University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice
Faculty of Economics
Department of Regional Management and Law

Master's thesis

Support of the Sharing Economy

Introduction to government support, legal framework, funding opportunities, challenges, and supportive infrastructure to the sharing economy in France and Germany

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Theses guidelines

Objective:

Main aim of the theses is to reveal which kind of differences do exist in monetary and regulatory support for companies utilizing a "sharing economy" model between France and Germany? The case study will be focused on two different companies in two selected cities one in Germany and one in France.

Methodological approach:

There will be described the situation in both selected cities as regards social and economic environment influencing sharing economy model. This part of work will include theoretical background of circular and sharing economy and history of these types of business in France and Germany in two selected cities. Following analyze will focus on selected two companies.

In selected cities and some interviews will be made with managers and employees. There will be used mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Framework structure:

1. Abstract
2. Introduction
3. Literature review
4. Methods
5. Results
6. Discussion
7. Conclusion

Extent of work report:	**50 – 60 pages**
Extent of graphics content:	**As necessary**
Form processing of diploma thesis:	**printed**
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Recommended resources:

Cavaleiro de Ferreira, A., & Fuso-Nerini, F. (2019). A Framework for Implementing and Tracking Circular Economy in Cities: The Case of Porto. Sustainability, 11(6), (1813). https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/6/1813/htm#B8-sustainability-11-01813

Ellen MacArthur Foundation. (2019). Circular economy diagram. Retrieved November 23, 2021, from https://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy-diagram

Heshmati, A. (2015). A Review of the Circular Economy and its Implementation: IZA Discussion Paper No. 9611. Institute of Labor Economics (IZA). https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/9611/a-review-of-the-circular-economy-and-its-implementation

Kirchherr, J., Piscicelli, L., Bour, R., Kostense-Smit, E., Muller, J., Huibrechtse-Truijens, A., & Hekkert, M. (2018). Barriers to the Circular Economy: Evidence From the European Union (EU). Ecological Economics, 150, 264-272. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2018.04.028

Kirchherr, J., Reike, D., & Hekkert, M. (2017). Conceptualizing the circular economy: An analysis of 114 definitions. Resources, conservation and recycling, (217), 221-232. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921344917302835

Stahel, W. R. (2016). The circular economy. Nature: Nature 531. Retrieved November 17, 2021, from https://www.nature.com/articles/531435a

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Abstract

The sharing economy has gained significant attention in recent years, with some projecting a significant shift towards this model in the future, especially in Germany. Still, it can be difficult for aspiring entrepreneurs to find information and support when seeking to start a business with this model. This thesis aims to determine the differences in monetary, regulatory, and administrative support for sharing economy startups. Searches of various relevant terms were made using the popular search engine Google to determine the number of websites hosting online resources available to an average person seeking to start one of these businesses. In France 17 were found and in Germany 24 were found. Questionnaires were distributed and interviews conducted with officials from sharing economy companies started in the past 10 years to access their perceptions about the availability of support, the relative ease of navigating regulation, and general challenges when founding and operating a sharing economy company in their respective countries. It was determined that both France and Germany have recognized the potential of the sharing economy and have taken steps to support the growth of sharing economy companies. France has implemented specific policies and initiatives, such as startup grants and incubation programs, to support the development of social enterprises, which include sharing economy businesses. The supportive ecosystem for the social economy has been shown more developed in France than in Germany. In contrast, Germany has focused on creating a supportive regulatory environment and providing access to networks for innovative entrepreneurs in general. In any case, it has been found that neither country offers specific programs for the development of the sharing economy. Companies were generally found to experience similar challenges in both countries, revolving mainly around navigating vague regulations, accessing funding, and locating information and support programs from the government. Further research on this subject could help in understanding how to best adapt existing economic policy and support to the increasing number of companies seeking to utilize a sharing economy model.

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List of abbreviations

B2B *Business-to-Business*
B2C *Business-to-Customer*
BGB *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*
BPI *Banque publique d'investissement*
C2C *Customer-to-Customer*
CE *Circular economy*
EI *Entreprise Individuelle*
ESS *Économie sociale et solidaire*
EU *European Union*
GbR *Gesellschaft bürgerlichen Rechts*
gGmbh *Gemeinnützige GmbH*
GmbH *Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (Germany)*, *Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung*
IHK *Industrie- und Handelskammer*
INPI *Institut national de la propriété industrielle*
KfW *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau*
KG *Kommanditgesellschaft (Germany)*
MEFIDS *Ministère de l'économie, des finances et de la souveraineté industrielle et numérique*
OHG *Offene Handelsgesellschaft (Germany)*
P2P *Peer-to-Peer*
SA *Société anonyme*
SARL *Société à Responsabilité Limitée*
SAS *société par actions simplifiée*
SASU *Société par actions simplifiée unipersonnelle*
SEND *Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland*
SNC *Société en nom collectif*
SSE *Social and solidarity economy*
UG *Unternehmergesellschaft*

1 Introduction

The term "sharing economy" was coined by economist Martin Weitzman at the beginning of the 1980s. The basic theory of the sharing economy is that the more market participants share with each other, the greater the prosperity for each individual market participant (Weitzman, 1984). The sharing economy has since emerged as a disruptive force in the global economy, challenging the status quo and transforming the way goods and services are consumed in modern society. This has led to a variety of concepts and business models, all grouped under the umbrella of the sharing economy. They represent rapidly growing sectors in the global economy, with companies such as *Foodsharing* and *Blablacar* becoming household names, especially in Germany and France (Vaughan & Daverio, 2016; Munger, 2021). This growth has been driven by entrepreneurs who have seen opportunities to leverage technology to create value for customers, while also transforming traditional business models. However, despite the potential of these companies to drive sustainable consumption and reduce waste, they face significant challenges in terms of regulation, funding, and market competition, as noted by Kirchherr et al. (2018a) and the interviewees that participated in this study. This master thesis aims to explore the support available to founders of sharing economy companies in France and Germany. Through a comparative analysis of the two countries, this thesis will examine the regulatory frameworks, funding opportunities, and market conditions that impact the founding process of sharing economy startups.

1.1 Context

The latest Flash Eurobarometer on this issue has shown an increase in the proportion of use of collaborative economy offers compared to the study two years prior (23% in 2018 compared to 17% in 2016) (European Commission, 2018a, p. 4). The Commission's survey also offers insight into the potential of the collaborative economy, as it revealed an interest of about one fifth of Europeans in actively using collaborative platforms in the future (ibid.). On the other hand, it has been found that France is a more fruitful country for aspiring founders of social enterprises than Germany (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2019b). The development of the "startup nation" has been a project of France's President Emmanuel Macron since the beginning of his first mandate in 2017 (Fagot & Madeline, 2021). At a startup campus in September 2019, Macron announced the country's target of 25 unicorns by 2025. In early 2022, it was announced that they reached their goal an eager three years early (Bennett, 2022). Considering this development, it was assumed that France would be an overall more hospitable country for startups from the sharing economy. As further pointed out by Bennett, this although remarkable

development, does not feel as grand when put into a European perspective. Compared to Germany, France's newly developed 25 unicorns, which were a mere three only in 2017, still lags some of its European neighbors. A 2016 impact paper, presented by PWC on an order by the European Union (EU), assessed the size and presence of the collaborative economy in the EU. They found the United Kingdom (at the time still a member of the EU) and France to be the numeric leaders of the collaborative economy, considering France to be the leader in peer-to-peer carsharing, followed closely by Germany (Vaughan & Daverio, 2016, p. 19).

According to the Economist, "Britain and Germany are still home to more of Europe's top 100 unicorns, or unlisted firms valued at over $1bn" (Economist, 2023, paragraph 6). The scene is changing though, as the head of *BlaBlaCar* observes: "Now it's become cool to be a tech entrepreneur [in France]" (ibid.).

1.2 Research questions and hypothesis

This research will focus on revealing the availability of resources across both countries including government incentives such as grants or tax relief; access to funding; and support infrastructure providing information about launching a sharing economy startup. Specifically, this thesis will address the following research questions:

- What are the government support structures available to sharing economy company founders in France and Germany?
- What funding opportunities are used by founders of sharing economy companies in France and Germany?
- What are the obstacles experienced in the startup process of a sharing economy company in France and Germany?

These questions were tested using the following hypothesis:

- France is a more hospitable country for sharing economy startups, especially those following a social economy approach.

It was anticipated that the social entrepreneurial culture in France is better developed. Therefore, it is made easier to start such a business in France.

1.3 Aims and methods

The primary aim of this thesis is to determine the differences between France and Germany in monetary, regulatory, and administrative support of startups utilizing a sharing economy model. The case study is supported by interviews at three different companies, two in Germany and one in France, as well as a supplementary worksheet completed by a representative from a second French company. One interview was conducted with a German

consultant at a research project, another consultant answered the worksheet. Quantitative data consists of the number of websites, hosting relevant resources, found when searching Google using the methods presented in chapter 3.

In addition to the primary aim, it is in the interest of this thesis to offer a tool that reveals resources from both countries. It is also of interest, particularly in the border region between France and Germany, to obtain a comparison of the resources in the respective neighboring country to help entrepreneurs make important choices regarding their business model, including in which country to start their company.

1.4 Scope and limitations

This thesis is limited to France and Germany. The thesis is further limited to the founding of a sharing economy company. It does collate general advice for starting a business where specific resources are lacking but does not aim to provide general business advice. In both countries, successful sharing economy companies have already been established.

The qualitative research approach of this study focused on detailed and personal answers from the interview partners with the intent of gaining insight into the benefits and difficulties of founding a sharing economy company as they were experienced in real world scenarios.

Due to time and resource constraints, the sample size of this research is limited. The generalization of findings may be affected as a result. It is also not possible to generalize these findings for the founding of companies operating without the sharing economy model. As only a certain number of resources can be processed within the framework of a master's thesis, this work thus makes no claim to be exhaustive. A more detailed guide, possibly also regarding further EU member states, would be conceivable as a possible extension of this work.

1.5 Thesis structure

The thesis begins with a literature review and a background description of the sharing economy, focusing on its definitions and key principles. This includes the neighboring principles of the linear and the circular economy (CE). The development of the sharing economy will be concentrated on the EU, France, and Germany. The literature review further includes information about social entrepreneurship in France and in Germany, before describing the regulatory framework that surrounds the sharing economy in both countries. Finally, a brief overview of current issues and challenges in the sharing economy is given.

The thesis then provides the results of the quantitative and qualitative research, divided into six sub-chapters, and separated by country. It shows results regarding government support, legal

framework, funding opportunities, challenges in the founding process, the supportive network, and non-categorized results. Subsequently, the discussion provides an interpretation and reflection upon the previously presented results and interprets them in relation to the current literature.

In the conclusion, the key findings will be summarized, followed by a brief overview of possible sources of error in the study, as well as suggestions for further research. The appendix includes the interview guides, answered worksheets, interview transcripts, follow-up e-mails, the template used in writing the consent form distributed to interviewees, and the companies' profiles.

2 Background and literature review

The objective of this literature review chapter is to provide a comprehensive overview of the circular, sharing, and linear economy, as well as the state of the sharing economy in the EU, France, and Germany. This chapter will also explore the regulatory frameworks that govern the sharing economy in France and Germany and examine the role of social entrepreneurship in these countries. Finally, this chapter will discuss current issues and challenges that arise in the sharing economy and how they impact the economic model. The literature review will draw upon various academic sources, including books, journals, and reports, to provide a thorough analysis of the sharing economy and its impact on the economy and society.

2.1 Definitions and characteristics

In their 2019 collection of "Case studies about the Transition from the Linear Economy", Sillanpää and Ncibi (2019) promote the CE "as the most comprehensive and mature economic model able to reconcile economic growth with sustainability" (ibid., p. vii). The often repeated "reduce, reuse, recycle" ideal of the circular movement simplifies the idea behind the CE effectively, whereas the linear economy represents the general status quo, its principles reflecting more of a "take, make, dispose"-approach (ibid., p. 1). The various definitions used in academia for these different economic approaches will be dissected in the subsequent chapters, a definition used for this thesis will be provided.

2.1.1 Linear economy

> "Cycles, such as of water and nutrients, abound in nature — discards become resources for others." (Stahel, 2016, p. 435)

The currently dominating economic model is that of the linear economy. Its focus lies on economic growth, disregarding the implications of the consumption, production, and disposal of its goods. Described by Sillanpää and Ncibi (2019) as the "take-make-dispose" model, the linear economy is a fossil-based economic system that relies on mass production and consumption (ibid.). It is the dominating global economic model but has also been criticized for its unsustainable nature. The linear economy is characterized by producing more products from cheap resources and disposing of them after their useful life, either through landfilling or incineration. This approach has led to the wasteful management of valuable resources and a continuous pressure for raw materials.

Research from Stahel (2016) compared the linear and CE to bodies of water. For him, the linear economy "flows like a river, turning natural resources into base materials and products for sale through a series of value-adding steps" (ibid., p. 436).

Overall, the linear economy is seen as an ineffective and unsustainable paradigm that leads to "environmental, societal, and geopolitical issues", a paradigm that needs to be replaced (Sillanpää & Ncibi, 2019, p. 38). Sillanpää and Ncibi emphasize the need to transition to a CE, which focuses on closed-loop systems and sustainable resource management (ibid.).

2.1.2 Circular economy

Considering the depletion of our most valuable resources, there is a pressing need for a reduction in our overall, global consumption (Möhlmann, 2015). Stahel (2016) and Schwanholz & Leipold (2020) view the CE as one of the most important tools in preservation of Earth's ecosystems, preventing humans from reducing the carrying capacity of the planet through environmental exploitation.

The following *Figure 1* depicts the butterfly diagram. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation describes it as illustrating "the continuous flow of materials in a circular economy" (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2019). The flow combines two cycles, the right side depicting the technical cycle, the left side depicting the biological cycle. The technical cycle keeps products and materials inside of this continuous flow following the approach of "reuse what you can, recycle what cannot be reused, repair what is broken, remanufacture what cannot be repaired" (Stahel, 2016, p. 435). It depicts how circularity can be applied to materials used in electronics, such as metals and plastics. The biological cycle, on the other hand, "returns nutrients from biodegradable materials to the Earth to regenerate nature" (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2019). In both cycles, the goal is to "maximize value at each point in a product's life" (Stahel, 2016, p. 436). The innermost loop represents how products can be designed to be durable and easy to repair, extending their lifespan. So, when a product is no longer needed or no longer works, it can be refurbished or reconditioned by replacing the faulty part so that it can be reused. As a last resort, it can be broken down into its basic materials for subsequent recycling. Thus, the innermost loop is the beginning of the cycle, whereas the outermost loop presents the last resort, the last step in a product's life, on both sides of the cycle.

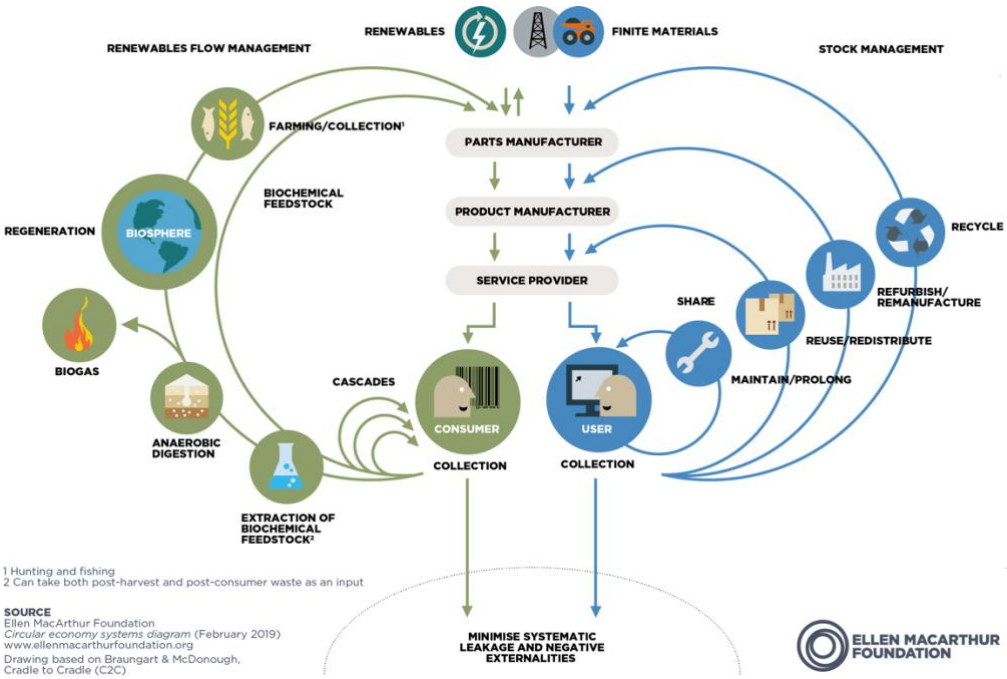

Figure 1: The butterfly diagram: visualising the circular economy

Kirchherr et al. (2018b) defined the term "circular economy", which is based on an analysis of 114 definitions, as follows:

> A circular economy describes an economic system that is based on business models which replace the 'end-of-life' concept with reducing, alternatively reusing, recycling and recovering materials in production/distribution and consumption processes, [...], with the aim to accomplish sustainable development, which implies creating environmental quality, economic prosperity and social equity, to the benefit of current and future generations. (pp. 224-225)

Fueled by concerns over ethics and safety, greenhouse-gas emissions, and resource security, Stahel (2016) argued that the CE is "shifting our approach to seeing materials as assets to be preserved, rather than continually consumed" (ibid., p. 436).

The CE is enshrined with the hope of significantly reducing environmental impacts of modern societies and dampening the blow of the climate crisis. In particular, the implementation of CE in the EU could result in a 48% decrease in CO2 emissions, generate a net economic gain of EUR 1.8 trillion, and produce an additional two million jobs by 2030 (European Commission, 2014). In the end, it is more about a "fundamental systemic [innovation] instead of a bit of twisting the status quo" (Kirchherr et al., 2018b, p. 229).

Stahel's lake analogy ties the ideas of the CE together. As per his theory, the "reprocessing of goods and materials generates jobs and saves energy while reducing resource consumption and waste" (Stahel, 2016, p. 436).

However, since the first Circularity Gap Report in 2018, the degree of circularity in the global economy has been decreasing every year and, according to the most recent survey, amounts to only 7.2% for 2022, compared to 9.1% in 2018 (Circle Economy, 2023, p. 18). To "decouple economic growth from resource consumption and waste generation" (Bressanelli et al., 2020, p. 3) in line with the Paris climate goals, it is necessary to transform the share of the linear economy (92.8%) into circularity. As an example, the Circular Economy Initiative Germany published an exemplary roadmap for achieving a CE model in Germany (Kadner et al., 2021). Their report recommends a set of measures and for Germany to enable a transformation of the economic model into a CE model, ranging from environmental implementation goals, over economic, and finally social implementation goals. They recommend, for example, an "interdepartmental coordination of the implantation of measures" (Kadner et al., 2021, p. 78), the implementation of "effective real-world pilot projects" for which they provide specific examples (ibid.), "exploring, piloting and scaling concrete business models which bring higher-quality circular strategies and use- and reuse-oriented business models to fruition (ibid.). Especially this last example can be understood to include measures and business models also specific to the sharing economy. Coincidentally, Germany was amongst the first countries in the EU to implement CE strategies in 1996 (Heshmati, 2015).

In 2023, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in cooperation with the project consortium Öko-Institut e.V., Fraunhofer Institut and the Freie Universität Berlin, also published a study and a related roadmap for CE in Germany (Tauer et al., 2023). It shows relevant actors, especially in politics and business, and presents the most important sector-specific policy instruments according to their study. The main demands include an absolute raw material consumption target and a secondary raw material use target, the creation of a governance structure in the form of a resource conservation law, and the installation of framework policy instruments and sector-specific policy instruments (ibid., p. 96).

2.1.3 Sharing economy

Seen by some as an enabler to the CE (e.g., Kathan et al., 2016; Sillanpää & Ncibi, 2019; Schwanholz & Leipolz, 2020), the sharing economy is another business model considered to be a puzzle piece towards a green economy. First mentioned in 2008 with the emergence of the co-riding platform *Uber*, the sharing economy enables users (businesses and consumers) to temporarily share, rent, or borrow assets or services instead of owning or purchasing them (Puschmann and Alt, 2016; Öberg, 2023). Digital platforms are commonly used to connect supply and demand, connecting those who own underutilized assets with those who require them.

What is new about the sharing economy, compared to old concepts such as district libraries or cooperative ownership, is the importance of digital technology, as it is typical for sharing economy companies to offer a web-based platform that mediates transactions, or even the use of an app to process such transactions (Busch et al., 2018). The concept of sharing, however, is of course not novel to human societies. Humans "have always shared" (Frenken & Schor, 2017, p. 4). Public libraries and pools, self-service laundromats and car rentals have been around since before the rise to popularity of the sharing economy. The novelty of the concept of the sharing economy is so called "stranger sharing" (Schor, 2016, p. 7). With the sharing economy, the tradition of sharing extends from a trusted circle (friends, family, neighbors, etc.) to people with no prior connection. The number of scientific publications on sharing economy organizations has increased continuously in recent years, which underlines the topicality of the research field (e.g., Wruk & Oberg, 2022).

The European Commission uses the terms sharing and collaborative economy interchangeably (European Commission, 2016a; Česnuitytė et al., 2021). According to the Commission, a collaborative economy business model refers to a system where "activities are facilitated by collaborative platforms that create an open marketplace for the temporary usage of goods or services often provided by private individuals" (European Commission, 2016a, p. 3). The commission distinguishes between three types of actors:

> i) service providers who share assets, resources, time and/or skills – these can be private individuals offering services on an occasional basis (‚peers') or service providers acting in their professional capacity („professional services providers");
> ii) users of these; and
> iii) intermediaries that connect – via an online platform – providers with users and that facilitate transactions between them (‚collaborative platforms') (ibid.).

The Commission concludes that "collaborative economy transactions generally do not involve a change of ownership and can be carried out for profit or not-for-profit" (ibid.) or, as Belk adds, even without any financial remuneration at all (Belk, 2007). It is often argued that the more accurate term for paid transactions would be renting, even though the term sharing is used for example in shared expenses in the context of flat sharing (ibid.).

On the more general European level, the definition remains fuzzy and commonly includes both for profit and non-profit businesses, platforms, and bottom-up civic initiatives (Česnuitytė et al., 2021).

A sharing economy approach thus allows users to share their "shareable goods"(originally coined by Benkler, 2004), goods that, "by nature provide owners with excess capacity,

providing the consumer with an opportunity to lend out or rent out their goods to other consumers" (Frenken and Schor, 2017, p. 5) on a P2P-platform (Peer-to-Peer). Excess capacity is assumed to be present when the owner does not use his product all the time (ibid.). Examples for such platforms can take various forms and are not limited to a specific sector. Ranging from B2B (Business-to-Business) over B2C (Business-to-Consumer) to P2P, collaborative platforms may include:

- Co-working platforms: shared open workspaces (freelancers, entrepreneurs, startups, Work-from-home employees)
- P2P Lending platforms: instead of lending goods, these platforms allow individuals to lend money to other individuals, thus bypassing traditional credit institutions.
- Fashion platform: B2C or P2P marketplaces, leasing-services
- Freelancing platforms: freelancers of all kinds offering their services on matching platforms.

Against this backdrop, the definition of sharing economy used in this thesis is that of the German Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie (BMWi), as presented by Busch et al.: "The sharing economy includes business model based on the 'web-based mediation of temporary usage rights for the often-sequential use of goods, sometimes combined with services, to changing end consumers. This includes business models in which the company itself provides the goods (e.g., sharing of reusable food containers) as well as those in which "third-party goods are brokered", for example the P2P renting of household appliances" (Busch et al., 2018, p. 8).

Busch et al. then divide it into the following four core elements:

- In the context of the sharing economy, **no transfer of ownership** takes place.
- The mediation of transactions takes place with the help of the **internet**.
- The transfer of temporary rights of use takes place **against or without payment**.
- The end consumer is the buyer of the sharing economy, so both **P2P** and **B2C** models count. (Busch et al., 2018, p. 8):

2.1.4 The sharing economy in practice in the EU

Europe-wide research has investigated the motivations of European citizens of contributing to or taking part in the collaborative economy since it became a more widely known model. The Eurobaromater poll revealed that the most frequently mentioned advantage of collaborative platforms is "a convenient access to services" (73% of respondents), The "lack of clarity about who is responsible in case of problems" (49% of respondents) is seen as the main disadvantage.

Concerning the future use of collaborative platforms, the Eurobarometer has shown that 60% of users continue to use traditional consumption channels, whereas 27% of respondents stated that the use of collaborative platforms had led them to exclusively use services once they became available via said platforms (ibid., p. 5).

As to the sharing economy market in the EU, the European Commission has noticed strong and consistent growth since 2013 and significant acceleration in 2015, which was mostly due to the significant investment of large sharing platforms in their European operations (European Commission, 2016a, p. 2).

2.1.4.1 Sharing economy in France

The sharing economy in France has been growing steadily and successfully in the last two decades and now occupies a "significant space in the French economic system" (Lewkowicz and Cahier, 2022, p. 113). One of the main drivers behind the animated discussions surrounding collaborative consumption and the sharing economy has been the French non-profit *OuiShare*. What originally started out as the blog *consocollaborative.com*, has now turned into a presence in over 20 countries, attempting "to create a collaborative organization with a cooperative decision-making process that values consensus over speed" (Sundararajan, 2016, p. 24).

At least two notable and successful French sharing companies can be mentioned here. First: *Blablacar*, a ridesharing platform/mobile application. Founded in France in 2006, the "unicorn" is the world leader in long-distance car-sharing, with more than 70 million users in over 22 countries worldwide. The company employs over 350 people and has the largest long-distance car-sharing community, with at least 15 million users in France alone. According to research by the French Senate, at least 40% of 18–35-year-olds were registered on Blablacar in 2017 (Bocquet et al., 2017a, p. 19).

The second example is *La Ruche qui dit oui*. Roughly translating to "the beehive that says yes", the service has since spread to other countries. In Germany it's known as *Marktschwärmer*, whereas anglophone countries know the concept as *The Food Assembly*. Sundurarajan (2016) summed up the service as follows:

> A volunteer in a neighborhood decides to set up a local "ruche". The platform provides the ruche with software that allows local farmers to post availability and prices of produce in advance. […] Customers place orders for the produce that they want. A couple of times a week, the farmers and the customers meet during a specific time window at a physical space provided by the local volunteer, and the produce is picked up. The volunteer gets a small commission (about 8%), the platform gets an additional 8%, and the rest goes to the farmer. (p. 16)

The latest official numbers of the French sharing economy, published by the French Senate in a fact sheet in 2017, estimate the value of transactions via collaborative platforms at 28 billion EUR in 2015. These numbers had doubled compared to 2014. The estimate lies at about 570 billion EUR by 2025 (Bocquet et al., 2017a). As for C2C (Customer-to-Customer) sales, they estimate the value of transaction on *Leboncoin* in 2016, with 18 million users, at 21 billion EUR.

2.1.4.2 Sharing economy in Germany

In 2017, it was found that the most used sharing economy offers by Germans included media and entertainment (23%), retail and consumer goods (20%), and hotels and accommodation (17%), whereas the sector with the highest turnover was the finance sector with 7.7bn EUR (Beutin, 2018, p. 19). In his report, Beutin states that, in 2017, 39% of Germans "have used a Share Economy service within the past year which represents the second lowest adoption rate of all six examined countries" (ibid.), although he does find a slightly higher number compared to previous years.

The potential for a development in other sectors is there, as shown by statistical findings regarding the sectors in which Germans would use sharing offers. According to a collaborative study in 2015, 72% of German respondents answered that they would use ridesharing offers in the future, 70% would agree to share tools, 66% would agree to use a shared bike, 62% would use car-sharing offers, 40% an apartment, 26% would use clothes swap offers and 23% would use crowdfunding offers (Brandt, 2016). It is, however, interesting which way the intention to share goes. An astounding 79% of respondents would only want to share their own goods with familiar people, 11% would categorically decline. This is also shown in the preferred provider of sharing opportunities, as 62% of respondents prefer companies to private individuals, which fosters a huge potential for further development of sharing economy platforms in Germany (ibid.).

The study conducted in 2018 for the then Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy in Germany (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, BMWi, now Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Protection BMWK), further analyses the situation of the sharing economy in Germany. In general, it should be noted here that institutions such as the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy already stated in 2018 that the sharing economy needs both uniform definitions and regulatory options, which on the one hand would guarantee a possible economy for the new companies and enable fair competition for existing companies (Busch et al., 2018, p. 8). The basis of this demand stems from current conditions of competition for sharing economy

companies and their established competitors, with mostly classic business models, not being identical (Busch et al., 2018, p. 8).

Apart from novel, internet-based platforms, the sharing economy and its predecessors have a long tradition in both France and Germany. For example, *Maschinenring*, a German national association, was established centuries ago for farmers to collectively share resources like machinery (Mair & Reischauer, 2017; Zehle et al., 2021). Generally, German sharing economy associations are more organized on a non-profit base and are also often organized as cooperatives (ibid.).

The I-share project, led by the University of Mannheim, investigated the effects and contributions of the sharing economy in Germany in their latest report (Wruk and Oberg, 2021). This report finds that existing empirical data on the (sustainability) effects of the sharing economy in Germany are mostly limited to specific companies, such as mobility and accommodation platforms. The project calls for further research into the sustainability of the sharing economy, especially outside of the often-researched fields of mobility and accommodation (ibid.).

Foodsharing e.V. and *Grover* are examples of notable and successful German sharing economy organizations. *Grover*, originally founded in Germany in 2015, is now active in Austria, Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands. They are a rental commerce for consumer electronics and offer their users access to tech products in a monthly subscription model. They have since launched an own mobile service provider in the United States. According to their own database, they have circulated "more than 1 million devices in total" and currently employ "over 400 employees" (Grover, 2023, para. 1). *Foodsharing e.V.* is an association, an initiative, and an online platform where users can find information and a map on which all share points (called *Fairteiler*) are listed. Via this platform, private individuals share food with others free of charge. The initiative *Foodsharing e.V.* was launched in 2014 and in 2022 over 132,000 users were registered as food savers, over 500,000 as food sharers and over 12,000 cooperations with businesses were registered (Menn & Freitag-Ziegler, 2022). According to their own data, participants in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland have saved 82 million kilograms of food from waste (Wundersee, 2022).

2.2 Social entrepreneurship in Germany and in France

Entrepreneurship is the "process of starting a business or organization" (Heshmati, 2015, p. 21). *Social* entrepreneurship, according to the European Commission, refers to "an innovative and sustainable way of addressing societal challenges that combines social objectives with entrepreneurial skills, processes, and resources" (European Commission, n.d.). In other words,

social entrepreneurship involves using business principles and strategies to create positive social and environmental outcomes, rather than just maximizing profits. Social entrepreneurs aim to create innovative solutions to social problems, such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, while also generating economic value and sustainability. The EU recognizes social entrepreneurship as a key driver of social and economic development and has implemented policies and initiatives to support and promote social entrepreneurship across member states. Social economy and entrepreneurship are committed to the common good and pursue social, ecological objectives, and social enterprises contribute to the solution of a societal or social problem through their economic activities or arise from economic self-help (Social Economy Berlin, 2021).

In 2021, the European Commission estimates the share of social enterprises, whose primary objective is not the distribution of profits to owners or investors, but a social purpose, at 10% of all enterprises in the EU, in which about 6% of all employees are employed (Social Economy Berlin, 2021; European Commission, n.d.).

In 2006, French politician and EU Enthusiast, François Bayrou, called for the development of the then "social economy", "a model of a performing economy in a just society, in a society with solidarity" (Economist, 2007, paragraph 20). Today in France, the social entrepreneurship movement is based around ESS, or *Économie sociale et solidaire* (Social and solidarity economy, SSE), an economic model based on local initiatives. It refers to a group of companies organized as cooperatives, mutual societies, associations, or foundations, whose operations and activities are based on a principle of solidarity and social utility. Their management methods are democratic and participative, and their financial resources are generally partly public. Profits are strictly controlled and reinvested, as individual profit is prohibited.

The founding principles of the SSE in France are:

1) Democratic management,

2) collective or social utility of the project,

3) mix of resources, and

4) individual non-profitability (Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et de la Souveraineté Industrielle et Numérique, 2020a).

A major economic player, the SSE accounts for 10% of GDP and nearly 14% of private-sector jobs in France (ibid.). The sector included some 220.000 companies and organizations, 2.3 million employees and 22 million volunteers in 2021 (Douet, 2022).

Regarding the legal framework for the SSE in France, the law 2014-856 of July 31, 2014, recognizes the SSE as a specific mode of enterprise and institutes the creation of Chambre

française de l'économie sociale et solidaire (French chamber of the social and solidarity economy). It provides a definition of SSE companies and creates the status of "entreprise solidaire d'utilité sociale [socially useful solidarity company]" (ESUS).

Furthermore, a commercial company can sign up to the principles of the SSE as soon as it is set up or at any time during its existence, by completing the declaration of formalities on the website of the contact point for business formalities: *formalites.entreprises.gouv.fr*. This portal forwards the declaration to the relevant bodies within the French administration: the National Institute of Industrial Property (Institut National de la propriété industrielle, INPI) for registration in the National Register of Companies (RNE) and the Registrar's Office for registration in the Trade and Companies Register (RCS).

France further encourages existing businesses to register themselves as part of the social economy, according to the ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty (Ministère de l'économie, des finances et de la souveraineté industrielle et numérique, MEFIDS) (MEFIDS, 2021). For this to happen, the French law put into place a rather straightforward process, in which the first step would be to change the company's articles of association to reflect its commitment to social economy principles in its operation.

A 2019 poll conducted by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, ranked the 10 best countries to be a social entrepreneur (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2019a). According to this poll, France is the third-best ranking country in the world for such entrepreneurs, after Canada and Australia. Germany meanwhile finds itself in 21st place out of 44 polled countries. During the first round of this poll in 2016, France was ranked 10th, and Germany 12th (ibid.). One of the expert pollsters, Norbert Kunz of Social Impact, justifies this by saying that, even though Berlin is considered the world's hotspot for social entrepreneurs, the rest of Germany has not yet followed suit. According to the poll, aspiring founders encounter increasing difficulties accessing grants, investment, and non-financial support, which has also led to the drop in the ranking (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2019c). Kunz further explains that social entrepreneurship is considered a "fairly new phenomenon" in Germany, even calling it a "small, colorful but fast-growing plant" (ibid.).

In Germany the social economy is organized differently than in France. Social enterprises are united in that their corporate goal must be oriented towards the common good, with profit not being their primary motivation (Social Economy Berlin, 2021). Although Germany too has a longstanding history of cooperative organizations and structures (see 2.1.4.2), the different federal states within Germany (Länder) handle social entrepreneurship differently and mostly independently. However, it can generally be said that in Germany too, the political and

economic sphere work together, ensuring the possibilities for social entrepreneurship to flourish (ibid.).

2.3 Regulatory Framework

To set up a business, entrepreneurs must first choose a legal status. This defines the structure and operation of the business. Several criteria need to be considered in making this choice. These include the number of partners, the amount of their contributions, the taxation of profits, and the partners' social security or tax status. The broader regulatory framework for founding a company in France and Germany will be briefly presented in this chapter.

2.3.1 Germany

For prospective business owners, the German bureaucracy can appear overwhelming. In their 2020 handbook, Rösel et al. collated the different legal structures for German businesses and their implications. It serves as an exemplary source of information, although numerous handbooks present the data just as concisely. The German legal framework allows for several kinds of business structures for sharing economy companies. German law dictates the appropriate legal structures a business may form under based on the following 3 distinct general models:

1. Sole proprietorships,
2. Partnerships, and
3. Corporations.

1. Sole proprietorship

Individuals starting a business as a sole trader could found a company under sole proprietorship (Einzelunternehmen). A different form of sole proprietorship could be a freelancer (Freiberufler). These types of businesses are considered to offer a start into self-employment. Freelance businesses are usually set up as follows: registration with the tax office, registration with professional associations, pension fund, employers' liability insurance association, and artists' social insurance fund, if applicable.

For sole proprietorship, one "natural" person is needed for the process of starting the company. The law does not prescribe a share capital, and the company is subject to income tax, although no turnover tax needs to be paid if turnover before tax did not reach 17,500 EUR in the previous business year and is expected to remain below 50,000 EUR in the coming business year. The entrepreneur assumes unlimited liability regarding assets. The only formation cost is registration fees (about 30 EUR). The process for setting up a small traders company starts with

business registration, followed by registration with the tax office, and registration with a trade association (IHK, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, or HWK) if applicable. §14 of the trade, commerce, and industry regulation act (Gewerbeordnung, GewO) obliges anyone engaging in commercial activity to notify the authorities of their intentions through a trade registration (Gewerbeanmeldung).

2. Partnership

A business partnership (Personengesellschaft) includes at least two people joined legally as proprietors. This model allows partners to choose between several structures when starting their business. The most common are a civil law partnership (Gesellschaft bürgerlichen Rechts, GbR), a general commercial partnership (offene Handelsgesellschaft, OHG), or a limited partnership (Kommanditgesellschaft, KG). Partnerships are regulated through the German commercial code (Handelsgesetzbuch, HGB).

A GbR does not come into existence by written contract alone; rather, it is sufficient that several partners act to achieve a common purpose. It is however recommended, according to Rösel et al., that a (notarial) partnership agreement in which rights and obligations are regulated in detail, be concluded. This type of company is not entered in the commercial register, as is also has no legal capacity and is not a legal person. The partners are further jointly and severally liable with their entire assets (ibid., p. 91).

An OHG is a suitable structure for two or more individuals operating a commercial business, with significant risk due to liability. Different than a GbR, in the case of an OHG, the provisions of the HGB and those of the German Civil Code (Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, BGB) apply to this partnership, in addition to the internal regulations of the partnership agreement (ibid., p. 89). Also, formation costs differ. Founders need to consider fees for the commercial court, a notary, and trade licensing office (about 250 EUR in total).

Lastly, a limited liability company and limited partnership (Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung und Compagnie Kommanditgesellschaft; GmbH & Co. KG) has the legal form of a limited partnership and is entered in the commercial register. The liable partner however is not a natural person, but rather a Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (GmbH), which is also responsible for the management (Rösel et al., p. 90).

3. Corporations

Corporations (Kapitalgesellschaft) are considered separate legal entities from natural persons and can assume one of the following legal structures (ibid.).

The most common structure is a GmbH, a limited liability company (Joksović, 2020). To establish a GmbH, at least one shareholder is required, and a minimum share capital of 25,000

EUR must be provided, which can be provided through capital contributions of at least 100 EUR each (ibid., p. 90). The legal base lies in the GmbHG.

A major benefit of a GmbH as a limited company is that it protects the individual partners' finances, as their fiscal liability is limited to the amount of their respective capital contribution (ibid.) as recorded in the articles of association (Gesellschaftsvertrag). Applicable taxes are value-added tax (Umsatzsteuer), trade tax, corporate income tax (Körperschaftssteuer), and in the case of distributions capital gains tax (bei Ausschüttungen Kapitalertragssteuer). The cost of founding a GmbH starts at 500 EUR with the fees for entering the commercial register, a notary, and for business registration. The formation procedure includes: a shareholders' meeting (Gesellschafterversammlung), articles of association (Gesellschaftsvertrag), payment of at least 12,500 EUR in share capital or, in the case of a non-cash formation, contribution of objects of a corresponding measurable value, entry in the commercial register, business registration, registration with the tax office, Chamber of Industry and Commerce or Chamber of Trade and Crafts (HWK).

For entrepreneurs lacking the necessary starting capital, the entrepreneurial company (Unternehmergesellschaft, UG) is offered as an alternative, as the start capital for a UG is 1 EUR. A UG is a business structure for trades of all kinds and liberal professions (except pharmacists, notaries, and doctors) that enables limitation of liability but, in contrast to the GmbH, requires only a small amount of startup capital (Volkelt, 2019).

The gemeinnützige GmbH (gGmbh), non-profit limited liability company, is a form of enterprise suitable for founders who wish to pursue charitable purposes, but also want to be economically active and reduce liability risks (see: social entrepreneurship). One advantage to a gGmbH can be that it does not have an association board ; instead, there is a managing director in place. This streamlines decision making. There are a few common features that connect a GmbH and a gGmbH: the share capital must be a minimum of 25,000 EUR and at least one executive director needs to be presented. Both must be registered in the trade register. The advantage of the gGmbH over the GmbH lies above all in its tax treatment. Because of its non-profit status, a gGmbH benefits from some benefits and exemptions. For example, the gGmbH is exempt from trade tax, and corporation tax, and does not have to pay gift and inheritance tax if it receives donations of this kind. In addition, gGmbHs are allowed to collect donations and issue tax-deductible certificates for them.

If the company employs workers, it must register with the social security office and deduct social security contributions from employee wages.

It is important to note that tax and accounting regulations in Germany can be complex and it is recommended to seek professional advice from a tax advisor or accountant to ensure compliance with all requirements.

2.3.2 France

France's legal system defines eight possible company structures.

1. Sole Proprietorship

Sole proprietorship (Entreprise Individuelle, EI) is a popular legal structure used by of entrepreneurs in France (Dénos, 2004). An EI is also a flexible legal structure. A "micro-entreprise" scheme falls into the same category. As the name implies, an EI has only one natural person who, and as of 15 May 2022, benefits from liability limited to the assets useful for their professional activity. EIs set up before 15 May 2022 also benefit from this limited liability for all debts incurred from 15 May 2022 onward (MEFIDS, 2022). The liability of the manager covers civil and criminal liability. No share capital is needed for an EI, and profits are subject to income tax (industrial and commercial profits, non-commercial profits, or agricultural profit) (Dénos, 2004.). Dénos describes the cost of setting up a sole proprietorship as low, comparing it to the fees and costs for setting up a company (*société*) (ibid., p. 2). As for liability issues, the director is indefinitely liable for the company's debts out of his or her personal assets (ibid., p. 8). There can further be confusion between the private assets of the entrepreneur and the business assets, causing an unclear separation between private and business accounting (ibid., p. 8).

2. Limited Liability Company

Second comes the limited liability company (Société à Responsabilité Limitée, SARL). It cannot be chosen for the legal, judicial or health professions (excluding pharmacists). SARLs have a flexible minimum contribution. The number of partners can range from two to 100 partners (individuals or legal entities), whose liability is limited to their contribution, except in case of mismanagement if the partners are also managers of the company (ibid.). The SARL's starting capital is also dependent on the size and need of the company, whereas the profits are to be taxed by corporation tax, with the possibility of opting for income tax in certain cases ("family SARLs" or certain SARLs that are less than five years old). French law does not provide for a minimum share capital. However, the share capital must appear on the company's letterhead and thus plays an important role in the company's public image.

The so-called "loi Macron" (Macron law, after the French president Emmanuel Macron) has led to the simplification of legal regulations of the SARL, and the Court of Appeal (Cour

de Cassation) ruled in May 2015 that the shareholders of a SARL can make legally binding decisions even if they clearly contradict the articles of association and the special formal requirements provided for this, as long as these decisions were made unanimously (Chambre commerciale de la Cour de Cassation, audience publique du 12 mai 2015, pourvoi n° 14-13744).

3. Sole Proprietorship with limited liability

A sole proprietorship with limited liability (Entreprise unipersonnelle à responsabilité limitée, EURL) is an SARL with only one partner. These two legal structures therefore share many characteristics. A EURL, or any company with only one partner, can morph into a multi-personal company (Dénos, 2004, p. 7). The minimum share capital is 1 EUR, and, if higher, 20% of cash contribution must be paid when the company is incorporated, and the remainder must be paid within 5 years (Direction de l'information légale et administrative, 2023).

A EURL also operates with only one partner (natural or legal person), the liability being limited to the partner's contributions, except in case of mismanagement if the partner is also the company's manager. The EURL can have one or multiple managers whose liability covers civil and criminal liability. Depending on the size and needs of the company, the share capital can also be zero. Based on Code de Commerce articles L. 223-1, L. 223-4 et seq., L. 223-31, D. 223-2 and Annexe 2-1, the legal provisions of the EURL largely correspond to those of the SARL. There is, however, a major difference in taxation compared to a SARL, as the profits of the sole shareholder of a EURL are subject to income tax. The option to pay company tax instead of income tax exists.

4. Public Limited Company

The société anonyme (SA) is meant for many partners (or shareholders) and a large amount capital. The SA needs at least two shareholders (individuals or legal entities), companies whose shares are admitted to trading in a regulated market (stock market) or a multilateral trading facility, a minimum of seven shareholders is required (Direction de l'information légale et administrative, 2023). The partners' liability is limited to their contribution and the SA needs to maintain a board of directors (from three to 18 members), who must be shareholders, with one of them appointed chairman (and possibly a managing director). The minimum starting capital is 37,000 EUR, its profits subject to corporation tax, or income tax in certain cases (for companies less than five years old) (ibid.).

5. Simplified Joint Stock Company or Single-Member Simplified Joint Stock Company

Two structures fall under this category: the simplified joint stock company (société par actions simplifiée, SAS) and the single-member simplifies joint stock company (société par

actions simplifiée unipersonnelle, SASU) allow for a flexible status and liability limited to capital contributions. These types of companies offer considerable flexibility in terms of capital and the transfer of shares. However, an SAS or SASU cannot be chosen for the legal, judicial, or healthcare professions. At least one partner (natural or legal person) is needed, a single partner making it a SASU. The partner(s)' liability is limited to their contribution to the company. Depending on the size and needs of the company, no minimum share capital is provided by law. Profits are subject to corporation tax, with the option of income tax possible in certain cases.

There are only a few provisions in the French Commercial Code (Code de Commerce) that regulate this form of company (L227-1 to L227-20 and L.244-1 to L.244-4). As a result, both the structure and the management of the company can be designed relatively freely and flexibly in the company statutes (Direction de l'information légale et administrative, 2023).

6. General Partnership

A general partnership (société en nom collectif, SNC) has at least two partners (individuals or legal entities) operating a merchantile business with joint and unlimited liability (Direction de l'information légale et administrative, 2023). It is less common than an SA or SARL. Partners are jointly and severally liable for the company's debts (ibid.). This form cannot be chosen for the legal, judicial or health professions (excluding pharmacists). There is no required starting capital for SNCs. Each partner's share of the profIts is taxed at the regular income tax rate, although the company may opt to pay corporation income tax (ibid.). Partners in a SNC are counted as non-salaried workers and are thus subject to regulations concerning self-employed workers (ibid.).

7. Production Cooperative

A production cooperative (Société cooperative de production, SCOP) is a company in which the employees are the majority shareholders. It may have the legal status of an SA, an SAS, or an SARL.

For SAS/SARLs, at least two partners are required, whereas an sAs requires seven. The partners' liability in sAs and sAs is limited to their contributions. The managing director of SCOP is elected by the shareholders. The director or manager is treated in the same as an employee if remunerated. The starting capital for a SCOP (SARL or SAS) is 30 EUR, and 18,500 EUR for a SCOP (SA). SCOPs are subject to corporation tax at the standard rate. Profits may be exempt from corporation tax if half of them are allocated to employees and the other half to reserves, in accordance with a profit-sharing agreement.

8. Limited partnership with shares

The limited partnership with shares (Société en commandite par actions, SCA), can be used by craftsmen, traders, industrialists, and liberal professions (Direction de ''information légale et administrative, 2023). The structure requires two types of partners, general partners (*commandité*) and limited partners (*commanditaires*), resulting in a hybrid legal structure where the general partner manages, and the limited partner invests. The *commandité(s)* are under merchant status and are jointly and severally liable for the debts of the company, also control its direction and management. The *commanditaires* do not have merchant status, and their liability is limited to the amount of their contribution to the company's share capital (ibid.).

With acts no. 2015-990 of August 6, 2015, and no. 2016-1321 of October 7, 206, France has put in place regulations aimed in particular at harmonizing the tax obligations of economic operators in order to guarantee fair competition, clarifying the boundaries between salaried employment and self-employment in order to safeguard workers' rights, and guaranteeing the fairness and transparency of relations between collaborative platforms and their user-consumers.

The French National Counsel of Consumption (Conseil National de la Consommation, CNC) has also adopted an opinion on collaborative digital platforms aimed at strengthening the information obligations of platforms linked to digital "matchmaking" activities. This output is also aimed at workers' and consumers' protection.

2.3.3 European Union

With the collaborative as well as the sharing economy on a steady rise in the EU (European Commission, 2016a, p. 2), challenges arise for policy makers and regulators at the EU, national, and municipal levels considering the perceived novelty of collaborative platforms seemingly operating in a "legal vacuum" (Celikel Esser et al., 2016, p. 8). While ensuring a fair market and continued innovation, they also need to "ensure consumer protection, preserve labor rights, avoid the erosion of the tax base and regulate new activities" (ibid., p. 3). With the help of a "European Agenda for the Collaborative Economy" the European Commission provides the member states with policy orientations and guidelines on "how to apply existing EU legislation to the regulatory challenges raised by the collaborative economy platforms" (Celikel Esser et al., 2016, p. 3). In a related communication, published in 2016, the Commission classifies the guidelines under five main areas:

1) market access and licensing;

2) taxation;

3) consumer protection;

4) liability;

5) employment (European Commission, 2016a, p. 2).

It does not include issues related to crowdfunding activities or services provided by learning platforms.

Concerning the policy context of the collaborative economy in the EU, Celikel Esser et al. (2016) summarize that the Commission provides "regulatory guidance to Member States on EU Law application" (p. 2). The European Commission (2016a) further sets out recommendations for the regulation of the sharing economy, with the aim of helping consumers, businesses, and public authorities to move confidently into the sharing economy. In their communication paper, the Commission encourages Member States to review and revise the legislation in force in their respective countries. It does not, however, give regulatory framework for the founding process of companies in Member States.

Instead, it provides resources for expanding an existing company to another European country, and the possibility of creating a European Company, also known as an SE (Societas Europaea in Latin). European companies fall outside the scope of this thesis, but they could possibly become important to companies in the sharing economy that want to expand their field of business to other Member States. In short, a European Company is a "type of public limited-liability company that allows a business to be run in different European countries under a single set of rules" (Your Europe, n.d., para. 1).

More broadly speaking, the EU encourages all Member States to meet certain targets to encourage startups, including:

- Administrative set up on the part of the Member State in 3 working days or less
- Costs of less than 100 EUR
- Completion of all procedures through a single administrative body
- Completion of all registration formalities online
- Registration of a company in another EU country online (ibid.)

2.4 Current Issues and Challenges

Although considered to be on the rise in the EU, the sharing and CE face challenges and criticism regarding regulatory barriers, consumers' and workers' rights, and the role of technology. Above all, the lack of a prescriptive and coherent definition of the sharing

economy, already described in chapter 2.1.4, "leads to conflicting research contributions and disparate conceptualisations of sharing economy business models" (Curtis and Mont, 2020, p. 2).

The sharing economy has long been promoted for its sustainability promises (Frenken & Schor, 2017). The actual sustainable effects of the sharing economy are of course complex. It is widely believed to be inherently eco-friendly to share goods and services with other consumers, which Frenken and Schor justify with the assumption that demand for new goods or the construction of new facilities (e.g. hotels or shared spaces in the accommodation sector) is reduced through the sharing approach (ibid.). There is yet to be empirical evidence to be presented on the issue, apart from the car-sharing sector, where a reduction in CO2-emissions has been observed (ibid.). Other sectors have yet to be proven significantly more sustainable and resource efficient, as different economic mechanisms are put in motion. In another example from the accommodation sector, Frenken and Schor mention the "rebound-effect", where money made on a sharing platform (through selling or lending goods) would be used to buy new goods. This would not decrease carbon emissions and might even increase them. Overconsumption might be enabled through the facilitated access to goods otherwise inaccessible, as for example through second hand-marketplaces that may incite consumption with the perceived sustainability of a used item bought online.

It has been further criticized, that it has been made easier to profit from the assumed sustainability of the Sharing economy. Tu (2017) studied the development of this type of greenwashing and provides the following concept of sharewashing: "the act of misleading consumers by claiming to be part of the sharing economy and being motivated by the social and ecological principles of sharing rather than conventional profits" (ibid., p. 6).

Regulatory uncertainty has provoked criticism of the sharing economy in the last few years. It is not seen as acceptable that companies that abide by the laws of their national, state, or local authorities, are at a disadvantage compared to unlicensed individuals operating in the same space (Celikel Esser et al., 2016). The discussion oscillates between those advocating for self-regulation and those who advocate for "extending the reach of formal regulation to platforms in order to correct market failures and protect workers" (ibid, p. 8). This discussion, however, is mainly concentrated on the issue of workers working through platforms (so called "on-demand" workers) and thus providing their services, rather than platforms focused on the sharing of goods.

Uncertainty also extends to the use or protection of data within the sharing economy. According to Grotkowska (2020), "short-term relationships between suppliers and customers

require trust" (ibid., p. 36), which has already been revealed by the Eurobarometer. If the platform is to be the bearer of trust as the intermediary, there is a need for a base level of data protection that both the supply and demand side can rely upon. Since the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the EU in 2018, this has become a major talking point regarding the regulation of the sharing economy.

Furthermore, while the sharing economy flourishes, the contribution of volunteers is often overlooked. Wruk and Oberg's (2021) study on the effect of the sharing economy in Germany has shown the importance of volunteers and grassroots organizations in the German sharing economy and how these are often left behind in the legislative process.

Barriers to the sharing economy have been increasingly studied by scholars in recent years. Kirchherr et al. (2018b) found the main barriers to the circular and sharing economy to be cultural, regulatory, market, and technological. They contest literature that "particularly emphasized technical barriers as key barriers for CE implementation" (ibid., p. 265), and present that "cultural barriers, particularly a lack of consumer interest and awareness" (ibid., p. 264) should be considered the main problem. The regulatory barriers lay in "lacking policies in support of a CE transition", whereas market barriers lay in "lacking economic viability of circular business models" (ibid., p. 266). Finally, the technological barriers have been found to be due to "lacking (proven) technologies to implement CE" (ibid.).

Araujo Galvão et al. (2018) identified the main barriers through a thematic analysis of 195 articles relating to the subject. According to their analysis, the main barriers are: "technological, policy and regulatory, financial and economic, managerial barriers, performance indicators, customer (interest in the environment issues or lack of information on environmental impacts) and Social" (p. 82).

Lastly, it has been criticized that not enough resources are being put into research on the sharing economy outside of now global players such as *AirBnb* and *Uber*, which has resulted in updated and improved sharing economy business models in those respective sectors but has left other sectors lacking (e.g. Curtis and Mont, 2020). According to Curtis and Mont (2020), "no tool currently exists to support sustainable business model innovation at the organizational level within the sharing economy" (ibid., p. 2).

3 Methodology

The methodology of this thesis shall be briefly presented in this chapter. This work ideally forms the basis for further research projects. It is also intended to offer an assessment of how current resources offered to sharing economy startups are received in practice. The study thus

aims to provide insights into the factors, including legal, cultural, and economic, that influence the founding of sharing economy companies in France and Germany.

3.1 Research design

The research design includes qualitative data collection through interviews with representatives of sharing economy companies in each country, one in France and two in Germany. Unfortunately, the second French company answered only the worksheet that was sent out before the initially planned interview. The sample size was chosen so that the same number of interviews could be conducted, and the same number of questionnaires answered in both countries for comparability. Additionally, two German consultants answered the worksheet. Because this study is meant to perform an initial assessment of the experiences of companies in the sharing economy, extreme precision is not necessary. Instead, this paper investigates potential trends among relatively young online platforms, specifically those that have been in operation for no more than 10 years. Consequently, a modest sample size will be adequate for this purpose. This approach also limits the population that the sample should represent, concentrating solely on the perception of the representatives within sharing economy companies rather than encompassing all startups in Germany and France. This study does not provide a comprehensive or representative analysis of all sharing economy companies, but it does showcase the experience of four sharing economy companies during the foundation phase. As a result, semi-structured interview format was considered the most appropriate for the interviews. The semi-structured approach allows a "blend of closed- and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up why or how questions" and allows for the interview to "meander around the topics on the agenda– rather than adhering slavishly to verbatim questions in a standardized survey" (Adams, 2015, p. 493). Quantitative data on website availability was collected using Internet research.

3.2 Selection of companies

The qualitative approach involving interviews with leadership from the companies concerned was decided at the very beginning of the literature search. The relevant companies and interviewees were refined later, after the literature search. It was decided that "leadership" could extend beyond upper management to communications officers, as to avoid restricting interviews with organizations where the leadership team was too busy to provide time for an interview.

Loosely following Busch et al. (2018) core elements of the sharing economy described in 2.1.3, the interviewed companies were chosen based on four characteristics:

- Startups less than ten years old (founded in 2013 or later),
- Growth-oriented in terms of their employees and sales,
- Founded in France or Germany,
- Adhered to the sharing economy principle, where the end consumer is the "buyer" in a transaction facilitated by the internet.

The contacted associations and consultants were chosen based on their perceived relevance and involvement in the topic. An initial e-mail inquiry was sent out to gauge interest in participation and the relevance of the organization. Organizations that were not interested could thus be sorted out directly.

In total, e-mails were sent to 24 companies, 12 in each country.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

The first interview was held on June 29th, 2023, the second on July 13th, 2023. The third interview was held on July 17th, 2023. An interview with a consultant at a research project was held on June 30th. Three other interviews were planned, all with French companies, but none were able to be completed.

The process of transcribing and analyzing the data involved three stages. Initially, the handwritten notes were reviewed after each interview. Subsequently, field notes were created to capture key points from each interview. Finally, the transcription process was completed. For the transcription, the automatic Amber transcription tool was employed and subsequently corrected and adapted. The GAT 2 convention (following Selting et al., 2011) was broadly used for transcription.

The interviews were transcribed in a sequential manner, starting from the first question asked and concluding with the response to the last question. However, certain elements such as introductory pleasantries, reassurances about the consent form for audio recording, acknowledgments, expressions of gratitude, and unrelated questions, e.g. regarding the interviewer's personal background were not transcribed. Nonetheless, all other content, including passages that were not utilized in the results and discussion, were transcribed. Due to the time-consuming nature of the GAT2 method and its lack of practicality for these qualitative interviews, it was adapted accordingly, and for a semi-verbatim transcription. For example, non-verbal interjections such as "uhm" or "uh" were not included in the transcription, as they

are not relevant to the analysis. Repetitions of filler words such as "like" and "yeah" were transcribed as to not falsify the interview further.

Furthermore, since all the interviewees wished to remain anonymous, the names of interviewees are masked on both the audio recording consent forms (see template in 7.5) and the transcriptions of the interviews (see 7.2). All identifying data was further blacked out of the worksheets answered by the second consultant and the two French interviewees. Their anonymized identifiers are presented in *Table 1* below.

Identifier	Position	Organization
G1	Communications Manager	German startup
G2	Communications Manager	German startup
F1	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	French startup
F2	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	French startup
C1	Lead Researcher & Consultant	Research project
C2	Consultant	Independent Consultant

Table 1: Identification of interviewees and study participants. Identifier, position, and organization
The leftmost column shows the identifiers, where G stands for Germany, F stands for France, and C stands for consultant. The middle column describes the position of the participant, whereas the rightmost column shares the organization the person belongs to.

Microsoft Word, with its notes and highlighting functions, was utilized for the coding of the interview. Recurring themes were highlighted, and, together with notes and comments made by hand during the interview, subsequently worked into the analysis as the thesis progressed. According to Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021), using a combination of both deductive and inductive approaches to coding help with the identification and/or organization of themes.

The collected data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2017) thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to the support of the sharing economy in France and Germany as they are perceived by the interviewees. Thematic analysis can be seen as a family of methods, however, Braun and Clarke defined it broadly as "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6). Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik refer to thematic analysis as "the process of combining codes to summarize findings in a coherent and meaningful way" (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021, p. 1364).

Their step-by-step-approach includes six steps:

1) familiarizing yourself with the data,
2) generating initial codes,
3) searching for themes,
4) reviewing themes,

5) defining and naming themes, and

6) producing the report.

As for the quantitative research approach, internet research has been conducted to assess the availability of support possibilities for aspiring founders, financial aid and supportive associations and institutions on the topic. Availability of websites, government offices, public information, or supportive institutions and associations, expert assistance specific to the sharing or collaborative economy was assessed online. Due to time restraints, the search was aimed at government or government-adjacent resources, except for the supportive framework, as this theme was explicitly aimed at support outside of government opportunities. The accessibility of the information and resources was determined by whether they could be found with simple search terms and on the first page of Google. Further, again in the interest of brevity, only the number of websites hosting such resources was counted. Not the amount of information they contained. The names and web addresses of the resources are listed in *Table 5* of the appendix. The search was conducted using the Google search engine in French and German, from 01.06.2023. until 30.06.2023. *Table 2* below presents the different search terms used for the quantitative research. Categorized by theme, the number of search terms is equal for every language. On the left the search terms in French are presented, on the right are the search terms in German. There was no quantitative research conducted for legal framework.

Resource Category	French Search Terms	German Search Terms
Government support	économie collaborative France économie de partage france créer entreprise economie de partage créer entreprise economie collaborative entreprise ess créer structure ess collaborative créer entreprise collaborative support gouvernement ess	Sharing economy unternehmen Sharing economy Deutschland Shared economy unternehmen Unternehmensgründung sharing economy Unterstützung sharing economy Gründen sharing economy Gründung social economy Social economy support deutschland
Funding opportunities	Financement economie de partage Financement economie collaborative Financement creation dentreprise collaborative Subventions economie collaborative Subventions entreprise collaborative Prêts economie collaborative Prêts entreprise collaborative	Finanzierung sharing economy Finanzierung unternehmen sharing economy Fördermittel sharing economy Darlehen sharing economy Zuschüssen sharing economy Unternehmensgründung finanzierung sharing economy Gründen finanzieren sharing economy
Supportive framework	Association economie collaborative France Association economie de partage Fédération economie collaborative	Verein sharing economy Organisation sharing economy Verband sharing economy Unterstützung sharing economy

	Organisation economie collaborative Association economie sociale et solidaire Organisation economie sociale et solidaire	Verein support sharing social economy Verein sozialökonomie

Table 2: Search terms used for quantitative research.
This table presents the search terms used for quantitative research relating to the support of the sharing economy in France and Germany. The leftmost column categorizes the subject of the data. The middle column shows the search terms used for France; the rightmost column shows the search terms used for Germany. In the last row of the three columns, the number of results of the different columns is added together to receive a total number of search results.

4 Results and discussion

This chapter will first present the results from the quantitative data collected in June 2023, followed by the results from the interviews and worksheets. The semi-structured interviews with representatives and leadership of the companies and independent consultants, and the literature review highlighted several points and themes that will be further discussed in the subsequent discussion chapter.

4.1 Results

In each sub-chapter, before presenting the qualitative data relevant to that chapter, the quantitative data will be briefly presented.

The following *Table 3* presents the number of websites found in the respective countries under the respective search terms presented in *Table 2*. In total, 17 relevant webpages were found with French search terms, compared to 24 results found with German search terms.

Theme	**France**	**Germany**
Government support	8	10
Funding opportunities	4	7
Supportive framework	5	7
Total	**17**	**24**

Table 3: Quantitative data: number of websites found using search terms from Table 2 in Google.
The leftmost column categorizes the subject of the data. The middle column shows the number of search results for France, the right column the results for Germany. In the last row of the three columns, the number of results of the different columns is summed.

The following *Table 4* briefly presents the data collected in the interviews and through the worksheets.

Theme	France	Germany	Comparison
Government support	Leadership was able to reach out to government resources when needed, although not satisfied with the result. The possibility of university-led business incubators was given and used.	Leadership was in contact with government structures for general advice and within the framework of a financial support program.	Both countries have general information and support instances for founders. None have support specific to the sharing economy.
Legal framework	Market is considered promising, although legal framework considered unclear. Further support was needed and hard to come by as bureaucratic procedures hard to understand. Both chose sole proprietorship, mainly due to the size of their team.	Framework considered beneficial by consultants, as capitalism-oriented companies could use not yet explored areas to their benefit. A GmbH was considered most convenient for both companies for tax and liability reasons. Legal framework also considered outdated.	France has clearer framework concerning the social and solidarity economy. In both countries it was considered too difficult to come by information specific to the sharing economy.
Funding opportunities	Only one of the interviewees participated in government loans, in one case because a government office refused them due to their size. The other interviewee participated in one public and one private incubator and got a financial grant for the further development of the company.	Both German companies got more elaborate funding, in both cases government backed. One of them got a DBU grant for sustainable startups, whereas the other got support from the Gründerfonds. Apart from that they got funding from private sources or crowdfunding.	None of the interviewees has been able to take advantage of funding specific to the sharing economy. In Germany, however, funding for green startups was more easily accessible than in France.
Challenges	Mainly difficulties in finding and accessing, even when contacting government offices. The information they did find was considered too vague. Further, the creation of a sustainable brand within a linear and consumption-driven system, is difficult for them.	Regulatory framework was considered outdated. Other main challenge was locating information and accessing resources. In one case, academic research helped overcome this. Oversaturation in sectors already prepared by, and regulated for, Airbnb and Uber, but in other less popular sectors. Funding was hard to access too, procedures described as tedious, esp. on the European level.	Both countries make it difficult to access information specific to the sharing economy. Choosing to market primarily to sustainable consumers was challenging, because it is a small base in both France and Germany. Challenges seem to be the same in both countries.
Supportive framework	Heavily relied on the professional and personal network for support, both received some information from government institutions like the CCI or universities. Further support from business incubators.	One interviewee in contact with the only two support organizations specific to their sector. Otherwise, general support from business incubators, and investors. Explicit reference to the geographic location and the importance of local communities willing to engage, in the case of a P2P-sharing-platform.	Importance of personal and professional networks in both countries, although sector-centered support initiatives more present in Germany than in France. Incubators and business angels present in both countries, once again not centered around the sharing economy.

Table 4: Summary of qualitative data: Most important points from interviews with professionals working in the sharing economy. The leftmost column shows the topic, the second column from the left shows the main contents of the French results. The second column from the right shows the main contents of the German results and the rightmost column contains a short comparison.

4.1.1 Government support

For this thesis, government support includes easily accessible webpages and resources, government programs, and institutions specific to the sharing economy.

4.1.1.1 France

As seen in *Table 3*, searching for government support in France yielded 8 relevant results. The first result is the website of the Legal and administrative information department (Direction de l'information légale et administrative), which is part of the Prime Minister's office, and the sharing economy page describes the phenomenon to the readers, as well as the fiscal implications of engaging in the collaborative economy as both user and provider. The other results lead to private blogs, websites, consultancies, and the likes.

Broadening the spectrum of keywords to SSE related terms lead to more and more government resources. First, on the webpage of the MEFIDS, one of their sections is titled "Nos services en ligne" (Our online services) and eventually leads to the subpage formalites.entreprises.gouv. This page as well as Entreprendre.Service-public, the official website for administrative inquiries for companies, offer information about the different legal forms, different steps to founding a company, and what else to keep in mind.

The MEFIDS offers a page dedicated to the founding of a company, which can be found under "créer ou reprendre une entreprise".

MEFIDS also offers a comprehensive guide as a summary of measures in favor of SSE structures (MEFIDS, 2020b). This document aims to summarize all the support measures applicable to SSE structures, as well as contact points and useful information. It was originally published at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, it still offers conclusive help for social entrepreneurs in the making.

The ADEME, the French Environment and Energy Management Agency provides funding and support for sustainable entrepreneurship, including those based in the sharing economy.

Further, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Chambre de commerce et d'industrie, CCI) is an economic public establishment in France. Just like in other countries, it is supposed to represent the interests of commercial, industrial, and service companies in a geographical area. This government-supported initiative aims to promote French startups and innovation. One webpage specific to the sharing economy, that is also available in English, provides 5 paragraphs of information and was last updated in January of 2021. Though the webpage does not offer conclusive information, it does point to useful and related legal texts as well as documents for users and providers in the sharing economy.

Another support opportunity is incubators. Often organized by large companies and corporations, they act as financiers, mentors, or guides, maybe offering a certain infrastructure to businesses they work with. Financing can be significant, but the dependency on the host can be considered a negative aspect of incubators. Alternatively, incubators can be hosted by universities, and are often restricted to students at the host university.

As for the interviewees' testimony, both F1 and F2 are aware of the CCI's possibilities and resources in their region. F1 shared that they consulted the CCI of their place of residence for the general aspects of creating a company, as did F2.

> F2: La CCI comme différents organismes sont la pour nous aider et nous expliquer… [The CCI and other organizations are there to help us and explain things to us…]

In a different program organized by the French CCI headquarters and the INPI, National Institute of Industrial Property (Institut national de la propriété industrielle), F2 was able to acquire information and support regarding business models and legal structures.

> J'ai tout simplement fait appel à mon réseau de coach juridique grâce aux incubateurs pour pouvoir créer l'entreprise et la déposer officiellement (INPI, juriste, etc.) [I simply called on my network of legal coaches, thanks to the incubators, to create the company and register it officially (INPI, lawyer, etc.).]

F1 further mentions that support from the BPI, the French public investment bank, was denied due to the young age of their company, much to F1's displeasure. However, the BPI did advise them to reach out to other institutions for help.

> 00:01:12
> F1: alors je me suis rapproché de la bpi aussi ils ont dit c'était une trop jeune entreprise
>
> 00:01:17
> F1: ils m'ont orienté vers un autre des autres organismes que j'ai pas eu le temps de faire de m'orienter aussi

The introductory part of this sub-chapter briefly mentions the possibility of university hosted business incubators in both France and Germany. F2 mentions having participated in such an offer through their alma mater. The interviewee further participated in two other incubators, one of them private, the other Parisian and semi-public.

> J'ai créé [company] suite à mon Master 2. C'était à la base un projet de fin d'étude en groupe pour valider le Master suite à quoi nous avons eu l'opportunité d'intégrer l'incubateur de l'école.

4.1.1.2 Germany

Research about government support in Germany has shown that different support programs can be found for entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs. These are not reserved for sharing economy companies. Indeed, no results have been found for specific sharing economy support.

As a matter of fact, searching for terms like "sharing economy gründung" on any regular search engine, returns only three publications from the federal government of Germany, which have already been treated in this thesis. The documentation of the Deutscher Bundestag, the German Parliament (2016) for example explains the different business models of the sharing economy already present in Germany. No more recent documentation could be easily found on the matter. The document further points users to the use of the word "shareconomy" in Germany (ibid.).

Relevant results are rarely specific to the sharing economy. Among the few public resources is the Munich Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IHK München). They provide general information on the sharing economy as well as advice for aspiring founders and their most important to-dos in the founding process. They further published a study on resource efficiency within the sharing economy. Other webpages on the sharing economy are privately funded, from private magazines, blogs, or newspapers and merely describe the matter.

Concerning general support for aspiring founders, six public resources came up. First, the business startup portal *Gründerplattform*, a platform for founders, supported and animated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Protection (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz, BMWK) and the German Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW). On their sole page dedicated to the sharing economy, they describe what they understand as the sharing economy, its goals, different models and examples, pros and cons, and the effects of the it on the German economy. They further provide ideas as to how founders could succeed in the sharing economy with their own business idea. The article suggests founders to consider the sharing economy as their future business model if they want to become an "ecopreneur" or a social entrepreneur, if they have sustainable business ideas, or want to work as a freelancer or a solopreneur and could thus profit from the numerous offers of sharing within the already existing sharing economy infrastructure. Lastly, they offer an interactive tool to develop the reader's business idea. For more specific business advice, the *Gründerplattform* offers a legal form tool, contract templates, guides, seminars, and other events.

Second, another offer of the BMWK, is the Business startup portal (*Existenzgründungsportal*). Again, this offer is not by any means restricted to the sharing economy, but rather for founders in general. They help with regards to the different legal forms, business plan development, corporate management, law & contracts.

Third, the German Federal Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt, UBA) provides support and guidance for sustainable entrepreneurship, including sharing economy companies. They share information on funding opportunities and eligibility criteria on their website. They

also offer a an export forum (*Expertenforum*), where founders can consult experienced founders and experts in their field.

Fourth, the German Federal Foundation for the Environment (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt, DBU) also offers support and founding opportunities. Their offers can include support from speakers from the DBU, from volunteer mentors from the DBU network, coaching seminars to promote entrepreneurial skills, and an integration into the DBU network for digitization and sustainability, nachhaltig.digital.

Fifth, the KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau), the state-owned investment and development bank. Their programs include business programs for startups and aspiring founders as well as established companies in need of guidance regarding succession, the development of sectors such as energy and the environment, and innovation. The information about these programs can be consulted on a dedicated webpage. The KfW further offers support for the founding of social organizations.

Lastly, the Länder offer specific support programs for entrepreneurs in their region. When searching for support in a specific state, founders can check their respective state's development banks or government institutions.

The interviews with the two German companies have shown that neither experienced significant obstruction brought upon them by the government. G2 described the support they received from the DBU. G2's company won their pitch contest and was granted funding through a DBU program, but also received entrepreneurial support from them.

> 00:05:27
> G2: so yeah often its like pitch contests or like different rounds and then semi-final and final with startups whatsoever in in the end one one wins something
>
> 00:05:39
> G2: so where we won for example at the dbu or big grand im pretty sure they also had expert networks and different experts and contacts to different people in the industry which which they provided to us and where they helped us

Other than that, G2 mentions that they had difficulties receiving specific support from public institutions.

> 00:04:37
> G2: so yeah its really hard to to also try to get get the support of governmental european whatsoever funding
>
> 00:04:48
> G2: yeah thats thats pretty hard but we we obviously like if they have nice programs that that fit us we try to get in there as well yeah

The only other public support the company received was from the *Gründerfonds* mentioned earlier. According to G1, the *Gründerfonds* mostly provided financial support, but also general advice on entrepreneurship.

4.1.2 Legal framework

The legal framework for the creation of a business has been presented in chapter 2.3. This information is easily accessible through a simple internet search. It has not, however, been possible to find information on specifically founding a sharing economy business in either France or Germany. This chapter thus only includes the testimony from the interviewees regarding their perception of the legal framework of their host country.

4.1.2.1 France

F1 estimates the (legal) framework to be in favor of the sharing economy. In their opinion, the sharing economy and sustainable consumption options are understood to be better for the climate and for consumers.

> le marché est prometteur dans ce secteur. […] il sera favorisé car c'est devenu écoresponsable et un acteur économique pour mieux consommer. De plus c'est un outil anti-gaspillage.

F2 also mentions the difficulties in understanding the system around creating a (sharing economy) business in France. They mention consulting several legal coaches for the creation of their business to understand the procedure.

> nous restons trop souvent dans le flou et les démarches paraissent très lourdes pour peu de résultats ce qui est décourageant. [too often we are left in the dark and the procedures seem very cumbersome with little result, which is discouraging.]

4.1.2.2 Germany

For G1, the reasons for choosing a GmbH are fourfold. Firstly, they believe the "taxation of a limited liability company is preferable" (see transcript) to the taxation of a sole proprietorship or business partnership, which are subject to regular income tax, whereas limited liability companies are subject to corporation tax. In their worksheet, German consultant C2 answered that the "current system of economic growth encourages maximizing personal gain and company growth via profits and spending money" (see 7.3.1). This is mainly done "through taxation laws and existing structures" (ibid.). While this is advantageous for growth-oriented for-profit companies, "true" sharing economy business models cannot profit from this. Grassroots initiatives, according to C2, also find the system inhospitable for their business models.

> 00:17:20
> C2: when i talk to two founders or two activists that are working for grassroots

initiatives they surely dont find the current legal systems and financial systems supportive

00:17:33
C2: again its really difficult for them to get access to financial to funding while there are there is funding provided for tech startups for instance for biotech startups

00:17:44
C2: for well in general technology oriented startups

00:17:48
C2: it is much more difficult as a social startup for instance or as a sharing organization with social goals to get access to to funding

00:17:56
C2: there are smaller pots but they are as i said rather small and they dont really perceive that there is much really support

Second, the limited liability company offers entrepreneurs a "high degree of creative freedom in the shareholders' contract" (see their worksheet).

A third reason for the first company to choose a GmbH was the possibility to include "contributions in kind to the share capital" rather than only monetary stocks, which facilitates the founding process for startups.

The fourth reason to choose a GmbH was a more subjective and social one, as at least one of the interviewees perceived the GmbH to appear more professional and create trust, especially in an economy where most sharing economy organizations aim for growth (Mair et al., 2022, p. 45).

G2 talked about the restructuring process of their company, where they turned a UG into a GmbH, the reasons behind it being mainly pragmatic and of a financial nature.

00:12:09
G2: when we did our firmierung from an ug to gmbh so so basically yeah

00:12:19
G2: from from limited to the other limited you said but but from the one you can you can found like really easy and faster and with less money

They thus eventually chose a GmbH for the simplicity of investment compared to GbR or OHG, but also the lack of stress compared to an AG.

00:12:48
G2: obviously you can go way smaller and and do like an offene handelsgesellschaft or stuff like that or just gesellschaft bürgerlichen rechts a gbr

00:13:01
G2: but that is not really suitable for people who want to invest i think because its like not capital companies

According to their testimony, young startups with a limited start capital are better off with a GmbH.

00:13:15
G2: and also the other ones dont really fit and the other direction like not going smaller

00:13:22
G2: if you would have gone bigger within with a share company like with an ag that would have been like way more problematic was like yeah all the numbers and figures you have to get together at the end of the year

00:13:38
G2: so really cost intensive especially if you start really small without any money

00:13:43
G2: so i think like i dont really know another option that that is good for investors and also at the same time yeah provide the security of of a company

Apart from the legal structure of the company, G2 talked about the barriers they perceived in the creation of their company. In their opinion, today's German legal framework is lagging behind modern developments in the sharing economy that go beyond structures like *Airbnb*.

00:20:16
G2: so if you want to share things so for example you have like a tax tax rate or like i think its at or like like i think €200 or something like that

00:20:31
G2: until then you dont have to pay taxes if you rent out stuff but from there on and you have and i think that that diese grenze so to say it its quite low and not really made for for todays wishes or or things we need

00:20:55
G2: so i think comes from a time where people like when no one really shared and if they did like they did it once or twice and so yeah it didnt really bother most people

00:21:08
G2: but yeah nowadays as you can see in our business model people want to share with each other

00:21:14
G2: so yeah i think the political system needs to make it as easy as possible

G2 further notes that even sharing as a single person requires a legal structure, which in his opinion also presents a barrier to further development of the sharing economy.

00:21:21
G2: and also for example if i buy myself something which i want to rent out from the beginning on and i plan to maybe make money with it i have to found not a company but like kleingewerbe i have to register that and stuff like that

00:21:39
G2: so yeah there are some barriers especially for private people

4.1.3 Funding opportunities

As for funding, the results look at public funding opportunities. Smaller private resources are left out due to the large number available. Other resources used by the interviews include private funding and will be presented below.

4.1.3.1 France

First, France's public investment bank (BPI) is one of the first search results. Their programs provide financing and support for innovative and sustainable businesses in France, including those focused on the sharing economy. They have been supporting SMEs with favorable loans since 2013.

The French Agency for International Investments (Agence Française pour les Investissements Internationaux) is responsible for attracting foreign companies, and the Interministerial Delegation for Spatial Planning and Regional Attractiveness (Délégation interministérielle à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'attractivité régionale, DATAR) – the authority for spatial planning and competition – was responsible for national investment promotion. Although the webpage still shows up in search results, the bureau was dissolved in 2014, after it was merged with the Interministerial Cities Committee (CIV) and the National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunity (Ascé) to form the General Commission for Territorial Equality (Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires, CGET).

France is the only country within the EU to have the so-called "Credit d'impôt recherche" - a tax credit for research and development. Companies that invest in this area receive a 30% tax credit for expenditure up to 100 million euros. If the expenditure is higher, they receive a 5% tax credit for the amount above that.

For social entrepreneurship and SSE funding, the French Public Investment Bank (BPI) has published a list of private or semi-public entities that offer different loan programs. This includes territorial development banks and private funds.

For small and medium-sized enterprises, there is also a 20% tax credit on innovation expenditures up to a maximum of 400,000 EUR. Lastly, some regions also support SSE projects. To identify regional aid, founders are advised to consult the National database of public aid to businesses.

F1 solicited the BPI for funding and consultation, but criticized them for not granting funds, as they deemed the company too small to receive funding.

> 00:01:12
> F1: alors je me suis rapproché de la bpi aussi ils ont dit c'était une trop jeune entreprise
>
> 00:01:17
> F1: ils m'ont orienté vers un autre des autres organismes que j'ai pas eu le temps de faire de m'orienter aussi

F1 then proceeded to provide the company with their own funds, which explains the lower amount of starting capital described in 3.2.

F2 participated in two incubator programs, one of which was centered around the Paris region. The Parisian incubator, a partly publicly funded program, further offered support from experts in their fields, also offering a financial grant to help develop the company.

> « bénéficié d'un soutien de 2 incubateurs dont un parisien qui, en plus d'un soutien d'experts dans leurs domaines, offrait également un bourse financière pour participer au développement de l'entreprise. ».

4.1.3.2 Germany

The first result is the KfW. The KfW offers several loan programs. Its startup loans (Gründerkredite) are designed for founders and SMEs, offering 125,000 EUR. Their Environmental Innovation Program offers loans for innovative, large-scale pilot projects, developing novel technology. It further requires that the product be replicable and scalable in Germany and provide sustainable environmental relief. In addition to a list of funding programs, their website also offers a tool with which prospective founders can be assigned the right program for them.

Already investigated in 4.1.1.2, the DBU offers funding opportunities for sustainable businesses like within the sharing economy as well, especially in their Green Startup program. They support companies in the founding phase and startups up to 5 years old with up to 125,000 EUR per project for a maximum duration of 24 months.

Germany's possibilities of business incubators were also investigated. They can be used for funding of a sharing economy company. Germany too has numerous incubators to offer, both public and private. Once again, no specific sharing economy resources were found for such incubators in Germany. Rather, several incubators and funding sources for social and general entrepreneurship were found.

Outside of public or semi-public funding opportunities, founders might also investigate private venture capital or debt funds for funding, as well as sustainable crowdfunding opportunities like Startnext, Seedmatch, GLSCrowd, or WiWin, to name a few. The association of Business Angels Deutschland (BAND) offers a central contact point for innovative startups seeking capital.

It is notable that the funding opportunities the interviewees utilized were not specific to the sharing economy. For both companies, funding also came from numerous sources. Both received government funding as well as public funding or crowd investment and fundraising. Both relied on investors for their business model, G2 stated that their funding situation is estimated to be 50% private through business angels and other investors and 50% public through government funding or government loans.

Specifically, G2 mentions a grant from the DBU, from which they acquired a grant of 125,000 EUR.

> 00:01:52
> G2: i think at the moment its actually fifty fifty between private so from business angels and governmental funding or government loan
>
> 00:02:04
> G2: and maybe its a little bit more private business angel investing at the moment or will be more of that in the future as well
>
> 00:02:16
> G2: but yeah we got like €125000 from the dbu which is deutsche bundesstiftung welt yeah
>
> 00:02:28
> G2: or they gave us a grant of 125 k so yeah like we we did a lot with that money
>
> 00:02:36
> G2: and yeah we also had a business angel round i think two years ago where we got like i think 100000 or 125000 also in funding

The first German company also participated in *Die Höhle der Löwen*, the German equivalent of the popular show *Shark Tank*, where founders pitch their ideas to a handful of wealthy investors.

> 00:01:35
> G1: they then quite early in the stage on only a couple of months into into the business signed up for höhle der löwen basically the german version of shark tank and
>
> 00:01:49
> G1: went there only a couple of months after after drafting the company and they were at höhle der öwen with nearly nothin
>
> 00:01:58
> G1: so one bowl a handful of partners live a very very shady app but apparently it was enough and they got their first funding

With the help of the funding from *Höhle der Löwen*, they started scaling the company.

> 00:02:16
> G1: so company was registered beginning of 2020 and then beginning or mid 2020 and they went to höhle der löwen and raised almost half a half a million which gave them the kickstart and basically start scaling the company
>
> 00:02:32
> G1: and then at the end of that year they started to go into funding
>
> 00:02:37
> G1: and yeah eventually raised series a beginning of last year

Furthermore, they accessed funds from the public *Gründerfonds*, as well as other private funding opportunities, such as startup competitions.

> 00:03:10
> G1: yeah so exactly so at the beginning was so there was the gründer the

> Gründerfonds which supported the company basically paying salaries and the base salaries this was I would say public money
>
> 00:03:26
> G1: and then there was of course a lot of a lot of money from startup competitions um where where they were able to get the trophies in and for the company

4.1.4 Challenges in founding a sharing economy business

Difficulties and stumbling blocks in setting up a business do not necessarily have to be linked to national governments. The founders and representatives from France and Germany spoke about their personal experiences and highlighted various challenges. Known challenges to the sharing economy companies have been discussed in chapter 2.4 and have not been subjected to quantitative research.

4.1.4.1 France

The French interviewees described their challenges mainly by noting the difficulties in locating informational resources. F1 specifically pointed out that the information was "très difficile à trouver [very hard to find]" (Worksheet).

> Je demande seulement. je me suis rapprochée de LA CCI (chambre de commerce et d'industrie à Versailles. Sinon très difficile à trouver […].

This is a recurring theme, as F2 also stated difficulties in locating resources and information, finding them rather vague. They further described the procedures necessary for accessing resources being cumbersome with few results, which they found discouraging.

> La CCI comme différents organismes sont la pour nous aider et nous expliquer mais nous restons trop souvent dans le flou et les démarches paraissent très lourdes pour peu de résultats ce qui est décourageant.
>
> Personnellement je trouve qu'il est compliqué de trouver des financements et surtout à quel type de financement nous avons le droit.

Establishing a brand on the market has been another, albeit less challenging point for the interviewees. F2 stated that, for a brand committed to sustainability values, they always risk excluding a certain demographic from their audience.

> En créant une entreprise à forte valeur durable et en communiquant dessus, nous prenons aussi le risque d'écarter une partie des consommateurs. Il faut savoir mettre le curseur au bon endroit pour attirer l'intégralité de notre cible.

For their company to flourish and their values to remain intact, they said that this requires a specific business plan but also the right professional network. They further recommended monitoring tendencies abroad and on the national market for developing trends and who could become part of their network.

> Il s'agit de bien s'entourer notamment avec des personnes un peu plus pointu sur ce sujet. Je conseille à tout le monde d'être curieux, les évolutions vont vite, il faut aussi regarder ce qu'il se fait déjà, ce qu'il se prépare, les tendances qui se dessinent (anticipation) et aller regarder ce qu'il se fait à l'étranger.

4.1.4.2 Germany

One of the main challenges for the interviewees to founding a sharing economy business in Germany was the difficulty in locating resources and accessing information. In the case of the second interviewee, they profited off the fact that their founder had done extensive research himself on the topic of the sharing economy.

> 00:07:21
> G2: okay i mean like as i told in the beginning it was really good start that that [founder] wrote his bachelor thesis about [company] because there he was forced to or had to look for a lot of sources and like yeah
>
> 00:07:44
> G2: putting everything together that makes sense and probably way more detailed than any startup would collect or any founder would collect information in different parts of of the sharing economy and startup life or industry hes hes founding in
>
> 00:08:01
> G2: so that was really good yeah like like obviously its always hard to to find exact information or yeah especially for free like or or interviews of people of many people just for for survey or whatsoever

According to them, there is a need for further information and research regarding sharing companies in fields other than shared mobility (as in car sharing) and accommodation sharing such as *AirBnb*. During their founding process, they studied the market, conducted surveys, and worked around the missing data on sectors further from accommodation and mobility.

> *00:08:48*
> G2: but i think at the moment you can find some input for the start in the sharing economy field often its sharing economy like airbnb was houses or flats and it was cars thats a lot of examples
>
> *00:09:06*
> G2: yeah but you can find some different ones as well to to get a brief understanding of the industry
>
> *00:09:11*
> G2: and yeah then if you want to go really detailed like we went like with sharing economy with things that really doesnt exist at the moment in germany
>
> *00:09:23*
> G2: then you have to do some own surveys and assumptions as well

This has also been mentioned by G1. G1 also alluded to the difficulty of accessing resources like funding when the company or idea did not yet have a standing on the market.

> 00:11:19
> G1: but looking at the funding space and what what kind of investments are being taken at the moment I think you need to be very very lucky

00:11:28
G1: and if you have a strong name with that with a great funding record I think its still easy

00:11:35
G1: because they invest into your name rather than the business idea yeah

00:11:39
G1: but if your business model can't prove that you have that you will run into profitability in lets say round about two three years then I think its tricky

Apart from the locating issues, both interviewees encountered difficulties acquiring governmental and European funds, as the task was very time consuming, as G2 described.

00:03:15
G2: but its always really time consing and hard to to go through the whole process and to apply to to a lot of different programs

00:04:37
G2: so yeah its really hard to to also try to get get the support of governmental european whatsoever funding

As a result, one of them reached out to an external consultancy hoping to better access European funding opportunities. This proved to be only marginally successful.

00:05:50
G1: for this for this period no what we are looking into the european funds we have reached out to an external consultancy for that

00:05:59
G1: how do I say this right without deploying too much the success rate is quite low lets put it this way yeah so weve always been more successful when we go sourcing ourselves rather than reaching out to externals

4.1.5 Supportive framework

In their 2022 report on the effects of the sharing economy in Germany, Wruk and Oberg found that, until now, previous empirical studies have primarily concentrated on assessing the effects of individual large organizations or specific sharing platforms, typically within the realms of mobility and accommodation services (e.g., Firnkorn & Müller, 2011; Martin & Shaheen, 2011; Zevras, Proserpio, & Byers, 2017). Nonetheless, associations and initiatives have formed around the sustainability aspect of the circular and, more precisely, the sharing economy, in both France and Germany.

4.1.5.1 France

ESS France or *Chambre Française de l'Économie Sociale et Solidaire* is the leading organization of the SSE in France. It represents and promotes the interests of SSE companies and organizations, offers support for members, networking events, lobbying, and information on the ecological transition, international and global perspectives.

If founders want to start a business following a cooperative scheme, the *Coop FR* association representing more than 23.000 French cooperative businesses, proposes a practical guide to setting up a cooperative (Coop FR, 2022). Cooperative business models may also include sharing businesses. *Coop FR* further offers contact points and possibilities of networking within their association.

Another resource for cooperatives is the association *Les Licoornes*. Deliberately mocking the economic term "unicorn", web startups valued at over a billion dollars, *Les Licoornes* is an association made up of 9 different cooperative companies (Cooperatives of collective interest, SCIC). They work together, share their experiences at their own events, at media events, and work throughout different sectors they deem key sectors of the civic and ecological transition: mobility, energy, finance, second-hand goods, telecommunications, electronics, and food. Although they are not specifically called a sharing economy association, they might come closest among these search results. Several of their members can be considered collaborative economy models, but they also share resources and infrastructure between one another and could be a point of contact for general advice about the sharing economy in France.

La Ruche is another French organization that provides support and resources for social entrepreneurs in France, including those based in the sharing economy. They partner with public institutions, foundations, and banks and offer a wide array of consulting services. Mainly, they offer working spaces and support at every stage of the business development process through peer and expert meetings.

The support received by the two French companies examined in this thesis has been negligible. F1 worked with the *BGE Yvelines*, one of the Parisian suburb sub-chapters of the French National support network for entrepreneurs (Réseau national d'appui aux entrepreneurs). Co-financed by the EU, BGE advises, supports, and offers training courses to business startups, takeovers, and managers. It is not limited to sharing economy companies.

F2 consulted with the CCI, as well as with the INPI, and participated in their business incubators and their support programs.

4.1.5.2 Germany

The first result is the research project i-share. The goal of the project "is to capture the economic, ecologic and social impact of the sharing economy in Germany" (i-Share, 2022). Thus far, the project has brought about three reports with different focuses, a glossary around the sharing economy and an atlas. Their projects are conducted with the support of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and by consulting with the involvement of sharing economy organizations, other research institutions, municipalities, and associations.

Second, the Federal Association of German Leasing Companies (Bundesverband Deutscher Leasing-Unternehmen) which is composed of roughly 140 member companies representing approximately 85 percent of the German leasing market. It offers a legally secure basis for the exchange of opinions and experience in compliance with German anti-trust law. They share information about funding and support programs for leasing companies, fiscal policies, legal framework, and briefly about the sharing economy.

Next, Scientific coordination of the funding measure 'Sustainable Management (Wissenschaftliche Koordination der Fördermaßnahme Nachhaltiges Wirtschaften, NaWiKo), which ended in 2020. However, they still assemble resources surrounding, among other things, the sharing economy.

Third, the Bundesverband Nachhaltige Wirtschaft e.V, (BNW) an association committed to the sustainable transformation of the German economy.

Fourth, the Gemeinwohl-Ökonomie Deutschland e.V., an association for the economy of the common good. This model is a sustainable economic model with the goal of an ethical economic culture. As an alternative to the current understanding of the economy, it builds on the values of "Menschenwürde, ökologische Verantwortung, Solidarität, soziale Gerechtigkeit, demokratische Mitbestimmung und Transparenz" (GWÖ e.V., 2023, para. 1).

Fifth, the Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland (SEND), dedicated to social entrepreneurship. Founded in 2017, SEND is a non-profit association that aims to network and link the social entrepreneurship sector in Germany. Through events, regional focus groups and a volunteer team, they assembled over 800 members. They regularly take stock of the national situation. To date they published four Social Entrepreneurship Monitors and can be a source for inspiration and consultancy for aspiring social entrepreneurs.

Lastly, the Bundesverband Deutsche Startups e.V., the representative association of startups in Germany. They explain and represent interests, and concerns of startups to legislators, administrators, and the public. While they promote innovative entrepreneurship, they also publish the Green Startup Monitor. Not limited to the sharing economy, but rather to the green economy at large, it aims at highlighting the importance of startups as drivers of innovation in the Green Economy.

The interviewees expressed a need for a supportive framework in their target country and community. Locating the business in a supportive environment and geographical neighbourhood was especially important for G2's company. Their business model relies on local communities willing to engage with each other.

(00:10:32)
G2: and he [the founder] thought like yeah like how can it be like all my neighbors probably have a drill and like my city in my street where where i live in the area where i live in hamburg like i can probably like knock on every door and everyone would have a drill

Thus, location, local attitude, and need were all important factors in developing the business model.

00:14:17
G2: yeah because obviously that that plays a really important role what you say and especially for our idea because we are like for us community is really important

00:14:41
G2: but for us its truly important because yeah people where they want to share together its really important that they are close to each other and that like all items are like in a special location

00:14:53
G2: and theyre obviously like the big cities like munich berlin hamburg cologne frankfurt like like these five for example are really important target cities

00:15:03
G2: and also like business angel clubs accelerator programs talking to other entrepreneurs all that kind of stuff is obviously way more developed in a city like hamburg

As a preliminary measure to avoid dependence on access to a large local community and market, G1 mentioned the importance of a strong digital product.

00:14:26
G1: and you find then a smart solution around it then then you should do it and then it needs to be digital

00:14:33
G1: i think everybody who still thinks that you can do analog models and will highly fail okay

00:14:40
G1: because at least when you do digital you have some proof you have your data and at the end when your company doesnt run well you at least could sell the data yeah

00:14:50
G1: you do an analog product then it becomes really tricky if people dont buy your stuff youre basically yourre stuck yeah

Relating to trouble in building the company, G2 mentioned having trouble accessing government support other than of monetary nature.

00:04:18
G2: in the beginning it was like more focused on that and yeah and now like already the focus on on finding new angel investors that fit and that want to invest money now and the current market situation is like full full part job

00:04:37
G2: so yeah its really hard to to also try to get get the support of governmental european whatsoever funding

G1 explained the support they did receive was very centered around their business model for reusable food containers and thus not applicable for companies outside of this sector.

00:04:49
G1: there is theres associations created in the past one 1 to 2 years around the system of reusables

00:05:02
G1: mehrwegverband deutschland and theres a new era on european level yeah and they basically do our lobbying lobbying on a political level so this is the support we get but thats basically already the entire support we get

4.1.6 Non-categorised results

This sub-chapter is intended to provide the space for results that do not fit into any other sub-chapter, but which should nonetheless be included. For one, it will present the sustainable motivation of the interview partners that lead them to found, lead, or work for their company. This is a common theme for all interviewees, as they laid out their motivations and sustainability practices in their interview. A second theme is the interviewees' assessment of the market and the future of the sharing economy. Lastly, F1's experiences as a female solo entrepreneur.

With regards to the motivation behind the creation of a company, G1 says that "either you're face with a problem, and you want to find a solution for it or you just have this once-in-a-lifetime idea that nobody has thought about [before]" (00:00:14). For G1's company's founders, the former was the case. Reusable take-out containers were already being done, but not as accessible and not on the same scale as they would have liked.

00:01:02
G1: uhm and then were looking at the different competitors that were already out there and different kinds of systems for borrowing borrowing items

00:01:09
G1: were talking to a lot of competitors if theres a possibility of merging

00:01:15
G1: but quite quite early in the stage of developing it they already figured that theres no such system out there thats really able to scale and make an impact on a long term on long run

Adding to this, their conscience weighed heavy with the use of single use take-out containers during late-night work hours. Later, worries about their kids' futures added to this weight.

00:00:24
G1: and in our in our case its been that the founders were faced with the problem on a daily base when they were back at [old company] and

00:00:34
G1: faced with this massive amounts of single use containers every night when they order to the office for late night late night shifts

00:00:43
G1: and so they they grow up and and they they become dads

00:00:49
G1: and so they wanted to do something good and something lasting for the environment and also for the for the future of their children so they decided how or they were looking into systems how to get rid of it

G2 shares a similar story. For his company, the founder was disappointed to find that the city he recently moved to did not have a sharing system in place. He then started one himself.

00:00:39
G2: so he needed to rent something out in a new city and was really confused that he really didnt have an option to do that in this neighborhood

00:10:32
G2: and he thought like yeah like how can it be like all my neighbors probably have a drill and like my city in my street where where i live in the area where i live in hamburg like i can probably like knock on every door and everyone would have a drill

F1 had been motivated to start her company after watching an economic broadcast. She then developed the idea with the help of consultants, her network and own brainstorming.

For F2, what started out as means to finish their master's program, later turned into the opportunity to participate in their alma mater's and a private incubator. They elaborated on the mission of the company regarding its sustainability responsibilities as for their "engagement environnement et sociétal de [company] fait partie intégrante de l'ADN de la marque [[company]'s commitment to the environment and society is an integral part of the brand's DNA]" (worksheet). The circularity of their products is another important part of it.

> À la fin de chaque cycle, chaque vêtement fait l'objet d'une vérification qualité avant de repartir en circulation et lorsque nous jugeons qu'il n'est plus de qualité, nous en faisons don à des associations pour de l'upcycling ou les gens dans le besoin. Ainsi nous optimisons chaque produit.

Briefly mentioned in all the worksheets and interviews was the way the interviewees viewed the market for the sharing economy. Every interviewee was optimistic, although to different extents, and for slightly different reasons.

F1 says that the sharing economy model will be promoted in the future "car c'est devenu écoresponsable et un acteur économique pour mieux consommer [because it has become eco-responsible and an economic player for better consumption]", thus specifically pointing out the economic factor in the model.

00:04:15
F1: moi je dirais que c'est plutôt favorable parce que de plus en plus de société ça marche plus que porteur

00:04:21
F1: de plus en plus de gens se tourne vers le marché écoresponsable du circulaire et anti gaspillage

00:04:30
F1: donc oui plus en plus de gens qui d'acheter pour un ou deux usages

00:04:36
F1: du coup l'économie de partage est favorable dans le mode où on vit surtout avec l'inflation et l'économie qui va pas fort quoi

For F2, society is likely to grow more accustomed to sharing opportunities and will even demand bigger corporations and established businesses to indulge in it, or they would lose competitiveness.

> Je pense que cette évolution sera favorisée et qu'il sera indispensable pour chaque entreprise d'y penser sans quoi elles ne seront pas attractives aux yeux de la société de consommation. (p. 109)

G1 argues that business models like the sharing economy model will be unavoidable in the future.

00:12:28
G1: we are well convinced that its the only way moving forward

00:12:32
G1: in a couple of years there will there wont be any single use yeah

00:12:36
G1: or if there still is the tax is so high on it that people will really try to minimize the use of it and no

G2 agreed with the fact that the potential for energy efficiency and sustainability of the sharing economy makes it an important player in the economic and environmental development of the next decade.

00:22:57
G2: but i think there will be like huge changes in the next few years because yeah most sharing economies are identified classified whatsoever for making their industry where theyre operating in like way more efficient and more resource efficient time efficient whatsoever

00:23:19
G2: and yeah that is also that is always really important like for for getting emissions down and being environmentally more friendly

00:23:33
G2: so i think in the sharing economy and especially on the legal side they will they will have a lot of stuff in the in the next 5 to 10 years

Nevertheless, G2 was a bit more hesitant and called for supportive changes in the system towards a more sharing enthusiastic model.

00:20:55
G2: so i think comes from a time where people like when no one really shared and if they did like they did it once or twice and so yeah it didnt really bother most people

00:21:08
G2: but yeah nowadays as you can see in our business model people want to share with each other

00:21:14
G2: so yeah i think the political system needs to make it as easy as possible

Lastly, F1 pointed out her experiences specifically as they relate to being a female solo entrepreneur. She stated that interlocutors often assume her company has a *male* cofounder. She states that she would like to see female entrepreneurs encouraged further.

> En effet, beaucoup de personnes ont pensé et pensent encore que j'ai un associé (homme) alors que j'ai fait tout seule (sauf le site, car je ne connais pas ce type de codage) Les femmes peuvent et doivent entreprendre seul, la notion de partage est plus inscrit dans nos gênes je pense.

Further, both France and Germany maintain programs aimed at female entrepreneurs specifically and could potentially provide support on the matter. Although these results cannot be immediately categorized under one of the other chapters, support for, and opposition to, female entrepreneurship could provide a basis for future research.

4.2 Discussion

The results have shown both similarities and differences in the experience of founders and representatives during the process of starting a sharing economy company in France and Germany. This discussion offers an analysis of the results and will work through them chronologically.

None of the interviewees experienced substantial obstruction in their founding process. This assessment is also consistent with representative research regarding pressure on sharing organizations in Germany. It has been shown, however, that sharing organizations do not receive any specific support either, as the government "neither supports nor hinders their emergence and activities" (Vith et al., 2022, p. 62). This goes, to some extent, hand in hand with the associated legal framework for the sharing economy in the two countries. It is perceived to be the least clear and most unsatisfactory aspect of founding a company for most interviewees. This assessment is in line with previous literature and research, as many criticize the lack of regulation and clarity in the sharing economy, as seen in Celikel Esser et al. (2016) and Araujo Galvão et al. (2018). The regulatory framework from 2.3 has shown that neither France nor Germany offer a specific regulatory framework for the sharing economy. Generally, a lack of universally accepted definitions appears to create difficulty assessing the power and potential of the sharing economy.

This was viewed from two different perspectives by interviewees. On one hand, founders can potentially take advantage of the situation and use the vague legal framework to their advantage, allowing them to source out loopholes and find a niche, currently unreachable by legal entities. Both C1 and C2 also pointed this out.

On the other hand, the unclear legal framework creates uncertainty not only for founders, but also for consumers. Founders can be affected by this, especially early on, as consumers might refrain from significant levels of consumption in the sharing economy. The Eurobarometer survey has shown this to be a real threat to the development of the sector European Commission, 2018a).

In the 2017 report on the sharing economy in Germany, the Scientific Advisory Board of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Protection discussed the challenges of regulatory frameworks for the sharing economy, specifically for digital intermediary platforms, who are often exposed to little competition and have a central function in shaping markets (BMWi, 2017). According to the advisory board, these companies also often develop economic sectors that are characterized by a high degree of regulation and are not limited to local markets. The board thus raised the question of whether sector-specific regulation of certain markets is necessary today and whether there is a need for new regulation. Calling it hardly possible to give detailed regulatory policy recommendations that apply equally to all areas of the sharing economy, they share the different options and regulations already present (ibid., p. 10). These regulations might entail new types of restrictions on competition, but also the legitimate concern for workers, consumers, and the public, pointing to problems with antitrust and workers safety in the case of *AirBnb* and *Uber*. The Scientific Advisory Board thus suggests the guiding principle of regulatory policy to be that business models within and outside the sharing economy, offering comparable services, are not subject to different regulatory requirements. The Board overall assumes there to be no discernible need for further action by politicians or legislators to reform the regulatory framework under antitrust law.

Since 2019, digital collaborative economy platforms in France have been obligated to send an annual summary of transactions carried out and gross amount received in the previous year to each customer, seller, or service provider, and to tax authorities. This also applies to all operators of collaborative economy platforms located in France or abroad, whose users reside in France or make sales or provide services located in France. This is because the sharing economy grows stronger and more economically important in France, as it does in Germany. According to a 2017 report by the French Senate, the collaborative economy "n'est pas un simple effet de mode, mais une tendance de fond" ([is not just a passing fad, but an underlying

trend]) (Bocquet et al., 2017a, p. 17). In Europe, it accounted for 28 billion EUR in transactions in 2016, a figure that doubled in the span of a year. By 2025, it could reach 572 billion EUR (ibid.). In 2015, the French Senat further published a report about the tax implications of the collaborative economy (Bouvard et al., 2015). According to this report, as the collaborative economy becomes a "réalité économique tangible [tangible economic reality" (ibid., p. 7) that, unfortunately, is developing in a "cadre uncertain [uncertain context]" (ibid.) where a distinction between "true" and "false" sharing is hard to make (e.g., Belk, 2014), as C1 also pointed out in their worksheet. For the French Senate, the question lies in the distinction between cost-sharing and profit-sharing, between solidarity and commercial activity, for which there is a clear need for legal and fiscal clarification. Users of such platforms must declare their income in case of doubt, but those who operate in a grey area or have a revolutionary business idea will not find answers so quickly (ibid., p. 8).

The French National Counsel of Consumption (Conseil National de la Consommation, CNC) has also adopted an opinion on collaborative digital platforms aimed at strengthening the information obligations of platforms linked to digital "matchmaking" activities, also aimed at worker and consumer protection.

As for social entrepreneurship, the French state "has long been encouraging a strong trend of social and solidarity economy enterprises (community-based associations, mutual insurance companies, etc.)" (Lewkowicz and Cahier, 2022, p. 264). In 2021, the Ministry in charge published a "How to set up a social economy business" guide, further explaining the 2014 law that further strengthened SSE businesses. According to ESS France's "Avis du Conseil Supérieur de l'Économie Sociale et Solidaire" on the assessment of the 2014 law, a lack of data still demands conclusive proof of effectiveness of the law. Overall, the stakeholders are satisfied with the law of 2014, which remains France's most successful piece of SSE legislation and is even setting an example in Europe and the rest of the world (ESS France, 2023, paragraph 6).

Compared to Germany, France offers a wider array of legal structures and possibilities for social entrepreneurs to develop their business. Lewkowicz and Cahier studied the cooperative sector in France, which often coincides with the creation or use of a collaborative approach. The French cooperative sector is considered one of the most important in the world (Lewkowicz & Cahier, 2022), their annual aggregate turnover reached 8,4 billion EUR in 2022, compared to 7,4 billion EUR in 2021 and 5,6 billion EUR in 2020 (Lewcowicz & Cahier, 2022, p. 264).

The problems of legal uncertainty are not unknown to policy makers at the European level either. In 2017, lawmakers called for coherent strategies on the collaborative economy, and research has already been conducted with regards to the gig economy and consumer protection,

workers' rights implications, tax obligations, and fair competition, as well as the influence of the professionalization of the sharing economy (e.g., Stampfl, 2016). So far, the European agenda for the collaborative economy remains a guideline, but an important one that the European Commission highlights for the further development of the Single Market, according to Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska, responsible for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs in the Commission's press release (2016b) about the agenda:

> "The collaborative economy is an opportunity for consumers, entrepreneurs and businesses – provided we get it right. If we allow our Single Market to be fragmented along national or even local lines, Europe as a whole risks losing out. Today we are providing legal guidance for public authorities and market operators for the balanced and sustainable development of these new business models. We invite Member States to review their regulation in the light of this guidance and stand ready to support them in this process." (p. 1)

The amended legislation does not, however, concern the founding of sharing economy companies and the framework for their creation. Rather, most of the legislation is aimed at the business development, the management and accounting processes. The assessment of the interviewees, that support structures at the founding stage are lacking on both sides of the Rhine, is clearly founded.

Finally, the 2018 study by the European Commission investigated the business and regulatory environment affecting the collaborative economy in the EU. Their study report (2018b), though focused on the sectors of transportation, accommodation, and finance, further solidifies the need for "regulatory clarity" (ibid., p. 14). Interviewees thoroughly agreed with this. In his 2018 report on the PWC study on the sharing economy in six European countries, Beutin (2018) revealed that one of the biggest worries of providers is the uncertainty of income (23% of providers), followed by the "not clearly defined legal situation in terms of income tax and related topics (22% of providers)" (p. 20).

As for the funding opportunities in France and Germany, it can also be assumed that neither country favors the collaborative economy over any other green economy model. Neither country offers specific sharing or collaborative economy funds. They do, however, support a transition to a green economy in general, in which they include the circular and collaborative economy as well as social entrepreneurship. The difference in perception of the social economy in both countries has been described in 2.2, and the funding opportunities for companies of the sector presented in 4.1.3. Although not an exhaustive list, it can be concluded that such funding opportunities are not scarce in either country for founders in general, but rather for green and sustainable companies.

Although the German federal funding data base *Förderdatenbank*, assembles funding programs from federal government, Länder, and EU, it was found that there are no general offices in Germany where public funding can be applied for. Almost every program must be applied for at a different institution with different contacts. In addition, the application procedures differ depending on the program. For this reason, the appropriate funding programs should be selected after an individual analysis of the business' situation.

The company interviews showed that another important factor in garnering support for a newfound business is the community and the supportive framework in which it operates. These results are consistent with research by Mair et al. (2022), according to whose representative study, 64% of sharing organizations consider community a main driver for the success and competitiveness of their business, especially during the founding process. Sharing platforms that depend on P2P exchange, like the company of G2, are more in need of a supportive neighborhood and community than for example F2's. F2's service is entirely online, whereas G2's services only act as an intermediary platform, but rely on residents from the same area to interact with each other. G2 considered community to be "really important" (00:14:17) as their business relies on "their community or […] regular users" (00:30:09). For them, the community should be considered from the very start of the founding or even pitching process, as community building can help build the case for a successful and "innovative new business model" (00:31:25). In their case, community laid the groundwork for their business, as the founder used the lack of a sharing community in his new neighborhood as an inspiration to start hhis company. Thus, the needs are as diverse as the sharing organizations present in France and Germany. According to Vith et al. (2022), sharing organizations need a diverse supportive framework, under which "existing organizations can grow, and new organizations can be born" (ibid., p. 65). Thus, although there are associations and consultants that include sharing economy businesses in their portfolio and their target audience, there has yet to emerge a dedicated support system for sharing economy businesses.

On a European level, meaning accessible to both French and German companies, Social Economy Europe assembles 2.8 million social enterprises in the EU. 2013 saw the appearance of the European sharing economy Coalition and, as G1 pointed out, sector specific support does exist already, it is rather the cross-sector support that is lacking. This assessment has been confirmed by C2. The support infrastructure in Germany appears to be a little more fragmented than it is in France. An organization like *Les Licoornes* does not yet exist in Germany, however, smaller initiatives are currently campaigning to create a similar entity. Projects like *Platform Cooperatives Germany eG*, that is trying to bring together cooperative companies in Germany,

advise German cooperative companies and build networks. G1 mentioned the *Mehrwegverband Deutschland* that helped them in their founding process, which is again very specific to their sector and less to the sharing economy at large.

The question also arose as to how the sharing economy can go hand in hand with social innovation and entrepreneurship. The question was raised as one of the driving causes of the Social Economy Berlin Conference in Berlin in July 2023, but has already occupied scholars and entrepreneurs alike (e.g., Zheng et al., 2021). It has been noted that social enterprises include a wide range of legal and organizational structures that utilize market mechanisms to bring about positive social impact. As the interviewees have reported of their RSE engagements, their social commitment, and the likes, it can be assumed that they could also qualify as a social business. This does not, however, mean that sharing economy businesses can *automatically* be considered social businesses. If for example they still encourage overconsumption instead of aiming for sustainable consumption, then the social value of the company is not immediately discernible. On this topic, Mair et al. (2019) sampled 108 social enterprises and 233 sharing economy organizations. They concluded that sharing economy organizations and social enterprises in fact do behave quite differently with regards to the roles of community or growth. These findings are not cause for despair, as the researchers see their findings as "a positive sign that also reflects a societal ability to nurture and institutionalize alternative forms of organizing that can potentially overcome well-known deficiencies of capitalism" (ibid., paragraph 10). The results from the quantitative research have shown a growing support system for social entrepreneurship, and thus, if founders combine sharing and social approaches in their business model, they should at least be able to find advice when sought out.

Finally, chapter 4.1.6 presented parts of the interviewees' and their founders' motivations for starting their businesses.[1] Hamari et al. (2016) analyzed both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations of users for participating in the sharing or collaborative economy and found that founders' and users' motivations are somewhat similar. The interviewees in this paper's study were mainly moved to action by economic and sustainability goals. Hamari et al. (2016) found that "in case of intrinsic motivations, perceived sustainability significantly predicted positive attitude toward [collaborative consumption] […]; however, it did not have a direct association with behavioral intentions" (ibid., p. 2054). They concluded that "perceived sustainability has a small total effect through attitude to behavioral intention" in users (ibid.). As for extrinsic

[1] Although these findings are not directly linked to this paper's research questions, it can be argued that they could lay the groundwork for future research projects.

motivations of users, which were not investigated regarding the founders, they concluded that "expected gains in reputation did not significantly affect either attitude towards [collaborative consumption] […] or behavioral intention to participate in [collaborative consumption] services" (ibid.). Regarding the economic value of participation in sharing economy services, they found that "economic benefits did not have a significant effect on attitude towards" these services, but "did have significantly positive direct influence on intention to participate" in the sharing economy (ibid., pp. 2054). These findings have also been found in later studies (e.g., Böcker & Meelen, 2017) and coincide with the interviewees' impressions of the market.

Depending on the orientation of a future sharing economy company, these results may well help guide the business model. Nevertheless, independent market analyses are probably inevitable, as G2 already mentioned.

5 Conclusion

This work examined the views of leadership from sharing economy companies founded in France and Germany regarding their founding process, as well as the state of the sharing economy, and support for it, in their countries. It investigated the government support structures available to these companies, what funding opportunities were used in their creation, and what hurdles the startups overcame. The findings of this paper have shown that multiple barriers present themselves in the founding of a sharing economy business in both France and Germany, but to a different extent depending on location.

5.1 Summary of main points discussed

It has been found that company leadership did not perceive a significant difference in government support between France and Germany. Although, this research has shown that the ecosystem for *social* entrepreneurs is different, and most importantly more developed in France than it is in Germany. Cross-sector cooperation through associations like *Les Licoornes* and *Coop FR* is a more widespread phenomenon and facilitates exchange and mutual assistance between founders and businesspeople from different areas of the collaborative, circular, and social economy. It is notable that government support structures for sharing economy companies are very rare in both France and Germany. Most organizations and public institutions assisted in a more general manner, not specific to the sharing economy.

Companies interviewed for this thesis were able to utilize both public and private funding opportunities. However, none of their financial assistance programs were tailored to the sharing economy model. Rather, they were either within a broader "green" spectrum, such as through

the German DBU, or for their innovative idea, for example through funding from *Höhle der Löwen* or through business incubators.

One of the main barriers experienced by interviewees related to the lack of adequate and specific information about this economic model and the possibilities it offered in their respective countries. Every interviewee experienced difficulty accessing relevant information about the sharing economy, regulatory framework, and taxation information. Both countries thus appear to lack fundamental offers in this regard. At the very least, they did not find the supporting information in a reasonable time frame and resorted to resources available through their network or private entities. Especially Germany considers sharing economy companies to fall under already existing categories and business structures. There appears to be no significant incentive to change this.

Regarding social entrepreneurship however, this research has shown that there is still room for improvement in Germany. One of the interviewed consultants argued that the work currently being done in Germany relating to the sharing economy concerns almost exclusively profit-oriented organizations and does not consider the social impact or value of the sharing economy. France on the other hand appears to have made headway on this by implementing the social aspect in both their ministerial work and their supportive structures in the country. By supporting associations like *ESS France*, France encourages social entrepreneurship specifically. In Germany, the *SEND* network, although also supported by ministries, is a rather new addition to the supportive landscape and is yet to find a substantial footing throughout the country.

5.2 Sources of error

The sample size was chosen so that the same number of interviews could be conducted with interviewees from both countries. However, several interviews with French leadership did not take place due to last minute cancellations or non-respondent interviewees. Due to these restraints, input from German companies was collected via interviews only, while the main input from French representatives was collected through two worksheets and one short follow-up interview. Although worksheets were sent out to ten consultants in each country, only two German consultants replied and answered the worksheet, one agreed to an interview. This might lead to marginally denser data on the German side. Further quantitative and qualitative data could not be collected due to restraints on time. In the case of future studies, these would be points to address.

5.3 Suggestions for future research

As for the future of the sharing economy in both France and Germany, it is safe to assume that the industry will further influence the classic social market economies. As one of the German interviewees pointed out, the market system will probably trend toward encouraging the sharing of goods due to sustainability concerns which are starting to be felt by the public. Especially Germany, where its citizens believe that the sharing economy is here to stay (Beutin, 2018), is most certainly in for a change, as the sharing economy is expected to have the working population "change from having one main occupation to having multiple sources of income" (ibid., p. 20). Under these circumstances, it would be interesting to analyze the willingness and the possibilities of citizens to engage in such working environments.

Furthermore, several interviewees pointed out the importance of community and of local initiatives. According to Gruzska (2017), "giving the local community of co-creators the possibility of shaping it according to their values, visions, and practical goals", can help develop the model on a local level (ibid., p. 101). Thus, on the local as well as on the local cross-border level, further research could be done on bilateral or even generally European cooperation in the collaborative economy. How do neighboring countries facilitate or disincentivize the collaborative economy in their border regions? Could INTERREG programs play a role or is this something to be developed in further European integration? Especially with the background of the master's program under which this thesis is written, it would be of utmost interest to research these topics.

Lastly, relating to the interviewees assessment of the market situation and the circumstances under which sharing economy companies can be founded and scaled, it could be interesting to investigate the motivations of founders to start their company. The results presented in Non-categorised results could be used as a starting point to try and assess the different backgrounds from which companies start, what their baseline needs are, and under what conditions their ideals could thrive.

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7 Appendices

7.1 Interview guides and worksheets

7.1.1 Leadership

- Can you please describe the process of founding your company?
- What resources did you call upon during the founding of your company? Did you receive any public, private, governmental, or European support or funding? If so, can you describe the process and how it helped your company?
- Did you receive support from other public, private, governmental, or European associations or initiatives?
- Did you encounter any challenges locating or accessing resources or funding for your company? If so, can you describe those challenges and how you overcame them?
- How did you decide on a business model? What were some of the key considerations in developing this model?
- How did you decide on a legal structure?
- Was location an important factor in starting your company?
- Can you describe some of the specific sustainability practices or initiatives that your company employs?
- Would you call the current system (legal, financial, etc.) in favor of, in opposition to, or indifferent to the founding or operation of sharing economy companies?
- How do you see the market for the sharing economy evolving in the future? Do you think the evolution will be helped along or fought by the current system?
- What advice would you give to other entrepreneurs looking to start a sharing company? What are some of the key challenges they should be prepared to face, and how can they overcome those challenges?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

7.1.2 Lawyers

- Have you worked with sharing economy companies in the past? If so, can you describe your experience working with these companies?
- What business structures (corporation, limited company, etc.) are available for entrepreneurs who want to start a sharing economy company in [country]?

- What are the special requirements, if any, for registering a sharing economy company in [country]?
- Are there any specific regulations or laws that limit the business activities of sharing economy companies in [country]?
- Are there any liability or insurance concerns specific to sharing economy companies operating in [country]?
- Are there any tax incentives, or disincentives, that entrepreneurs should be aware of when founding a sharing economy company in [country]?
- What are some of the biggest legal challenges that entrepreneurs face when founding a sharing economy company in [country]? Are they unique to sharing economy companies?
- Would you call the current system (legal, financial, etc.) in favor of, in opposition to, or indifferent to the founding or operation of sharing economy companies?
- Do you see any legal barriers to innovation in the sharing economy sector in [country]?
- What opportunities do you see for entrepreneurs in the sharing economy sector in [country]?
- Is there any legislation on the horizon in [country] which would help or hurt sharing economy companies?
- What regulatory changes would you like to see implemented to help the growth of the sharing economy in [country]?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

7.1.3 Associations

- Can you briefly tell us about your association and its involvement in the sharing economy and social entrepreneurship?
- What hurdles are faced when founding a sharing economy company in [country]?
- What incentives and support are available for entrepreneurs who want to start a sharing economy company in [country]?
- Are these hurdles and incentives unique to the [country] market?
- How do you think the [country] government can further support and incentivize the growth of sharing economy companies?
- What are some success stories of sharing economy companies in [country] that you are aware of?
- How do you see the sharing economy evolving in [country] in the next 5-10 years?

- How does your association support the founding and/or opperation of sharing economy companies in [country]?
- Would you call the current system (legal, financial, etc.) in favor of, in opposition to, or indifferent to the founding or operation of sharing economy companies?
- Is there any legislation on the horizon in [country] which would help or hurt sharing economy companies?
- What regulatory changes would you like to see implemented to help the growth of the sharing economy in [country]?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

7.1.4 Consultants

- Have you worked with sharing economy companies in the past? If so, can you describe your experience working with these companies?
- What business structures (corporation, limited company, etc.) are available for entrepreneurs who want to start a sharing economy company in [country]?
- What are the special requirements, if any, for registering a sharing economy company in [country]?
- Are there any specific regulations or laws that limit the business activities of sharing economy companies in [country]?
- Are there any liability or insurance concerns specific to sharing economy companies operating in [country]?
- Are there any tax incentives, or disincentives, that entrepreneurs should be aware of when founding a sharing economy company in [country]?
- What are some of the biggest legal challenges that entrepreneurs face when founding a sharing economy company in [country]? Are they unique to sharing economy companies?
- Would you call the current system (legal, financial, etc.) in favor of, in opposition to, or indifferent to the founding or operation of sharing economy companies?
- Do you see any legal barriers to innovation in the sharing economy sector in [country]?
- What opportunities do you see for entrepreneurs in the sharing economy sector in [country]?
- Is there any legislation on the horizon in [country]which would help or hurt sharing economy companies?

- What regulatory changes would you like to see implemented to help the growth of the sharing economy in [country]?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

7.2 Transcripts of the interviews

7.2.1 Interview n°1 + follow-up e-mail

Transcription header

Interviewer	Johanna Osnabrügge (I)
Date of the interview	29.06.2023
Name of the interviewee	G1
Profession, role of the interviewee	Commercial director
Location for interview	Telephone
Recording device	Philips recording device
Permission for recording	Yes
Permission for usage in research purposes	Yes
Permission for personal data usage	Yes
Interview duration	0:16:55
General description of the interview flow, memorable points of discussion: Went well for a first interview.	
What went well Very clear voice on the recording, easy to transcribe. Open and talkative interview partner.	
What did not work I realized that my questions maybe were asked too broadly, I will work on that, and on follow-up questions for the next interviews. As a result, I asked follow-up questions about their legal structure via e-mail.	
Areas for further exploration:	

00:00:00
I: i would like to know if you could tell me broadly about the process of of founding your company could you tell me something about that
00:00:09
G1: well theres always like founding a company either have two options right
00:00:14
G1: either you youre faced with a problem and you want to find a solution for it or you just have this one once in a lifetime idea that nobody has thought about
00:00:24
G1: and in our in our case its been that the founders were faced with the problem on a daily base when they were back at BCG and
00:00:34
G1: faced with this massive amounts of single use containers every night when they order to the office for late night late night shifts
00:00:43
G1: and so they they grow up and and they they become dads
00:00:49
G1: and so they wanted to do something good and something lasting for the environment and also for the for the future of their children so they decided how or they were looking into systems how to get rid of it
00:01:02
G1: uhm and then we're looking at the different competitors that were already out there and different kinds of systems for borrowing borrowing items
00:01:09
G1: were talking to a lot of competitors if theres a possibility of merging

00:01:15
G1: but quite quite early in the stage of developing it they already figured that theres no such system out there thats really able to scale and make an impact on a long term on long run
00:01:29
G1: So they decided to do so they they bootstrap first
00:01:35
G1: they then quite early in the stage on only a couple of months into into the business signed up for höhle der löwen basically the german version of shark tank and
00:01:49
G1: went there only a couple of months after after drafting the company and they were at höhle der öwen with nearly nothin
00:01:58
G1: so one bowl a handful of partners live a very very shady app but apparently it was enough and they got their first funding.
00:02:08
G1: Okay
00:02:08
G1: so this is the base of of [the company] basically and this happened in, in mid 2020
00:02:16
G1: so company was registered beginning of 2020 and then beginning or mid 2020 and they went to höhle der lröwen and raised almost half a half a million which gave them the kickstart and basically start scaling the company
00:02:32
G1: and then at the end of that year they started to go into funding
00:02:37
G1: and yeah eventually raised series abeginning of last year
00:02:42
I: okay okay just writing that down real quick that already brings me to the second question because I was going to ask about resources that you called upon during the founding process so you received basically then private funding did you also receive any other like governmental support or european support or funding for like in the process
00:03:10
G1: yeah so exactly so at the beginning was so there was the gründer the Gründerfonds which supported the company basically paying salaries and the base salaries this was I would say public money.
00:03:26
G1: and then there was of course a lot of a lot of money from startup competitions, um, where, where they were able to get the trophies in and for the company.
00:03:37
G1: so there was money coming but the big ones was of course private money at the beginning and then during series a the amount of investors basically quadrupled
00:03:49
G1: and led us to three VCs on board and and a handful of private investors still in
00:03:57
I: okay yeah
00:03:59
G1: So the variety is there and now we are also looking much more into public funding and on european level on grants but so far nothing really big to be communicated.
00:04:13
I: and like that is more in the development stage and not during the funding process right like the european and the public funds that youre looking for
00:04:22
G1: well the european grants would be part of daily business now basically yea

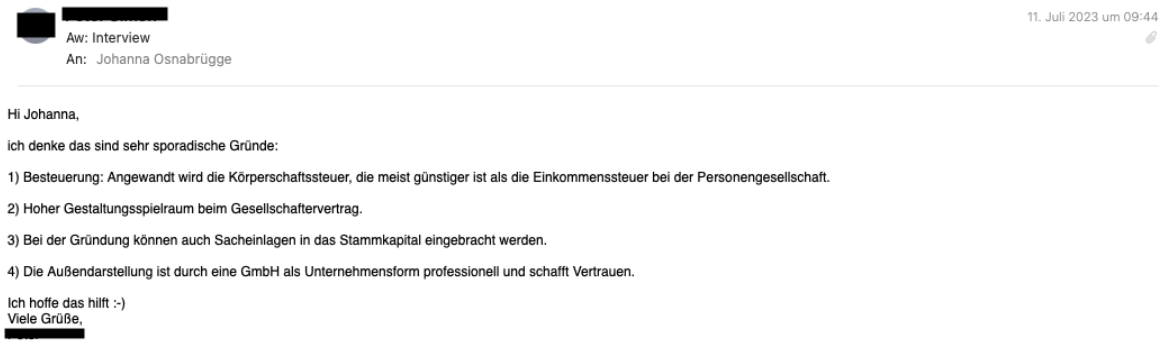
00:04:34
I: did you in any at any point during the process did you get support not necessarily financial but maybe administrative through associations or like initiatives
00:04:49
I: there is theres associations created in the past one 1 to 2 years around the system of reusables.
00:05:00
I: Hmm.
00:05:02
G1: mehrwegverband deutschland and theres a new era on european level yeah and they basically do our lobbying lobbying on a political level. So this is the support we get, but that's basically already the entire support we get.
00:05:20
I: okay okay good okay good to know nothing european okay
00:05:27
I: and that basically relates to what you just said did you encounter any challenges locating like the resources the the found the funding the support that you had you just talked about only basically two supportive associations but regarding other resources and funding did you encounter any specific challenges
00:05:50
G1: for this for this period no what we are looking into the european funds we have reached out to an external consultancy for that
00:05:59
G1: how do I say this right without deploying too much the success rate is quite low lets put it this way yeah so weve always been more successful when we go sourcing ourselves rather than reaching out to externals
00:06:16
I: Okay. Yeah, I see.
00:06:17
G1: yeah what went really well I think I missed this one we did a crowdinvesting where we reached out to our own user base
00:06:27
G1: at the end of last year and this worked out really well.
00:06:30
G1: so if you get your own existing user base to basically buy into the company and therefore having them a much more and greater interest that the company will be successful this is really a big one
00:06:44
I: yeah okay I understand
00:06:47
I: how did you decide on the business modec Can you is there any key considerations that like got into you developing or deciding on this model
00:07:01
G1: getting back to the first answer, um, when they were looking at the what's already out there, they figured that the classical deposit system won't work for reusable containers
00:07:13
G1: and when you scale and especially when you scale abroad country borders
00:07:18
I: yeah
00:07:19
G1: so this is why they decided or they were looking into other borrowing systems and quickly stumbled upon the very traditional one the library system
00:07:28
I: yeah
00:07:29
G1: and so this is why I decided on that. And why do we do non subscription fees rather than pay per use? Um, because in the long term the pay per use just pays off more.

00:07:42
I: Okay.
00:07:43
G1: right if you have like fixed fixed monthly salaries is nice but that is already where it stops. If you do the pay per use, you just need to increase the the use rate and automatically outdrive basically any subscription model.
00:07:58
G1: its tough in the beginning In the beginning the subscription model is easier but they are basically stuck at one level then while the pay per use pays out later
00:08:09
I: okay.
00:08:12
I: I saw that your you choose a specific location was that an important factor was it like a personal choice or like an administrative choice
00:08:21
G1: for the physical location you mean Germany or
00:08:26
I: in Germany I mean.
00:08:29
G1: no its well our headquarter is still in cologne and its basically where the company was founded. That's the only reason. Okay, um, no, that's actually the only reason.
00:08:40
I: Okay okay well thats good enough of an answer for me thank you
00:08:44
I: do you have information that you can give me on like sustainability practices o like, initiatives that your company employs outside of your like your normal day to day business
00:08:56
G1: Yeah basically the entire business is around sustainability
00:09:03
G1: I mean what else do we do we try that we operate our own fulfillment center so we try to be as efficient as possible there.
00:09:11
G1: and we work very closely with dhl on their sustainability goals and try to minimize basically the CO2 emissions when we do our logistics operations in the large cities we operate via cargo bikes and do our local ups via cargo bikes so we don't need to make use of freight deliveries rather than doing it via cargo bikes locally yeahI think this is the bigger ones
00:09:45
I: okay yeah do you feel like the current system be it legal financial regulatory that would you consider it in favor of or in opposition to or indifferent to the founding of a company like yours what would you say
00:10:05
G1: That you mean that the current finance climate would empower funding at the moment
00:10:13
G1: I think you need a very very strong case at the moment to even get funding Yeah and its its very tough times
00:10:23
G1: and we are we are the lucky ones that we basically hit our series a just a handful of days before the Ukraine war started last year
00:10:32
G1: And I think if it would have lasted or not one two weeks we would have not gotten the series done And and then it would be very critical about about the company already
00:10:43
G1: So we were the lucky ones and now we of course we also know that funding is not easy and so we have stretched our runway a lot really a lot by almost 12 months

00:10:56
G1: just to buy ourselves into to two more investment windows because our business basically you can only go funding twice per year
00:11:05
G1: Its at the end of the year and so basically around october november and then again in march april because we have a huge summer gap
00:11:14
I: Okay yeah
00:11:15
G1: and yeah so this gives us at least a possibility
00:11:19
G1: but looking at the funding space and what what kind of investments are being taken at the moment ithink you need to be very very lucky
00:11:28
G1: And if you have a strong name with that with a great funding record I think its still easy
00:11:34
I: Okay.
00:11:35
G1: Because they invest into your name rather than the business idea yeah
00:11:39
G1: but if your business model can prove that you have that you will run into profitability in lets say round about two three years then I think it's tricky
00:11:49
G1: I think nobody buys into business cases that will be profitable in ten 15 years
00:11:57
I: okay so that basically connects part of my new question maybe you have something more to add to that but I was wondering how you see the market for this kind of sharing projects evolving in the future
00:12:12
I: you just talked about the funding possibilities in the current system do you see do you see that developing in any in any way
00:12:22
G1: and sharing economy you mean our business model
00:12:27
I: ah yeah
00:12:28
G1: we are well convinced that its the only way moving forward
00:12:32
G1: in a couple of years there will there wont be any single use yeah
00:12:36
G1: or if there still is the tax is so high on it that people will really try to minimize the use of it and no
00:12:44
G1: so we are well convinced that the the business model itself will be there
00:12:48
G1: the question is rather which company can last and to stand until them
00:12:54
G1: it will be a we it wont be a one takes it all but most likely a two takes it all and a handful of years there wont be many players out there anymore
00:13:04
I: yeah okay
00:13:09
I: what advice would you give them given all you just told me if you can what advice would you give to other entrepreneurs that will be looking into starting a sharing economy sharing company given what you just said about the the current climate of it basically but also the key challenges of what you just told me about what did you think,what kind of advice could you could you offer
00:13:34
G1: I would say its not too late but you are already one of the later ones lets say

00:13:42
G1: theres so so many companies out there already many many failed unfortunately already but some are quite successful
00:13:52
G1: I think you need to be very specific in the beginning what part of the sharing economy you want to be part of
00:14:00
G1: Because theres companies they want to do everything and and then there's some that just focus like, let's take an ocean package they circle for example they focus on a very very simple product and just try to scale it
00:14:15
G1: and I think this is this is one that can be that can work out If you find a product thats very very simple where you don't need a huge product range to basically cover the market.
00:14:26
G1: and you find then a smart solution around it then then you should do it and then it needs to be digital
00:14:33
G1: i think everybody who still thinks that you can do analog models and will highly fail okay
00:14:40
G1: because at least when you do digital you have some proof you have your data and at the end when your company doesnt run well you at least could sell the data yeah
00:14:50
G1: you do an analog product then it becomes really tricky if people don't buy your stuff youre basically yourre stuck yeah

Follow-up e-mail (11.07.2023)


[redacted]
11. Juli 2023 um 09:44
Aw: Interview
An: Johanna Osnabrügge

Hi Johanna,

ich denke das sind sehr sporadische Gründe:

1) Besteuerung: Angewandt wird die Körperschaftssteuer, die meist günstiger ist als die Einkommenssteuer bei der Personengesellschaft.

2) Hoher Gestaltungsspielraum beim Gesellschaftervertrag.

3) Bei der Gründung können auch Sacheinlagen in das Stammkapital eingebracht werden.

4) Die Außendarstellung ist durch eine GmbH als Unternehmensform professionell und schafft Vertrauen.

Ich hoffe das hilft :-)
Viele Grüße,
[redacted]

7.2.2 Interview n°2 (Consultant C2)

Transcription header

Interviewer	Johanna Osnabrügge (I)
Date of the interview	30.06.2023
Sigle of the interviewee	C2
Profession, role of the interviewee	Lead Project and Research Manager
Location for interview	Telephone
Recording device	Philips recording device
Permission for recording	Yes
Permission for usage in research purposes	Yes
Permission for personal data usage	Yes
Interview duration	0:35:32
General description of the interview flow, memorable points of discussion: Very motivated researcher with interest in reading the thesis after it is done.	
What went well Received valuable information about the sharing economy in Germany as a whole. Was able to ask questions when I was unsure about what had been said.	
What did not work They couldn't give me too specific information about companies that were newly founded.	
Areas for further exploration Difference in support for sharing economy companies versus grassroots organizations, as explored in their research project.	

00:00:00
I: yeah these topics that you want to touch upon
00:00:02
I: Perfectly fine for me okay so the first one i had was whether youve worked with sharing economy companies in the past and if you could describe the experience with them
00:00:15
C2: mm well work with sharing organizations in the sense that we did interviews with sharing organizations
00:00:21
C2: and i dont know if you saw on our website that we also built a registry for sharing organizations the ishare atlas
00:00:29
C2: and because of that i was in contact with sharing organizations as well but we didnt consult them in the in the sense of the of this word right
00:00:39
C2: yeah okay
00:00:40
C2: but we did work with them and my experience was that many sharing organizations in particular those that are active more on the grassroots level not the not commercial platforms but rather grassroots initiatives
00:00:55
C2: what they were saying a lot is that it is really difficult to to get off the ground the organization to find initial funding or to and or perhaps find some initial funding for the first 1 or 2 years
00:01:09
C2: but then really to get some continuity into into the process was really difficult

00:01:15
C2: because in the beginning you can get some support from public authorities for instance or from other yeah Other forms like initiatives
00:01:28
C2: but really bring it taking getting some continuity with regard to funding is really difficult for them
00:01:36
C2: okay
00:01:37
C2: that was one experience another experience well there are many experiences but what do i remember Um
00:01:45
C2: another thing surely was that many grassroots initiatives were not so much not only focusing on their own initiative and organization
00:01:54
C2: but really had some bigger picture in mind you know like initiating transformation and change processes on the societal level contributing to to a movement that they perceived
00:02:07
C2: so that was something that we heard about a lot
00:02:10
C2: we also had some calls from from sharing organizations when we announced that we want to make the survey and want to measure the impact that really said
00:02:21
C2: Oh thats thats great and this will will be helpful to us because they are not able or dont have the resources to do some impact any impact measurement within the organizations
00:02:33
C2: but money lenders are donators increasingly demand for some yeah some proof that the organizations are actually contributing to the goals that they want to contribute to
00:02:50
C2: so that was an experience which yeah we were really happy to hear on the one hand because its gave us the impression that our research is also valuable and can be impactful
00:03:02
C2: yeah thats these are the i would say the the major major things
00:03:08
I: okay yeah thank you i would
00:03:12
C2: perhaps Perhaps one addition
00:03:13
C2: what we also found is that there are two i would say prototypical sharing organizations On the one hand we have these platform organizations
00:03:25
C2: and i must admit that we had much less contact with platform based organizations in particular in the early stages of the project
00:03:32
C2: the grassroots initiatives that were the other prototypical sharing organization they were much more open or also demanding for some some support and somebody to to talk to
00:03:46
C2: while platform organizations in particular the larger ones are really difficult to to get access to right
00:03:52
C2: but they are of course also smaller platforms that work rather on a non-profit or non-commercial level such as lending platforms that where you can i dont know borrow a drill from your neighbor things like that yeah

00:04:09
I: that basically brings me to the second question Now that youve described the two prototypical organization ones that youve worked with tell me if you can answer that question to that extent but the question would be what business structures are available are available or most available for people that want to start such an organization
00:04:33
C2: well we actually captured the the legal forms of all the two 2500 sharing organizations that we identified
00:04:42
C2: and we saw that roughly 20% are cooperations of some sort this oftentimes is gmbhs in germany limited liability companies few other forms but this was the dominant one for the for profit organizations for the companies
00:04:59
C2: then we had roughly i think 40 50% of nonprofit times associations and other forms of nonprofit organizations
00:05:10
C2: and we had many organizations that we describe and perceive as organizations they have ebsites or Facebook pages but they dont yet have a legal form
00:05:20
C2: so there are many initiatives out there that already work for one two three four years but not yet have developed a formal structure or founded an organization
00:05:32
C2: but we do expect and from talking to these organizations or some of them at least we would expect that they would become would have formalized structures at some point
00:05:44
C2: and we would expect that some of them would become corporations and others would rather become NGOs
00:05:50
I: okay yeah would you say there are special requirements or like for registering a company like that like be it a non-profit or a corporation
00:06:05
C2: i think some organizations or some initiators of these projects are at least not theyre not so sure type of legal form to choose
00:06:14
C2: in particular when they have a social or ecological values in particular in mind they find it difficult to find the appropriate type of organization
00:06:24
C2: so they oftentimes opt for for being just an association a verein
00:06:30
C2: this is i would say in in some regards the easiest form that they can choose
00:06:37
C2: but at the same time its the limits of course what activities they can do right and how to whether or not they can have some returns and have how they can generate income
00:06:49
C2: so there are some restrictions with regard to that
00:06:52
C2: i think with special requirements or the requirements that they have to fulfill depend rather on the industry that they want to be active in right
00:07:02
C2: i mean we have the sharing economy as i would say an umbrella concept that subsumes a large diversity of organizations that are active in very different fields or markets or industries
00:07:15
C2: and therefore it is not so easy to really say okay sharing economy organizations face all face the same requirements with legal requirements for instance

00:07:25
C2: because with that regard they really have to think more deeply about what industry do we want to be active in
00:07:32
C2: and then it is sometimes not so easy to really decide what type of organization are they
00:07:38
C2: i mean like in the case of Uber i think this is the the example that we all know
00:07:44
C2: they are a taxi company but they are also not a taxi company right so they do not have to fulfill the same requirements as traditional taxi companies because they dont employ the the drivers
00:07:59
C2: so it is of course i think still difficult or not so sure for many sharing organizations what are the legal requirements
00:08:08
C2: and many told us that it took them a lot of time to really find out what they have to what requirements they have to fulfill and then to make sure that they fulfill these requirements
00:08:17
C2: so it took a lot of time and a lot of effort and many argue that its not so easy to also find some support in early stages
00:08:28
C2: because also the consultants for for for founding a company i mean there are many out there also at universities or at public authorities
00:08:37
C2: we have startup support but its not so much theres not so much knowledge on the sharing economy either
00:08:44
C2: and they act sometimes in what is called i think gray zones with regard to regulations
00:08:53
C2: so its it can be difficult to really find out how to yeah How to establish such a company or such an organization
00:09:02
C2: perhaps with regard to the legal structures one thing i forgot is that theres also i would say a growing number of cooperatives in this field
00:09:13
C2: partly as a countermovement to the development of large platforms that are centrally organized that centralized data and centralized ownership as well and centralized decision making
00:09:27
C2: and theres a lot of criticism for instance in the case of Uber or airbnb that those who actually provide the services and provide the manpower and the workforce are not involved in decision making in any way
00:09:40
C2: and arguing that cooperatives organizational structures could help to overcome the problems that result from these not this not being involved
00:09:51
C2: there has developed a movement has developed that supports the development of cooperatives theyre not
00:09:58
C2: its still not easy because they even more faced a problem i think of having access to to financial resources
00:10:07
C2: because as a cooperative its difficult to say okay lets take an investor on board right

00:10:12
C2: and for investors its not so attractive so they face even more the problem to really get off the ground okay
00:10:21
I: so relating to that are you aware of even industry wide or market wide of liability or then insurance concerns we just talked about one of the companies with those companies operating in germany because we just talked about Uber for example
00:10:41
C2: i think in the beginning of i would say what is the right of diffusion of sharing models in 2008 or after that
00:10:49
C2: many companies in the sharing in the sharing economy surely were facing the problem that its difficult to find an appropriate insurance
00:10:57
C2: and that was in particular relevant for mobility organizations car sharing for instance
00:11:04
C2: my impression is that this has been resolved to a large extent in particular when it comes to ride sharing car sharing where you really i dont know really have to to have an insurance because a lot of things can happen right when while youre on the road Um
00:11:18
C2: i think that in insurance companies have got used to the concept of sharing organizations within the last decade
00:11:35
I: okay the question i wanted to ask specifically about laws surrounding it so like regulation or laws that would limit the business activities of such organizations are you aware of something like that
00:11:54
C2: i would say that its rather the opposite still at the moment that
00:11:59
C2: there is perhaps something like not necessarily a lack of regulations but a lack of knowledge of which regulation is relevant for which type of organizations
00:12:08
C2: or some organizations still have the possibility to take advantage of smaller regulative voids i would say
00:12:16
C2: or for of not being regulated in the same sense as other organizations that are active in the sector
00:12:23
C2: i mean airbnb here is a good example right they dont have to fulfil all the requirements that the that hotels have to fulfil
00:12:31
C2: so it can be rather easier for for sharing organizations to access a market and to become even a dominant player in the market with
00:12:43
C2: although they have very short history
00:12:48
C2: legal challenge legal challenges i would say that legal challenges are not necessarily different for for sharing organizations than for other startups
00:13:02
I: so not specific
00:13:04
C2: ah surely specific in the specific industries
00:13:08
C2: but my impression is that rather there are possibilities to take advantage of the fact that there is not so much security about which regulations do i have to fulfill
00:13:20
C2: so larger in particular larger platforms can rather take advantage of the fact that

regulation is i dont know not fluid but perhaps not so not so strict as for other as for competitors in markets
00:13:33
C2: and for social startups or for rather grassroots initiatives in this context i think that its it does matter if youre active in the sharing economy or in a in a different area
00:13:46
C2: the challenges i think are are high in the sense that its not so easy to get these organizations to work and to run on a continuous level
00:13:59
I: would you say that is limited to germany or do you think thats also more of a european
00:14:05
C2: and thats thats not limited to germany i would say
00:14:08
C2: and there is also activity on the european level with regard to what to do in particular with the large platforms
00:14:16
C2: can can we govern them better
00:14:19
C2: there is much controversial discussion about whether the the initiatives that have been taken so far on the european level are really helpful
00:14:28
C2: they are perhaps a first step towards really yeah Getting a better control of larger platforms
00:14:36
C2: there is not so much debate on on very small initiatives and rather non profit initiatives
00:14:44
C2: which rather have a more positive impact i would say in particular on local economies while larger platforms are more seen as a threat to local economies
00:14:57
C2: so i think there are the european theres much more activity on the european level also on the federal level in order
00:15:04
C2: to really make sure that the negative consequences are not so hard while supporting those that have rather a positive impact is not the priority at the moment i would say
00:15:18
I: okay
00:15:19
C2: which is a problem i think
00:15:21
I: okay yeah its not too like not too relating to that but i would like to know whether you are aware of or want to make aware of or raise awareness about like tax incentives or even disincentives that founders should be aware of when they want to start such an organization
00:15:49
C2: Hmm that i must say i dont cannot really say anything helpful to that about that
00:15:55
C2: i wouldnt think that they are particular tax incentives or disincentives for sharing economy organizations
00:16:01
C2: so thats rather will be again depending on the industry in which their organizations are active or the business model that they choose to have
00:16:10
C2: whether its a digital business model or not it might be easier to take advantage of tax incentives

00:16:17
C2: again the example of larger platforms that are have their headquarters for instance in the Us
00:16:23
C2: or they choose to have headquarter in a country with yeah more advantages taxes with a more advantages tax system
00:16:33
C2: so but this is not specific necessarily to the sharing economy this also holds for other types of platforms right
00:16:40
C2: i dont know about any particular tax incentives or disincentives in germany
00:16:44
I: yeah more generally speaking would you like the question number eight that i that i sent you i would like to know whether you would call the system be it legal or financial but the system in germany in favor of in opposition of or indifferent to founding such an organization Um
00:17:10
C2: again i think that we have to distinguish between the rather commercial platform organizations and the grassroots initiatives
00:17:20
C2: when i talk to two founders or two activists that are working for grassroots initiatives they surely dont find the current legal systems and financial systems supportive
00:17:33
C2: again its really difficult for them to get access to financial to funding while there are there is funding provided for tech startups for instance for biotech startups
00:17:44
C2: for well in general technology oriented startups
00:17:48
C2: it is much more difficult as a social startup for instance or as a sharing organization with social goals to get access to to funding
00:17:56
C2: there are smaller pots but they are as i said rather small and they dont really perceive that there is much really support
00:18:05
C2: they rather think okay theres not much attention on the on the legal or political side
00:18:10
C2: the attention focuses on the on the platforms
00:18:14
C2: for platform organizations in the sharing economy
00:18:17
C2: i do still think that there is many challenges for startups to to found an organization because perhaps the regulatory the regulatory system is not so clear
00:18:33
C2: but again i think that its they can still take advantage of some of the situation that is that it is not so clear
00:18:44
I: okay so you would in that context describe it not as a legal barrier or would you say that to the innovation this could could even be a barrier to in the in the sector in germany Um
00:19:02
C2: i would rather think it could be a barrier than than a support
00:19:07
I: okay
00:19:08
C2: but not necessarily in comparison to other countries Not necessarily that much different

00:19:15
C2: Or perhaps there are some countries like in the united kingdom for instance
00:19:19
C2: there are social bonds that are much larger and that help social enterprises sharing organizations with the social focus for instance
00:19:28
C2: to have access to funding and these types of funding possibilities
00:19:34
C2: we do not have them here or in a very in a much much smaller to a much much smaller degree right
00:19:40
I: okay
00:19:40
C2: so i think that and also in other countries like the united kingdom we also have dedicated legal forms for social enterprises that are also sharing organizations can use
00:19:52
C2: where i think i think theyre important because they are a strong signal and showing what the organization is is about
00:20:03
C2: they lead to much more visibility and recognition also in the population so i think they can be very valuable
00:20:09
C2: but we do not have these in germany
00:20:12
C2: but there is a there is a movement really trying to promote the development of a dedicated legal form
00:20:19
C2: for verantwortungseigentfor instance for the responsible ownership or for social enterprises in general
00:20:28
C2: there are several groups of activists i would say that do not necessarily work together that much
00:20:35
C2: and that would make things might make things easier to some extent
00:20:41
C2: because i think when there is a dedicated legal form then also the support structures will develop
00:20:45
C2: so there would be legal advisors for instance that have many information or that can help organizations to found and to get off the ground
00:20:56
C2: while now its again but this this this is a focus solely on the social enterprise grassroots part of the sharing economy
00:21:06
I: okay
00:21:07
C2: and i think in particular for grassroots initiatives like repair cafes community gardens perhaps local lending platforms small lending platforms
00:21:16
C2: its what i want to say now i forgot Um
00:21:26
C2: it would be it would not necessarily require to have a completely different legal system but rather to have local support structures
00:21:35
C2: this can be simple things such as when the municipality provides some rooms and spaces to these initiatives
00:21:42
C2: would be much easier for them to to try out some and experiment with their ideas and work on their ideas

00:21:49
C2: Or when the municipality provided very small funding possibilities somebody who had who would be able to work for 10 or 15 hours a week on a project
00:22:00
C2: it would be really helpful to get these things off the ground
00:22:04
C2: so its rather i think not or not necessarily the legal system but rather the really the support infrastructures
00:22:13
C2: perhaps on the federal but also on a on a local regional level that could help in particular smaller sharing organizations with the social objective
00:22:23
C2: and there are many of them out there that do not get so much visibility in the media for instance
00:22:28
C2: so theyre oftentimes forgotten
00:22:30
C2: but these are the ones that this is at least something we observe in our research that actually have a strong positive social impact
00:22:38
C2: they contribute to to the development of new social interactions new social relations in the neighborhood to strengthening the social cohesion in a neighborhood for instance
00:22:49
C2: so they do have a strong social impact but do not get much do not get much attention from from public from authorities and from the market as well
00:23:01
C2: they are rather neglected
00:23:04
I: i would like to pick up something you said just now about the groups not working together too much could you elaborate on that what do you mean exactly by that
00:23:15
C2: well sometimes when you talk about sharing economy or social enterprises or i dont know green economy post capitalism
00:23:25
C2: there are so many movements out there that somehow have or have very similar objectives right
00:23:32
C2: and i have talked to different groups and thought okay these should know each other right
00:23:39
C2: they are sometimes or oftentimes even have headquarters in the same city in berlin there are several of these groups but they are not very densely connected
00:23:48
C2: they have different focuses Of course some really focus on ecological aspects others more on social aspects again others really on the on fighting capitalism
00:23:59
C2: so they have an even bigger picture in mind
00:24:03
C2: and i think its its natural somehow that they do not know each other in early stages of the movements
00:24:10
C2: but i think it would be really helpful to to join forces and to yeah become an even an even larger movement
00:24:20
C2: and then really make sure that they get a voice right and they are heard also by political actors

00:24:26
C2: but they have slightly different objectives of course or at least different focuses in the objectives
00:24:36
C2: and probably its not so easy to give up that your focus is on social or ecological goals and you need all of them i think
00:24:45
C2: but probably it could be advantages to to really join forces to some extent okay
00:24:53
I: thank you very much would you say theres or do you feel like have you heard of legislation on the horizon that would help or even hurt sharing economy companies for example the ones who just talked about um
00:25:10
C2: i wanted to look up the names the exact names but im not i didnt do it before the interview
00:25:15
C2: but there is activity on the european level in particular to capture or to draft and better govern the activities of large platforms
00:25:24
C2: so they are i think supposed to to to report certain to make certain reports on their activities
00:25:37
C2: and there is a group i think at a european level watching these organizations and observing their development
00:25:44
C2: so this is out there and i think thats its good this is surely one aspect that that is important with regard to getting better control of the sharing economy
00:25:57
C2: but i think what is not out there i already said it before is much attention to smaller grassroots initiatives
00:26:08
C2: and perhaps legal developments of legislation that would help them to to get more attention and yeah to to develop the organizations
00:26:25
I: that brings me to the i mean almost the last question because one of the questions i would have asked but weve already talked about it would have been what regulatory changes you would like to see implemented to help those organizations get off the ground get funding get support all that if you would like to elaborate on that im im i would like to hear it otherwise
00:26:54
C2: i think theres many initiatives that have been tried out in other countries and united kingdom is surely a pioneer to some extent
00:27:04
C2: things like social bonds and im im afraid i dont know the exact vocabulary
00:27:10
C2: but theres always for instance money left in the banking system that doesnt belong to anyone or that cannot be traced anymore
00:27:18
C2: who is the owner when people die these kinds of things right
00:27:21
C2: so and this is not like a couple of thousand euros per year but really millions per year
00:27:28
C2: and in the united kingdom there are social bonds that are created out of that money that belongs to nobody
00:27:34
C2: so it doesnt hurt anybody except of the banks because before that the banks were allowed to keep it after a certain time

00:27:42
C2: but now they have developed these social bonds and social enterprises can apply for the money right
00:27:49
C2: so this would be something that could be also applied in germany and there are already concepts developed about around that
00:27:56
C2: there is this social entrepreneur entrepreneurship Network germany and they have promoted this idea a lot which i liked very much
00:28:05
C2: so i think there is already many ideas out there in other countries who have been experimenting with social enterprises for a longer time already from which germany could learn as well and develop these kinds of structures
00:28:23
C2: what and there i think also good activities Oftentimes on a local level
00:28:30
C2: where For instance in mannheim we have now a social economy cluster the municipality has introduced such a cluster
00:28:40
C2: so they have people who support social enterprises to develop their business models to get access to funding these kind of things
00:28:48
C2: and this is completely new so i dont know yet whether it is working well and how it is perceived but i think it is a good start
00:28:57
C2: you know to have somebody on the level of municipalities and authorities in general
00:29:04
C2: who is responsible for that topic and not focusing only on entrepreneurs that are active in a tech biotech whatever sector
00:29:11
C2: so this is a great i think first step and other authorities could surely learn from that
00:29:21
C2: i had yesterday a meeting with people with a group of people who are trying to revive a small villages and rural areas
00:29:35
C2: and its oftentimes 1 or 2 or several people who come together and form such an initiative
00:29:41
C2: and they talked about how it is really difficult to get support from
00:29:46
C2: in particular in the rural areas where i dont know many the mindset perhaps is even more traditional
00:29:52
C2: i mean of course not everywhere but its on average
00:29:56
C2: so they have really difficulties to just talk to the mayor and convince them that what they do is really helpful
00:30:05
C2: and it takes often times a lot of time so i think yeah
00:30:11
C2: we surely also need change of mind in with authorities how to approach the the area of social enterprises in General and and sharing organizations in particular
00:30:25
C2: i mean sharing is Not a new phenomenon right
00:30:29
C2: we have sharing structures that were much much stronger 100 or 200 years ago with machinery rings for instance

00:30:39
C2: Cooperatives have been developed 200 years ago and they were based on the idea of sharing
00:30:46
C2: so commonly using resources with something rather natural before
00:30:51
C2: in particular probably in the 1950s surely there was a strong push that owning things became yeah a signal of wealth
00:31:02
C2: not only on the individual level but also on the national level
00:31:06
C2: and this caused surely a strongly a strong change of mind on how to approach these ideas of sharing
00:31:14
C2: so i think many people still do want to own their i dont know their stuff
00:31:22
C2: although they need it just once a year
00:31:24
C2: instead of thinking about it would be much more advantageous cheaper and and easier to to rent i dont know things that i use only once a year
00:31:35
C2: but were just not used to doing that
00:31:38
C2: so i think besides the legal challenges and regulatory challenges that some organizations in the sharing economy are facing
00:31:45
C2: there is this challenge of really initiating a mind a change of mindset among the population
00:31:53
C2: i mean there has been some development within the last decade i would say
00:31:58
C2: but sustainability sharing economy these kind of topics are still rather in the niche
00:32:05
C2: so they have not yet made their way out of the niche and into a mass market or not in particular not for for those types of offerings that are made by by grassroots initiatives
00:32:21
C2: we got used to car sharing a bit more and i think a larger percentage of people is using that and perhaps the e-scooters that are out there everywhere right
00:32:30
C2: many people are using them although the impact of these organizations is really questionable
00:32:36
C2: but really i dont know not going to a repair cafe and getting having your tV repaired instead of buying a new one when it doesnt work anymore
00:32:45
C2: these are things that yeah we are very we have become very convenient in with regard to our consumption behavior and this changing this is really difficult
00:32:58
C2: but i think as important or even more important or equally important to changing laws and regulations
00:33:04
I: yeah okay thank you very much that will be all the questions for me if you have anything else you would like to add feel free
00:33:15
C2: and probably a lot but i dont know with the focus that you have in your in your work i probably dont have too much to add
00:33:24
I: i already have heard a lot of things that i will that im eager to dive into Like to incorporate

00:33:31
C2: what what we have done is survey among sharing organizations with regard to how they perceive their environment
00:33:41
C2: the legal environment was part of it and we have published a report the i-share report three you find it on our website
00:33:49
C2: where we describe the results that could be relevant for you
00:33:52
C2: but i think ive touched upon most of the things that we did that we discussed or that we talked about there

7.2.3 Interview n°3

Transcription header Interview 3

Interviewer	Johanna Osnabrügge (I)
Date of the interview	07.07.2023
Name of the interviewee	G2
Profession, role of the interviewee	Sales Lead Manager
Location for interview	BBB
Recording device	Philips recording device
Permission for recording	Yes
Permission for usage in research purposes	Yes
Permission for personal data usage	Yes
Interview duration	
General description of the interview flow, memorable points of discussion: I really liked when he talked about their convictions, and how their personal lives intertwine with the story of their company. He was able to give me background information bc he knows the founder very well.	
What went well Talk about finances and different support structures.	
What did not work Would have like to hear more about the support they received from the government.	
Areas for further exploration Comparison Stadt-Land? Difference UG GmbH and how Umstrukturierung works forsharing economy companies?	

00:00:00
I: can you tell me about the process of founding your company from the beginning to where you are right now
00:00:08
G2: yeah sure so i cant go into really exact detail because the main founder was [founder] who had the idea and who did like the first first really first steps
00:00:22
G2: but yeah obviously it all started yeah that he identified the need for our service for our product in society and
00:00:34
G2: yeah its actually really classical story because yeah he found that need in himself
00:00:39
G2: so he needed to rent something out in a new city and was really confused that he really didnt have an option to do that in this neighborhood
00:00:48
G2: and yeah then yeah some time later he wrote his bachelor thesis about [company] about our concept and after that founded the company
00:01:01
G2: and yeah obviously in the beginning it was yeah really really baby steps yeah
00:01:07
G2: you you start like talking to people really new to all the topics and everything and yeah
00:01:14
G2: then at some point you actually like go somewhere put get the money from investors stuff like that and
00:01:23
G2: actually found the company and so that people can invest in everything so thats a little bit yeah the brief concept of the whole founding

00:01:34
I: okay so you talked about investing just now about getting the money from investors if we continue talking about the funding did you receive like more public or private maybe governmental or even european funding for failing
00:01:52
G2: i think at the moment its actually fifty fifty between private so from business angels and governmental funding or government loan
00:02:04
G2: and maybe its a little bit more private business angel investing at the moment or will be more of that in the future as well
00:02:16
G2: but yeah we got like €125000 from the dbu which is deutsche bundesstiftung welt yeah
00:02:28
G2: or they gave us a grant of 125 k so yeah like we we did a lot with that money
00:02:36
G2: and yeah we also had a business angel round i think two years ago where we got like i think 100000 or 125000 also in funding
00:02:49
G2: but yeah we we are continuing to do that at the moment so that will be definitely be a bigger part in the future for our company
00:03:00
G2: but yeah at the also at the same time we are always applying like to to different interesting programs yeah of of governmental and european funding and stuff like that
00:03:15
G2: but its always really time consing and hard to to go through the whole process and to apply to to a lot of different programs
00:03:25
G2: so that was definitely more important at the beginning also as a kind of validation that we can say okay here look they they gave us a grant
00:03:36
G2: they think we are really good and and and into all of our details so thats also a really good proof for for external people and new investors and everything
00:03:48
G2: yeah but it becomes less interesting i think yeah the longer you you run your company
00:03:56
I: so just to understand that right for the beginning of the process basically it was more important and more interesting for you is that right
00:04:04
G2: yeah yeah yeah just as a proof of concept and obviously getting the money
00:04:10
G2: yeah i mean it would be highly interesting now as well but we have so many other topics
00:04:18
G2: in the beginning it was like more focused on that and yeah and now like already the focus on on finding new angel investors that fit and that want to invest money now and the current market situation is like full full part job
00:04:37
G2: so yeah its really hard to to also try to get get the support of governmental european whatsoever funding
00:04:48
G2: yeah thats thats pretty hard but we we obviously like if they have nice programs that that fit us we try to get in there as well yeah
00:04:58
I: so apart from the financial support did you have support be it administrative or anything outside of the financial part from those institutions or like maybe associations or initiatives
00:05:14
G2: so i dont know really in detail like to what extent they helped us but the ones where we like won if you can say it like that

00:05:27
G2: so yeah often its like pitch contests or like different rounds and then semi-final and final with startups whatsoever in in the end one one wins something
00:05:39
G2: so where we won for example at the dbu or big grand im pretty sure they also had expert networks and different experts and contacts to different people in the industry which which they provided to us and where they helped us
00:05:59
G2: to a certain extent yeah obviously thats a little bit more when its privately organized
00:06:08
G2: so like yeah private organized pitch events pitch contests
00:06:14
G2: yeah its often that they do the advertisement was yeah okay you can meet business angels like we have a huge network here and that whatsoever
00:06:25
G2: i think like also we got support at other programs where we were successfully yeah
00:06:37
I: okay did you while looking for those resources the ones that we just talked about did you have problems locating them or accessing them like for for the funding or just for the information around around them
00:06:57
G2: what exactly do you mean so with resources you mean money or
00:07:01
I: well no resources as in information on how to basically set up the sharing economy company and the funding so like everything surrounding the process not only the financial resources
00:07:12
G2: Right okay so and the question there was how we got the information and when or
00:07:19
I: and if you had any challenges locating them
00:07:21
G2: okay i mean like as i told in the beginning it was really good start that that [founder] wrote his bachelor thesis about [company] because there he was forced to or had to look for a lot of sources and like yeah
00:07:44
G2: putting everything together that makes sense and probably way more detailed than any startup would collect or any founder would collect information in different parts of of the sharing economy and startup life or industry hes hes founding in
00:08:01
G2: so that was really good yeah like like obviously its always hard to to find exact information or yeah especially for free like or or interviews of people of many people just for for survey or whatsoever
00:08:28
G2: so we we obviously did things there as well to to validate our own business model and our own thoughts
00:08:36
G2: we did surveys with people and everything yeah because the ones we found or the information we had were not specific enough for our case
00:08:48
G2: but i think at the moment you can find some input for the start in the sharing economy field often its sharing economy like airbnb was houses or flats and it was cars thats a lot of examples
00:09:06
G2: yeah but you can find some different ones as well to to get a brief understanding of the industry
00:09:11
G2: and yeah then if you want to go really detailed like we went like with sharing economy with things that really doesnt exist at the moment in germany

00:09:23
G2: then you have to do some own surveys and assptions as well
00:09:27
I: okay so we just talked about the fact that [founder] wrote his bachelor thesis about it can you explain to me how you decided on the business model eventually
00:09:43
G2: do you mean the whole idea or do you mean like how we earn money in our industry and what our revenue streams are or do you mean like the whole business model the whole idea and everything
00:09:55
I: yeah like how you came to the idea basically okay
00:09:59
G2: so so as i said before [founder] came to the idea from his own need actually because he moved to hamburg and he had to drive like more than an hour to the whole city to sister to rent their drill for like i dont know drilling a hole in the wall whatsoever and he had to drive like more more than an hour and just use it like like for five minutes and he was like yeah using that time
00:10:32
G2: and he thought like yeah like how can it be like all my neighbors probably have a drill and like my city in my street where where i live in the area where i live in hamburg like i can probably like knock on every door and everyone would have a drill
00:10:48
G2: like why is it that i cant rent out their drill and why is it that i have to drive an hour to my sister and then back in the hour and then the next day readable drill back the same
00:11:01
G2: so yeah thats where it all really started
00:11:05
G2: and yeah then like like when he was in a semester abroad he had entrepreneurship courses and
00:11:13
G2: he picked up that idea again or that that he had and developed it into a proper business model then wrote a special thesis about it to collect information
00:11:24
G2: validated it with surveys and everything and then actually started founding so thats like yeah from from idea to to founding start a story of [company]
00:11:36
I: okay and okay that basically brings me to the next question because i was wondering how you decided on the legal form because from what ive learned that youre a gmbh so limited liability company and i was wondering how you decided on that what were the how you weighed out your options basically if you can tell
00:11:57
G2: yeah yeah so i cant speak for [founder] here
00:12:00
I: yeah
00:12:01
G2: and during that time like i think i was already at [company] and then working with [founder] together when we
00:12:09
G2: when we did our firmierung from an ug to gmbh so so basically yeah
00:12:19
G2: from from limited to the other limited you said but but from the one you can you can found like really easy and faster and with less money
00:12:31
G2: i think like when i think about the other options its pretty clear that we chose that one especially the limited the ug in the beginning
00:12:45
G2: because i dont see like a lot of different options there

00:12:48
G2: obviously you can go way smaller and and do like an offene handelsgesellschaft or stuff like that or just gesellschaft bürgerlichen rechts a gbr
00:13:01
G2: but that is not really suitable for people who want to invest i think because its like not capital companies
00:13:10
G2: its like people companies often
00:13:15
G2: and also the other ones dont really fit and the other direction like not going smaller
00:13:22
G2: if you would have gone bigger within with a share company like with an ag that would have been like way more problematic was like yeah all the nbers and figures you have to get together at the end of the year
00:13:38
G2: so really cost intensive especially if you start really small without any money
00:13:43
G2: so i think like i dont really know another option that that is good for investors and also at the same time yeah provide the security of of a company
00:13:56
I: yeah for when you founded it was location apart from your living location was it an important factor in starting [company] in hamburg or like for example for the resources that you can gather from the state of hamburg you know that sort of thing
00:14:12
G2: uh i think it would have been a more interesting question if [founder] would have lived somewhere else
00:14:17
G2: yeah because obviously that that plays a really important role what you say and especially for our idea because we are like for us community is really important
00:14:29
G2: and its not like a physical product that you ship somewhere and you say okay i dont care if like just one customer lives in this area or 100
00:14:38
G2: like the shipment is the same and everything and i earned money
00:14:41
G2: but for us its truly important because yeah people where they want to share together its really important that they are close to each other and that like all items are like in a special location
00:14:53
G2: and theyre obviously like the big cities like munich berlin hamburg cologne frankfurt like like these five for example are really important target cities
00:15:03
G2: and also like business angel clubs accelerator programs talking to other entrepreneurs all that kind of stuff is obviously way more developed in a city like hamburg
00:15:16
G2: so thats a really important factor i think yeah he didnt really consider all these factors because he was living in hamburg anyway
00:15:25
G2: yeah so it was clear to him to to to found the company there but i think yeah prospectively watching on it it was really good that he was living there that we are currently operating in hamburg
00:15:42
I: okay i read about your your different blogs like what you talk about for your values or just tips that you give out to lenders and and renters and i was wondering if in your company you have some specific sustainability practices or initiatives that you employ apart from you know offering the the sharing economy platform

00:16:08
G2: yeah so good good point that you make there because thats probably the biggest sustainability practice that we
00:16:18
G2: that we do or that we tell ourselves that we do like forming the sharing economy
00:16:24
G2: and obviously we are renting out a lot of stuff and we are like heavily users of our own product
00:16:31
G2: so im renting out like so much stuff and i dont buy it for example or rent it out to other people so so thats a big point
00:16:41
G2: and then we are we are like not really or we are not big enough that you can talk about like policies that we make in our company for that or kind of that stuff
00:16:53
G2: and we are also like really focusing because we are burning a lot of money we have to focus on that side
00:16:59
G2: but we are we are really vision driven by by our company and the sustainable part thats really important for us
00:17:06
G2: so obviously you see that in our company culture as well
00:17:10
G2: so [founder] and me for example we live in the office also together and we like nearly completely vegan sometimes vegetarian but like we never eat meat which is in my opinion pretty sustainable yeah yeah
00:17:30
G2: and some other stuff i would have to think about it at the moment yeah thats fine yeah yeah like its not really that we think about it and say okay yeah
00:17:42
G2: its company policies and stuff like that because we are a little bit too small for that at the moment
00:17:47
G2: ! but obviously like our personalities form the company culture and thats quite sustainable one in my opinion yeah
00:17:57
I: just writing that down so i dont lose it
00:18:01
G2: was that a good sentence
00:18:03
I: i really liked it no i think its i think its very interesting how you how you phrase it i mean i guess you live it that way too but that your personality is formed the company culture i think is how do i say it true yeah i mean it fits it fits the idea of sharing economy in my opinion if its a if its a sustainable idea from the get go then i think it only makes sense that you live through it as well so you know
00:18:30
G2: yeah
00:18:33
I: okay on to the next question its more about the the system that you operate in that your business model wants to survive in basically would you call the current system be it legal financial the system in general in favour of in opposition to or indifferent to the founding or operation of of a sharing economy company what do you think
00:18:56
G2: so i would answer that like with not doing like huge system critics and not saying oh yeah like capitalism is wrong or something like that because then we can talk for 2 hours or 3 hours
00:19:11
G2: so i will try to answer the question in the actual real framework that we have

00:19:17
G2: so like my assption is that obviously capitalism will will stay and and and we will still remain a democracy but stuff like that
00:19:28
G2: but then you can say that that like if you really go into detail that like especially legal system is not really made for sharing economies
00:19:42
G2: i think there have been some changes especially in the markets in the sharing economy that yeah that have developed really good in the last years
00:19:52
G2: so im pretty sure that that the politics have made a lot of changes in the sharing economy of flats and and stuff like that because airbnb is becoming so big or became so big over the last years
00:20:09
G2: but in general like there are some legal barriers
00:20:16
G2: so if you want to share things so for example you have like a tax tax rate or like i think its at or like like i think €200 or something like that
00:20:31
G2: until then you dont have to pay taxes if you rent out stuff but from there on and you have and i think that that diese grenze so to say it its quite low and not really made for for todays wishes or or things we need
00:20:55
G2: so i think comes from a time where people like when no one really shared and if they did like they did it once or twice and so yeah it didnt really bother most people
00:21:08
G2: but yeah nowadays as you can see in our business model people want to share with each other
00:21:14
G2: so yeah i think the political system needs to make it as easy as possible
00:21:21
G2: and also for example if i buy myself something which i want to rent out from the beginning on and i plan to maybe make money with it i have to found not a company but like kleingewerbe i have to register that and stuff like that
00:21:39
G2: so yeah there are some barriers especially for private people
00:21:46
G2: and we see that because like we especially focus on the private people because we think thats the most sustainable way
00:21:55
G2: because if we just like do like other companies and just have like business customers at our platform that rent out stuff
00:22:03
G2: most of them buy their stuff newly and and things like that and they dont really reach like people that dont live in a city and and there are a lot of different things
00:22:14
G2: so for us its really important that the private people can participate on both sides and also rent out their stuff
00:22:24
G2: because they already own so many things that are already produced which which dont have yeah
00:22:31
G2: so we dont have to emit new emissions just to produce the things they already own them and yeah
00:22:39
G2: we think that would be really sustainable and obviously hope that or want that that its as easy as possible

00:22:48
G2: but obviously that part doesnt really have a lobby and the whole sharing economy doesnt really really have have a lobby in the politics
00:22:57
G2: but i think there will be like huge changes in the next few years because yeah most sharing economies are identified classified whatsoever for making their industry where theyre operating in like way more efficient and more resource efficient time efficient whatsoever
00:23:19
G2: and yeah that is also that is always really important like for for getting emissions down and being environmentally more friendly
00:23:33
G2: so i think in the sharing economy and especially on the legal side they will they will have a lot of stuff in the in the next 5 to 10 years
00:23:43
I: way to answer my next question as well that would have been for the for the future basically so that works really well i was also like wondering like picking up what you just said that its for you the most sustainable concept to for example to connect p2p basically do you feel like theres been changes in the the publics perception and usage of the sharing economy
00:24:10
G2: so i mean most concepts in the sharing economy are still b to c so for business to customers you just have to say like that
00:24:22
G2: like p2p happens in some markets but like its not really the dominant type of sharing economy
00:24:31
G2: so most of the time like if i think about sharing economy i always have to think about airbnb but this partly p2p but also a huge part is b2c
00:24:43
G2: because like now just huge lenders just use airbnb as well to to rent out their million dollar plus houses or big companies yeah so that is
00:24:58
G2: theres also huge b2c business on their platform which is not necessarily bad like not not at all because that also provides the p2p aspect which is really important in my opinion
00:25:13
G2: so you can also participate on the supply side as a private person if you want to
00:25:22
G2: but like most most other sharing economies i think about are like car sharing which is really typical they are all also p2p sharing companies in the market
00:25:33
G2: but most of them are like b2c so miles share now and everything yeah and a lot lot of mobility sharing is is b2c
00:25:43
G2: so i think yeah a lot lot of these companies in the sharing economy are b 2 c and not most of them are p2p
00:25:52
G2: now now now i forgot the pointe like like the starting question of yours the to go
00:25:59
I: the societal change or lack thereof in regards with regards to
00:26:04
G2: the change in society so obviously my opinion its a bigger change like or i see that most customers of ours or people i talk to have a bigger barrier to lend out stuff than just renting it out so so being a supplier
00:26:27
G2: which is not not not really a big problem because like we have one drill on the supply side can obviously supply more people than just one guy or girl on the demand side
00:26:40
G2: so its okay if not everyone wants to lend their things away

00:26:44
G2: but but yeah i think there happened something
00:26:47
G2: i think like the step is not so big to to to do it in the b2b market or to in the b2c market to use the sharing economy
00:26:56
G2: so to use a miles to get from a to b to book a hotel room or a small flat over airbnb stuff like that i think the barrier there is not as big as saying okay im renting out my flat or my car or like my things on on our platform
00:27:17
G2: thats a bigger step
00:27:18
G2: but i also see it on on a personal stage like with friends and everything
00:27:25
G2: that they also made through changes and that some of them are now renting away stuff on our platform which they didnt want to do half a year ago or a year ago
00:27:38
G2: so i can i can see it like with friends
00:27:42
G2: and on a personal level obviously its a little bit biased because i tell a lot about our startup and obviously do good advertisement
00:27:52
G2: but but i think society actually changes there
00:27:56
G2: and what is really interesting for me or really good point is that most of the people see the good impact from start away
00:28:05
G2: so they have some concerns some areas which obviously we need to fight
00:28:11
G2: but most of the people that i talk to and that i yeah just pitch our idea really see the sustainable impact and the good impact on society that we can create with that
00:28:26
G2: and i think thats a good foundation for for building up on that and for getting everyone in the boat to to participate
00:28:35
I: okay thank you basically one of my last questions would be again on the entrepreneurial side whether you would have advice that you would give out to others in hamburg or just other german entrepreneurs in general that are looking into starting a sharing company
00:28:55
G2: a sharing company okay okay thats specific okay yeah
00:29:01
I: like if if people that would want to found a company like yours like with the with the same ideals for example what advice you could give
00:29:11
G2: so so so for people who want to found the same like ours i would say dont do it
00:29:17
G2: because this is our market share now no no like like yeah i think in general you can you can say or one of the best advice is just do it like
00:29:35
G2: i dont know if it is more important for ideas from the sharing economy or more important for other ideas
00:29:43
G2: but but in the end you need to do it and and you need to get your as up and and stop thinking about all the different good things you can do with it and nice features you can build and customers you can like you can get on your platform or whatever
00:30:02
G2: and like at some point you just need to to to start doing it yeah
00:30:09
G2: i mean like sharing economies often or sharing companies often rely on on their community or like on regular users

00:30:26
G2: and in our case or in airbnb or in uber case also rely on the supply side that that the people or the customers also fill out that site
00:30:41
G2: so thats definitely like important to to to to think about if you start your company and and in the way you you start it
00:30:55
G2: so yeah if that is important to you or you have like p2p yeah things like airbnb or like we do
00:31:04
G2: but us you really need to think about your community building and really need to think about how to to to kick boost your supply so that like the customers you you reach out to you with marketing
00:31:21
G2: yeah ah like like then yeah can can get supply on on your website so thats yeah a big challenge for a lot of sharing companies
00:31:35
G2: and obviously like we are talking here about quite innovative new business models that maybe someone did before in a different version or in another country or tried whatsoever
00:31:49
G2: but but most of the time its innovative products so yeah there for for for that situation you can give like so many advice
00:32:00
G2: but in the end you need to start and and you need to get going and try to to move the market with your ideas yeah so i think that would be the most important points
00:32:15
G2: yeah
00:32:16
I: thank you very much that brings me to the end of my questions uh would you like to share anything else that i maybe havent talked about questions that i might have missed that you would want to talk about
00:32:31
G2: i think in the end i can just say that that is really a lot of fun to to work in the sharing economy or or especially in my case at [company]
00:32:46
G2: yeah its just really big because like because im i love the vision so much or i share the vision the same vision and i see the impact the sustainable one and i see where that goes in the future
00:33:03
G2: it is just like so motivating to to to work on the problems to go the extra miles to do the extra hours to to to put in more effort
00:33:17
G2: and it doesnt really feel like work it feels like yeah love project like like like a small child youre working on and and raising
00:33:26
G2: so thats what i love about impact impact entrepreneurship or impact founding especially the sustainable side of it
00:33:37
G2: and i think a lot of sharing economy companies have the potential to to change a lot in the sustainable way as well
00:33:47
G2: and yeah like people working there then also might might have the option to to feel the same like i do to be really inspired by the work to to love what they do
00:34:02
G2: and yeah i hope other people in the sharing economy feel the same way or the people will found start ups in the future in the sharing economy will create the same because its really powerful

00:34:16
G2: yeah and we definitely did that at [company] thats why im also yeah really positive that that we will be successful in the future because we are like all so motivated by our vision
00:34:29
G2: yeah and other people as well working with us together so motivated by us and our vision and inspired that i think yeah this will really work out
00:34:40
G2: and thats thats the really important part which should never be underestimated like yeah inspiring people and getting everyone in the boat
00:34:53
I: okay wonderful thank you very much thats all from from my side thanks again for the input

7.2.4 Interview n°4

Transcription header Interview 4

Interviewer	Johanna Osnabrügge (I)
Date of the interview	17.07.2023
Name of the interviewee	F1
Profession, role of the interviewee	CEO
Location for interview	Telephone
Recording device	Philips recording device
Permission for recording	Yes
Permission for usage in research purposes	Yes
Permission for personal data usage	Yes
Interview duration	00:05:01
General description of the interview flow, memorable points of discussion: The interviewee started with saying that she doesn't have much time, did not go into much detail. I was under the impression that she didn't understand all the questions I had asked her. It was a rather short interview.	
What went well French a bit rusty, other interviews done in English, otherwise okay.	
What did not work Very short and hardly satisfying. Asked me to ask questions I didn't have enough answers for yet instead of asking all of them again after sending the work sheet.	
Areas for further exploration Singles out her experience as a solo entrepreneur, could be interesting for further research on gender differences in the sharing economy.	

00:00:04
I: okay je vais juste voir où je voulais avoir des précisions alors pour la deuxième question par exemple je vous ai demandé à quelles ressources vous avez fait appel et vous avez dit que vous en avez pas appel à des fonds pour la création de l'entreprise que vous avez fait ça avec vos propres fonds c'est bien ça
00:00:25
F1: exactement c'est ça
00:00:27
I: et je me suis demandé si vous avez reçu peut être de l'aide administrative dans votre démarche
00:00:34
F1: non non non non non non non j'ai vraiment fait tout toute seule
00:00:38
I: ok très bien ok très bien après pour la ce qui est la numéro quatre pour les difficultés que vous avez rencontrées ou pas dans la recherche des ressources ou des financements vous avez dit que vous avez vous même vous êtes rapproché de des structures par exemple la cci est ce que c'était la seule la seule structure à laquelle vous avez demandé de l'aide
00:01:12
F1: alors je me suis rapproché de la bpi aussi ils ont dit c'était une trop jeune entreprise
00:01:17
F1: ils m'ont orienté vers un autre des autres organismes que j'ai pas eu le temps de faire de m'orienter aussi

00:01:26
F1: la bpi comme je vous ai expliqué dans mes réponses enfin il y a une levée de fonds qui va peut être être fait
00:01:33
F1: j'ai rdv à la fin de la semaine avec une société qui peut être intéressé pour une levée de fonds
00:01:38
F1: donc je suis en train de voir le compte reparti tout ce que ça engage quoi
00:01:44
I: et pour ces ces différentes ressources ou même pour la cci est-ce que c'était propre à l'économie de partage c'était juste pour juste entre guillemets pour la création de l'entreprise
00:01:57
F1: toujours pour le propre pour [company] pour la société de partage oui
00:02:03
I: et pour est-ce que les différentes informations que vous avez reçu c'était comment demander on demande alors oui pour [company] mais est-ce que c'était toujours avec alors faut que je réfléchisse un peu quand
00:02:27
F1: vous avez le temps cherchez vos mots
00:02:30
I: je me demande si les entreprises ou les organismes que vous qui qui ont aidé dans cette démarche est-ce que les ressources qu'ils vous ont donné c'était dans l'esprit de l'économie de partage ou c'était plus généralement
00:02:47
F1: non non c'était c'était propre à l'entité de la société aujourd'hui
00:02:54
I: et est-ce que vous avez reçu des des recommandations pour le modèle d'entreprise ou comme
00:03:02
F1: c'est la vision clairement c'est moi qui qui ait travaillé ca qui fait la démarche
00:03:09
I: et vous êtes toujours seule la sasu
00:03:13
F1: c'est toujours une sasu c'est une société
00:03:15
F1: je toujours fondatrice et présidente de la société ou pour l'instant 100 % président et pour l'instant 100% fondatrice pour l'instant en fait
00:03:26
F1: j'ai voulu expliquer la description c'est c'est là que j'ai fait tout tout seul pas le site internet parce que c'était un petit peu particulier
00:03:35
F1: moi je sais coder mais pas ça c'est particulier un peu de système de petites annonces
00:03:41
F1: donc là j'ai fait appel à une agence web à paris mais sinon non non non tout le reste avec nos petits bras
00:03:53
I: pour la question numéro neuf pardon je l'ai pas traduit je suis désolé c'est juste c'était un peu pouvoir votre votre vision du système entre guillemets du marché si c'est favorable défavorable ou un peu neutre envers les entreprises de l'économie de partage
00:04:15
F1: moi je dirais que c'est plutôt favorable parce que de plus en plus de société ça marche plus que porteur
00:04:21
F1: de plus en plus de gens se tourne vers le marché écoresponsable du circulaire et anti gaspillage

00:04:30
F1: donc oui plus en plus de gens qui d'acheter pour un ou deux usages
00:04:36
F1: du coup l'économie de partage est favorable dans le mode où on vit surtout avec l'inflation et l'économie qui va pas fort quoi
00:04:47
I: et ça ça a aussi répondu à ma question numéro dix et et normalement je ne vois pas d'autres questions

7.3 Answered work sheets

7.3.1 Consultant C2

Work sheet for consultants (English, Germany)

1. Have you worked with sharing economy companies in the past? If so, can you describe your experience working with these companies?

yes, I work as a startup consultant which includes concepts of sharing economies

2. What business structures (corporation, limited company, etc.) are available for entrepreneurs who want to start a sharing economy company in Germany?

same legal structures as for regular companies

3. What are the special requirements, if any, for registering a sharing economy company in Germany?

none

4. Are there any specific regulations or laws that limit the business activities of sharing economy companies in Germany?

not that I am currently aware of

5. Are there any liability or insurance concerns specific to sharing economy companies operating in Germany?

yes, depending on the setup

6. Are there any tax incentives, or disincentives, that entrepreneurs should be aware of when founding a sharing economy company in Germany?

capitalistic growth is strongly encouraged through taxation laws and existing structures, thus being disadvantageous for “true” sharing economy business models

7. What are some of the biggest legal challenges that entrepreneurs face when founding a sharing economy company in Germany? Are they unique to sharing economy companies?

that there is no advantage or benefit in doing something “good” over maximizing profits which makes sharing just as disadvantageous as any social and sustainable business model atm

8. Would you call the current system (legal, financial, etc.) in favor of, in opposition to, or indifferent to the founding or operation of sharing economy companies?

the current system of capitalistic growth encourages maximizing personal gain and company growth via profits and spending money – thus intrinsically being in opposition of any type business trying to achieve mostly social and sustainable factors (which includes “true” sharing companies)

9. Do you see any legal barriers to innovation in the sharing economy sector in Germany?

see question 8 + liability issues, taxation issues, complex regulatory laws and regulations are all barriers – also because there aren’t enough sharing companies big enough to encourage change because of answer #8

10. What opportunities do you see for entrepreneurs in the sharing economy sector in Germany?

plenty IF they have enough money in their pockets to actually achieve systematic change that would benefit the social/ sustainable sector as a whole

11. Is there any legislation on the horizon in Germany which would help or hurt sharing economy companies?

there have been talks for two years or so of introducing legal business frameworks for social businesses- I’m still waiting for that to happen- same in financing and tax benefits

12. What regulatory changes would you like to see implemented to help the growth of the sharing economy in Germany?

make doing actual good attractive through legislation and taxation and making the rest more unattractive

13. Is there anything else you would like to add?

when I state “true” sharing economy, I do not meen FreeNow and AirBnB – I mean the actual sharing type company with a social/ sustainable/ c2c intention

7.3.2 Company F1

Interviews with company founders/leadership (French)

1. Pouvez-vous me parler brièvement du processus de création de votre entreprise ?
   Tout est partie d'une émission économique en juillet 2017.
   J'ai travaillé après les différentes étapes cahiers de charges fonctionnel et technique, étude de marché, le design de plateforme web (ux design) création statut etc..
   Tout cela jusqu'en 2022

2. À quelles ressources avez-vous fait appel lors de la création de votre entreprise ? Avez-vous bénéficié d'un soutien ou d'un financement public, privé, gouvernemental ou européen ? Si oui, pouvez-vous décrire le processus et la manière dont il a aidé votre entreprise ? Je n'ai pas fait appel à des fonds pour la création d'entreprise pour Dubblezen . C'était avec mes fonds propre je travaillais à coter

3. Avez-vous reçu le soutien d'autres associations ou initiatives publiques, privées, gouvernementales ou européennes ? oui BGE des Yvelines (pépinières) mais pas très utile car la base avait déjà faite en amont.

4. Avez-vous rencontré des difficultés pour trouver ou accéder à des ressources ou à des financements pour votre entreprise ? Si oui, pouvez-vous décrire ces difficultés et la manière dont vous les avez surmontées ? Je demande seulement. je me suis rapprochée de LA CCI (chambre de commerce et d'industrie à Versailles. Sinon très difficile à trouver. Dernièrement une levée de fond est envisagée

5. Comment avez-vous choisi un modèle d'entreprise ? Quelles ont été les principales considérations lors de l'élaboration de ce modèle ? il est basé sur l'e-Commerce avec des petites annonces.

6. Comment avez-vous choisi la forme juridique de votre entreprise ? Pourquoi avez-vous opté pour la forme finale ? Sasu car je l'ai créé seul sans hésitation

7. La localisation a-t-il été un facteur important dans la création de votre entreprise ? oui, je l'ai installé dans une ville nouvelle des Yvelines (saint Quentin en Yvelines)

8. Pouvez-vous décrire certaines des pratiques ou initiatives spécifiques en matière de développement durable mises en œuvre par votre entreprise ? J'ai pris des

engagements RSE en trois points : [redacted]

9. Would you call the current system (legal, financial, etc.) in favor of, in opposition to, or indifferent to the founding or operation of sharing economy companies? Oui, complètement. Je vérifie les propositions pour les levées de fond (origine, pays etc …)ou les personnes qui veulent être mon associé.

10. Comment voyez-vous l'évolution du marché de l'économie de partage à l'avenir ? le marché est prometteur dans ce secteur. Pensez-vous que cette évolution sera favorisée ou combattue par le système actuel ? il sera favorisé car c'est devenu écoresponsable et un acteur économique pour mieux consommer. De plus c'est un outil anti-gaspillage.

11. Quels conseils donneriez-vous à d'autres entrepreneurs désireux de créer une entreprise de partage ? Quels sont les principaux défis qu'ils devraient être prêts à relever et comment peuvent-ils les surmonter ? bien connaitre le marché et ne pas compter ces heures …. Et aimer ce qu'il fait

12. Y a-t-il autre chose que vous aimeriez partager au sujet de votre entreprise ou de votre expérience en tant qu'entrepreneur durable dans l'économie du partage ? Quand on a un objectif en tête, il faut travailler à fond. En effet, beaucoup de personnes ont pensé et pensent encore que j'ai un associé (homme) alors que j'ai fait tout seule (sauf le site, car je ne connais pas ce type de codage) Les femmes peuvent et doivent entreprendre seul, la notion de partage est plus inscrit dans nos gênes je pense.

7.3.3 Company F2

Interviews with company founders/leadership (French)

1. Pouvez-vous me parler brièvement du processus de création de votre entreprise ?

   J'ai créé [redacted] suite à mon Master 2. C'était à la base un projet de fin d'étude en groupe pour valider le Master suite à quoi nous avons eu l'opportunité d'intégrer l'incubateur de l'école.

2. À quelles ressources avez-vous fait appel lors de la création de votre entreprise ? Avez-vous bénéficié d'un soutien ou d'un financement public, privé, gouvernemental ou européen ? Si oui, pouvez-vous décrire le processus et la manière dont il a aidé votre entreprise ?
   [redacted] a bénéficié d'un soutien de 2 incubateurs dont un parisien qui, en plus d'un soutien d'experts dans leurs domaines, offrait également un bourse financière pour participer au développement de l'entreprise.

3. Avez-vous reçu le soutien d'autres associations ou initiatives publiques, privées, gouvernementales ou européennes ?
   Non

4. Avez-vous rencontré des difficultés pour trouver ou accéder à des ressources ou à des financements pour votre entreprise ? Si oui, pouvez-vous décrire ces difficultés et la manière dont vous les avez surmontées ?

   Personnellement je trouve qu'il est compliqué de trouver des financements et surtout à quel type de financement nous avons le droit. La CCI comme différents organismes sont la pour nous aider et nous expliquer mais nous restons trop souvent dans le flou et les démarches paraissent très lourdes pour peu de résultats ce qui est décourageant.

5. Comment avez-vous choisi un modèle d'entreprise ? Quelles ont été les principales considérations lors de l'élaboration de ce modèle ?
   J'ai tout simplement fait appel à mon réseau de coach juridique grâce aux incubateurs pour pouvoir créer l'entreprise et la déposer officiellement (INPI, juriste, etc.)

6. Comment avez-vous choisi la forme juridique de votre entreprise ? Pourquoi avez-vous opté pour la forme finale ?
   Il me l'a tout simplement conseillé et n'ayant pas de connaissance dans ce domaine je me suis renseigné et cela semblait cohérent.

7. La localisation a-t-il été un facteur important dans la création de votre entreprise ?
   Etant une entreprise exclusivement en ligne, la localisation n'a pas été un souci. Il suffit juste de penser long terme donc cela nécessite une adresse de siège social stable.

8. Pouvez-vous décrire certaines des pratiques ou initiatives spécifiques en matière de développement durable mises en œuvre par votre entreprise ?
   L'engagement environnement et sociétal de [redacted] fait partie intégrante de l'ADN de la marque. Je ne souhaitait pas créer de nouveaux produits sachant tout ce qu'il existe déjà. [redacted] mise sur l'existant pour proposer une offre de location. C'est en colctant les invendus et fins de collection des grandes marques de prêt à porter bébé que [redacted] propose des box de vêtements à la location. Cette économie circulaire participe donc à préserver notre environnement notamment grâce à la location qui offre plusieurs vies à chaque vêtement. Notamment quand on sait que les bébés grandissent très très vite et ont à peine le temps de porter leurs habits.
   À la fin de chaque cycle, chaque vêtement fait l'objet d'une vérification qualité avant de repartir en circulation et lorsque nous jugeons qu'il n'est plus de qualité, nous en faisons don à des associations pour de l'upcycling ou les gens dans le besoin. Ainsi nous optimisons chaque produit.

9. Would you call the current system (legal, financial, etc.) in favor of, in opposition to, or indifferent to the founding or operation of sharing economy companies?

10. Comment voyez-vous l'évolution du marché de l'économie de partage à l'avenir ? Pensez-vous que cette évolution sera favorisée ou combattue par le système actuel ?
    Je pense que cette évolution sera favorisée et qu'il sera indispensable pour chaque entreprise d'y penser sans quoi elles ne seront pas attractives aux yeux de la société de consommation.

11. Quels conseils donneriez-vous à d'autres entrepreneurs désireux de créer une entreprise de partage ? Quels sont les principaux défis qu'ils devraient être prêts à relever et comment peuvent-ils les surmonter ?
    Il s'agit de bien s'entourer notamment avec des personnes un peu plus pointu sur ce sujet. Je conseille à tout le monde d'être curieux, les évolutions vont vite, il faut aussi regarder ce qu'il se fait déjà, ce qu'il se prépare, les tendances qui se dessinent (anticipation) et aller regarder ce qu'il se fait à l'étranger.

12. Y a-t-il autre chose que vous aimeriez partager au sujet de votre entreprise ou de votre expérience en tant qu'entrepreneur durable dans l'économie du partage ?

En créant une entreprise à forte valeur durable et en communiquant dessus, nous prenons aussi le risque d'écarter une partie des consommateurs. Il faut savoir mettre le curseur au bon endroit pour attirer l'intégralité de notre cible.

7.4 Company profiles

F1: The first French company is a SASU (société par actions simplifiée à associé unique). As such, the solitary chairman is responsible for all his or her actions, which may give rise to civil or criminal liability. Their NAF code, a code for a company's main activity provided by the French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), is registered as "Portails internet" (Internet portals) (6312Z), their social capital set at 100,00 EUR. The company provides a platform that is dedicated to rentals for B and C level consumer, with a rental duration that can last anywhere between 1 day, 1 weekend, 1 week or 1 month. Users can post one or several rental ads. It's open to both professionals and private individuals. Their portal is divided into 19 sections, and further offers a directory of rental agencies. It was created in 2022 and consists of one employee in addition to the founder.

F2: The second French company is also a SASU (société par actions simplifiée à associé unique). Their code NAF is registered as "Location et location-bail d'autres biens personnels et domestiques" (Rental and leasing of other personal and household goods) (7729Z). Their share capital was registered at 5,000 EUR. They offer a subscription service for children's clothing aimed at the end consumer. Their rental boxes of clothes are sent out to the subscribers every 3 months. The company offers a destocking solution for brands in the baby clothing market. Based on unsold and dormant stock from carefully selected brands, the boxes offer and extend the life of items that are not consumed. Once returned from the customer, the branded items in the boxes are checked by the company's own quality department. If all the criteria are met, they are sent off to a new customer. If an item is found to not be in a good enough to be passed on, it will be donated to a charity. The company was created in 2022 and has a sole employee.

G1: The first German company is a GmbH from Cologne that provides the development, consulting, and distribution of sustainable and intelligent packaging solutions to reduce disposable packaging and plastic waste as well as the associated technologies and applications. Founded in 2019 in Cologne, they offer their system partners (restaurateurs, company caterers, student unions, food merchants and delivery services) reusable packaging as a system solution. As their users, end consumers can thus avoid packaging waste. In addition, they operate an online platform for their reusable system, which can be used via the user app and the partner app. They are registered in the trade register as a GmbH with a share capital of 61,238,00 EUR.

First registered in 2020, they started with a starting capital of 25,000 EUR. The company has three directors, and currently about 70 employees.

G2: The second German company is a GmbH (Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung) from Hamburg with one executive director. They offer a sharing economy platform that acts as an intermediary between private individuals (P2P) and between private individuals and companies (B2C). It is possible for registered users to either sell or rent their items. The company recently extended their business to other lending businesses that would want to offer their products on their website. The platforms allow for users to share between strangers in safe transaction, using mandatory verification with ID document and face scan, an insurance that covers transactions on the platform up to 15,000 EURand their own payment system. The company was originally founded as a UG (haftungsbeschränkt) with a starting capital of 200 EUR in 2017, then joined with a struggling GmbH from Berlin. The new GmbH started with an increased starting capital of 25,000 EUR, as decided by the shareholder's meeting amending the Articles of Association. They currently employ 15 workers.

7.5 Audio recording consent form

Einwilligungserklärung Interview

Ich erkläre hiermit mein Einverständnis zur Nutzung der personenbezogenen Daten, die im Rahmen des folgenden Gesprächs erhoben wurden:

- *Date and time*
- *Interviewerin: Johanna Osnabrügge, M.A. Regionale und Europäische Projektentwicklung*
- *Masterarbeit zum Thema „Support of the Sharing Economy in France and Germany"*
- *University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice*
- *Prof. Dr. Eva Cudlínová*

Die Daten werden im Rahmen eines telefonischen Gesprächs erhoben, das mit einem Aufnahmegerät aufgezeichnet wurde. Zum Zwecke der Datenanalyse werden die mündlich erhobenen Daten verschriftlicht (Transkription), wobei die Daten anonymisiert werden. Eine Identifizierung der interviewten Person ist somit ausgeschlossen.

Kontaktdaten, die eine Identifizierung der interviewten Person zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt ermöglichen würden, werden aus Dokumentationsgründen in einem separaten Schriftstück lediglich den Gutachter*innen der wissenschaftlichen Ausarbeitung zur Verfügung gestellt. Nach dem Abschluss des Projekts (05.10.2023) werden diese Daten gelöscht.

Der Speicherung der personenbezogenen Daten zu Dokumentationszwecken kann durch die interviewte Person jederzeit widersprochen werden. Die Teilnahme an dem Gespräch erfolgt freiwillig. Das Gespräch kann zu jedem Zeitpunkt abgebrochen werden. Das Einverständnis zur Aufzeichnung und Weiterverwendung der Daten kann jederzeit widerrufen werden.

_____

Vorname und Name in Druckbuchstaben

_____

Unterschrift

_____

Datum, Ort

7.6 Table 5: Content of webpages presented in the results in chapter 4.1

	France		Germany	
Theme	Name	Link	Name	Link
Gov. support	MEFIDS: Éclairage, Vie-publique	https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/19381-leconomie-collaborative-un-nouveau-modele-socio-economique	Bundestag: "Sharing Economy" und Wirtschaftspolitik	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/publikationen/-sharing-economy-und-wirtschaftspolitik-727734
	Entreprendre: Créer une entreprise	https://formalites.entreprises.gouv.fr/	Deutscher Bundestag. Aktueller Begriff Sharing Economy	https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/377486/21fc4300787540e3881dbc65797b2cde/sharing-economy-data.pdf
	Synthèse des mesures en faveur des structures de l'ESS	https://www.economie.gouv.fr/files/files/2020/20201216-Mesures-de-soutien-ESS.pdf?v=1690279204).	Deutscher Bundestag (2016). Sharing Economy. Dokumentation WD 5 – 3000 – 027/16. *Wissenschaftliche Dienste*.	https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/422762/dba2f255d095bec790b14090a886d484/wd-5-027-16--pdf-data.pdf
	CCI : Les nouveaux modèles économiques	https://www.cci.fr/actualites/les-nouveaux-modeles-economiques	IHK München	https://www.ihk-muenchen.de/ihk/documents/BIHK_Studie_Shareconomy_FINAL.pdf https://www.ihk-muenchen.de/de/Service/Recht-und-Steuern/Steuerrecht/Sonstiges-Steuerrecht/Shareconomy/
	URSAFF : Activités relevant de l'économie collaborative	https://www.urssaf.fr/portail/home/espaces-dedies/activites-relevant-de-leconomie.html	Gründerplattform	https://gruenderplattform.de/ https://gruenderplattform.de/green-economy/sharing-economy
	Impots.gov : Sharing Economy and digital platforms	https://www.impots.gouv.fr/sharing-economy-and-digital-platforms	Existenzgründungsportal	https://www.existenzgruender.de/DE/Home/inhalt.html
	ADEME	https://www.ademe.fr/	UBA: Grüne Startups stärker fördern	https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/themen/gruene-start-ups-staerker-foerdern
			DBU: nachhaltig.digital	https://www.dbu.de/ https://nachhaltig.digital/

			KfW: Inlandsförderung	https://www.kfw.de/inlandsfoerderung/Unternehmen/Gr%C3%BCnden-Nachfolgen/Sozialunternehmen/ https://www.kfw.de/inlandsfoerderung/Companies/
			Förderdatenbank	
Funding opportunities	CGET	https://www.cget.gouv.fr	DBU	https://www.dbu.de/foerderung/green-start-up/
	DATAR (archive page)	https://web.archive.org/web/20140208003821/http://www.datar.gouv.fr/	KfW	https://www.kfw.de/inlandsfoerderung/Unternehmen/Gr%C3%BCnden-Nachfolgen/F%C3%B6rderprodukte/ERP-Gr%C3%BCnderkredit-Startgeld-(067)/
	Crédit d'impot de recherche	https://entreprendre.service-public.fr/vosdroits/F23533	Startnext	https://www.startnext.com/
	BPI : Base des aides	https://bpifrance-creation.fr/basedesaides	Seedmatch	https://www.seedmatch.de/
	BPI : Financements dédié aux projets de l'ESS	https://bpifrance-creation.fr/encyclopedie/entreprises-structures-responsables/creer-entreprise-engagee/financements-dedies-aux	GLSCrowd	https://www.gls-crowd.de/
			WiWin	https://wiwin.de/
			Business Angels	https://www.business-angels.de/
Supportive framework	ESS France	https://www.ess-france.org/	Forschungsprojekt i-share zur Wirkung der Sharing Economy	https://www.i-share-economy.org/de
	Coop FR	https://www.entreprises.coop/	Bundesverband Deutscher Leasing-Unternehmen	https://bdl.leasingverband.de/newsroom/leasing-themen/leasing-und-sharing-economy/
	Les Licoornes	https://www.licoornes.coop/	NaWiKo	https://nachhaltigeswirtschaften-soef.de/
	La Ruche	https://la-ruche.net/	BNW	https://www.bnw-bundesverband.de/
	ADECC : Association pour le Développement de l'Économie Circulaire et Collaborative	https://adecc.org/	Gemeinwöhl-Ökonomie Deutschland e.V.	https://germany.ecogood.org/

			SEND	https://www.send-ev.de/
			Bundesverband Deutscher Startups e.V.	https://startupverband.de/
Last consultation date		30.07.2023		30.07.2023

Table 5: Content of webpages presented in chapter 4.1, with links
The leftmost column shows divides the results into three different themes: government support, funding opportunities, and supportive framework. The second column from the left is titled France and is again divided into two columns: Name and Link. In it the titles of the websites and referring links are entered. In the third and last column from the left, the same is repeated for Germany. This table refers to the numerical results of the quantitative research from Table 3.