprocation, but instead to enhance group solidarity and intentional togetherness (Belk, 2010; 2014). It is important to recognize that the expansion of opportunities for sharing out, especially with those masked under the façade of true sharing values, have reduced the potential for true sharing and the nurturing of genuine relationships, as non-monetized sharing systems have struggled to penetrate markets and attract users to a comparable degree as monetized platforms, especially with the emergence of various monopolistic platforms like Airbnb and Uber (Piscicelli, 2018). However, those companies which are publicly acknowledged for sharewashing practices are exhibited to undermine consumer trust, implying there is a recognition to the pseudo sharing issue, similar to that of

‘greenwashing’, characterized as businesses who utilize ecological sustainability rhetoric to improve their market position (Hawlitschek, 2018).

Zipcar is frequently included in critiques of the sharing economy as it advertises the social, economic and ecological benefits that arise from the ‘sharing’ of their vehicles (Bocker, 2017). However, with regards to fostering social cohesion, over that of social capital within cities, users need not interact with anyone in order to obtain or drop-off the vehicle, while the instances of negotiating feelings of responsibility, scheduling and the like, coined as micro-social practices, and as done with traditional carpooling between neighbors, are eliminated. In turn, this suffocates the potential for new bonds and probability of high levels of group identification. Furthermore, and similarly to Airbnb, while the intension of the respective systems is to reduce conspicuous consumption with increased sharing activities, what has been proven on various accounts, is that the money saved on accommodation, inspires more travel in the case of Airbnb, and the convenience of Lyft, inspires more automobile usage, and less public transport (Benoit, 2017; Schor, 2017; Plewnia, 2017). In turn, this conveys the sharing economy, not as transformative or as an alternative to the current neoliberal economic system, but as a tool to further support its expansion and integration into all aspects of life. Subsequently, these arguments illustrate the importance of providing the adequate infrastructure, socially, economically, and technologically, to harmonize levels of sharing in and out, capital and cohesion, and providing opportunities for both strengthening community, and micro-entrepreneurship.

vi. Research Gap

Therefore, when understanding quality social cohesion as a balanced combination of sharing in and out, strong and weak ties, bonds and bridges, which each are derived from a varying levels of social capital and cohesion, it becomes necessary to learn how particular infrastructures, like that of the sharing economy, aid in promoting a sound balance between the two, and avoid an intensification to one type of social network, instead of a more equitable set of practices that supports various aspects on one’s life. Therefore, this study aims to provide a more nuanced analysis of Belk’s true versus pseudo sharing, that highlights how such these sharing practices impact levels of social capital and cohesion. Moreover, while the majority of current literature focuses on a specific sector or aspect of the sharing economy, rarely is an in-depth analysis provided that incorporates the influence of a city’s historical, demographical and current political context on its version of the sharing economy, with no data available that relates such specifically to social cohesion and capital. However, this connection is vital when acknowledging not only, the increasing diversity of cities spurred by globalization processes, but also the social aspect of the sharing economy, as these elements frame the way participants conceive, approach and use collaborative consumption platforms, while their participation, shapes their social cognitive abilities, and in turn, the way they interact in society.

3. Methodology

To investigate the current state of Amsterdam's sharing economy, this thesis employed both the single intrinsic case study and grounded theory methodologies to ensure the research incorporated the city's historical development, demographic profile, and contemporary political situation, as each significantly influenced the adoption and current state of the sharing economy. More specifically, while the city's history as a regional, and transnational service hub and knowledge structure laid the infrastructure for a future sharing economy to flourish, the city's 'open' and 'tolerant' norms paved the way for an early adoption, as the municipality often welcomed disruptive modes of development. Subsequently, this to Amsterdam being the first in Europe, second worldwide after Seoul, to formulate a specific sharing economy policy, resulting in a set of guidelines and practices that have been disseminated throughout Europe (Glind, 2016). Moreover, this development trajectory fueled the development of the city's current 'super diverse' majority-minority population (Cruz, 2015), exacerbating the importance of analyzing the relationship between, true and pseudo sharing, and collaborative consumption's impact on social capital and cohesion, as it becomes more deeply integrated into daily life, and societal integration and cultural adaption become increasingly complex processes. Therefore, this thesis asks the following:

- i. **Research Question:** To what extent do the collaborative consumption platforms operating in Amsterdam impact levels of social capital and social cohesion between neighborhoods?
 - a. **Sub question 1:** To what extent does Amsterdam's Sharing Economy Action Plan differ in its prioritization of benefits related to social capital and cohesion?
 - b. **Sub question 2:** To what extent do food and meal sharing platforms operating in Amsterdam contribute to levels of social capital and cohesion between neighborhoods?
 - c. **Sub question 3:** To what extent does the divergence of the food and meal sharing sector from Amsterdam's SEAP, in terms of its contribution to social cohesion, provide insight for revising collaborative consumption planning, governance, and policymaking practices?

In order to begin operationalizing this set of research questions, the case study approach was used to establish the initial boundaries required to conduct a holistic and contextually accurate study that captured the lived experiences of participants within the broader historical and demographic setting. Therefore, before completing an analysis pertaining to Amsterdam's sharing economy policy specifically, and the collaborative consumption platforms operating within the municipality, an in-depth research process was undertaken to situate the argument within past and present political, social, and economic norms, values, and practices. This enabled the case boundaries to be established and a set of historically relevant details to be configured in which to align the research. Subsequently, thoroughly understanding the case context enabled the thesis to provide more grounded explanations for results and in turn, generate inclusive and scrupulous analyses that arose from the identification of patterns, relationships, and correlations between current actions and past phenomena.

Secondly, the grounded theory framework has been noted as a useful complimentary framework for conducting case study research as it ensures such is rooted in historical and contextual details, while also contributing to intercultural investigations by highlighting the different lived experiences of users and creators between the various platforms selected for investigation through theoretical sampling (Creswell, 2007; Storch, 2009). More specifically, the flexible and inductive nature of grounded theory, which promotes constant iterative analysis and the focusing of the investigative scope, enabled the research to produce numerous conceptual analyses by utilize a mixed-method approach, that enabled the incorporation of views and perceptions of different actors that have different relationships and conceptualizations of the sharing economy (Rambaree, 2013; Glaser, 2010; Simmons, 2010). The views of participants, including platform creators, hosts and guests, supported the formulation of a comprehensive conceptualization of how the discourse, ideology, and narrative disseminated by institutions, or a particular platform, influences the type of functionality, environment, and contact produced, and in turn, opportunities for improving social capital and/or cohesion.

Moreover, the grounded theory framework, and its ascribed mixed-methods, enabled the study to further understand not only peoples motivations for using and creating such platforms, and how such extend beyond solely access to new or different types of food, but also, how such motivations and expectations change as they experience the platform environment, interact other users and are exposed to different social norms, cultures and the like (Saldana, 2013). Additionally, this line of inquiry enabled the thesis to more fully delve into the environment of meal sharing experiences, the types of interactions which manifest, and the elements which drive inter-ethnic contact and cultural learning. Subsequently, this allowed for the research to examine the dialectical relationship between the platform and its users, and how such continuously change and evolve as they interact with one another. Therefore, the grounded theory acted as a supporting framework to the case study approach, as it provides a more nuanced examination of food and meal sharing platforms, critical when attempting to learn about the complexities of the societal dynamics of trust, bridging relationships, AES boundary augmentation, and inter-ethnic solidarity, all of which are highly dependent on contextual details, environment, and often, personal details, as for each to form, a sense of collective agency, relational empathy, and mutual vulnerability is often required.

To investigate the illusive concepts of social capital and cohesion, which, while noted as having various similarities, are derived from differing conceptual foundations and prioritize different objectives, this thesis unpacked each into a more distinguishable set of indicators, tailored to sharing economy research. More specifically, these indicators helped to formulate more recognizable, relatable, and comprehensible interview questions. Secondly, the distinctions made between social capital and cohesion, aid in providing a clear analysis that highlight the differences in platform functionality, objective, and result. Thirdly, these indicators have been tailored for this specific use case, as they incorporate conceptual elements and syntax from the sharing history, and sharing economy literature, to provide a contextually relevant framework that incorporates various perspectives (Belk 1988, 2010, 2014; Bandura, 2002; Carrasco, 2016; Bardhi F. E., 2012).

i. Methods

In terms of methods, the combination of the case study and grounded theory approaches allowed for a mixed-method framework to be employed for data collection and analysis. This was deemed important due to the multi-faceted nature of both the sharing economy, and especially, the two contrasting elements to be examined: Social capital and cohesion, as each are influenced by a broad range of factors and actors, demanding the incorporation of multiple perspectives. The following will explain the procedures used in terms of categorization, qualitative coding, interviewing and memo writing, and how such were used to shape the scope of the investigation, gather and organize a diverse data set, and undergo a constant comparative method of analysis for purposeful sampling and to increase the potential for identifying patterns rooted in contextual details (Creswell, 2007, p. 64). *Figure 1* below illustrates the flow of processes, while the following paragraphs will provide a more thorough description of such.

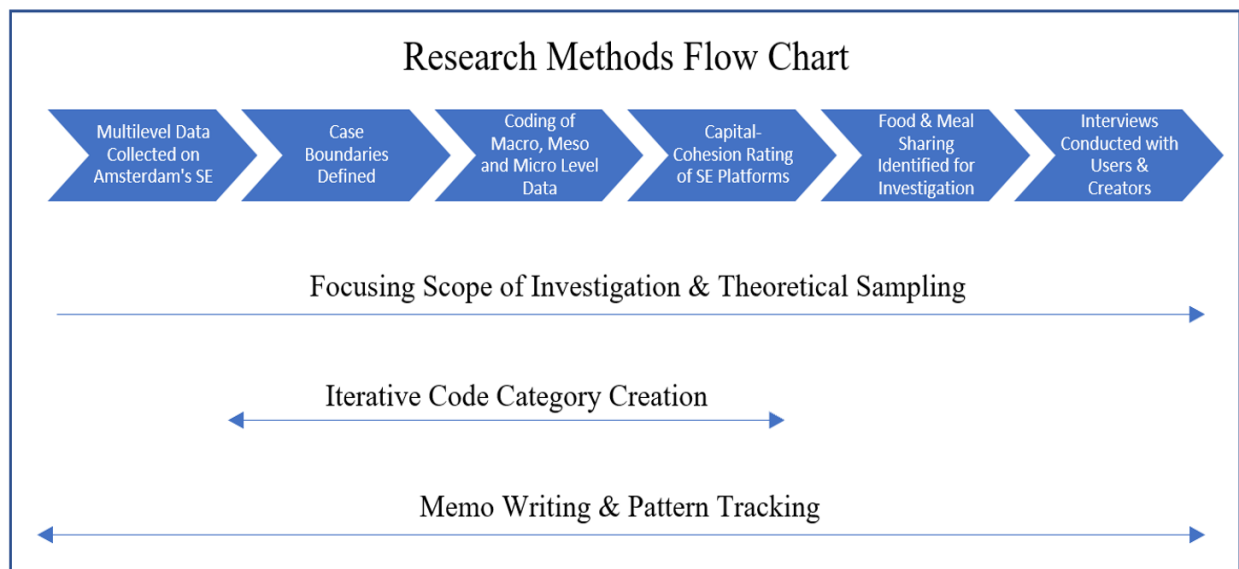


Figure 1: Research Methods Process Flow Chart (Authors illustration, 2020)

To begin, an in-depth data collection process was conducted to design and set the boundaries of the case and for theoretical sampling which allowed for the continued narrowing of the scope of investigation from the sharing economy as a whole, to specifically food and meal sharing platforms and their relationship with social cohesion. The data set constructed, illustrated in *Figure 2*, incorporates entries from multiple sources including: Municipal policy documents (N=3), articles and blog posts by Share NL (N=15), and corporate literature from platforms that the University of Utrecht and the Amsterdam municipal government identify as collaborative consumption platforms operating in Amsterdam (N=127) (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2018). Each piece was categorized and indexed according to their respective stakeholder classification and type of sharing sector participation: Mobility, Accommodation, Logistics, Food and Meal Sharing, Item Sharing, Time Intensive Services, and Crowd Sourcing. Conceptually, these three categories are defined as: A macro class for political representation, including Share NL as the consultancy was a main policy contributor, the meso class for sharing economy enterprise literature, and the micro class for

interviews with platform creators, hosts, and guests. This indexing and categorization process aimed to help provide a more comprehensive understanding of the various perspectives regarding the sharing economy from differing actors within Amsterdam, while also ensuring the case boundary formation utilized an inter-stakeholder triangulation process to ensure a comprehensive narrative, discourse, and rhetoric analysis.

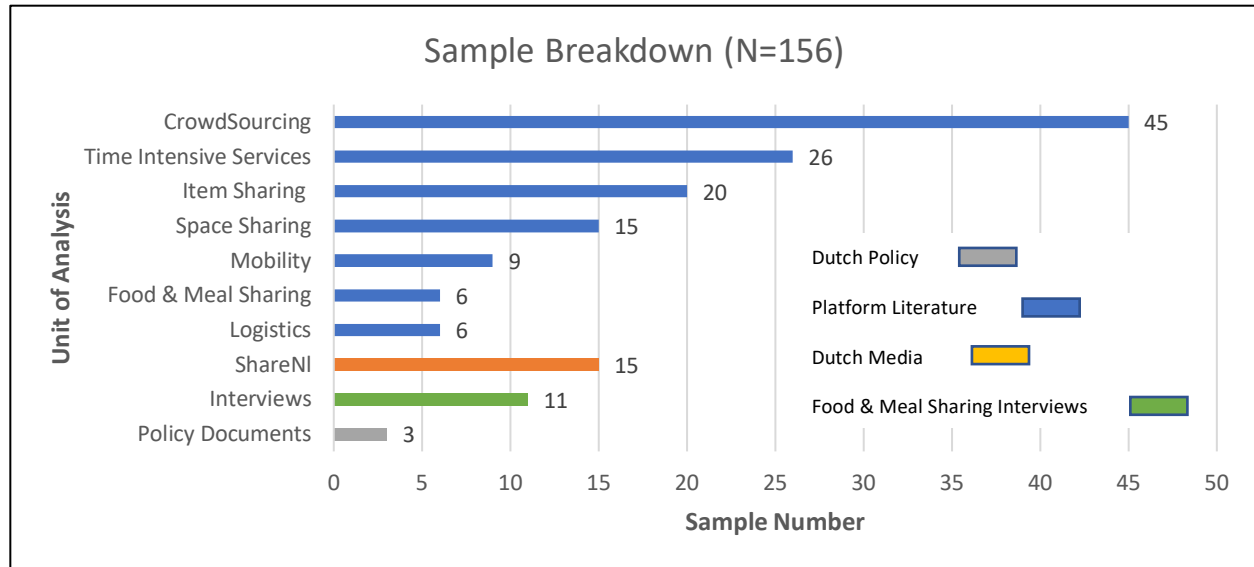


Figure 2: Breakdown of Total Sample (N=153) (data, Authors illustration, 2020)

Secondly, in order to analyze the bounded case created throughout the indexing process, and to continue the theoretical sampling process and identify which sector aimed to construct a socially oriented narrative that correlated with the SEAP's aim to improve social cohesion, a 2-cycle hybrid coding strategy was employed. As contended by various academics, hybrid coding approaches, especially in the first cycle, allow the researcher to complete various tasks that combine both data description and organization with value referencing and sub-coding, key for comparison analyses and pattern identification during the second round of coding (Saldana, 2013; Rambaree, 2013; Creswell, 2007). This exploratory and iterative coding strategy, which commenced at the macro political level and moved downward through the Share NL's literature to the sharing economy's platform literature and finally interviews, aimed at formulating an accurate profile of Amsterdam's sharing economy that further strengthened the case boundaries and illustrated the discourse and narratives being endorsed, while uncovering elements which related to social capital and cohesion, to be ranked during the second round of coding.

To identify emerging patterns throughout the coding process, and to develop rigorous code categories, the list of codes was re-examined every 10-15 pieces of literature, or after a full sector of the sharing economy was completed. The purpose of this examination was threefold. Firstly, this ensured that the number and relevance of the codes remained feasible and concentrated. Secondly, this provided an opportunity for memos to be written noting key points of interest and emerging linkages between codes. Thirdly, it supported the formation of code categories that determined which codes were a property of, associated with or a result of a phenomena, discourse, or rhetoric dynamic. While this coding strategy supported the formulation of an in-depth depiction of the varied narratives and types of rhetoric and syntax

being used to refer to, or support the, sharing economy, and its perspective benefits towards social capital and/or cohesion, to more clearly illustrate which sector most strongly endorses a discourse that supports either of these two goals, a two dimensional Likert scale was created, as seen in Annex B, to assess platforms based on the social capital-cohesion indicator table in Annex 1.

Each collaborative consumption platform was given 2 ratings from 1-5, which measured to what degree each platform based their mission, functionality, value, and objective, on the indicators relating to social capital and cohesion as viewed in Annex A. The platforms ratings were then graphed according to sector alongside the sector's average, for a clearer depiction of which category diverged from the others, and for further theoretical sampling. Accordingly, since the food and meal sharing sector was the only sector to prioritize cohesion related indicators over capital, with Tasty Talks leading the way, a clear divergence was apparent, indicating it as the clear choice to undergo a deeper analysis through semi-structured interviews. The aim of such, was to understand if meal sharing experiences embodied the narrative of the discourse endorsed by the sector's corporate literature, and indeed led to the creation of a novel social infrastructure that strengthened social cohesion, or if elements of pseudo sharing were involved. It is important to note the decision to rate both the concepts of social capital and cohesion separately, and not assign an either/or scale, as this would have reduced the opportunity for a more nuanced assessment that captures the way both exist simultaneously in a complex web of social relations.

After the food and meal sharing sector was identified through the aforementioned coding and rating processes, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 meal sharing participants as viewed in Annex F including platform creators, hosts, and guests, following the interview guides in Annex D, E, and F. As Covid-19 travel restrictions prevented the researcher from immersing themselves into the meal sharing experience, noted in the following section, interviewees were gathered by utilizing social media, mainly various Facebook groups, such as those for specifically for expats or locals, to Buy/Sell/Trade, for interest groups such as for musicians, vegetarians or dance enthusiasts, and finally, the Amsterdam Cooks group, which contains over 4000 people and yielded the highest number of respondents, understandably. Various general questions regarding "What meal and food sharing apps people preferred?" and "How they felt such influenced the development of social networks and community in Amsterdam?" were posted to generate preliminary interview results, aid in scoping the semi-structured interview guide, and locate potential interviewees. In turn, this strategy combined with snowball sampling, yielded 11 in-depth phone interviews, with numerous follow-up sessions. However, due to the 70-30 female to male event attendee ratio noted by various participants, as well as the snowball sampling often manifesting with "girls telling their girlfriends", as noted by C1, the creator of Tasty Talks, 10 of the interviews are with females. Subsequently, it must be acknowledged that this thesis provides a female oriented perspective, although as will be mentioned, this is also apart of the result of the theoretical sample and constructivist grounded theory methodology.

Interviewing a combination of meal sharing platform creators, hosts and guests, mainly those who affiliated with Tasty Talks, and to a lesser extent Eatwith, a result of both theoretical and snowball sampling, helped capture the complex social dynamics of meal sharing experience and to verify if the cohesion related indicators peppered throughout the corporate literature crystallized during the platform's activities, and how such occurs. More specifically, for the research to continue rooting itself in the present context and lived experiences of participants, ample space was provided for respondents to share details about their experiences, their feelings regarding such, and the way these events altered their network, daily life, and

socio-cognitive capacities, such as navigating unfamiliar, culturally diverse, social situations. In turn, this allowed the research to more accurately understand why the actors placed such high importance on the personal atmosphere, the cooperative processes, and face-to-face interactions, and how such structures and activities were successfully implemented and under what conditions.

ii. Scope of Research

As will be explained through the analysis section, the environmental characteristics of meal sharing events, and group oriented collaborative efforts needed to ensure a successful evening, are all key factors that highlight the importance of the experience, and ‘being’, as opposed to ‘having’. In turn, to capture such dynamics more concretely, and further saturate the data set, it would be beneficial to visit the field, immerse one’s self in the experience, and include participant observations (Creswell, 2007). Although the interviews began to produce redundant information by their completion, a new category of data could be added through time in the field and additional methods and thereby, like the online-offline duality of the sharing economy, the framework would match this attribute in stride, and shed light on aspects unable to be illuminated by a study done online, from a distance. More specifically, while this thesis has provided a sound foundation for this strand of research to be continued, an ideal next step would be to attend various Tasty Talk and Eatwith events, and gain a deeper understanding of the varying conditional elements of the setting, from conversations, to behaviors, the personal environment, and body language, that scope the course of the experiences and shape the functionality and results of such. As noted by Creswell (2007), participant observation is an ideal method for researching “culture-sharing groups”, which works in two senses, as meal sharing communities share a culture that is based on sharing one’s own culture. Unfortunately, due to the travel restrictions presented by Covid-19 measures, this element of the research could not be produced and was in part, although notably lacking in depth, substituted by adding a photograph analysis that captured past events, to compliment the semi-structured interviews.

4. Case Study Analysis: Investigating Amsterdam’s Sharing Economies

i. Historical, Political & Demographic Context

Amsterdam’s position as an international trading post, financial service center, and knowledge sharing hub, formed through its cosmopolitan development trajectory, played a pivotal role in the production of political, social, and economic institutions that remain to be regarded as ‘open’ and ‘tolerant’, laying a unique foundation for the city’s adoption of the ‘disruptive’ sharing economy (Smith, 1984; Muller, 2012; Cortie, 2003; Crul, 2015). As Amsterdam grew to be a major port during its ‘Golden Age’ in the 17th century, supporting the rise of the merchant class, parallel to enhancing the diversity of the city, it also rose in magnitude as a place of information exchange, and due to its centrality as a international marketplace, eventually as a key provider of “information economies” (Smith, 1984, p. 986). This aided in building critical institutional pillars which would later enable the city to become a competing financial center and an important node in the network of global cities (Saskia, 2001; Neal, 2001). More specifically, as argued by P. W. Klein, Amsterdam’s “economic paramountcy” was derived from its ability to act as a center for connecting different regional economies and linking necessary services along the supply chain (Smith, 1984, p. 986). Smith, expanded upon this claim, by arguing that “the nature of information as a commodity and as a by-product of the operations of trade networks led in the seventeenth century to the evolution in

Amsterdam of a central information exchange for all of Europe” and to a reputation that at the time, no other city could compete with (p. 987).

While these testimonies illustrate Amsterdam’s economic success and construction of institutions resilient in the face of diversity, it is important to also acknowledge the subsequent “egalitarian” urban development that unfolded with the rise of the Dutch welfare state (Oorschot, 2006; Fainstein, 1997). More specifically, while many regard the Dutch welfare state as a “hybrid” welfare regime, blending elements of corporatism and social democracy, others claim it leaned toward social democracy due to its comprehensive and generous citizen security system that surpassed workers insurance to include “universal peoples insurance that covers all citizens” (Oorschot, 2006, p. 58). Beginning in 1874 with the forbidding of child labour, and continuing to evolve in 1901 with a more inclusive insurance scheme developed to address “misery and poverty among the working population”, it was not until post-WWII that the Dutch welfare system expanded to provide globally recognizable levels of support (Oorschot, 2006, p. 60). The significant historical shift which took place in 1945 was that the “legitimising principle for social protection was broadened” from those who earned a wage to:

“the idea that society, organised in the state, is liable for the social security and protection against want of all its members, on the condition, that citizens themselves do all that can be reasonably expected in order to acquire such security and protection”
(Oorschot, 2006, p. 63).

This not only represents an institutional shift in terms of providing more inclusive and comprehensive benefits, but also an ideological shift, as this signifies an agreement between citizens and the government to work together, to protect all members of society, as both sides are bound to fostering security and protection. Designed and controlled by the State, the new collective schemes aimed at facilitating both “large-scale horizontal, and vertical solidarity”, by connecting “different generations, professional groups and social classes” (Oorschot, 2006, p. 59). In turn, this ambition to instill a sense of unity, togetherness, and equality, through institutionally driven social support, conveys an ideology and set of social norms interwoven with high levels of openness and acceptance. Additionally, this structure aids in abating divides that arise from diversity by providing a overarching positive link, the ideological aspect that while ensuring the well-being of society is a responsibility of the State, it must be achieved through a cooperative effort between the institutions and all citizens. However, the welfare systems of the 1960s and 70s were formed under particular economic conditions (Fainstein, 1997), which have since, been challenged on numerous fronts, as globalization and neoliberal restructuring swept through institutions in the following decades.

These historical nuances have influenced the current socio-cultural condition, levels of tolerance, openness, and acceptance, immensely, and are especially importantly in terms of their ability to support the flourishing of meal sharing platforms. Firstly, with regards to institutional design, governing bodies have a proven track record of not only adapting and incorporating multi-faceted levels of diversity into institutions, but have embedded such in the city’s identity, and now, brand, setting social norms accordingly (Mos, 2014; Savini, 2015). In turn, this influences individual perceptions of what lived experiences entail in the city, effecting expectations, motivations for in migration, and, the manner in which citizens approach new

things, like sharing with ‘strangers’, and their willingness to exercise collective agency and engage in cultural learning activities, like those produced during meal sharing events. Secondly, Amsterdam’s role as a key information hub which connects regions and nations to services via its knowledge and network economies, led to the installation of the infrastructure required for a smooth integration of the sharing economy, as it too, is designed to exploit the power of digital networks (van den Berg, 2005). Lastly, while the openness aids in providing the cultural diversity for successful meal sharing experiences that foster meaningful inter-ethnic contact, this ‘open’ mindset also contributed to the integration of digital technologies and therefore, the required technical literacy for a city wide adoption of collaborative consumption platforms.

Current Governance Approach: Challenging the Welfare State

The egalitarian Dutch welfare state has been challenged on various fronts since the neoliberal regime sprouted in the early 1980s, and continues to have its former equitable social support structures contested during the regime’s later stage, the era of the cultural economy, city branding, gentrification processes and the like (Fainstein, 1997; Ochstenbach, 2017; Majoor, 2008). Firstly, acknowledged by various authors as “neoliberal urbanism”, and others as “entrepreneurial governance” (Peck, 2009; Russo, 2010; Fainstein, 1997), Amsterdam’s current urban development strategy, while still employing a discourse interlaced with its historically equitable roots, has participated in a transition aligned with globalisation and broader European trends based on ‘corporatist’ and neoliberal traits of increased privatization, foreign direct investment, and reduced governmental support in terms of social security nets like that for social housing and unemployment, while heightening the emphasis on individualism and inter-city competition (Veldboer, 2011; Mepschen, 2019; Musterd, 2014; Qian, 2019; Thrift, 1994). In contrast to its post-WWII social democratic development trajectory, the 21st century neoliberal vision has been protested against for failing to provide adequate levels of social regulation and securities (van den Berg, 2005; Qian, 2019; Thrift, 1994). Subsequently, the previous bond made between the State and civil society, to cooperate in ensuring security for all citizens, has been tampered with, and the responsibility of such, transferred in large part to private actors, some of which operate within the bounds of the sharing economy.

For instance, entrepreneurial governance approaches, also coined “public management”, ignited by a neoliberal policy agenda, have fueled the intense privatization of public housing, aimed at increasing private ownership, endorsing individual accumulation, prioritizing market interests over those dedicated to an equitable and just society, and pursuing a development trajectory that caters to a specific demographic, ‘the creative class’ and knowledge professionals (van den Berg, 2005; Qian, 2019). The steep decline in provisions of social housing and housing subsidies induced by the municipality and that have been married to culturally-led urban regeneration projects in inner city areas such as Jordaan, and Amsterdam West, have been prominently contested by citizens and academics alike (Russo, 2010; Fainstein, 1997; Lees, 2007). Such bolsters inequality, segregation and the like, as will be elaborated on in coming sections, and illustrates a shift to a more capital intensive ideological vision as the cultural diversity that blossomed from Amsterdam’s historical trajectory becomes increasingly commodified and monetized, to fuel gentrification processes, and be distributed in the form of “cultural capital” (Florida, 2014; Ochstenbach, 2017). As conveyed in Amsterdam’s approach to the sharing economy, its development trajectory embraces many aspects of Richard Florida’s creative class theory which argues that cities must cater to “technology, talent,

and tolerance”, as they are the key drivers of economic development and global cities in the 21st century (Florida, 2014). In turn, this carries a high probability of challenging the city’s current societal fabric by embedding a political framework that prioritizes and supports social capital over a balance between such and cohesion.

Demographic Profile

The daily experiences of the inhabitants of Amsterdam’s municipality are shaped by the intersectionality of various forms of diversity, as the city is home to over 862,000 people from 170 different countries, with a foreign-born population of 52% as of 2015, far outweighing the Netherlands as a whole with 10%, and making Amsterdam a majority-minority city, or “super-diverse”, as historic populations have become a minority (van den Berg, 2005; Crul, 2015). While the city’s net migration rate is positive 5.2, the composition of such is higher in terms of migrants from non-industrialized nations, as viewed in *Figure 2* below, many with the intent of “enriching” their lives, including university students and young entrepreneurs, to refugees, migrants, and managers (AdminStat, 2018; Musterd S. O., 2003; Cortie, 2003 p. 274). Through the lens of Vertovec, Amsterdam is considered a ‘super-diverse’ city due to not only the extent of ethnic diversity which continues to broaden each year and has reached a unprecedented level, but also, as its level of ‘openness’ caters to diversity in various aspects of life, including, but not limited to “ethnicity, faith, immigration status, gender, age, lifestyle choices, and patterns of spatial distribution” (Pemberton, 2018, p. 734). This dynamic is important, as this unique demographic profile provides the necessary context for the particular meal sharing experiences of Tasty Talks to thrive, as will be discussed.

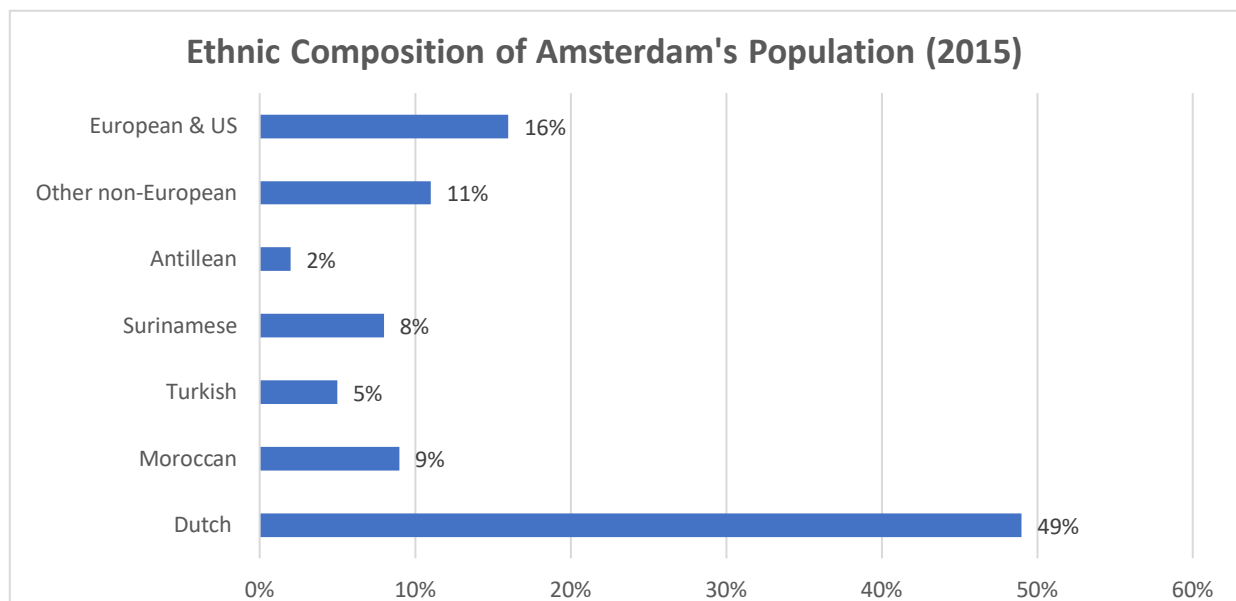


Figure 2: Ethnic Background of Amsterdam’s Population (Crul, 2015)

In terms of age, the prominent class, as with many capitals, is from 25-34, and is representative of population inflows that incorporate large numbers of knowledge professionals, as university students, migrant entrepreneur's like all of the three app creators interviewed, and young professionals, especially those seeking a city with Florida's three T's. (Cortie, 2003; van den Berg, 2005; Florida, 2014; Nijkamp, 2006). In turn, roughly 73% of households consist of one or two people, the complete civil status profile viewed in *Figure 4*, with an average family size of 2.18 (AdminStat, 2018). Moreover, Amsterdam inhabitants earn an income higher than the Dutch average, with few living on a low income, representative of the small concentrations of income equality that often manifest in capitals and larger cities (Onderzoek, 2009). This is a significant demographic shift in comparison to earlier decades in which households were mainly comprised of merchants and workers in manufacturing industries, and composed as a traditional 'Fordist' family with the corresponding 'traditional' life course (Musterd S. , Amsterdam as a Creative Cultural Knowledge City: Some Conditions, 2004, p. 231). However, this change coincides with the prominent age class, as well as the target audience of the city's drive to become a creative capital, as knowledge professionals are often veer from former nuclear family lifestyles, and seek other, more nomadic life paths, delaying marriage, and having children (Friedman, 2014; Florida, 2014).

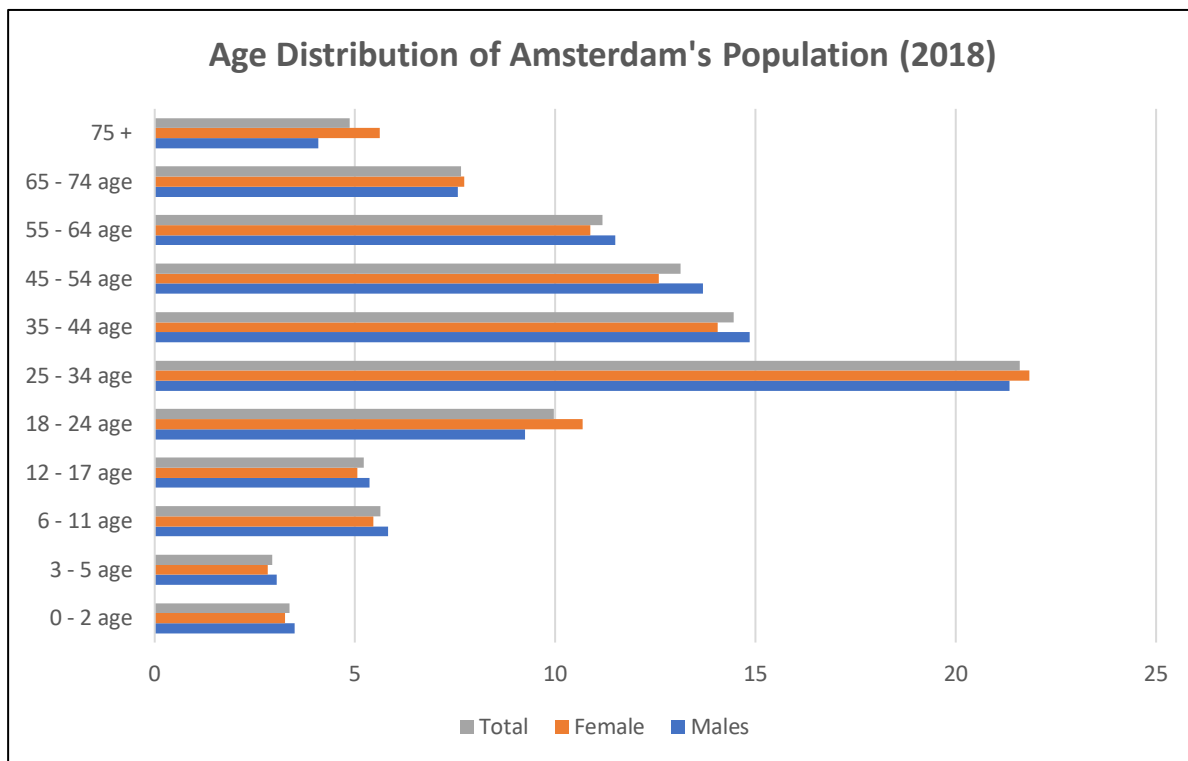


Figure 3: Age Distribution of Amsterdam's Population (AdminStat, 2018)

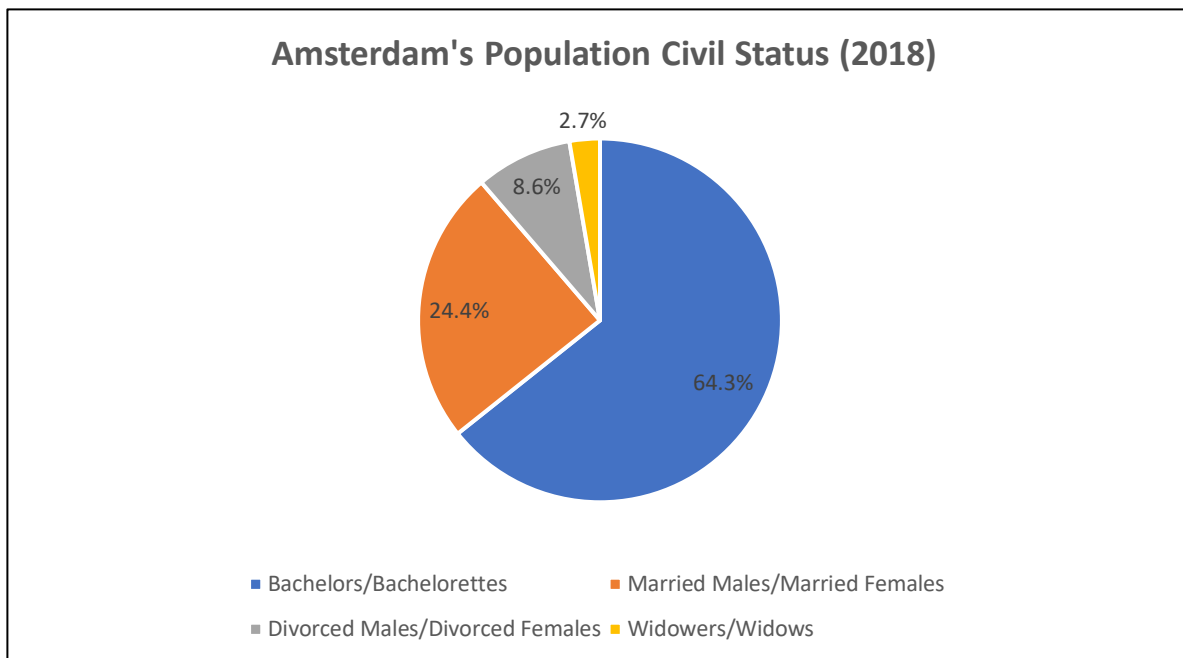


Figure 4: Civil Status of Distribution Amsterdam's Population 2018 (AdminStat, 2018)

However, when considering the diversity of migration patterns and the alteration of governance approach, it becomes especially important to distinguish between population inflows, as those who arrive to attend university, who aim to succeed as 2nd generation entrepreneurs, or to seek refuge in times of crisis each have varying expectations and motivations. More specifically, such intense diversity in population inflows must be acknowledged, as understanding the differences in their socio-economic status, demographic, and socio-cultural positions, simultaneously, is critical for identifying their needs, supporting successful integration processes, and aiding in the development of both social capital and cohesion (Musterd S. O., 2003; Nijkamp, 2006). Additionally, neoliberal induced policy changes have fueled societal tensions as infrastructure, housing, and “circles of innovation”, like those of the start-up community, have been increasingly tailored to suit the demand of “new professionals who are linked to new [knowledge] economies” (van den Berg, 2005, p. 63). In turn, this demonstrates that while the city remains diverse and ‘open’, various power flows and tensions persist, influencing the development of social capital and cohesion, in addition to the integration and functionality of collaborative consumption.

Socio-Spatial Layout

During the peak of the Dutch welfare state, governing bodies played a key role in the spatial development of the city as they acted as “both a planner and funder of housing construction” (Fainstein, 1997, p. 297). Additionally, the city mitigated the formation of a dominant central business district to retain its historic city center (Fainstein, 1997). However, the municipality’s role in socio-spatial planning has been in large part transferred to the private sector, reducing their level of control on the demographic distribution, which has, in the last decade, resulted in visible changes in the socio-spatial distribution of residents (Musterd S. O., 2003; Ochstenbach, 2017). Although the level of division and inequality does not equal that of other global knowledge hubs such as London or New York, levels of segregation, more prominently

noticed in regard to ethnicity and type of household, rather than income, has risen in recent decades (Fainstein, p. 299; Qian, 2019; Musterd S. O., 2003). Musterd's analysis contends that socio-cultural segregation is the highest rated factor, even though dominant concentrations have not been noted, single-person households are more likely to live in "a segregated existence", with slight socio-economic divisions peppering the city (Musterd S. O., 2003, p. 190). This relatively, harmonious social fabric, is in large part a result of the Dutch "Big City Policy", which strives to mitigate segregation and divisions through the active construction of "mixed neighborhoods" (Musterd S. O., 2003, p. 190).

Although 'global cities' are argued to often become 'divided cities', Musterd argues that this must not be assumed, as the "mix of cultural capital and the vacancies in the labor market" are important factors that influence the socio-spatial distribution of arriving immigrants, as does the local contextual details (Musterd, O., 2003; 185). Such a perspective is especially important in the case of Amsterdam, and its majority-minority status, as this means that migrants assimilate and integrate not into one particular majority, but instead, into a range of ethnic (sub)groups, fueling forms of cultural hybridisation (Crul, 2015, p. 4; Bandura, 2002). This conceptualization of socio-spatial organizations and integration is highly relative to this thesis, as will become evident through the interview analysis, as embracing inter-ethnic contact to learn about culture and develop trustworthy and meaningful connections by exploring one another's diversity, are critical to meal sharing's success and their ability to expand participants' socio-cognitive abilities. Subsequently, as the Dutch welfare services diminish, which hinder access to education, employment, housing and other critical infrastructure and opportunities, and policy prioritizes the needs of knowledge professionals, the importance of identifying new routes of societal integration and cultural adaptation become increasingly peril.

ii. Dissecting Amsterdam's Sharing Economy Action Plan

Amsterdam's 10-page Sharing Economy Action Plan (SEAP) was the first of such formulated in Europe, developed in large part, through collaborations between The College of Mayors and Alderpersons, The Ministries for Economic, and Social Affairs, and finally, the consultancy, Share NL (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2016). In addition to providing brief contextual clarity in terms of Amsterdam's support of an open and growing start-up culture, the policy discusses the concept of collaborative consumption before highlighting various strengths and weaknesses of this "irreversible trend" (Municipality, 2016, p. 6). Finally, it provides a planning schedule that illustrates its envisioned path for the adoption of the sharing economy before outlining a checklist that is aimed at "determin[ing] the impact of a sharing economy initiative" (p. 10).

To begin, it is important to outline the way the SEAP has chosen to define the sharing economy and collaborative consumption, as such provides the initial foundation for the city's development of platforms, and for the analysis. After acknowledging the various terms given to the sharing economy, and declaring it unsuitable to retain one specific definition, the document notes Botsman's collaborative consumption theorization due to its international attention and ability to surmise many subsections of the sharing economy. Contrarily, while also widely known, the document fails to recognize Belk's contributions in terms of various of 'true' sharing and 'pseudo sharing, or 'sharing in' and 'sharing out'. This conceptual clarification section ends by quoting the explanation of and endorsing, Share NL's conceptualization of the sharing economy, which is:

“The sharing economy in the wider sense of the word consists of *economic systems of local networks and marketplaces* that make the value of underutilised goods and services available *by directly connecting demand and offer*, making traditional and institutional intermediaries superfluous” (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2016, emphasis added).

Although the policy contends against one single definition, as the following will illustrate, the policy objectives and vision for the future of the sharing economy shares a striking resemblance to Share NL’s definition, and even more interesting, is considering this conceptualization as a reflection of Amsterdam’s earlier economic development as a main trading hub that connected regions, and economic systems by linking marketplaces and networks through services. Similarly, this illustrates another aspect of governmental decentralization as the aim of such a framework, as will be explained, is to support the private sector in providing more services, relieving institutional support whenever possible, reflecting the, ‘lassiez-faire’ form, and entrepreneurial aspects of neoliberalism.

More specifically, the College of Mayors, Share NL, and associated departments highlight their support for a global agenda as institutions strive to put “Amsterdam on the map as ‘Amsterdam, the Sharing City’” (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2016, p. 10). This sentiment is continuously developed throughout the policy as the College reiterates that it is “open to the trend”, has an “open approach” and an “open attitude towards” the sharing economy, and “welcomes the disruptive nature” of such, as this aspect is viewed as “part of the renewal” process (p. 3, 4, 7, 10). Subsequently, this open approach to disruption, has enforced a more reactionary method of governance, as noted by their commitment to “monitor and respond” rather than attempt to create a more balanced strategy that takes the previous five years of collaborative consumption into consideration.

This historically embedded ‘openness’, which remains prominent throughout the SEAP, has been framed through a lens tailored more to entrepreneurship and economic activities, than pro-social activities. The qualitative coding process illustrated such as the quantity and variation of codes within the economic rhetoric and capital driven objectives category far outweighs the number in the main versus category of social rhetoric and cohesion driven objectives, at 28 to 12. The main themes presented by the SEAP revolve around a narrative that highlights the low entry barriers to “casual entrepreneurship” as one can easily “Rent to neighbours”, reach new customer networks, or earn extra money by sharing skills, things, or knowledge, conveying the sharing economy as an inclusive, enticing new market for households to sustainably exploit by utilizing current and new, digitally formed networks to capitalize on their existing, underused assets (Amsterdam Municipality, 2016, p. 4). Although its described as an all inclusive space, this must be questioned, as those entering the market with extensive capital reserves begin with an advantage, while those who in the past, relied on particular networks for support, now face barriers to obtaining assistance, as generalized reciprocity declines alongside institutional aid, and neighborly interactions become market-oriented transactions.

Despite the social nature of sharing, especially when viewed through the historical lens that emphasizes ‘sharing in’ practices within families and close-networks (Belk, 2010), the SEAP drives a starkly different framework which changes the sentiment and rhetoric while augmenting the concept of sharing with friends, family, neighbors and communities, to one derived from the exponential network

reach facilitated by the “online” portion of the “transaction” (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2016, p. 1, 7). More specifically, platform participants and civil society, are referred to mainly as consumers (9x), customers (2x), entrepreneurs (6x), and users (6x). Moreover, the term ‘community’ is consistently used (4x), in reference to gaining access to new networks which enables one to engage in “casual entrepreneurship” or to begin another “enterprise” such as renting out one’s space, car, or tools (p. 2, 4, 5, 7). In turn, the idea of utilizing the sharing economy for reasons related to friendship, support networks, integration, learning about other ideas and cultures, or leisure, are rarely emphasized, and all huddled under the umbrella of ‘social cohesion’, mentioned only once in the policy explanation, and twice in the corresponding checklist (p. 4, 10).

While the minimal discussion of social cohesion by the policy does illustrate an imbalance, what is curious further yet, is the section titled “Challenges”, outlines a variety of negative social repercussions that could be fueled by the growth of the sharing economy, without any section every addressing their strategy to overcome such, or how they have considered these issues outside of their simple acknowledgement. With the economic “Opportunities” of the sharing economy outweighing the social by 13-2, the social “Challenges” surpassing economic issues 7-2, it is surprising that a section is not provided in order to address these issues and possible avenues for support in more detail (p. 4, 5). This trend continues in the checklist section, in which number 4, as seen below in *Figure 5*, clearly shows the hierarchy of preferred sharing economy goals.

4	What can the initiative achieve?	What can the initiative do for the city and its residents, visitors and/or businesses? - from a consumer’s perspective - from a business perspective - from a job opportunity perspective - with regard to sustainability, social cohesion etc
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Figure 5: Sharing Economy Action Plan Checklist: Part 4 (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2016, p. 10).

As seen above in *Figure 5*, 1 of the 3 times social cohesion is mentioned with regards to the benefits and objectives of collaborative consumption, it is grouped together with all possible “sustainability” advantages after three economic driven attributes (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2016, p. 10). The first question of the checklist determines if the initiative makes more efficient use of resources, has an on and offline component and has reviews available, all of which define if the platform is indeed part of the municipality’s version of sharing economy. However, the following two questions, which declare if the city will accept the new initiative, provide broad entry opportunities such as meeting goals for “sustainability, innovation, entrepreneurship, social cohesion, etc”, and further establishes the ‘welcoming’ nature of the municipality’s approach as it “embraces sharing economy initiatives if they *open up opportunities for the city*” (p. 10, emphasis added, as the question should be raised as to who the majority of these opportunities are being provided and at what/whose expense, if any). The remaining 7 of 10 questions inquire about the regulations the new platform will fall under or if new need to be created, the size of the initiative and its effect on existing markets, and lastly, if such could endanger society or the public (p. 10). In totality, as will be analyzed in the discussion section below, what must be understood, is how the clear emphasis on

the economic factors of the sharing economy influence new conceptions of sharing, and also, how such contribute to either the formation of social capital, and/or cohesion.

iii. An Alternative View: Share NL

For contextual clarity, and to provide another perspective on Amsterdam's sharing economy, this thesis felt it useful to briefly discuss the profile and narrative of the sharing economy being disseminated by Share NL, as organizers of the Sharing City Alliance, a member of the Souel Sharing City board, and the instigator of the Amsterdam Sharing City initiative that sparked the formation of the SEAP, which of course, they played a central role in crafting (Share NL, 2020). Share NL's, for-profit, 'expert' advice has been printed in over 150 publications, and have played been a key actor in the development of Amsterdam's sharing economy infrastructure, producing a municipal vision, and therefore, in shaping the city's version of collaborative consumption, its functionality, objective and narrative (Share NL, 2020). Share NL's intention is to build on the sharing ecosystem and "reshape the way we live, work and play, by "guid[ing] organizations on emerging technologies" and balancing such with "society" (Share NL, 2020).

Similar to Amsterdam's economic role as a global node, Pieter van de Glind, the creator of Share NL along with Harmen van Sprang, envision a long-term goal of developing the sharing economy and "becoming a hub with an objective", promoting Amsterdam as their current "flagship" project (Glind, 2016, p. 2). These claims are interesting for two reasons. Firstly, the idea of "becoming a hub with an objective" is strikingly similar to Amsterdam's position during its 'Golden Age'. Secondly, as will be illustrated, although the Amsterdam Sharing City is coined as their flagship project, the media articles, blog posts and corporate literature contrasts the SEAP in many regards as Share NL often prioritizes, or acknowledges the social and ecological benefits before, or in more detail, than those related to economic advantages, while consistently highlighting the power of collaborative consumption to benefit the city, communities, or institutions as a whole. Therefore, in comparison to the SEAP, a much more balanced code distribution emerged in terms of those emphasizing benefits related to social capital and cohesion.

In order to formulate a sound network, Share NL uses Ambassadors to connect different actors and support "start-ups to corporates", community centers and public libraries, to knowledge institutions and the municipality (Sprang, 2015). Through this network, the goal is not only to spread knowledge and improve case specific adoption, but also to "provide local connection and reduce social isolation", as the "value of social cohesion for us is sky high" (Sprang, 2015, p. 3). In contrast to the order and emphasis placed on elements of social importance presented in the SEAP, Share NL presents the opposite image as it states the purpose of the "Amsterdam Sharing City" is to utilize the sharing economy to improve "sustainability, social cohesion and, the economy", and advocate for more "collaborative lifestyles and governance approaches" (Sprang, 2015, p. 2). This socially cohesive perspective towards the sharing economy is illustrated further with the organizations drive to deter the ability of monopolies to form, to promote more enterprises like Fairbnb, and to cooperate with governmental bodies to craft a "right-to-challenge concept" tool to regulate collaborative consumption, and in fueling a shift from creating "profit to social value" (Chu, 2016, pp. 2, 3; Veracruz, 2016).

Alternatively, when considering the previous analysis of Amsterdam's SEAP, which is claimed to be Share NLs 'flagship product', and its marginalization of social criteria and strong support of capital intensive language and discourse, the success of such must be questioned, either in terms of their actual

intent, or with regards to the municipality's willingness to accept a socially driven sharing economy that works for the good of the collective rather than the individual, as such may disrupt their branding attempts. This view is supported in other articles, as Share NL state's that collaborative consumption represents a disruptive "transition" from "possession to use [and] from mistrust to trust", enabled through technologically induced networks, with the power to provoke a "system change" and correct the issues of a "failing capitalist system based on greed and resource depletion" (van den Bos, 2017, p. 2; Groag, 2017). This must not be accepted as an overarching statement that applies to all sharing platforms, as the extreme diversity of collaborative consumption models and frameworks produce an array of different outcomes, as will elaborated on further, especially when considering their support or contestation of an objective that favors individual capital accumulation (van den Bos, 2017; Greef, 2017).

For instance, the ability of "smart algorithms" that support various rating and review systems are continuously noted as being able to build trust through "authentic online assessments" (van den Bos, 2017, p. 3). However, as referred to numerously, such tools may provide sufficient trust to utilize the surface, but platforms differ greatly in their facilitation of time intensive, face-to-face interactions, that are noted as being key for building deeper levels of trust and relational empathy and correlate with social cohesion, while the former, supporting social capital. This dilemma becomes more interesting when taking into account Share NL's article that explains the importance of "teaching our children" to be "tech-savvy" and utilize such to build "trust amongst strangers" through online verification tools, to contribute to a "community as a whole" as it is "greater than the sum of its parts" (Martin J. , 2017, pp. 1, 4). While the thesis does not dispute the need or desire to empower children, but instead, aims to recognize the difference in messages being disseminated between various actors, especially between the SEAP and much of the Share NL literature, making it increasingly important to expand upon sharing economy variations, question the 'collaborative' nature of such, and ensure future generations are provided with a message that supports balanced levels of social capital and cohesion, among other equitable attributes.

iv. Collaborative Consumption Platforms Operating in Amsterdam

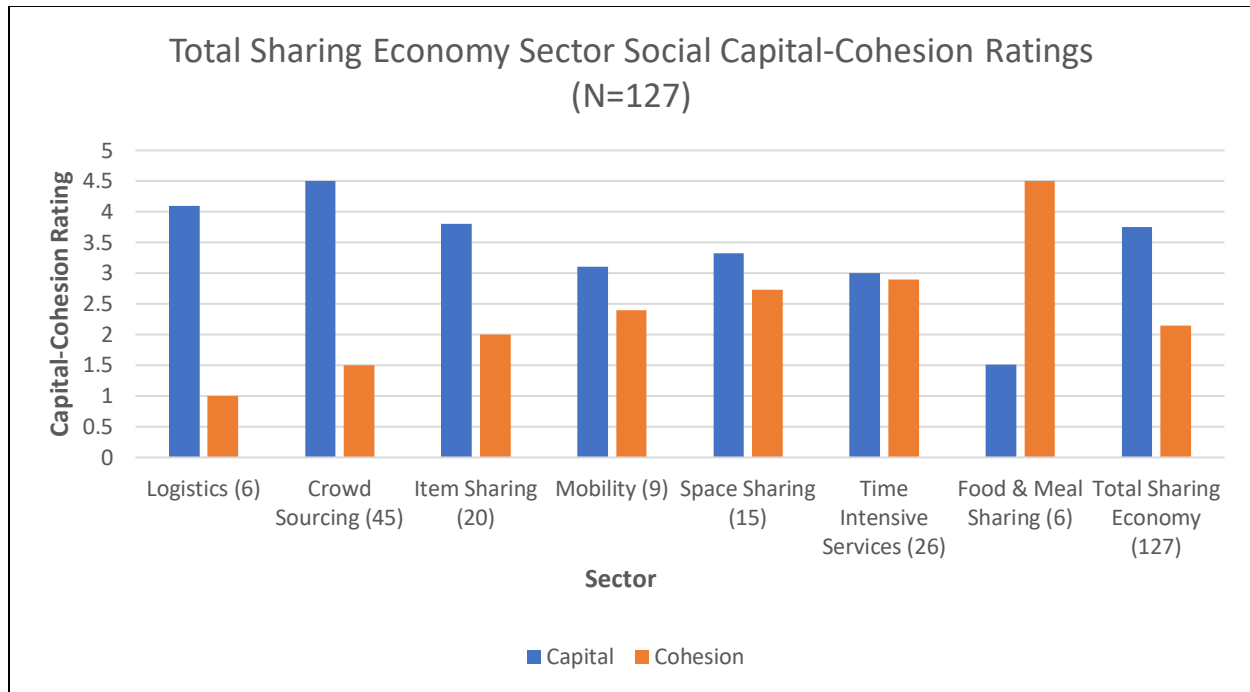


Figure 6: Sector Averages of Capital & Cohesion Ratings (data; authors survey; authors illustration)

Beginning with platforms with the least amount of offline interactions and that are mainly promoted as being practical, in addition to producing a sound economic return, the logistics and mobility categories, which have high entry barriers due to the price, insurance and upkeep of vehicles, combined with their immense 93% -95% idle time, make such pragmatic and “logical” ‘sharing’ options (Belk R. , 2007; Benoit, 2017; Guyader, 2018). While platforms such as BlaBlaCar and Toogethr, which cater to lengthy rides, utilizes a more balanced capital-cohesion narrative by highlighting the aspects of creating new relationships and making car sharing a more “social experience”, the majority, such as MyWheels, WeGo, and Car2go, strive to provide efficient and cost effective mobility solutions (MyWheels, 2020; Wego, 2020; Car2go, 2020; BlaBlaCar, 2020; Toogethr, 2020). Logistics, unsurprisingly, echoes a magnified version of this as their aim is to provide cheaper and faster delivery options for a range of goods. While this does have the potential to unite people through new collaborative mobility options during the ‘offline’ part of the ‘transaction’, and group oriented governance, as insinuated throughout the SEAP, and illustrated through the capital-cohesion rating process, to improve efficiency, and create a seamless transaction, the majority of platforms strive to replace human interactions with digital processes. In turn, although the combination of offline and online components is necessary according to the SEAP, a plethora of Logistics and Mobility

platforms have rendered the need for human interaction void by expanding the functionality of their digital application, therefore, showing clear favourability towards individual benefit and utility.

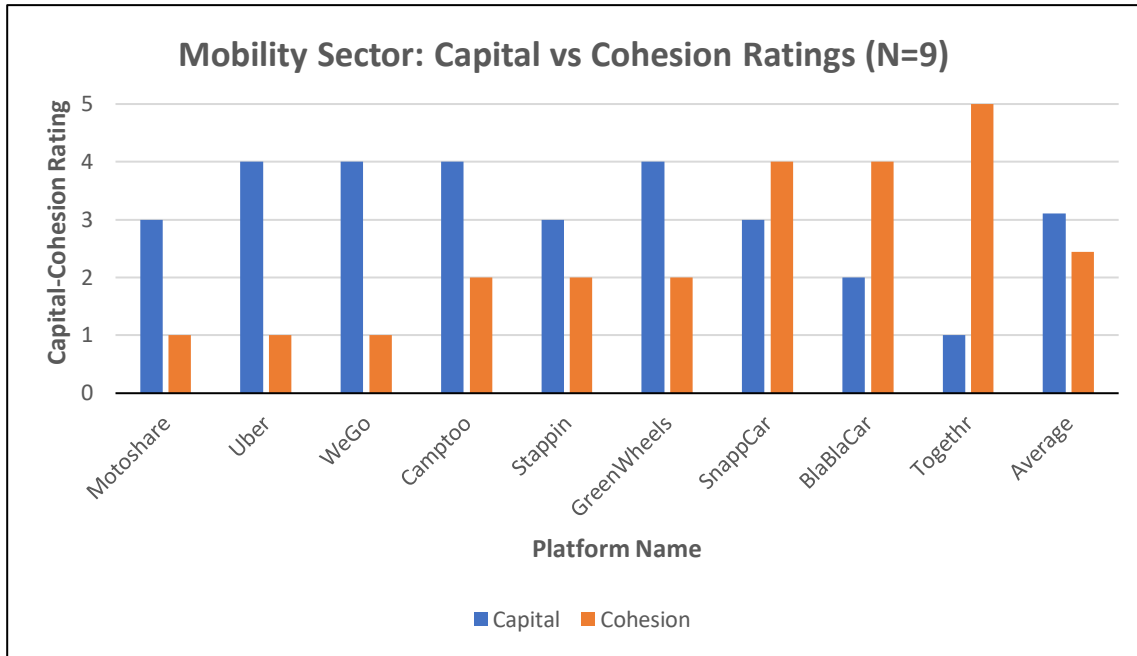


Figure 7: Mobility Sector Capital vs Cohesion Ratings (data; authors survey; authors illustration)

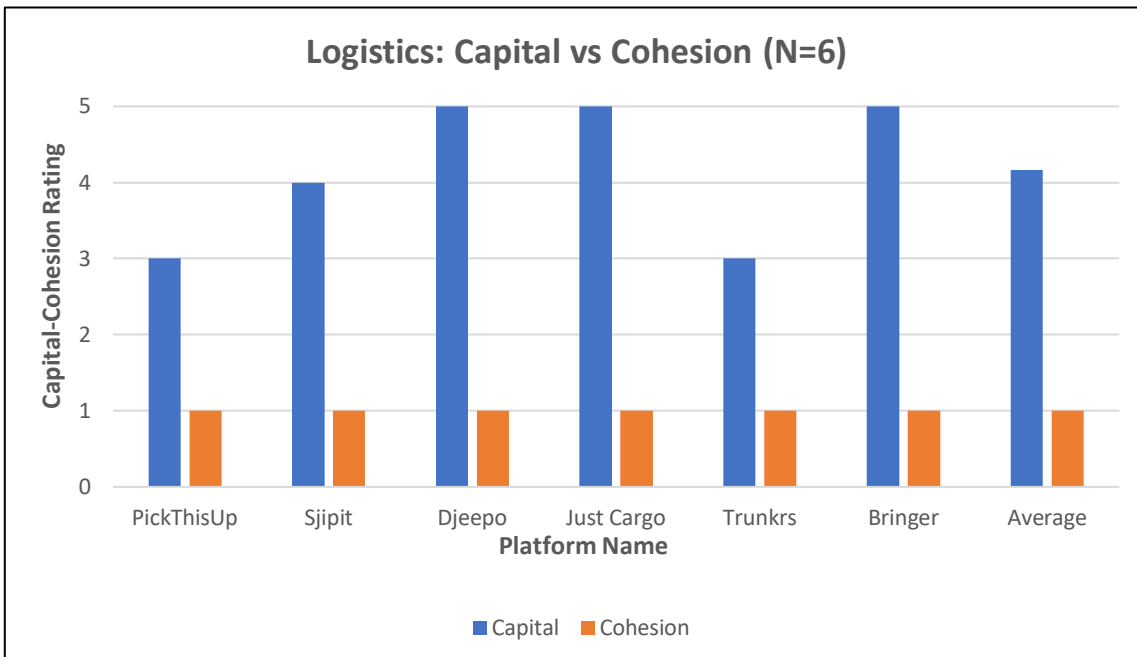


Figure 8: Logistics: Capital vs Cohesion Ratings (data; authors survey; authors illustration)

When considering further the importance and relevance of online and offline components to sharing, few in the Crowdsourcing sector (*Figure 9*), which contains far more platforms than any other, take advantage of the opportunity to create offline experiences or interactions between ‘givers’ and ‘receivers’, and formulate a pool of knowledge and skill sharing, in addition to monetary support. Although they too make use of idle resources, money savings, and enable the creation of new projects, the question remains as to what extent does anonymous money lending support the sharing economy benefits as endorsed by Share NL in terms of social cohesion. The objectives of platforms within this sector however, are much broader than logistics and mobility, as specific platforms have emerged for niche markets ranging from real estate, solar energy and windmills, to art, music and various other creative projects, on top of platforms such as Kickstarter which are all encompassing.

This diversity is important to acknowledge, especially with creative projects that involve group dynamics, as they are personal, can include strong senses of passion and vulnerability that act as avenues for more intimate interactions and can also contribute to one’s well-being. In turn, this leads to a complicated web of driving factors that promote foster elements of both social capital and cohesion. Therefore, while financial aspects may be the main principal driving the interaction, numerous externalities have the potential to cause spillover effects into other areas of one’s life. For example, From Your Neighborhood and Care About It, both support community residents in improving their neighborhood as a whole by aggregating resources, financial and otherwise, operationalizing projects and formulating harmonious, and inclusive objectives. As will be explored in the discussion section, two key factors which change the functionality and results that arise from these examples, is the shared investment of time and space, therefore, the benefits surpass economic and spillover into other areas of life as one is in direct contact with the concrete attributes of the investment, as well as the other investors and benefactors.

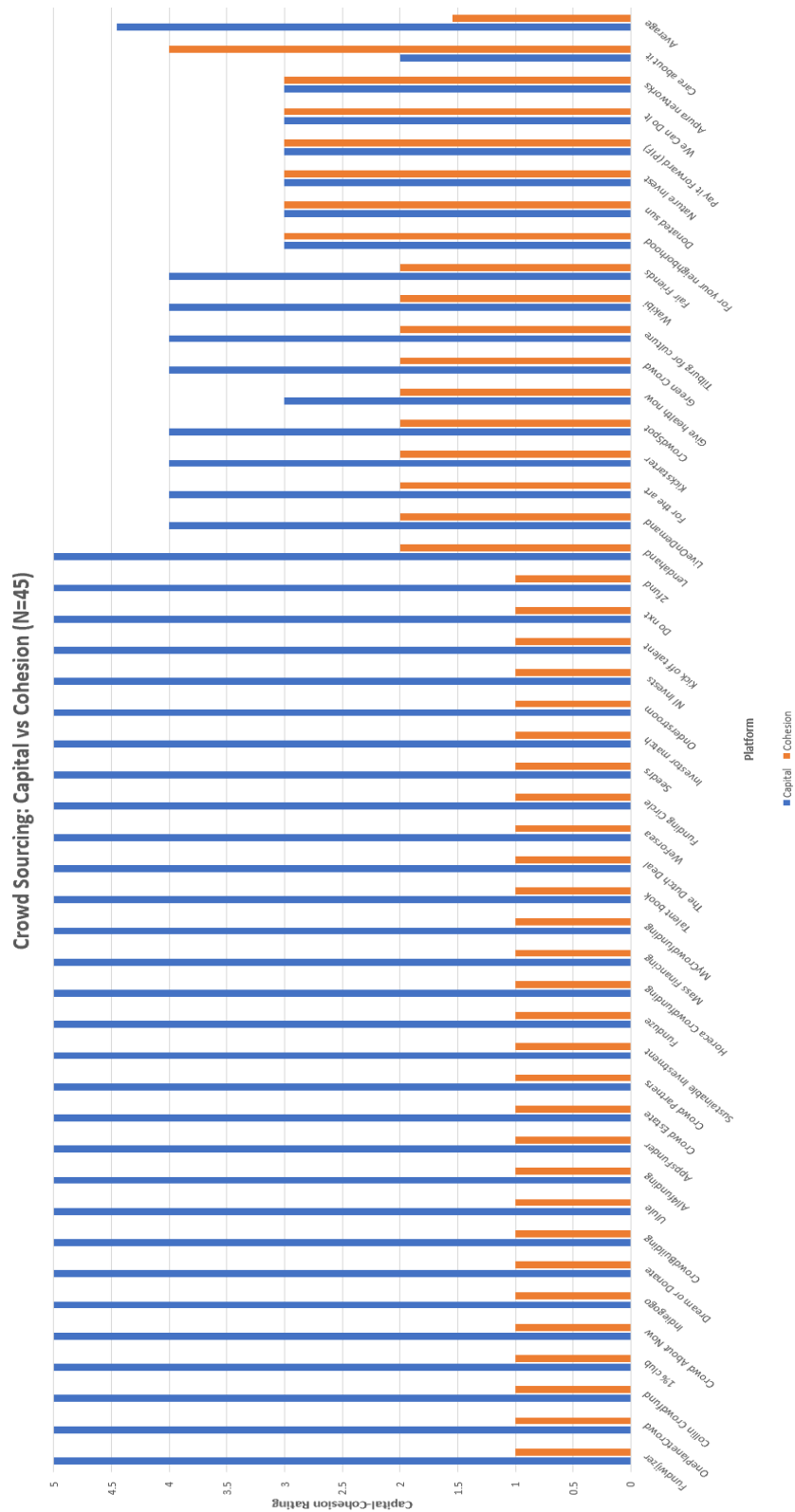


Figure 9: Crowd Sourcing Capital vs Cohesion Ratings (data; authors survey; authors illustration)

Moving towards platforms with more face-to-face interaction, the Item Sharing sector, utilizes sentiment and rhetoric related to benefits that arise from practicality, reducing consumption, and earning small portions of extra money by monetizing the idle time of everyday household things. However, again, the offline, real-life interaction aspect is being challenged by goals of increased efficiency, such as the delivery service launched by Peerby in 2017 (Peerby, 2020). While book and various clothes sharing platforms remain based mainly on either free or trading practices, the majority of other platforms, whether directed toward tools, boats, and mobile homes, or sports supplies, promote functions and objectives that align with that of the SEAP, in which items are rented through a digitally mediated transaction. Although the importance of reducing the idle time of items rarely used is a positive element in terms of reducing consumption, and society's carbon footprint, it must be questioned if pairing such with the idea of "Renting from a friend", is the most sustainable route to pursue when considering each social, economic and ecological benefits from the range of perspectives of actors that constitute the sharing economy (Renting from Neighbours, 2020). As explained during the literature review, this 'renting from a neighbour' concept conveys a type of hyper-neoliberalization process that monetizes once altruistic interactions based on 'true sharing' (Belk, 2014). Moreover, as the benefits are monetary, the spending is often reallocated instead of diminished, offsetting the potential ecological benefits, while increasing the number of transactions and decreasing generalized, non-reciprocal 'true sharing' activities (Bocker, 2017).

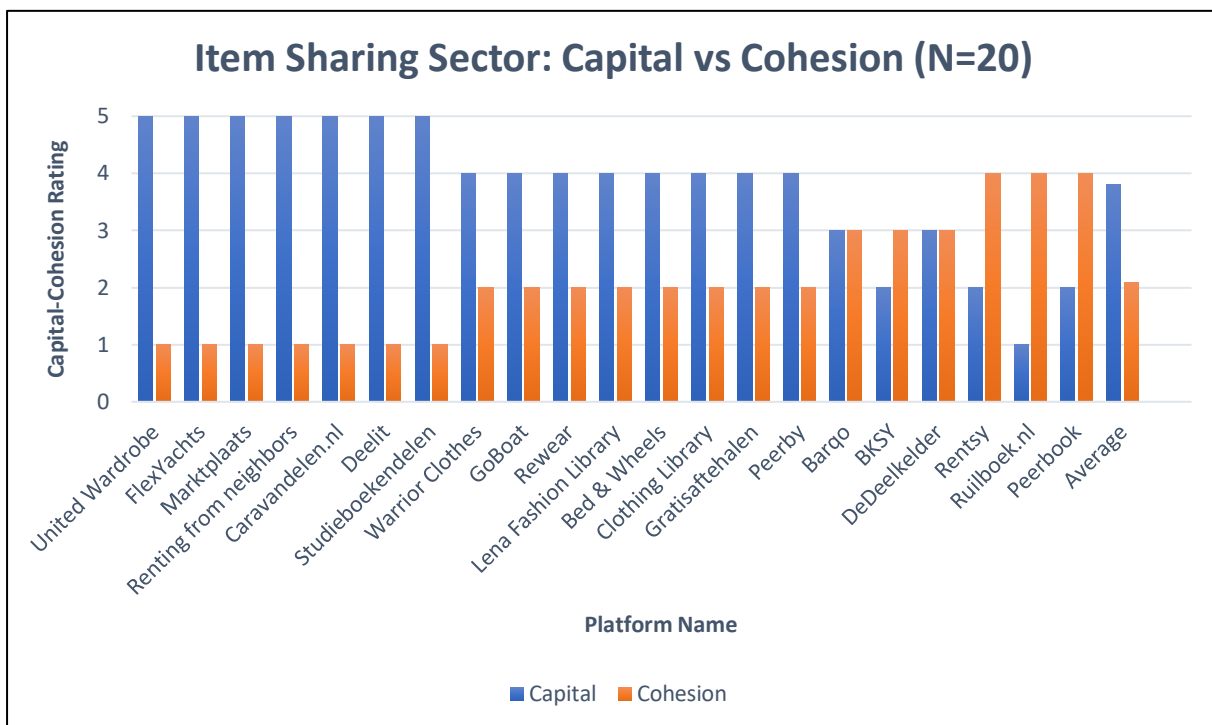


Figure 10: Item Sharing Sector Capital vs Cohesion Ratings (data; authors survey; authors illustration)

Next, in terms of quantity and quality of offline interactions, and narrative directed towards social cohesion, inter-cultural experiences and time intensive trust building, is the Space sharing sector. Despite the various parking space sharing entities which utilize a discourse inline with that of mobility, based on efficiency and economic returns, platforms which support the sharing of bedrooms, office areas, gardens

and homes take a more balanced approach in terms of the benefits they endorse. For example, Desktop Today, Couchsurfing and GardenShare, each prioritize the “social experience” their platform provides. However, understanding these social experiences is more complex, as the network access, and bonds created, have differing goals depending on participant and platform. Although GardenShare aims to improve access to farmable land, as “not everyone has a [garden] of their own”, and to support a more collaborative and community effort to food growing, the social experiences of Desktop Today are aimed to meet inspiring professionals, broaden one's knowledge, “discuss your work and visions and immediately expand your network” (GardenShare, 2020; Desktop Today, 2020). Subsequently, while both platforms aim at ‘sharing’ space, and creating a ‘social experience’, the objectives of each differ and therefore, promote differing results in terms of their potential to foster social capital and/or cohesion. Similarly, while Couchsurfing and Airbnb, both aim at sharing accommodations, the former aims at providing a local experience that combines various elements of travel, and face-to-face interaction, either as a tour guide, host, or coffee drinking partner (Couchsurfing, 2020). Contrastingly, Airbnb strives to create a more efficient accommodation “advertising, discovering and booking” (Airbnb, 2020).

Lastly, before discussing the divergent Food and Meal Sharing sector, is the Time Intensive Service sector, which is the most dynamic due to the variety of services offered, including: Pet sitting and walking, babysitting, labour tasks, tutoring, and organizing community helpers for neighbourly assistance. In turn, a more complex picture emerges, with a more equal balance between capital and cohesion. More specifically, while babysitting, labor tasks and pet care are often driven by practical and monetary objectives, many also exhibited an intent of supporting local people within their community and strengthening relationships through such processes. For example, Dienst4dienst provides a place for people to exchange their talents and services to formulate more collaborative and “self-reliant” communities, while Hulpje strives to create communities “where we will help each other again” connecting neighbors to those in need, with Timebox and Zoiizo promoting similar sentiments (Hulpje, 2020; Zoiizo, 2020; Timebox, 2020; Dienst4dienst, 2020). Even Pawshake and Petbnb promote the importance of “strong communities” through pet sitting. Consequently, in terms of balance, these broader sectors provide a unique combination of environments and types of contact with potential for improving both social capital and cohesion.

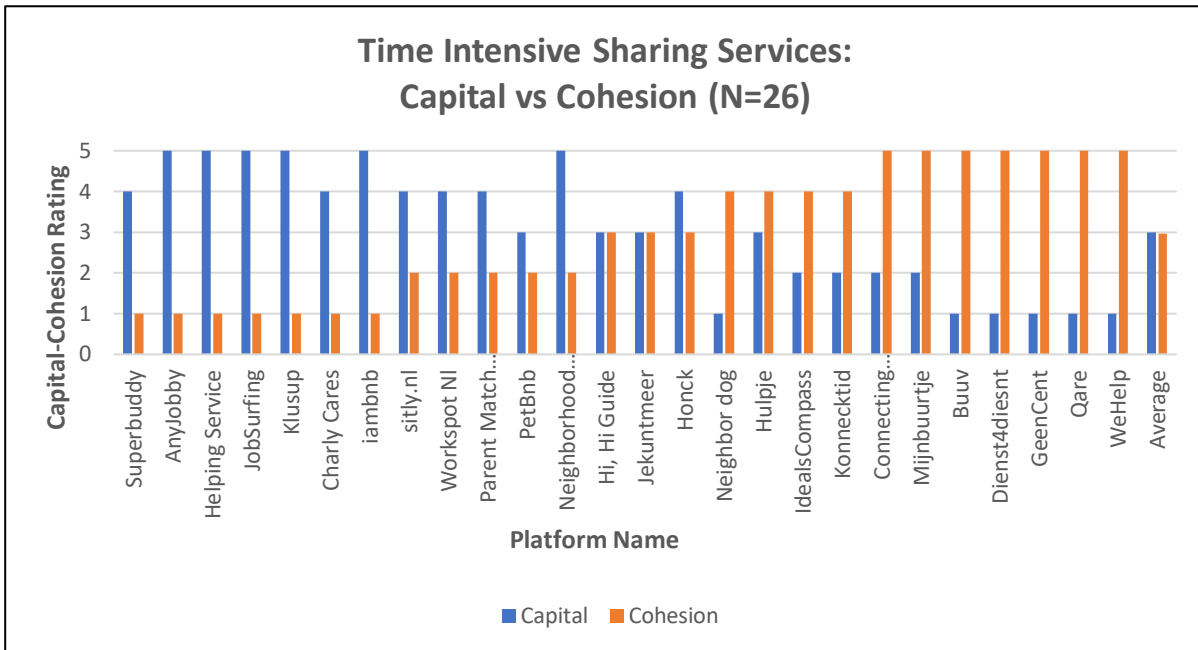


Figure 11: Time Intensive Sharing Services Capital vs Cohesion Ratings (data; authors survey; authors illustration)

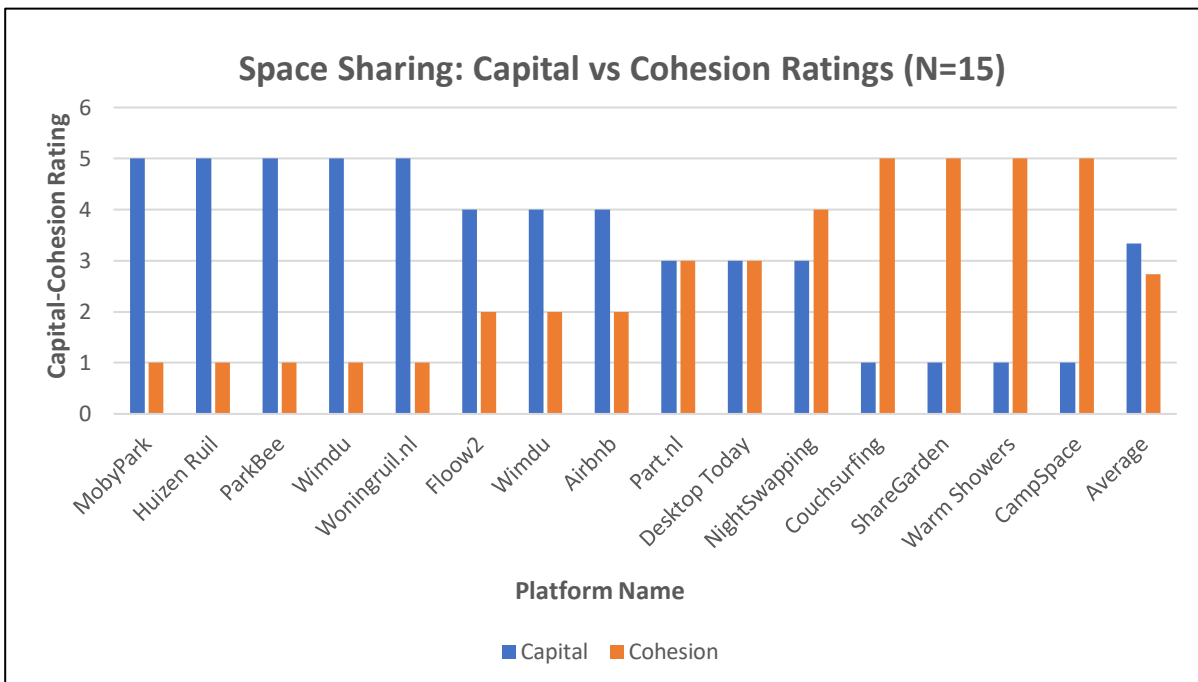


Figure 12: Space Sharing Capital vs Cohesion Ratings (data; authors survey; authors illustration)

In contrast to the previous sectors analyzed, food and meal sharing uses a syntax and sentiment that are more devoted to providing “loved experiences” derived from “passionate” chefs, hosts, and “heartful businesses” that want to build a “strong community” by “getting to know [their] neighbors” through “intimate dining experiences” (Tasty Talks, 2020; ShareDnD, 2020). The importance of building community is noted by three of the six platforms analyzed while the value and ambition for such to contribute to the success of the collective is noted by numerous apps which state their goal of helping support vulnerable populations by increasing their access to food, social relationships and economic opportunities (Tasty Talks, 2020, SupShare, 2020, Thuisgekookt, 2020). Moreover, sharing cultural knowledge, “family recipes” and “authentic experiences” further illustrate the prioritization of ‘being’ over ‘having’, and in spending quality time interacting to build trustful relationships and construct a social network which contributes positively to the well being of the individual, as well as the whole, by cooperating to create a meaningful event (Tasty Talks, 2020). Although it must be acknowledged, that food sharing platforms such as Thuisgekookt (Home Cooked), are limited in this capacity, as home chefs deliver the food, eliminating the meal sharing experience, the meal sharing sector is a stark contrast to the others, as these cohesion related attributes are peppered throughout the narrative presented while ideas and benefits related to capital accumulation, meeting new customers, creating transaction-based networks, and starting new enterprises are absent.

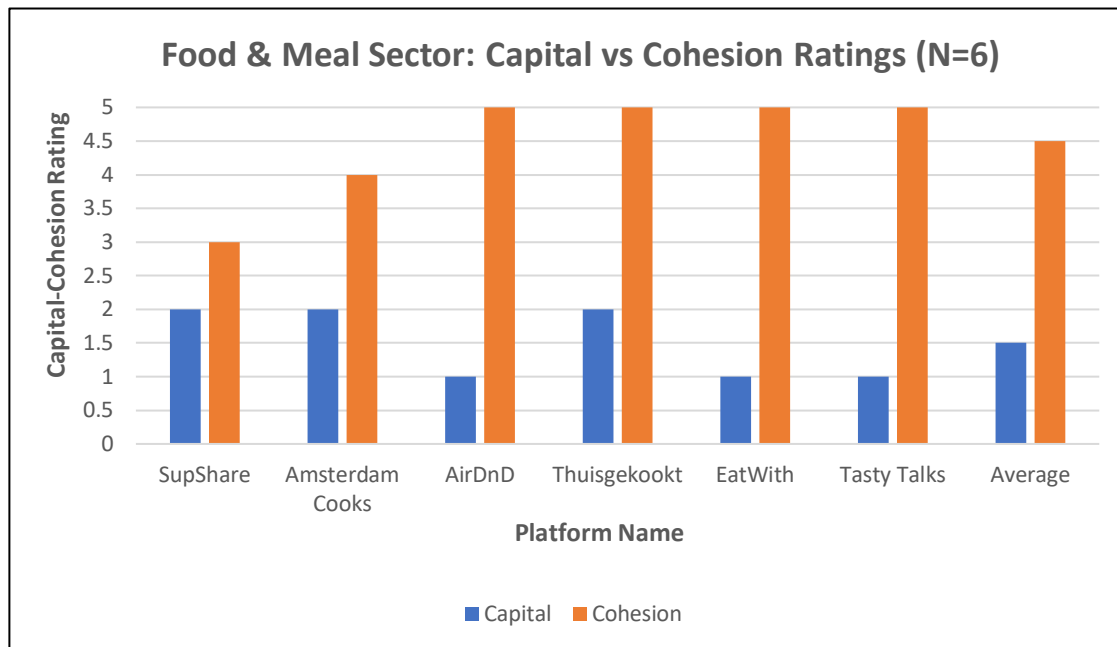


Figure 13: Food & Meal Sector Capital vs Cohesion Ratings (data; authors survey; authors illustration)

v. Interviews: Tasty Talks vs Eatwith

Throughout the interview process, the social cohesion code categories became more thoroughly developed in comparison to those of capital, as the language and syntax used did not resemble that of the SEAP, or the corporate literature of non food and meal sharing platforms. Three common themes were intertwined throughout the narratives painted and anecdotes provided by all 11 interviewees: The importance of atmosphere, the curiosity and willingness to learn about other cultures, and the motivation to spend time, in-person, socializing with different people. The deep descriptions provided about how these themes manifest under particular conditions, and in relation to the wider context of Amsterdam, enabled each of these aspects to act as a catalyst to explore the way these experiences influence levels of social capital and cohesion, and to what extent. Unlike the majority of sharing economy platforms, which as outlined above, aim to provide a streamlined approach to sharing that prioritizes practicality and efficiency, food and, especially meal sharing experiences, are fueled by people who dedicate time to exploring diversity, learning new things in a personal environment and developing their cultural adaption abilities through meaningful interactions. As noted, cultural adaption highlights the importance of being able to apply cross-cultural knowledge to understand other cultures and form “intercultural alliances”, elements which have been alluded to by each interviewee as a critical factor for a positive food and meal sharing experience (Zhu, 2007, p. 5). More specifically, this analysis will highlight the ways food and meal sharing has contributed to encourage the exercising of collective agency, the fostering of intercultural alliances, and the associated relational empathy, which to reiterate, is described as “a relational process that involves individuals and groups working together to build a collective interpretation of the situation they face and to develop a consensus for performing joined action” (Zhu, 2007, p. 6; Allan, 2003; Bandura, 2002).

@eatlovetalkexploreintegraterepeat
- Tasty Talks Facebook Username

Figure 14: Tasty Talks Facebook Username (Tasty Talks, 2020)

Tasty Talks Foundation & Objectives

Tasty Talks creator (C1), after moving to Amsterdam from India in 2017, noticed not only was Amsterdam missing a number of culinary treats from her home, but although she attended various other social gatherings, she continued having trouble building a supportive social network (C1, 2020). This resonates with a comment by Dutch Interviewee H5, who acknowledged the difficulty of integrating into Dutch society due to social groups often being difficult to join, and somewhat exclusive, an experience she endured during her re-integration process after being abroad for over a decade (H5, 2020). Subsequently, to address this problem, C1 began hosting dinners in her home with friends and people she met through the Facebook group Amsterdam Cooks, which has proven to be a vital, and overlooked node in the sharing economy web, as will be discussed further. C1’s original, and current objective for Tasty Talks meal sharing experiences is not only to socialize and eat good food, but to provide a comfortable environment for people

to learn about other cultures, values, and systems of thought, whether it be through food, traditions, or tails of their childhood (C1, 2020). As the following will illustrate, these concepts have remained top priorities of Tasty Talk experiences throughout its development and to the present day, with the platform now supporting a citywide network of hosts and guests, as they are valued by the community as important aspects of integration, adaption, and creating more meaningful relationships. Although the platform has begun expanding to other Dutch cities, and “hopefully one day, around Europe”, C1 intends to continue creating a “cozy and personal” environment, “accessible for everyone” (C1, 2020).

Although participants face a variety of contextually dependent situations individually, as a “community” of Tasty Talk hosts and guests, which various Interviewee’s noted feeling apart of, the common thread, is their motivation to create a social life in the diverse and changing demographic of Amsterdam by “connecting through food” (C1, H4, H5, G9, 2020). In contrary to the experiences Eatwith provides, which as expressed in both the corporate analysis and by numerous interviewees, target tourists who want to learn about Dutch culture from a local, Tasty Talks strives to create more diverse experiences by incorporating a combination of expats, locals, and tourists. However, as various Interviewees have acknowledged, there are usually more expats than locals, and fewer tourists, while in terms of gender, the relative estimate by respondents was roughly seventy percent women and thirty percent men. This occurrence was not acknowledged by anyone as having either a positive or negative effect, as no men every felt claimed to feel “unwelcome”, or “uncomfortable”, as inclusivity is an essential, and non-negotiable element of Tasty Talks, according to C1 (C1, 2020). Additionally, this imbalance was stated as possibly being due to promotion occurring through word of mouth, as “women who attended often relayed their positive experiences to female friends” (C1, C2, 2020). More importantly, in terms of diversity, as will be elaborated on further, is the cultural diversity noted by guests as being one of the most “interesting and exciting” parts of the evening, to “see where everyone is from” and by hosts as critical for “getting people talking and sharing” (C1, C2, H5, G7, 2020).

A Personal Environment & A Comfortable Setting



Figure 15: Tasty Talk Event in Amsterdam (Collaborative Production) (Picture; Khanna, 2020)



Figure 16: Tasty Talk Event in Amsterdam (Personal Proximity) (Picture; Khanna, 2020)



Figure 16: Tasty Talk Event in Amsterdam (Cultural Learning) (Picture; Khanna, 2020)

The photos above in *Figures 15, 16, and 17*, taken at Tasty Talk events in Amsterdam, illustrate the immersive nature of these new, small-scale, personal dining experiences, their augmenting of personal and private boundaries and, the subsequent ability of meal sharing platforms to provide an environment conducive to cultural learning, inclusive, genuine inter-ethnic interactions, and the development of relational empathy and group solidarity. Guests and hosts cannot be told apart, as they all wear matching uniforms, the apron, creating a physical binding agent that unites guests and introduces their common goal of working together to create a delicious dish, socialize, and generate a positive experience for all participants. Any type of hierarchy or division that normally arises in a restaurant scenario in which the chef and guests are separated in space, purpose and action, is mitigated, as participants collaborate in close proximity, around one's "family dining table", and under a common purpose, resulting in the acceleration of acclimatization while spurring participants to feel as though they had "been friends for years before coming" (C2, H5, G9).

When analyzing the photos, Figure's 15, 16, and 17, one would not assume these participants had not met previously, as a purposeful collaboration process is unfolding amongst a room filled of relaxed postures, smiling faces, and concentrated eyes, all in close proximity, with the bare hands of 'strangers', preparing the food about to eaten by everyone. While all participants cooperate to learn a new cultural skill, sharing their own personal cultural, fumbling and laughing together during the process, personal dynamics, like that of one's 'personal bubble' and private space, are challenged, as participants work side by side, arms crossing, and feet stumbling as they playfully dance their way around an unfamiliar kitchen. Guests especially, are all in a uniquely new experience, as all our in an unfamiliar home, with a new, diverse group of people, however, this shared experience, combined with the host's aim to create a "cozy and comfortable" environment, act as key points that fuel a smooth, and hasty, acclimatization process (C1, C2, 2020).

More specifically, important to platform creators, is the development of a "cozy and comfortable environment" that helps guests "make friends, find more delicious food... and create something different from a restaurant", where people "would not feel rushed, and "could feel comfortable having deeper conversations" (C1, C2, C3, 2020). The 'cozy', 'comfortable' and 'personal' elements quickly became prominent topics in each interview, as they are introduced in each experience when new people breach the boundaries of one's private home, where "it is a more *personal* experience", where "people keep their *personal* things", and where "I can *personally* interact with the host and chef" (Interview, 5, 6, 8, 9). Both hosts and guests acknowledged the expedited level of intimacy of entering a "strangers" home as having at first an exhilarating effect that dissipated more rapidly than numerous interviewees expected (C1, H4, H6, G8, G9, 2020, emphasis added).

While the first ten minutes are said to be a "bit of a rush...going into a strangers home and meeting new people", or having "strangers come into your own private space", the smell of the food, a photo, on the wall, the story behind the dish, or most notably, stories of one's own cultural experiences and food, are all mentioned as important avenues for sparking conversations that lead to personal expressions regarding a participants history, ethnic traditions, and childhood memories (C1, C2, H4, H5, G9, 2020). In turn, this acts as a catalyst for people to express something meaningful and therefore, convey a sense of vulnerability, and "intimacy", which is stated by multiple participants as being important in creating a "warm", "welcoming" and hospitable atmosphere conducive to acceptance, openness, and tolerance (C2 C3, H5,

H6, G7, G10, 2020). This type of social environment and the intimacy of being in someone's private space, where "their family lives", has been continually stated as being able to produce an environment that differs in comparison to a restaurant in its ability to spark genuine, engaging, and trust building interactions, especially, as hosts like Interviewee's 2 and 3, combine their talents of music and cooking to create experiences that enable them to "express their passions" and "make brand new dining experiences"(C2, C3, 2020).

The opportunity and space for hosts to "express their passion", was positively noted by various and according to GH, as one of the main reasons why she prefers these home dining experiences to restaurants (C2, C3, H4, H5, G8, 2020). More specifically, because, Tasty Talk events do not try to "disguise money making interests behind social stuff, which is quite obvious and people know it and it puts them off", the money part "is taken care of beforehand and then never spoken of again", and the profit "is not the motivation for any of hosts" (H5, G8, 2020). In contrast to efficiency based platforms which often minimize the level of interaction to increase convenience, Tasty Talks "connects the consumer to the labor directly", by providing space and time for them to express their creativity, passion and craft a "fun", "casual", and "joyful" evening that embraces an inclusive, pro-social attitude (C1, H4, H5, G9, 2020). Subsequently, when asked about the motivation for people to form relationships for business purposes, such an idea was claimed to rarely, as it was more of a place to "separate businesses and pleasure" (G8, 2020). While these types of relationships did come about, they were seen as positive spillover effects that happened over time, by chance, or often, due to the altruism of one expat attempting to assist another in their efforts to integration, illustrating the blurred lines between social capital and cohesion.

H5 was the first, and only, to utilize language which mimicked that of the SEAP, and the non, food and meal sharing corporate literature, but did so in a comparative manner. She presented a view, of which she was not alone in the sample, that opposed "large scale" enterprises that "push people to become some independent entrepreneurs" (H5, 2020). During the first section of the interview, when asked if she used any other sharing platforms, for meal sharing, or with accommodation like Airbnb, or BlaBlaCar for mobility, a lengthy rant was sparked, expressing her distain for such "big developers, mostly from other countries and out of town like Beijing", who used these platforms to "take advantage of people and earn more money" (Interviewee, 5, 2020). She, as well as Interviewee 7, explained how Airbnb has "pushed locals far from the center", as became extremely evident "during the Covid-19 pandemic when the area was a ghost town", that companies like Uber "treat labour terribly", and that both are "just grossly unfair...especially as all the money goes somewhere far away, like Beijing, and nothing goes back into the city" (H5, H7, 2020). However, when determining how Tasty Talk experiences differed in their sharing capacity, in compared to these "big developers", the concept of scale was highlighted as being critical, in terms of the perceived minimal capacity of meal sharing to scale up like Uber, and in terms of the scale of the events which inherently fostered interaction that surpassed "small talk" (H5, G10) .

The importance of scale was noted further by every Interviewee, as the small scale of someone's home, "especially in Amsterdam", was perceived as a key factor for fostering inclusive interactions as it keeps the groups from feeling "overwhelming", which hosts learn to do quite quickly, reducing social pressure and ensuring all guests have space to interact with each other (C1, G7, G9, 2020). As three guests mentioned, when combined with the "personal" and "casual" atmosphere, these intimate group sizes, enable people like themselves, who are shy and can have difficult interacting with new people and creating new

friendships, to feel “comfortable enough to open up”, share about their past, their childhood, and personal details they may not share in another setting, creating an escalating effect, as the more one person expresses and shares, the more others feel comfortable to follow. As noted by host, 3, usually people only come with one partner, a friend, or alone, which mitigates the chance for more dominate social groups to emerge, helping ensure that everyone has space to contribute and interact (H3, 2020). Both hosts and guests noted that often the home setting would have people chatting so long into the evening, the host would almost have to begin to usher people out the door, a factor not possible in a restaurant (C1, H5, 2020).

Time Investment & Cultural Learning

Unlike the majority of collaborative consumption platforms analyzed in sectors other than food and meal sharing, profitability, and the perspective of meeting new clients, customers and business connections, as conveyed by the SEAP, that may boost one’s ability to become a casual entrepreneur or access an efficiency boosting service, Tasty Talk participants strive to connect by taking the time to learn about one another’s culture in a real-life setting, through a personally reflective historical lens. More specifically, these emphasized elements were prominent during each Interviewee’s description about the types of conversations that occurred and the main route for effectively building a trusting bond and relational empathy, with a new person. When compared to the types of trust built via the rating and review systems of Airbnb, Interviewees acknowledged a difference between the traditional trust building mechanisms provided my meal sharing and “breaking bread” with others, which demands a personal time investment, and considerate, active listening, unlike the respective modern, technology mediated mechanisms. The importance of building trust through a time investment, along with the will for the creator of Tasty Talks to minimize competition between hosts, are both stated reason’s that have prevented her from introducing such a review or rating system into the platform (C1, 2020). As mentioned by C2, food “is not just about cooking and delivering, but about meeting other people, bridging with other countries, being global, connecting and socializing”, which is why she prefers to do workshops where the interaction levels are higher throughout the experience (C2, 2020).

While trust was fostered from the time spent together, as noted, it is important to recognize the substance of the time together, as the motivation of guests to learn about different cultures as well as share their own, and excitement of hosts to teach about the cultural and traditional relevance of the dish being made during that event, ensured the interactions were rich in emotionally charged content, unlike many Uber rides or Airbnb stays that progress with minimal conversation. Differing from Eatwith experiences, which many claimed to highlight mainly Dutch food and culture, Tasty Talks provides a platform that aims to support all cultures, as the diversity, and the learning and connecting opportunities inspired by such are viewed as a main pillar of value, allowing events to evolve alongside the demographic of the city. Interviewee’s 2, and 5 noted directly, and others indirectly, that the cultural diversity which enables Tasty Talk experiences to provide rich inter-cultural learning experiences, and foster these social phenomena, stems from the city of Amsterdam and its diverse demographic profile (C2, H5, 2020). More specifically, not only does the city have a diverse demographic which enables a diverse group to be formed for dining experiences, but also, that its historical context in relation to confronting and developing policy and social norms around varying types of cultural, ideological and religious diversity, both aid in providing a contextually supportive foundation for food and meal sharing experiences that promote intercultural

exchanges (C2, H6, 2020). As noted by creators 2 and 3, such platforms would not be able to operate in the same fashion and provide the same experience in a country like Spain, where the culture revolves around Spanish cuisine, differing from the culture and mindset of the Dutch, especially people in Amsterdam, who are “much more open to new foods and new cultures” due to the country’s history and the city’s population (C2, C3, 2020).

When questioned about the demographic of Tasty Talk participants, the intense level of ethnic diversity was consistently referred to in a positive manner. More specifically, culture, is noted by numerous as “something everyone attending has in common”, so it allowed everyone the opportunity to participate in the interactions and to feel included, as each were always given space to express their own views, values, traditions and the like. Numerous Interviewees mentioned Manasi, and other hosts, had made sure to interact with each person individually to help sure they felt included. This level of inclusivity, combined with group sizes helped created an environment which allowed people to feel comfortable and connect by expressing their differences, a factor that often divides groups rather than fostering a sense of community. Subsequently, this has created a platform which supports people in their attempts to harmoniously integrate into Amsterdam society and develop senses of social cohesion, and to a lesser extent, capital.

Network Expansion, Community Development & Civic Engagement

The potential of Tasty Talk experiences to improve migrants integration process and connect expats with locals, extends beyond the cultural learning that takes place during the events, and spills over into other aspects of life in the form on new friendships, work partners, and opportunities to support the development of one’s own as well as other, community and neighborhood. More specifically, seven interviewees stated that they had made new connections through Tasty Talk events, with activities ranging from leisure, such as for shopping and coffee to longer travel trips, sports, work or community projects. The number and intensity of such lay on a spectrum, as for the creator’s, these platforms acted as their central social network to a large extent (C1, C2, C3, 2020). In comparison, for hosts, the intensity weakened slightly, as while they met people during their events, they also met a higher volume of people, which was noted to decrease the ability to keep in contact, so the connection had to be slightly stronger for a host-guest relationship to develop long-term. Interestingly, in regards to both Tasty Talks and Eatwith, a network of hosts also formed, as the platforms created ‘host only’ events to foster learning opportunities by sharing experiences, ideas and the like. Tasty Talks however, extended relationships further by collaborating with community organizations and NGO’s during the Covid-19 lockdown periods to harness the power of the chef network Interviewee 1 had created and support vulnerable populations during a volatile time by providing the type of food delivery service Home Cooked offers.

While the most common type of new connection formed among guests and usually involved general leisure activities, contrastingly, only one guest noted forming new relationships for the purpose of employment, monetary or transaction-based activities that would indicate a more individual dependent objective (G8, 2020). Also, for those who the experiences did not produce new connections, none saw this as an issue, as for some the issue was their lacking of personal time, and for others, this was not the aim, as the one time experience was considered “enough”, especially as they “sometimes see the same people at different events” (H5, G7, G9, 2020). However, A clear division was more difficult to distinguish among host-host connections, as the foundation of their relationship stands upon the commonality of being hosts,

which implies the dynamic of their relationship subtly interweaves elements of social capital and cohesion. However, when discussing this aspect, numerous acknowledged they did meet people who had, by happenstance, found a job, or other capital-based opportunities, and that, especially for newly arrived participants, this was considered be a beneficial aspect. Importantly though, it was specifically stated by 8 Interviewees' that business related topics "are not really what the nights about", and not what the platform is designed for. This result is consistent with both the intention of platform creators, and the motives of participants, which each speak to the 'casualness' of the evening, and importance for people to "relax and have fun" (C1, 2020).

Socio-Spatial Mixing

Viewing this recognition and importance of diversity, through the contextual frame of Amsterdam, in which ethnic segregation is noted to be more prominent than socioeconomic, it is important to delve into the influence of Tasty Talks on the socio-spatial organization of the city. Firstly, it is important to consider the scale of Amsterdam, as many global city nodes sprawl many kilometers further than the Dutch capital's densely populated municipality, in addition the historical welfare support which promoted early social mixing, therefore, mitigating the existence of more severe levels of division and segregation that have been analyzed in the cases of London, for example. That being said, for the majority of expats, the experience of going to an event, whether they have been before or not, is still an adventure as multiple note that they often pay attention to different details than during their normal routines. Additionally, during each event, conversations would commence in which hosts would share more about their area and community, especially as it related to where they bought ingredients, prompting guests to share about their current living conditions, neighborhood and the like. The more important aspect was becoming familiar with the diverse populations that inhabited neighbourhoods beyond participants normal routines. However, this is not a unanimous experience, as G9 stated that she only attends events within a five to ten minute walk from her home in West, and would not be attending an event she had interest in because it was in Nord, roughly 15-20 minutes by public transport (G9, 2020).

5. Discussion: The Power of Collaboration

i. The Spectrum of Amsterdam's Sharing Economy

When examining Amsterdam's sharing economies through the lens of Belk's (1988, 2010, 2015) traditional sharing in practices, designed to manifest in a cooperative manner through the expression of collective agency for the group to benefit as a whole, and "sharing out", which "preserves the self/other boundary" by promoting proxy modes of agency that result in the sharing of resources among discrete economic interests, as illustrated in Figure 17 below, the analysis illustrates that a spectrum of sharing practices exist, between 'true' and 'pseudo', each varying in their impact on social capital and cohesion. Although the SEAP prioritizes benefits related to social capital through a intense endorsement of a discourse that invites people to exercise proxy agency through casual entrepreneurialism for the purpose of obtaining individual benefits, and in turn, participate in sharing out practices that resemble instances of 'pseudo sharing', among the 127 platforms, a combination of entrepreneurial and collective activities exist. As the variety of sharing economies expands into niche markets, there is a tendency for participants to opt for

more local, personal oriented platforms, as multiple interviewee's acknowledged being able to see through the 'façade' of those attempting to hide money making attempts behind sharing activities.

While the increasingly neoliberal policy framework being implemented in Amsterdam over recent decades supports collaborative consumption's current corporatist trajectory, the stark differences between the discourse and rhetoric of the municipality's SEAP, and the various pieces of literature disseminated by Share NL, the creator's of the Amsterdam Sharing City concept, design and launch, was surprising. The coding analysis illustrated that the municipality, to an extent, disregards the complex nature of formulating social cohesion, and how collaborative consumption can support or suffocate such processes, and instead, focuses on a narrative that prioritizes the entrepreneurial capacities of collaborative consumption, born from increased access to resources and customers, mimicking the decentralization and increased private sector role in service provision spurred by the city's increasingly market-driven approach to urban governance. This is especially apparent for participants of logistics, mobility, crowdsourcing platforms and those that prioritize efficiency and practicality over personal time investment, as they most often stay as "discrete" relationships, resulting in extending not one's aggregate extended-self, but one's customer reach, economic network, and social capital. However, a clear trend emerged among platforms that supported some type of face-to-face interaction, especially with time intensive services such as babysitting, tutoring, and pet care, which similar to meal sharing, involved boundary augmentation due to private home's being breached, and more personal, non-digitized trust being built through expressions of intimacy and vulnerability.

However, it is also important to acknowledge Amsterdam's history as a transnational knowledge center that supports businesses by connecting services, along with its 'tolerant' social culture that inherently, supports individuality. When combining such, with the current economic and political mindset, on the municipal, and more broadly, national and EU levels, which have ushered in the culture economy and city branding, like "Amsterdam, the Sharing City", it is not an illogical result for the sharing economy to pursue a capital driven trajectory. However, illogical or not, important to this investigation, is that the evolution, in combination with other elements, has led to a current situation in which capital driven sharing platforms, outweigh those related to cohesion, an issue which could lead to the reproduction of more competitive and individualistic norms that divide societies, reduce instances of collective agency, and mitigate their ability to be adaptable and resilient in the face of an increasingly volatile and uncertain world.

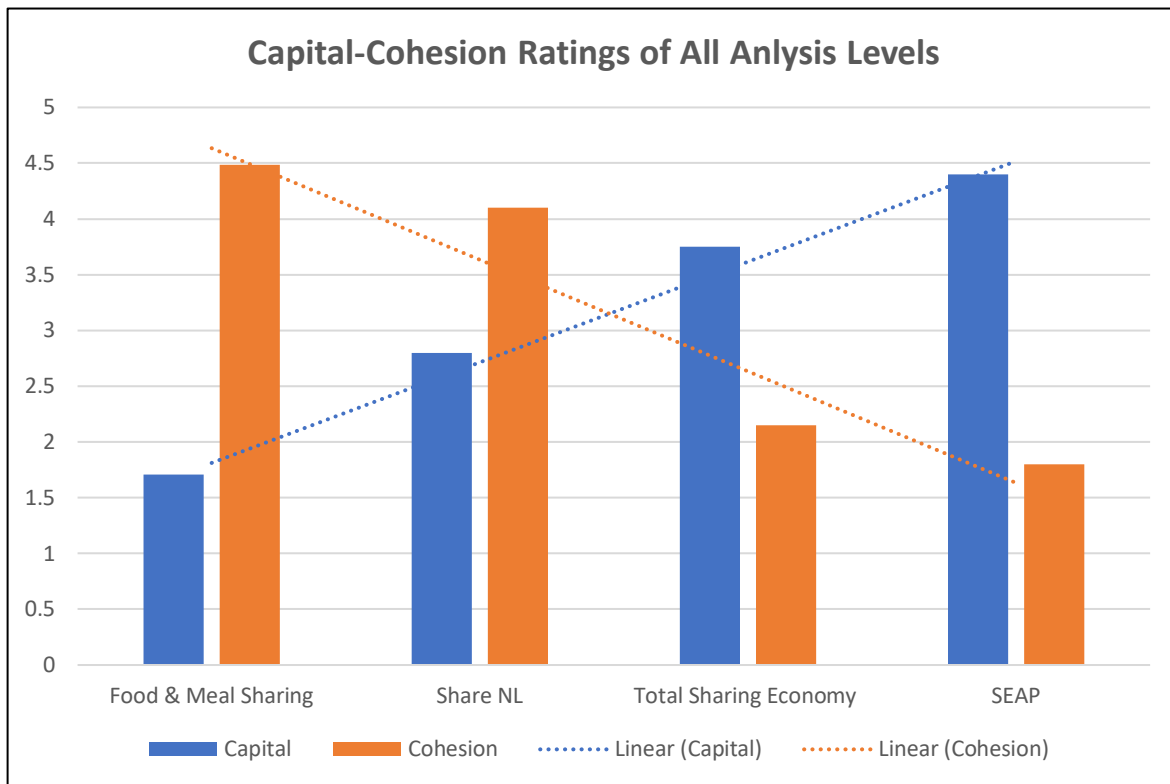


Figure 18: Capital-Cohesion Ratings of All Analysis Levels (data, authors survey authors illustration)

Interestingly, is the contrast in discourse, rhetoric, and prioritization of values between Share NL the instigators, and significant contributors to, the Amsterdam Sharing City initiative, and the respective SEAP disseminated by the municipality to guide such. More specifically, Share NL frames a discourse and utilizes a type of rhetoric and style of syntax that is more balanced in terms of the range of benefits that collaborative consumption could provide, with social and environmental superseding economic in level of importance, and local options prioritized over monopolistic global enterprises. In this manner, it was more reminiscent of the former Dutch welfare state, as Share NL's objective conveys a willingness to inspire a sense of collective agency, ensure the benefits of the sharing economy are equally accessible, and provide a solution to enhance upward social mobility and equitable, harmonious living. This view in many ways contests that promoted by the SEAP, as it outlines the economic potential of collaborative consumption in detail, and the various ways to capitalize on one's underused assets, while failing to delve into the many various experiences provided by different platforms that are generalized under one umbrella, and ignoring the possibility for participants to invest time into cultural learning activities and improve varying aspects of one's socio-cognitive capacities. Subsequently, the municipality's failure to place the necessary emphasis on elements of collective agency, necessary for developing a sense of cohesion that can be experienced on an individual, and societal level, combined with the contextual history mentioned, are factors that can be argued to have contributed to the lack of balance within Amsterdam's current sharing economy, in terms of providing an ecosystem of platforms that caters to strengthening social capital and cohesion.

ii. Meal Sharing: More Than Production & Consumption

Diverging from the discourse composed by Amsterdam's SEAP and the rhetoric utilized by the majority of non-food related sharing economy platforms, the capital-cohesion rating process and semi-structured interviews provided valuable evidence which demonstrates that Tasty Talks meal sharing experiences have, on multiple accounts, positively impacted social cohesion and as more of an externality, social capital. More specifically, in contrast to the majority of collaborative consumption models which strive to mitigate face-to-face interaction to expedite the sharing process, elevating levels of proxy agency and desires to obtain social capital, meal sharing produces numerous cohesion related indicators that facilitate cultural learning, collaborative activities that demonstrate collective agency, and in-person trusting building processes, highlighting the importance of interdependence, and the potential of utilizing diversity to smoothen societal integration and cultural adaption.

Firstly, the setting and atmosphere of meal sharing experiences which aim to embrace the (super) demographical diversity of Amsterdam, and enable such to flourish in a comfortable environment that promotes opportunities for intimate, inter-ethnic contact, has been a main contributor to the development of social cohesion. Argued by Veen (2019), who researched Home Cooked, a service which enables consumers to order a meal with a price set by the chef and pick it up at their home, often on a regular basis, the time interacting face-to-face with local, but unknown, chefs, navigating social cues, and, spending a few moments in the personal space of another's home, provides a social element that carry's the potential to build "community values" (p. 2). This sentiment was elaborated on, as mentioned during each interview for this thesis, the setting of being in the hosts private space, at their kitchen table, encouraged participants to "feel at home", as they were surrounded by the hosts private possessions, family photos, and the like, far exceeding the social boundaries of an entry way where a Home Cooked participant was too afraid to unzip her coat, in case such was "too free and impolite" (Veen, 2019, p. 5). As acknowledged, such differs from a restaurant in its social ambiance, as the personal setting was deemed part of the experience, helping guests feel at ease in an unfamiliar place and therefore, accelerating the acclimatization process, smoothing the navigation of new social cues, and providing a pathway to begin extending one's sense of their AES.

More specifically, establishing an intimate setting that augments the personal-private boundaries of one's home, and one's 'personal bubble', due to the proximity of working together around a dinner table, acts as a catalyst for "deep" conversations and interactions that explore and express the cultural diversity of the group, providing space for vulnerability and emotionally charged bonding interactions (C1, C2, G7, 2020). These moments, where family memories and ethnic traditions that people cherish, are revealed, are what many noted as a key motivation for participation, suggesting it was not the 'having' of the new gastronomy delights, but the 'being' with new, and different people, in a comfortable environment, and experiencing cohesion by connecting through food and culture. This demonstration of motivated time investment and cultural learning distinguishes meal sharing not only from other, more practicality prioritizing sectors, but also from food sharing services like Home Cooked, in which only "small talk" is employed during brief pick-up interactions, and the willingness of participants to get personally acquainted with one another, and develop a connection or relationship is unknown.

iii. Collective Agency & Cultural Learning

Fueled by the small scale, personal environment of one's home, Tasty Talk participants are provided with opportunities for inter-ethnic contact that veers from everyday interactions, and instead is inspired through shared senses of collective agency as guests and hosts consume and produce collaboratively. In addition to guests embarking on a cooperative cooking processes together, which entails the pooling of knowledge and skills to achieve a common goal, each participant works together to provide a safe space for diversity to be expressed, for cultural learning to take place, and for socio-cognitive abilities to be enhanced. These phenomena, which continue providing possibilities for the expansion of one's AES, and for guests to develop and experience senses of social cohesion, occur without the main trust producing mechanism popular among sharing platforms, including Eatwith and Home Cooked, the two-way review and rating system. In turn, Tasty Talk hosts and guests both exhibit a heightened level of "social courage", by demonstrating their willingness to not only "eat food from strangers" (Veen, 2019), but to venture through an evening of collaboration and cultural learning by their side, exhibiting a new example of collective agency. While it can be argued that such experiences inherently attract extroverted people, numerous interviewees explained that they are rather shy and often have trouble meeting people, however, the small scale and being in someone's home made the experience comfortable and accessible, and the joint task provided an activity that decreased the time of having to be constantly engaged in conversation, which can add stress to the situation. The collaborative tasks are of additional importance, as such provides space for not only recognizing one's differences but highlighting them to connect with others and facilitate cultural learning opportunities. While doing such, their interdependence is recognized, as all must cooperate, communicate, navigate a varied range of social cues, overcome hurdles, invade personal space, and unite to achieve a common goal, to create delicious dish and have a delightfully interactive evening.

iv. Societal Integration and Intercultural Adaptation

Following the previous sections, while the environment of meal sharing experiences fuel deep conversations while augmenting private-personal boundaries, providing space for cooperative processes and cultural learning activities, each of these elements, combined with the diversity of participants of Tasty Talk events, due to the city demographic, enhance the societal integration and cultural adaption capacities of participants. The inter-ethnic contact, especially the more personal interactions supported by meal sharing experiences, were consistently noted as being able to improve and expand one's social cognitive skill set, and in turn, aid participants in their integration and adaption process. As noted by (Pietila, 2010), the cooperation and cultural learning processes which arise during events, can substantially improve one's ability to navigate culturally diverse social norms and practices, communication methods, and varying modes of proxy and collective agency. This social competence is a critical tool when attempting to integrate and adapt into a super-diverse demographic like that of Amsterdam, from the perspective of locals and migrants alike, as the amalgamation of varying points of diversity continue perpetuating cultural hybridisation processes that result in countless subcultures (Bandura, 2002, p. 280). In contrast to meal sharing in more culturally homogeneous Brazilian cities, noted as revolving mainly around Brazilian culture, the intense diversity experienced and endured during Dutch meal sharing experiences amplify levels of both self and more importantly, collective efficacy, which "embodies the coordinative and interactive dynamics of group functioning" (Bandura, 2002, p. 272). Subsequently, not only do such

increases in efficacy, derived from advancing participants ability to integrate and adapt, aid in fostering social cohesion, but such also contributes to maintaining the city's reputation as open and tolerant by connecting the flows of diverse populations.

6. Limitations & Future Research

As mentioned, Covid-19 safety measures, which eliminated the possibility to travel to Amsterdam and participate in meal sharing experiences, perform participant observations and conduct interview's in person, were the main hurdles preventing this thesis from achieving its full potential. This element is especially imperative when considering the emphasis placed on face-to-face interaction by interviewees, and the importance of such in allowing them to feel comfortable in expressing more deeply connected stories, ideas, and emotions. Therefore, similar to the way purely digital forms of communication were noted as preventing cohesion indicators from manifesting, the digitally mediated research methodology can be argued to have limited the results to a degree, as phone calls and Skype interviews provide a different environment than in a real-life setting, possibly in someone's home, altering the depth of interactions. Likewise, attending events and experiencing the processes of cultural learning and cooperation firsthand would lead to a more grounded study with insightful details into the social dynamics produced by meal sharing events, especially when culturally driven differences in social dynamics and modes of agency.

Therefore, not only should future research aims strive to alter the methods as stated above, but in terms of research trajectory and scope of analysis, this investigation has illuminated other areas in need of examination. Firstly, it is important to further test the influence of the city's historical context, cultural values, and demographic profile on the functionality, objectives, and norms of the respective city's (meal) sharing platforms. Continuing on this train of thought, as Amsterdam's majority-minority population has played a large role in both shaping, and being shaped by, meal sharing, it is important to further explore the way's super-diverse, segregated, or homogenous cities, produce different collaborative consumption policy, infrastructure, and corresponding platform designs. Thirdly, it is important to further uncover the significance of scale within sharing platforms, and how such influences levels of social capital and cohesion. As noted by various Tasty Talk participants, this was a key factor in establishing a comfortable environment that welcomed the sharing of more personal details, while even Swedish car sharing platform protested after the service exceeded 150 vehicles, as they would no longer be able to know the other drivers (Bardhi F. E., 2012). Fourthly, although Tasty Talks provides a space for integration, and a wealth of diversity to manifest, when considering the demographic profile of participants in terms of age, socioeconomic background, and professional status, the degree of inclusiveness and accessibility of these experiences should be a topic of further research, to address the common expat vs migrant issue and further examine the extent of this inclusivity. Lastly, as argued by Muller, that "it is an illusion that power relations and conflicts will be somehow suspended through dialogue and intimacy, and that the distance and hierarchy between those who tolerate and whose who are tolerated will dissolve" (Muller, 2012, p. 426). Although the majority of participants contest this, as they viewed meal sharing experiences as inclusive, tolerant, and accepting, it is important to question this and consider this system of thought and ask how certain power relations, "kinds of meanings", and the like are reproduced or contested during the interethnic contact that emerges from such experiences, and how such shape the encounters that occur, within the present local and global, social conditions (Muller, 2012, p. 428).

7. Conclusions & Policy Suggestions

Analyzing Amsterdam's sharing economy through a grounded theory framework has enabled this thesis to shed light on the dynamic social complexities that manifest within the realm of collaborative consumption experiences occurring in Amsterdam, illustrating that dichotomic prescriptions that classify platforms as either instances of sharing in or out, pseudo or true sharing (Belk, 2010), must be examined from an array of perspectives that extend beyond policy or a given sector to account for the historical, cultural and demographic context. More specifically, Amsterdam's historical context as a transnational knowledge hub and service provider, its open and tolerant set of social norms, and intensely diverse demographic, each played an important part in laying a foundation for the rampant integration of digital, collaborative consumption platforms. However, while this foundation enabled a diverse range of sharing services to be born, intense neoliberally driven institutional restructuring that has undermined welfare systems, increased labour flexibility and insecurity, and fostered governmental decentralization processes married with high levels of privatization, have, as indicated by the SEAP analysis, steered the city's sharing economy discourse toward a model that prioritizes individual capital accumulation and the solidifying of one's AES by inspiring modes of proxy agency that utilize networks for personal gain, rather than to improve the quality of life as a collective.

In contrast to the SEAP, and many of efficiency boosting, practicality-based platforms that bolster ideas related to social capital and resemble Belk's theory of pseudo sharing, meal sharing experiences have created a divergent discourse and narrative which more closely aligns with that of Share NL, and the post WWII Dutch welfare system. More specifically, Tasty Talks, which has embedded the value of interdependence, cooperation and cultural diversity into the foundation of the platform's functionality and objectives, provides a personal, and comfortable space that enables hosts and guests alike to engage in a collaborative cooking experience that fosters cultural learning opportunities, relational empathy, and the improvement of individual and collective social cognitive capacities. Moreover, by avoiding the superficiality of smart algorithms used to expedite trust building, and instead, prioritizing the establishment of trust and deep connections through timely face-to-face interactions, the platform inherently inspires participants to demonstrate senses of social courage and collective agency, a risk that that helps expand the boundaries of one's AES, as participants willingness, and capacity to, engage in other collective activities increases. Subsequently, this thesis has illustrated that in spite of the trend of collaborative consumption platforms to focus on helping casual entrepreneurs obtain social capital, Tasty Talks meal sharing experiences have demonstrated a socially innovative utilization of Amsterdam's unique context and current demography to sustain and reproduce supportive societal integration and cultural adaption processes that aid in developing social cohesion on both the individual and societal levels.

The narrow scoped vision for collaborative consumption as put forth by the SEAP, which neglects the evolutionary diversity of the sharing economy, and the range of functions it currently serves throughout various aspects of society, has led to a simplified guide that promotes values and objectives based highly on the empowerment of entrepreneurs and their drive to obtain social capital. In contrary, as discussed throughout this thesis, and proven through an in-depth analysis of 127 platforms operating in Amsterdam, a wealth of opportunities to balance capital based objectives with collective processes that contribute to not only practicality, but also to trust, integration, adaption and social cohesion, remain untapped. In order to address this, it is advised that a more proactive institutional approach be taken, instead of the current

reactionary method, as such would enable a more thorough foresight and scenario analysis to be conducted, negative feedback loops to be identified, and harmful externalities to be avoided rather than overcome ex-post. Such a collaborative and more informed process is especially important when considering platforms that strive to exclude monetary transactions in order to build collective efficacy and trust through generalized, non-reciprocal methods of sharing, as not only do they bolster the highest opportunities to develop and experience social cohesion, but they most often face high entrance barriers due to monopolistic ‘sharing’ companies. Finally, fostering an ongoing dialogue with community organizations, and civic actors, will not only enable the needs of each to be more clearly identified, but also, such will provide space for opportunities to emerge, similar to Tasty Talk chefs partnering with local organizations to help vulnerable populations during the Covid-19 crisis, a partnership that continues to grow and expand their collaborations. This process will aid in understanding how Amsterdam fits into the sharing economy, and not only vice versa, and will in turn, enable its capacities to extend beyond supporting casual entrepreneurs, and shed light on a more integrated, synergistic, and tailored approach that accommodates the cultural and demographical diversity of the population, and balances opportunities for social capital and cohesion.

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*Annex***Annex A. Social Capital and Cohesion Indicator Table**

Conceptual Foci	Social Capital	Social Cohesion
Processes & Mechanisms	Utilize social networks for individual benefits	Understand social networks to generate solidarity, trust, and collective values and norms
	Focus on reciprocation via monetized transactions	Focus on generalized reciprocity
	Trust established between individuals via digital tools	Trust established via timely, face-to-face interactions, cooperative activities, and cultural learning
Objectives & Values	‘Having’ Knowledge & Material Assets	‘Being’, Knowing, and Experiencing
	Form networks for upward social mobility (economic emphasis)	Utilize social networks for battling isolation, loneliness, and integration obstacles (social emphasis)
	Community’s value relates to accessing individual support, sense of belonging and safety	Community value relates to establishing a support network that prioritizes the ‘common good’, social order and sense of place attachment
	Values learning opportunities as access to resources, knowledge, and capital for innovation and economic success	Values cross-cultural, inter-social, and other learning opportunities as empowering and the foundation for building trusting relationships
Results & Effects	Participation Based on Individual Thinking/Improvement Over the Long-Term	Participation Based on Both Individual and Collective Thinking/Improvement Over the Long-Term
	Increased use of proxy agency	Increased use of collective agency
	Civic engagement to secure personal safety and sense of belonging	Civic engagement to generate shared values, norms, and social practices
	Preserves the boundaries of one’s AES	Augments and expands the boundaries of one’s AES

Table A: Social Capital and Cohesion Conceptual Foci. Table adapted to the Sharing Economy Phenomena from theoretical foundations provided by Putnam, 2000; Portes, 2011; Carrasco, 2016; Bourdieu 1986, Coleman, 1988; Jensen, 2010; Dickes, 2012; Bandura, 2002, Kearns, 2001; Klein, 2013; The Council of Europe 2012).

Annex B – Social Capital – Cohesion Likert Rating Scale

Measurement Scale	Emphasis on Social Capital Related Indicators	Emphasis on Social Cohesion Related Indicators
1	- Includes none of the benefits related to social capital	- Includes none of the benefits related to social cohesion
2	- Includes some of the benefits related to social capital	- Includes some of the benefits related to social cohesion
3	- Balances Social Capital and Cohesion	- Balances Social Cohesion and Capital
4	- Focuses mainly on benefits related to social capital	- Focuses mainly on benefits related to social capital
5	- Only promotes elements that foster social capital	- Only promotes elements that strengthen social cohesion

Table B: Social Capital Cohesion Likert Scale (Authors illustration, 2020)

Annex C - Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Creators

Introduce Research and Explain the Purpose and Structure of the Interview

Section 1: General Impressions and Motivations with the Sharing Economy

1. To begin, we will start with some general info about your experience with the sharing economy.
 - a. What has been your general experience with sharing apps, from Airbnb, to Uber, or any others that you use?
 - a. Which apps do you use, how long have you been using the app and roughly how often you use them?
 - b. What were your original motivations for using these platforms? Have they met your expectations?

Section 2: General Impressions and Motivations with Food and Meal Sharing

2. We will now move onto questions regarding your use with food and meal sharing apps.
 - a. How did you first hear about meal sharing?
 - b. What were your original motivations for participating in meal sharing? Had you been a guest, or host with another platform before deciding to create your own?
 1. Practical/econ/social/ecological/other?
 - c. Which apps do you use, how long have you been using it/them and roughly how often you use them?
 - d. Was there a reason for choosing one platform over another?

- e. Have your expectations been met? Exceeded?
3. Could you go into a little detail regarding one of your more notable, positive experiences (what were the main things that made these positive experiences? Or if you have had any negative experiences? What were the distinct differences?

Section 3- Creating a Meal Sharing Platform

1. What were your original motivations for creating a meal sharing platform?
2. What would you classify as the main objectives of the platform?
 - a. What were the main factors influencing these objectives? Have these changed?
3. What type of functions and processes does the platform provide to fulfill these goals?
 - a. How have these changed over the evolution of the platform?
 - b. What have you learned?
4. Did you collaborate with others, or was it an individual process?
 - a. Did you acquire assistance from institutions, organizations, or the like?
5. How would you say this platform fits into the broader sharing economy?
6. What role does the platform play within Amsterdam?
 - a. In terms of, sharing practices it promotes or changes?
 - b. Influencing community, social networks?
 - c. Monetary value, employment and space for entrepreneurial activities?
7. How does the platform differ from others?
 - a. In regards to audience, functionality, objectives, influence on the city, neighborhoods and the like?
8. What do you see in the platform's future?

Section 4 – The Experience – Dependent on answers above

1. *To begin, could you first describe the types of settings you have experienced, and what it is like to be in some one's home, with new people?*
2. *Could you go into detail on the types of activities participants perform?*
 - a. *Was this a cooperative process? What were the dynamics of people working together? Was it always perfect harmony, or did sometimes issues arrive?*
 - b. *How would you describe the social dynamic between guests, in comparison to guests and hosts?*
 - c. *What type of value do you feel these collaborative processes brought to the experience? How did such alter the conversations had? And, the bonds formed?*
3. *In terms of the group size and demographic, what size's have you experienced, and which do you prefer?*
 - a. *Could you describe the demographic of the groups, in terms of ethnic and cultural diversity, distinctions between expat, local and tourists, age and gender?*
 - b. *How do you feel the diversity of the group and size of the group, influence the types of conversations, bonds being made, and the like?*

- c. *Do you share certain interests or values?*
- d. *Do you often learn things through these interactions (about any subject)?*
- e. *Would you say your exposed to people outside your normal social network?*

Section 5 – Hosting Experience –

1. What were your motivations for choosing to host?
 - a. How would you describe the events you host?
 - b. What types of qualities, elements, or activities are important to you? And, to your guests?
 1. Has this changed since you began? If so, how/why?
 2. Is it an interactive experience? Do people work together in creating the food?
 - c. How would you describe the people that come in terms of demographic?
 1. Do you feel that diversity is important in terms of the participants?
 2. Do people often feel quite comfortable? Interactive? Relaxed?
 3. What are the common motivations you hear?
 - d. Do you notice main conversation themes that appear at each event?
 1. Are people often learning new things? About what?
 - e. Would you say people often make new connections during the events? That maybe extend afterwards? Thoughts on what type of relationships, friendships, work collaborations and the like?

Section 6 – Network Development & Trust Building from an Individual Perspective

2. Roughly how many people have you interacted with through app experiences?
3. How well do you feel you get along with other users over the course of the night?
 - a. What influences this process?
 - b. Do you trust the people who you interact with through the app? Many?
 1. Has this changed over time/the more you used it?
 - b. Have you made any new friends or connections through using this app?
 - i.If yes:
 1. Do you talk or meet with them for activities or chats outside app related stuff?
 - a. What is the nature of these meetings, friends, work collaboration, community/civic engagement, food and meal sharing that does not go through the app?
 - b. Where do these activities take place, in your neighborhood, new places you haven't been?
 - c. Do you get the impression that most other users are trying to help expand their personal networks, friends and such, or is it more so towards helping them build connections to get a job, help their business?

2. How do you feel about trust within the app? For instance, do you often trust the people you meet and bond with? How do you build this trust? Is it more so through app reviews, or by talking and meeting face to face?
 - a. How comfortable do you feel sharing information with people in the app? Do you keep it rather casual, or do you feel yourself comfortable enough to talk about more personal things? Or does that develop more over time?

ii.If no:

1. Any thoughts on why that is? Do you feel it is an issue? Or do you not see that as an important app function?

iii.Do you think that money influences the friendship making and bonding that occurs between users?

1. What are your thoughts about combining sharing and money? Does it change the process? More or less comfortable? Does it take getting used to?
2. After a friendship is made, does this affect future exchanges when money is involved?
3. Are there any instances which the money aspect was phased out?

Section 7. Trust, Tolerance, and Social Engagement from a Societal Perspective

4. Would you say you are more trusting of people in your neighborhood, or in the city as a whole?
 5. Do you have more trust in institutions, in you community, or other sectors within Amsterdam?
 5. *You mentioned you had/had not learned new things, and were exposed to new people (conditional)*, would you say that this has influenced your values, maybe made you think differently about a certain topic? Open to a new idea?
 6. In terms of accessibility, would you say this app can be used easily by everyone in the city, or would you say it exclusive, or that only a certain demographic tends to use it?
 - a. For what reasons?
 7. Do you engage more with other community events, or are you more likely to since you started using the app?
- iv. Would you say that your sharing habits have changed since beginning to use the app?
1. For example, do you share more generally with friends and family before?
 2. More likely to share with people you don't know or less?
 3. Is the exchange for money more important in your sharing practices now?

- v. Any other thoughts on the way the app has changed your habits, behaviour, or the way you use the city?

Section 8. – The Sharing Economy and the Role of the Municipality, the private sector and other organizations

- vi. What are your general thoughts on the sharing economy and collaborative consumption from a wider perspective than your own use, but on their influence on the city and its inhabitants?
 - 2. Perhaps beginning with food and meal sharing, and then as the sector as a whole? From larger organizations like Airbnb and Uber to smaller local apps like Tasty Talks?
 - a. Positive or negative?
 - b. What would you change?
- vii. How would you define the role of companies in the sharing economy? Do you see their role to generate profits? Save the environment? Promote Community? A mix of all maybe? (Is what you think they should do, actually what you think they are doing?)
- viii. Similarly, what do you think of the municipality/government's role in the sharing economy?
 - 1. Should there be more regulation that encourages the sharing economy to move in one direction or another?
 - 2. Or should they let it evolve according to the market demand?
- ix. Have you heard of the Sharing Economy Action plan?
 - 1. If yes, what do you know about it, thoughts? Is it sufficient?
- c. Any final comments on food and meal sharing? Or the Sharing economy?

Annex D. Host Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Introduce Research and Explain the Purpose and Structure of the Interview

Section 1: General Impressions and Motivations with the Sharing Economy

- 4. To begin, we will start with some general info about your experience with the sharing economy.
 - b. What has been your general experience with sharing apps, from Airbnb, to Uber, or any others that you use?
 - a. Which apps do you use, how long have you been using the app and roughly how often you use them?
 - b. What were your original motivations for using these platforms? Have they met your expectations?

Section 2: General Impressions and Motivations with Food and Meal Sharing

- 5. We will now move onto questions regarding your use with food and meal sharing apps.
 - a. How did you first hear about meal sharing?

- b. What were your original motivations for participating in meal sharing? Were you a guest, before you began to host?
 - 1. Practical/econ/social/ecological/other?
 - c. Which apps do you use, how long have you been using it/them and roughly how often you use them?
 - d. Was there a reason for choosing one platform over another?
 - e. Have your expectations been met? Exceeded?
6. Could you go into a little detail regarding one of your more notable, positive experiences (*what were the main things that made these positive experiences?* Or if you have had any negative experiences? What were the distinct differences?

Section 3 – The Experience (If they had been a guest before hosting)

- 7. To begin, could you first describe the types of settings you have experienced, and what it is like to be in some one's home, with new people?
- 8. Could you go into detail on the types of activities participants perform?
 - a. Was this a cooperative process? What were the dynamics of people working together? Was it always perfect harmony, or did sometimes issues arrive?
 - b. How would you describe the social dynamic between guests, in comparison to guests and hosts?
 - c. What type of value do you feel these collaborative processes brought to the experience? How did such alter the conversations had? And, the bonds formed?
- 9. In terms of the group size and demographic, what size's have you experienced, and which do you prefer?
 - a. Could you describe the demographic of the groups, in terms of ethnic and cultural diversity, distinctions between expat, local and tourists, age and gender?
 - b. How do you feel the diversity of the group and size of the group, influence the types of conversations, bonds being made, and the like?
 - c. Do you share certain interests or values?
 - d. Do you often learn things through these interactions (about any subject)?
 - e. Would you say your exposed to people outside your normal social network?

Section 4 – Hosting Experience

- 4. What were your motivations for choosing to host?
 - a. How would you describe the events you host?
 - b. What types of qualities, elements, or activities are important to you? And, to your guests?
 - 1. Has this changed since you began? If so, how/why?
 - 2. Is it an interactive experience? Do people work together in creating the food?
 - c. How would you describe the people that come in terms of demographic?
 - 1. Do you feel that diversity is important in terms of the participants?

2. Do people often feel quite comfortable? Interactive? Relaxed?
3. What are the common motivations you hear?
- d. Do you notice main conversation themes that appear at each event?
 1. Are people often learning new things? About what?
- e. Would you say people often make new connections during the events? That maybe extend afterwards? Thoughts on what type of relationships, friendships, work collaborations and the like?

Section 4 – Network Development & Trust Building from an Individual Perspective

5. Roughly how many people have you interacted with through app experiences?
6. How well do you feel you get along with other users over the course of the night?
 - a. What influences this process?
 - b. Do you trust the people who you interact with through the app? Many?
 1. Has this changed over time/the more you used it?
 - c. Have you made any new friends or connections through using this app?
 - ii.If yes:
 2. Do you talk or meet with them for activities or chats outside app related stuff?
 - b. What is the nature of these meetings, friends, work collaboration, community/civic engagement, food and meal sharing that does not go through the app?
 - c. Where do these activities take place, in your neighborhood, new places you haven't been?
 - d. Do you get the impression that most other users are trying to help expand their personal networks, friends and such, or is it more so towards helping them build connections to get a job, help their business?
 3. How do you feel about trust within the app? For instance, do you often trust the people you meet and bond with? How do you build this trust? Is it more so through app reviews, or by talking and meeting face to face?
 - b. How comfortable do you feel sharing information with people in the app? Do you keep it rather casual, or do you feel yourself comfortable enough to talk about more personal things? Or does that develop more over time?
 - iii.If no:
 2. Any thoughts on why that is? Do you feel it is an issue? Or do you not see that as an important app function?
 - iv.Do you think that money influences the friendship making and bonding that occurs between users?

2. What are your thoughts about combining sharing and money? Does it change the process? More or less comfortable? Does it take getting used to?
3. After a friendship is made, does this affect future exchanges when money is involved?
4. Are there any instances which the money aspect was phased out?

Section 4. Trust, Tolerance, and Social Engagement from a Societal Perspective

6. Would you say you are more trusting of people in your neighborhood, or in the city as a whole?
7. Do you have more trust in institutions, in you community, or other sectors within Amsterdam?
6. *You mentioned you had/had not learned new things, and were exposed to new people (conditional)*, would you say that this has influenced your values, maybe made you think differently about a certain topic? Open to a new idea?
7. In terms of accessibility, would you say this app can be used easily by everyone in the city, or would you say it exclusive, or that only a certain demographic tends to use it?
 - b. For what reasons?
8. Do you engage more with other community events, or are you more likely to since you started using the app?
- v. Would you say that your sharing habits have changed since beginning to use the app?
 2. For example, do you share more generally with friends and family before?
 3. More likely to share with people you don't know or less?
 4. Is the exchange for money more important in your sharing practices now?
- vi. Any other thoughts on the way the app has changed your habits, behaviour, or the way you use the city?

Section 5. – The Sharing Economy and the Role of the Municipality, the private sector and other organizations

- vii. What are your general thoughts on the sharing economy and collaborative consumption from a wider perspective than your own use, but on their influence on the city and its inhabitants?
 3. Perhaps beginning with food and meal sharing, and then as the sector as a whole? From larger organizations like Airbnb and Uber to smaller local apps like Tasty Talks?
 - b. Positive or negative?
 - c. What would you change?

- viii. How would you define the role of companies in the sharing economy? Do you see their role to generate profits? Save the environment? Promote Community? A mix of all maybe? (Is what you think they should do, actually what you think they are doing?)
- ix. Similarly, what do you think of the municipality/government's role in the sharing economy?
 - 2. Should there be more regulation that encourages the sharing economy to move in one direction or another?
 - 3. Or should they let it evolve according to the market demand?
- x. Have you heard of the Sharing Economy Action plan?
 - 2. If yes, what do you know about it, thoughts? Is it sufficient?
- d. Any final comments on food and meal sharing? Or the Sharing economy?

Annex E. Guest Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Introduce Research and Explain the Purpose and Structure of the Interview

Section 1: General Impressions and Motivations with the Sharing Economy

- 7. To begin, we will start with some general info about your experience with the sharing economy.
 - c. What has been your general experience with sharing apps, from Airbnb, to Uber, or any others that you use?
 - a. Which apps do you use, how long have you been using the app and roughly how often you use them?
 - b. What were your original motivations for using these platforms? Have they met your expectations?

Section 2: General Impressions and Motivations with Food and Meal Sharing

- 8. We will now move onto questions regarding your use with food and meal sharing apps.
 - a. How did you first hear about meal sharing?
 - b. What were your original motivations for getting involved and have they changed? Why?
 - 1. Practical/econ/social/ecological/other?
 - c. Which apps do you use, how long have you been using it/them and roughly how often you use them?
 - d. Was there a reason for choosing one platform over another?
 - e. Have your expectations been met? Exceeded?
- 9. Could you go into a little detail regarding one of your more notable, positive experiences (*what were the main things that made these positive experiences?* Or if you have had any negative experiences? What were the distinct differences?

Section 3 – The Experience

10. To begin, could you first describe the types of settings you have experienced, and what it is like to be in some one's home, with new people?
11. Continuing into your meal sharing experiences, could you go into detail on the types of activities participants perform?
 - a. Was this a cooperative process? What were the dynamics of people working together? Was it always perfect harmony, or did sometimes issues arrive?
 - b. How would you describe the social dynamic between guests, in comparison to guests and hosts?
 - c. What type of value do you feel these collaborative processes brought to the experience? How did such alter the conversations had? And, the bonds formed?
12. In terms of the group size and demographic, what size's have you experienced, and which do you prefer?
 - a. Could you describe the demographic of the groups, in terms of ethnic and cultural diversity, distinctions between expat, local and tourists, age and gender?
 - b. How do you feel the diversity of the group and size of the group, influence the types of conversations, bonds being made, and the like?
 - c. Do you share certain interests or values?
 - d. Do you often learn things through these interactions (about any subject)?
 - e. Would you say your exposed to people outside your normal social network?

Section 3 – Network Development & Trust Building from an Individual Perspective

13. Roughly how many people have you interacted with through app experiences?
14. How well do you feel you get along with other users over the course of the night?
 - a. What influences this process?
 - b. Do you trust the people who you interact with through the app? Many?
 1. Has this changed over time/the more you used it?
 - d. Have you made any new friends or connections through using this app?
 - iii.If yes:
 3. Do you talk or meet with them for activities or chats outside app related stuff?
 - c. What is the nature of these meetings, friends, work collaboration, community/civic engagement, food and meal sharing that does not go through the app?
 - d. Where do these activities take place, in your neighborhood, new places you haven't been?
 - e. Do you get the impression that most other users are trying to help expand their personal networks, friends and such, or is it more so towards helping them build connections to get a job, help their business?

4. How do you feel about trust within the app? For instance, do you often trust the people you meet and bond with? How do you build this trust? Is it more so through app reviews, or by talking and meeting face to face?

c. How comfortable do you feel sharing information with people in the app? Do you keep it rather casual, or do you feel yourself comfortable enough to talk about more personal things? Or does that develop more over time?

iv.If no:

3. Any thoughts on why that is? Do you feel it is an issue? Or do you not see that as an important app function?

v.Do you think that money influences the friendship making and bonding that occurs between users?

3. What are your thoughts about combining sharing and money? Does it change the process? More or less comfortable? Does it take getting used to?

4. After a friendship is made, does this affect future exchanges when money is involved?

5. Are there any instances which the money aspect was phased out?

Section 4. Trust, Tolerance, and Social Engagement from a Societal Perspective

8. Would you say you are more trusting of people in your neighborhood, or in the city as a whole?

9. Do you have more trust in institutions, in you community, or other sectors within Amsterdam?

7. *You mentioned you had/had not learned new things, and were exposed to new people (conditional)*, would you say that this has influenced your values, maybe made you think differently about a certain topic? Open to a new idea?

8. In terms of accessibility, would you say this app can be used easily by everyone in the city, or would you say it exclusive, or that only a certain demographic tends to use it?

c. For what reasons?

9. Do you engage more with other community events, or are you more likely to since you started using the app?

vi. Would you say that your sharing habits have changed since beginning to use the app?

3. For example, do you share more generally with friends and family before?

4. More likely to share with people you don't know or less?

5. Is the exchange for money more important in your sharing practices now?

- vii. Any other thoughts on the way the app has changed your habits, behaviour, or the way you use the city?

Section 5. – The Sharing Economy and the Role of the Municipality, the private sector and other organizations

- viii. What are your general thoughts on the sharing economy and collaborative consumption from a wider perspective than your own use, but on their influence on the city and its inhabitants?
 - 4. Perhaps beginning with food and meal sharing, and then as the sector as a whole? From larger organizations like Airbnb and Uber to smaller local apps like Tasty Talks?
 - c. Positive or negative?
 - d. What would you change?
- ix. How would you define the role of companies in the sharing economy? Do you see their role to generate profits? Save the environment? Promote Community? A mix of all maybe? (Is what you think they should do, actually what you think they are doing?)
- x. Similarly, what do you think of the municipality/government's role in the sharing economy?
 - 3. Should there be more regulation that encourages the sharing economy to move in one direction or another?
 - 4. Or should they let it evolve according to the market demand?
- xi. Have you heard of the Sharing Economy Action plan?
 - 3. If yes, what do you know about it, thoughts? Is it sufficient?
- e. Any final comments on food and meal sharing? Or the Sharing economy?

Annex F

Participant	Role	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Affiliated Platform	Date	Location
C1	Creator/Host	37	Indian	Female	Tasty Talks	20.07.2020	Phone
C2	Creator/Host	35	Israel	Female	Tasty Talks & Global Seasons	04.08.2020	Phone
C3	Creator/Host	37	Portuguese	Male	Tasty Talks & Global Seasons	04.08.2020	Phone
H4	Host	27	Indonesian	Female	Tasty Talks & Amsterdam Cooks	05.08.2020	Phone
H5	Host	34	Dutch	Female	Tasty Talks	22.07.2020	Phone
H6	Host	28	Spanish	Female	Tasty Talks	27.07.2020	Phone
G7	Guest	26	Argentinian	Female	Tasty Talks	05.08.2020	Phone
G8	Guest	25	Dutch	Female	Tasty Talks & Eatwith	05.08.2020	Phone
G9	Guest	29	Romanian	Female	Eatwith	04.08.2020	Phone
G10	Guest	27	Columbian	Female	Tasty Talks	28.07.2020	Phone
G11	Guest	31	Dutch	Female	Eatwith & Amsterdam Cooks	07.08.2020	Phone

Interview Sample Descriptions (data, Authors survey, 2020)