

Stories of the Sharing Economy: Comparing Narratives and  
Regulatory Responses to TNCs across American Cities

Nicole M. DuPuis

Dissertation submitted to the faculty  
of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Public Administration and Public Affairs

Matthew M. Dull, Chair  
Adam Eckerd  
Anne M. Khademian  
Ralph Buehler

December 13, 2018

Center for Public Administration and Policy  
Alexandria, Virginia

Keywords: TNCs, technology, narrative, regulation, urban regime theory, decentered theory of  
governance

# Stories of the Sharing Economy: Comparing Narratives and Regulatory Responses to TNCs across American Cities

Nicole M. DuPuis

## **Abstract**

Over the last several years, new transportation service business platforms like Uber and Lyft have appeared in cities across the U.S. Since these new business models do not fit into existing regulatory and policy frameworks, and their entrance into markets is typically abrupt and sometimes illegal, these companies, which have come to be known as transportation network companies (TNCs), provoke city governance actors and the public to react in many different ways. Some cities take a free market approach, while others opt toward heavy handed regulation. In addition to policy action, there is a great deal of policy narrative swirling around these services and their place in existing mobility systems. There is wide variation in the dominant stories or narratives that emerge about TNCs when they suddenly enter a metropolitan market. Said narratives about these mobility providers also evolve as the companies continually operate in different cities. Some stories are thematically tied to specific interest groups and others seem to originate as a result of specific contextual nuances or incidents that occur. Sometimes stories originate in the context of local, state or national political backdrops and discourse. This dissertation argues that stories emerge in the context of urban regime characteristics. Using urban regime theory along with Mark Bevir and R.A.W. Rhodes decentered theory of governance, I will look at TNC operation in four U.S. cities: Indianapolis, IN, Austin, TX, Portland, OR, and Washington, DC. This dissertation explores the ways in which narratives emerge and change around TNCs, how those narratives are influenced by existing urban regime dynamics, and how they influence policy making.

# Stories of the Sharing Economy: Comparing Narratives and Regulatory Responses to TNCs across American Cities

Nicole M. DuPuis

## **General Audience Abstract**

Over the last several years, private sector mobility companies like Uber and Lyft have started operating in cities across the U.S. Despite the fact that these companies provide services that already exist with more traditional transportation providers (such as taxi cabs) and their business models are very rote and consistent across locations, city policy actors respond to them in many different ways. There is also wide variation in the sorts of stories or narratives that develop when these companies deploy and operate in different cities. Those stories sometimes reflect local political nuances and characteristics. Using urban regime theory along with Mark Bevir and R.A.W. Rhodes decentered theory of governance, I will use this research to explore the ways in which narratives emerge and change around TNCs in four cities: Indianapolis, IN, Austin, TX, Portland, OR, and Washington, DC. I will look at how those narratives are influenced by existing local nuances, coalitions and characteristics, and how they might influence policy making and responses in those places.

## **Acknowledgments**

I am tremendously thankful for the advice and guidance of my committee chair, Dr. Adam Eckerd, who supported and encouraged my investigation of policy narrative, local governance, and TNCs, despite the fact that all three of these topics felt, at varying times, like moving targets. There were people who suggested I avoid these as dissertation topics for this very reason, urging me to consider a less complicated, less evergreen, and more finite unit of analysis for my research. Dr. Eckerd was not one of those people, and he encouraged me to pursue my interests, despite the fact that the research might present difficulties. He was always quick to answer questions, provide thoughtful feedback to every draft and calm my many anxieties throughout the process. I am grateful for that.

I am also appreciative of the guidance and thoughtful feedback from the other members of my committee, Drs. Anne Khademian, Matt Dull, and Ralph Buehler. Each of these tremendous scholars, whom I respect and admire deeply, helped me to refine and improve my scope of research, my research questions, and my approach to the dissertation. They also each helped me find my way through the doctoral program, at varying times, and in varying ways. I am very grateful for their insights and steadfast support.

In addition to the invaluable moral support I received, I am appreciative of the financial support provided to me by the National Capital Region Chapter of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association. The scholarship so generously awarded to me by the Alumni Association helped me to power through and finalize my research.

I truly could not have endured this doctoral program or the dissertation process without the unyielding support of my family. They are huge and messy, but more importantly their show of

unconditional love has been the force that carried me to and through each of life's pivotal moments and trials. I am forever thankful for all of them, in all of their glorious, loud messiness.

This dissertation is dedicated to three people. To my mother, Vicki Losh—you are my hero. You are the smartest and most intellectually curious person I have ever known, and the most incredible example of an engaged community member. When I think about how divided we are as a country and all of the public policy challenges that lie ahead, I always come back to the idea that one of the solutions might be more people living their lives as you live yours. Your willingness to engage and organize at the local level, your constant striving for self-improvement and your impressive reading list, and your love for your neighbors and future generations make you a model citizen worthy of the highest award. I am so lucky that I get to be your daughter.

To my husband, Ryan Noll—you are my person. You should receive an honorary degree, because you truly put as much effort into getting through this program as I did. You supported me at every turn and challenge. You did absolutely everything you could to make my life easier when I was juggling everything at once and most importantly, you never said a word at the end of the longest days when I was sometimes running short on energy and patience. Not a day goes by that I do not recognize how lucky I am to have you as a partner in life. You make everything better.

And finally, to my son, Rowan Jeffrey Noll—you are my purpose. Caring for you is the most gratifying, the most important, the hardest and the most incredible thing I have ever done in my life. Thank you for always helping me to remember what is truly important and for clarifying what I see as my place in this world. Being your mom is a dream come true.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	ii
<b>General Audience Abstract</b> .....	iii
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	iv
<b>Chapter 1 – Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Objective and Research Questions</b> .....	1
<b>Methods</b> .....	3
<b>Theoretical Contributions and Significance</b> .....	4
<b>Results</b> .....	5
<b>Overview</b> .....	5
<b>Chapter 2 – Complementing Bevir and Rhodes’ Decentered Theory of Governance with Urban Regime Theory</b> .....	7
<b>Introduction</b> .....	7
<b>Decentered Theory of Governance</b> .....	7
<b>Urban Regime Theory</b> .....	10
<b>Theoretical Contribution</b> .....	12
<b>Summary</b> .....	16
<b>Chapter 3 – Technology-Based Market Innovations, Disruption, and How Stories Influence Policy Making</b> .....	17
<b>Introduction</b> .....	17
<b>Policy Narratives</b> .....	18
<b>Disruption</b> .....	23
<b>Governance, Innovation and Regulation</b> .....	31
<b>Summary</b> .....	35
<b>Chapter 4 – Research Design</b> .....	37
<b>Setting and Approach</b> .....	37
<b>Part I: Comparative Case Studies</b> .....	37
<b>Part II: Elite Interviews</b> .....	44
<b>Limitations and Challenges</b> .....	54
<b>Summary</b> .....	55
<b>Chapter 5 – Indianapolis, Indiana</b> .....	56

<b>Urban Regime</b> .....	57
<b>Transportation System</b> .....	59
<b>Entrance of TNCs</b> .....	61
<b>Regulatory Response</b> .....	63
<b>State Policy Interventions</b> .....	64
<b>Current Status of TNC Operations</b> .....	65
<b>Summary</b> .....	66
<b>Chapter 6 – Washington, DC</b> .....	68
<b>Urban Regime</b> .....	69
<b>Transportation System</b> .....	70
<b>Entrance of TNCs</b> .....	71
<b>Regulatory Response</b> .....	73
<b>Current Status of TNC Operations</b> .....	75
<b>Summary</b> .....	77
<b>Chapter 7 – Austin, Texas</b> .....	78
<b>Urban Regime</b> .....	79
<b>Transportation System</b> .....	81
<b>Entrance of TNCs</b> .....	82
<b>Regulatory Response</b> .....	83
<b>State Policy Interventions</b> .....	87
<b>Current Status of TNC Operations</b> .....	88
<b>Summary</b> .....	88
<b>Chapter 8 – Portland, Oregon</b> .....	90
<b>Urban Regime</b> .....	90
<b>Transportation System</b> .....	93
<b>Entrance of TNCs</b> .....	94
<b>State Policy Interventions</b> .....	96
<b>Current Status of TNC Operations</b> .....	96
<b>Summary</b> .....	97
<b>Chapter 9 – Findings</b> .....	98
<b>Introduction</b> .....	98
<b>Theory</b> .....	98

<b>Coding and Organizing Interview Data .....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Actions/Impacts of TNCs .....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Issues and Concerns .....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Actions Taken by City.....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Responses to TNCs .....</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Chapter 10 – Discussion.....</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>Overview of Research.....</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>Findings .....</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>Implications and Contributions .....</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Possible Future Research.....</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Chapter 11 – Conclusion .....</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Results.....</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Context.....</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Implications and Contributions .....</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Appendix A – Interview Questions.....</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Appendix B – Code Definitions.....</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Appendix C – Interview Recruitment Document.....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Appendix D – IRB Approval Letter .....</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Appendix E – Approved Consent Form for Research Initiative .....</b>	<b>180</b>



## List of Tables

<b>Table 1. Typology for city regulatory responses to TNCs.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Table 2. Dominant Narrative Themes in Cities.....</b>	<b>143</b>

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1. Interview Data Themes and Sub-Themes.....</b>	<b>100</b>
--	------------

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

“Sharing economy” business models have become a standard part of day-to-day life in American cities. The sharing economy, also sometimes referred to as the platform economy or the peer-to-peer economy, refers to “businesses that provide consumers the ability and platform to share resources and services (housing, vehicles, commercial space, etc.) typically taking place with an online and/or application based business model,” (DuPuis, 2017, 1). These business models have emerged and grown rapidly in a very short period of time, and they pose challenges for local governments that are unaccustomed to developing ordinances for data driven technology platforms. These platforms also cause friction against the backdrop of regulatory structures that were developed for more traditional incumbent businesses (hotels and taxis). They present unanticipated competition in the market, and often garner support from consumers. All of these factors, along with other political and cultural influences on governance, cause city officials to respond in vastly different ways to the emergence of these services. Some cities remain open and inviting to sharing economy platforms and business, regulating them lightly or not at all, while others opt to ban the companies in their jurisdictions, cease their operations while an ordinance is developed, or pass strict regulatory frameworks that place bounds on their operation. While these sharing economy and technology based platform business models have been applied to several different services, this study will build upon previous research (DuPuis, 2017) and it will be limited to transportation network companies (Uber, Lyft, Sidecar--otherwise referred to as TNCs).

### **Objective and Research Questions**

Despite the somewhat rote nature of the services offered by TNCs, cities vary widely in their reactions and responses to these companies. Some cities opt for outright bans on these services, while others take a free market approach, letting them operate freely. Most cities engage in

deliberation over the operation of TNCs in their city and ultimately develop for-hire transportation regulations that allow TNCs to operate under some restrictions. For instance, in Indianapolis, Indiana, the city government initially chose not to regulate these services, and intentionally took a free market approach to the operation of TNCs (Solis, 2014). This approach was taken, in part, to embrace innovation and also to market Indianapolis as a first-class city (Schoettle, 2014). Conversely, the city of Portland, Oregon had an ordinance in place that made TNC operation illegal. The city insisted on strict adherence to that ordinance when Uber and Lyft entered the market, leading to a temporary ban of the services and a public battle. The Portland City Council eventually crafted a Transportation-for-Hire ordinance that included TNCs and enabled them to operate (Soper, 2015).

More often than not, different coalitions and factions in a city subscribe to conflicting narratives, and the ones that rise to the top as dominant narratives influence the city's legislative body in its policy response. New York City became embroiled in a battle between traditional service providers (taxi) who invested in taxi medallions,<sup>1</sup> and riders who wanted the city to embrace these new technologies. The dominant policy narrative there focused most centrally on labor issues and on creating an egalitarian business and operating environment for both types of services (Hawkins, 2015). This study aims to examine the different ways in which cities respond to disruptive forces. The research questions for consideration are as follows:

1. *Why do cities respond differently to technology-based market innovations?*
2. *How do different narrative elements or patterns surrounding the emergence of innovations affect the ways in which city decision makers respond to their regulatory choices?*

---

<sup>1</sup> In some U.S. cities, taxi operators are required to purchase a Certificate of Public Necessity and Convenience (CPNC) or taxi medallion in order to legally pick up passengers and provide them with transportation. In some cities, these medallions can be quite costly. The price tag on a New York City taxi medallion has ranged between \$500,000 and \$1 million dollars. The introduction of TNCs in many communities across America has impacted the prices of taxi medallions, leaving many independent taxi owners underwater due to loans they took out to purchase them.

This study attempts to answer these questions by exploring the different ways in which cities respond to TNCs, the policy narratives that emerged around these services entering communities, and how those narratives might have influenced the ways policy actors responded to and regulated TNCs (DuPuis, 2017). Specifically, this dissertation explores the policy deliberations, urban regime formations, outcomes, and the narrative themes expressed by policy stakeholders in four American cities, as well as how those narrative themes influenced policy and regulatory outcomes in each city. By exploring how different urban regime types assess their policy context, I will better be able to understand how the regime's socio-political makeup helps to define the dominant narratives that influence their governing decisions. Identifying the aforementioned types of regime formations and narrative themes that subsequently emerge in each city will enable a more comprehensive understanding about why and how cities respond differently to technology-based market innovations like TNCs. The cities investigated in this dissertation include: Indianapolis, IN, Washington, DC; Austin TX; and Portland, OR.

## **Methods**

This dissertation research is approached in two parts. Part I includes a case study comparison of the four cities in the analysis. The case studies focus specifically on each city's response to TNCs entering the metropolitan market, with specific emphasis on regulatory outcomes or policy deliberation that took place (actions of the city council or other regulatory bodies), as well as major stakeholders involved in the discussion from outside city government. Part II is comprised of interviews with policy actors and stakeholders from each city who played a major role in the policy deliberations around TNCs.

## **Theoretical Contributions and Significance**

The significant theoretical contribution of this research is the opportunity to demonstrate the complementary relationship between Bevir and Rhodes' Decentered Theory of Governance and Urban Regime Theory. The research uses Bevir and Rhodes scholarship to explore narrative development in each city and the ways in which it influences in policy outcomes. It also utilized Urban Regime Theory, exploring the types of narratives that exist in cities with different urban regimes characteristics. Driving this investigation and the marriage of these two theoretical bodies is the expectation that perhaps urban regimes are not just about resources, but also common or dominant narratives that frame responses to policy circumstances. This research demonstrates the sorts of narratives that are prevalent in different types of urban regimes. It also illuminates the role of dominant narratives in decision making, the ways these dominant narratives influence policy outcomes, and the actors pushing them in different urban regime settings.

This dissertation also has practical and policy significance. Per my earlier research, the impact of TNCs like Uber and Lyft on mobility networks is still not fully understood, and the role of cities in regulating these companies represents yet to be resolved public policy puzzle. There is still a much to learn about how these new business models work, both on their own and in concert with existing services (DuPuis, 2017). Recent research indicates that last year ride hailing began having a substantial, measured impact on incumbent for-hire transportation providers as well as on transit ridership and traffic. In 2017, New York City counted 158 million TNC trips and 110 million taxi trips, meaning their mode share scales have officially tipped in favor of TNCs. Furthermore, survey results from NYC DOT indicate that 50% of the New Yorkers who use ride hailing companies to meet their mobility needs would have otherwise used public transit to make that same trip. (CityLab, 2018). This study aims to better understand the ways TNCs operate in

different types of communities. It also contributes to the existing body of knowledge about policy narrative and offers more evidence to support the impact of narrative on subsequent policy outcome. There existing scholarship that suggests that prominent stories that emerge in communities might influence the actions and decisions of city officials and other public policy stakeholders and decision makers (DuPuis, 2017). This study adds to that discourse.

## **Results**

With the exception of one city, Washington, DC, the narrative themes that emerged in each city were consistent with the city's urban regime characteristics and typology, and reflected in the city's ultimate policy response. While the policy outcomes in cities were, in some cases, upset by extraneous factors like state intervention/preemption, the findings of this research still demonstrate the connections between urban regime characteristics, dominant narratives, and decision making.

## **Overview**

This dissertation is composed of 11 chapters. In the introduction, an overview of the research subject is presented, along with the objective, theoretical argument, and the research questions and methods. The second chapter presents the theoretical frameworks used for this dissertation. Those bodies of literature include Bevir and Rhodes Decentered Theory of Governance and Urban Regime Theory. The third chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature that supports the dissertation and research questions. It begins with an exploration of literature related to governance, innovation, and regulation, then explores literature on the sharing economy, disruption, policy narratives and finally, addresses scholarship about the ways narratives are used to generate power or influence. Chapter four presents the research design, which is a

combination of comparative case studies and semi-structured elite interviews. Chapters five through eight present the case studies—Indianapolis, IN, Washington, D.C. Austin, TX, and Portland, OR. The following chapter presents findings from the interviews and themes that emerged across them. The final two chapters present a discussion of the findings and conclusions.



## **Chapter 2 – Complementing Bevir and Rhodes’ Decentered Theory of Governance with Urban Regime Theory**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the theoretical basis of this dissertation. It begins with an overview of Bevir and Rhodes Decentered Theory of Governance, which asserts that governance outcomes are the result of aggregated individual choices driven by narratives (2006). The next section discusses Urban Regime Theory, which argues that elite actors and resource priorities in certain types of cities drive policy intervention (1980). The third section presents the ways in which these two bodies of knowledge can be complementary, as well as the key theoretical contribution made in this study. The final section is a chapter summary.

### **Decentered Theory of Governance**

Bevir and Rhodes have developed a decentered theory of governance, which consists of several concepts, including the notions of situated agency, beliefs, traditions and dilemmas. The scholars argue that politics are made up of several conflicting explanations, that are best conceived as narratives. Their argument emphasizes the ways in which individuals understand their actions, as well as how they develop viewpoints and formative values and also how they act in response to change (2006).

**Situated agency.** Bevir and Rhodes concept of situated agency is the idea that courses of action in government are the results of aggregated individual choices. Individuals, in this case, are the actors and stakeholders in the democratic governance process. However, they do not operate in a bubble, but rather in the context of traditions or social markers that influence their beliefs. Traditions can best be described as the existing context within which an individual comes to know something. Another way to consider them is as the set of meanings or frames that guide an

individual's actions (DuPuis 2017). Choices can also be impacted by dilemmas or experiences that actors endure. The authors argue that beliefs can be molded by traditions, that they can evolve as a result of dilemmas, and that they are influential over action (Bevir & Rhodes, 2006). A dilemma occurs when an unexpected or never before experienced event results in a novel belief that might be inconsistent with previously held beliefs, and "change arises as situated agents respond to novel ideas or problems (dilemmas). It is a result of peoples' ability to adopt beliefs and perform actions through a reasoning that is embedded in the tradition they inherit" (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006, p. 5). In other scholarship, Bevir and Rhodes have used their Decentered Theory of Governance as a lens to explore network development and dynamics (2006). Ball and Junemann leveraged this theory to examine the policy networks that emerge to govern education in England, using a triangulated research approach to conduct what they called "network ethnography" (2011). In applying Bevir and Rhodes' core concepts to local government, this scholarship suggests that policy issues are unpacked and understood against the backdrops of narratives driven by policy elites, which then might feed into dominant discourses and influence policy outcomes and decisions in cities (DuPuis, 2017; Bevir and Rhodes, 2006).

**How narratives explain.** In Bevir and Rhodes explain that narratives can be causal drivers, asserting that adopted narratives link an individual's actions to his or her beliefs and desires (DuPuis, 2017). They demonstrate the linkages between actions and beliefs/desires with the following explanation: "An action X was done because the agent held beliefs Y according to which doing X would fulfill desire Z," (2006, p. 289). This explanatory model helps one to understand how beliefs and desires become a cohesive story or narrative, and how that narrative drives individual and collective action.

In applying Bevir and Rhodes' model to this study, the dilemma could be the sudden entrance of TNCs into a city's mobility market. Previous research explained further that the "tradition might be a culture of strong or weak unions surrounding traditional service providers, and the beliefs might be the individual agent's thoughts about the safety of these services. The agent's desire might be to get re-elected," (DuPuis, 2017, 9). The beliefs of the agent, in combination with his or her desires will culminate in narrative that helps that agent make sense of the issue and determine how to move forward. In this case, that narrative might be anti-TNC and the suggested policy action might be to ban or implement strict regulation to control these companies. Bevir and Rhodes argue that people's actions culminate from their beliefs and desires. This argument supports the idea that the narratives adopted by policy makers, comprised of a mix of beliefs, desires and traditions, can explain their actions. Furthermore, established narratives frame how the different types of cities understand and respond to future disruptive events that occur. Actors interpret disruptions through their existing narrative lenses and respond accordingly. Although the narrative may evolve as the policy response is formulated it will evolve in ways that remain consistent to each city's traditions (2006). This theory has also been used by other scholars to examine other issues and the ways people act. One study on the Israeli Welfare to Work program, utilized this scholarship to better understand the actions and interactions of actors and participants in those programs (Maron, 2014). Other scholarship that proceeded this study also utilized Bevir and Rhodes decentered theory of governance to understand how community members tell stories about certain events or disruptions, and how those stories are reflected in public policy. Drennan's study looks at the dominant narratives that existed for people that were impacted by the 2011 Brisbane Flood, and whether those values and narratives are reflected in national disaster resilience policy (2017).

Based on Bevir and Rhodes account of how policymakers act, using their beliefs, traditions and desires to create stories about policy issues, I expect to find that certain narrative themes will be connected with certain beliefs and thus, policy outcomes. For instance, I anticipate that certain policy beliefs and traditions will coincide with certain types of city governments. I also expect to find that certain themes will dominate in the deliberations among city council members.

### **Urban Regime Theory**

Just as stories matter, so do political and economic circumstances and coalitions. While Bevir and Rhodes scholarship helps us to understand why and how people use stories, urban regime theory helps us to recognize who those elites are, as well as why and how they form the narratives that they use to promote certain outcomes. Clarence Stone's scholarship on urban regimes emphasizes the relationships that form between public and private actors as they seek resources and institute policy interventions. Stone (1989) defines urban regimes as "the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together to make and carry out governing decisions." His subsequent scholarship further defines an urban regime as "a relatively stable coalition of actors that has or seeks to achieve, a sustained role in making governing decisions on the local level," (1989).

Because urban regime theory explores relationships between public and private actors, it is an especially relevant framework in which to investigate disruptive technologies like TNCs that enter metropolitan markets and the public-sector responses that follow. TNCs represent private companies that provide a service that is traditionally regulated by local governments. Stone argues that relationships with private entities are critical to effective governing, and that both public and private resources must be used to effectively implement policy interventions (1993). He further argues that:

...public policies are shaped by three factors: (1) the composition of a community's governing coalition, (2) the nature of the relationships among members of the governing coalition, and (3) the resources that the members bring to the governing coalition. Of course, this does not mean that the governing coalition operates in a social and economic vacuum; the socioeconomic environment is a source of problems and challenges to which regimes respond, (1993).

These three factors can be used to assess the ways in which policy discussions unfurled in each of the case cities.

While Urban Regime Theory was originally used largely to examine economic development within cities, many scholars have expanded its use to other contexts and policy issues (Mossberger and Stoker, 2001). Stone himself (1998) and Henig (1999) this theory to understand education, and the ways in which members of a community rally behind certain issues and form coalitions. Fuseini and Kemp attempt to use Urban Regime Theory to examine growth in Ghana, and the ways in which citizens respond to basic infrastructure and services (2016). Phillips and Barnes use the theory to understand the way the city of Hamilton, Ontario handled hosting a mega-event and the charge to build a new soccer stadium (2015). While all of these applications of Urban Regime Theory differ vastly from this study, they underscore the notion that this theoretical framework is versatile, and can be used to better understand a wide array of public policy issues.

**Types of regimes.** Stone and other scholars also make a distinction between different types of urban regimes, which are classified according to their coalition makeup and development outcomes: corporate/development, progressive, caretaker, and intergovernmental regimes (Stone, 1993; Levine and Ross, 2006). The scholarship of Burns and Thomas also identifies non-regimes (2006). More generally, these classifications can be used to assess the ways in which different

local government coalitions act toward TNCs. Corporate regimes tend to consider private sector interests and the business community plays a huge role in their coalitions. Important actors in these regimes might include CEOs, prominent philanthropies, or large employers in the area. Progressive regimes consider the needs of less powerful and protected classes as well as environmental concerns. Important actors in these regimes might include community organizers, activists, labor interests or nonprofit organizations (Stone, 1993). Caretaker regimes emphasize maintaining the status quo and avoiding disruption to their way of life. Influential actors in caretaker regimes are often bureaucratic figures or regulators. Intergovernmental regimes exist in cities that are mismanaged and require intervention from or federal policymakers (Levine and Ross, 2006). Important actors in these regimes might include federal liaisons, or members of Congress. Additional scholarship notes that some cities lack identifiable regime characteristics and typifies the cities in this category as non-regimes. In non-regime cities, stakeholder groups and coalitions are vulnerable to new issues that arise, and they fail to establish focused agendas. This often results in irresponsible and sometimes chaotic governing (Burns and Thomas, 2006). The non-regime classification will not be used in this research.

### **Theoretical Contribution**

While they represent two distinct bodies of theory, my argument in this dissertation is that Bevir and Rhodes Decentered Theory of Governance is complementary to the central elements of Urban Regime Theory presented by Stone and others. These two theoretical camps dovetail to explain the ways in which the dominant stories in certain places, driven by certain forces and actors, influence policy outcome (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006; Stone, 1989). My primary argument and contribution herein is that a given regime has a shared or dominant narrative/understanding of

an issue. That dominant or shared narrative is embedded in the characteristics of the regime and drives the policy choices that are made in each city or region.

This theoretical contribution utilizes Bevir and Rhodes' core narrative framework, but adds an important nuance to their theory. Bevir and Rhodes address governance with the assumption that policy actors are quasi-independent, guided only by their own experiences (2006). However, as Stone argues, those actors are not entirely independent, and they act and understand issues in the context of their governing regime (1989). A narrative is a product of the urban regime. Furthermore, a dominant narrative has the power to both pull people into a regime, and provides an intellectual or value-laden framework for what individual actors might consider correct or feasible as a policy outcome.

Transversely, Bevir and Rhodes decentered theory of governance contributes to Urban Regime Theory. Stone argues that resources are the forces that create and bind urban regimes (1980). While this is true, there is also human-generated, shared narrative that speaks to the values and priorities of people in that regime. This reflects the nuanced notion of a community's shared values and the idea that "who we are" goes far beyond market forces and resources allocation, but is also embedded in history, ways of knowing, and culture (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006).

**Justification.** Much of Stone's argument focuses on power in communities--how it comes to be, who wields it and how it influences political decisions. He explains further:

Regimes are a way of understanding how we act as political communities, and why some ways of acting tend to crowd out others. A regime thus does not represent a form of domination, "power over", as ordinarily understood, so much as one form of empowerment, "power to," crowding out others. (Stone, 2005, p. 6.)

This notion of “some ways of acting crowd[ing] out others” is consistent with the idea of a dominant narrative forming, and the ways in which that dominant narrative might feed into the development of an urban regime (2005, p.6). In addition to Stone’s work crossing over to Bevir and Rhodes in that way, he also addresses the ways in which narratives and preferences might form, and how those narratives might influence policy formation.

Let us turn, then, to the question of preferences on particular issues and let us assume narrow cognition: that ordinarily, people respond to what is familiar, immediate, and concrete. This view underlies the longstanding concept of satisficing (March & Simon, 1965) and has long been used in psychology (Milgram, 1974, p. 38). Narrow cognition is consistent with the pluralist view that individual preferences, at least on particular issues, derive mainly from one’s place in a highly differentiated society. However, we radically alter our understanding of politics if we think about preferences as being formed, not in the context of a static social structure, but rather in a context of dynamic social interactions that sometimes reveal new possibilities and offer changing opportunities (Darnton, 1989). Combined with narrow cognition, this step suggests that policy preferences are relatively fluid (Stone, 1993, 9).

This is consistent with Bevir and Rhodes notion of beliefs impacting actions and desires, as well as individuals having the capacity to adopt novel beliefs and transform their beliefs depending on certain experiences (2006).

Stone’s most notable and prominent regime analysis is that of Atlanta in the post WWII era. He explores the ways in which the city developed a biracial coalition comprised of players from the business, civic, and government sectors in order execute significant policy and development agendas while successfully enduring major social change that took hold in the post



WWII era. In the 60s and 70s, Atlanta was one of the epicenters of civil rights organizing, and the election of the city's first African American mayor solidified its status as a "mecca" for African Americans in the U.S, a cultural narrative that still exists today. Ultimately, the city's strong ties to the business community resulted in a great deal of development—including the modernization of the city's airport, the establishment and construction of the Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority system, and the opening of a convention center that would make Atlanta a destination for mega-events (1989). To this day, Atlanta's Chamber of Commerce is a significant player in all matters of policy making and civic life and plays a significant role in the governance decisions that are made in the metropolitan region. Stone's later scholarship compares Atlanta to other cities in the U.S. south, to make the distinction between them and their different policy and social outcomes (2015). This is an example of how the governance decisions that were made decades ago still define the dominant narratives and policy outcomes of a city today.

This study uses TNCs as a specific unit of analysis, but the research inquiry is broadened to all technology-based market innovations, and how different narrative themes that arise with the emergence of these innovations affect the ways in which policy actors and elites in different cities respond to them. The theoretical argument and contribution is that, contrary to the assumptions made in Bevir and Rhodes decentered theory of governance, it is not really individuals making choices or solely driving policy decisions, but rather, there is influence from urban regimes, and the groups, market forces and resources that bind them together. These regimes set the narrative that drives policymakers' decisions.

Earlier scholarship the notion of narrative as a driver of policy looks at the entrance of TNCs in mid-sized American markets. The scholarship finds a complementary relationship between Bevir and Rhodes and the Narrative Policy Framework, and presents evidence of a causal

relationship between narrative expression and policy responses and outcomes (DuPuis, 2017). Other scholarship from Yanow makes an argument that place and buildings can be representative of dominant narrative, and that they can drive the ways in which people near them act and think (1995).

## **Summary**

Cities tend to be governed by different types of regimes, based on their characteristics and the shared values of their residents (Stone, 1989). These regimes help actors understand their governing responsibilities through different narratives in a way that resembles sense making. The narratives help to structure policy actors' thinking, limit the scope of conflict, and restrict available choices for policy responses and outcomes. Identifying the aforementioned types of regime formations in the different case cities, along with the narrative themes that emerge from the interviews with policy elites in each city will enable a more comprehensive understanding about why cities respond differently to technology-based market innovations. The regime shares a narrative/understanding of the issue, and that then drives the policy choices that are made. This study aims to explore the ways in which the dominant narrative in a regime can dictate the options for policy outcomes.

## **Chapter 3 – Technology-Based Market Innovations, Disruption, and How Stories Influence Policy Making**

### **Introduction**

In this dissertation research, I expect to find that narrative themes are shared within urban regime coalitions. The political and economic circumstances, coalitions, and elite policy actors that exist in a city have significant bearing over which policy narratives become dominant in response to new innovations and related regulatory reforms. Urban regime theory underscores the ways in which policy coalitions and elites move to seek resources and institute policy interventions that are consistent with dominant priorities in a city. These regimes often form around or perpetuate certain values that come to signify or represent a city (Stone, 1989). When elite actors develop coalitions around a particular story or way of knowing, they are able to channel more political will toward an outcome of their liking. This can sometimes incentivize actors toward subscribing to a narrative or discourse that best suits their needs or desires at the time. It can also narrow the window of dominant narratives and thus the seemingly available policy outcomes.

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature that supports my dissertation's research questions and theoretical contributions. It begins with an exploration of scholarship about policy narratives, as an attempt to address how dominant stories about technology-based market innovations might influence the ways in which they are regulated. This is followed by introduction of scholarship about the ways in which narratives are used to generate power or influence. Specifically, this literature invokes narratives as powerful tools that can be used by policy elites to cede certain outcomes or limit others. Next there is an attempt to employ literature to define the concept of disruption and an exploration of scholarship about disruption as it relates to new technology-based business models that upend existing consumer patterns, especially in the context

of local economies. Some examples called upon to provide a parallel to the disruptive forces of TNCs are smartphones and food trucks. Then, the disruptive impact of new business models referred to as ‘the sharing economy’ are explored. This chapter concludes with an exploration of literature related to governance, innovation, and regulation, including the two bodies of scholarship that underwrite this dissertation’s theoretical assertion.

## **Policy Narratives**

Research and scholarship from several different disciplines and traditions supports the idea that narratives provide a means by which individuals and groups “organize, process and convey information.” Seminal studies in communications (McComas & Shanahan 1999), marketing (Mattila 2000), neuroscience (Ash et al. 2007), and psychology (Gerrig & Egidi 2003) have reported the nature and extent of the influences narratives can have on human cognition and behavior (Jones and McBeth 2010). Scholars who have applied narratives to public policy and administration include Deborah Stone (2002), Frank Fischer and John Forrester (1993) Emery Roe (1994) and Maarten Hajer (1993, 1995) among others. While they all might employ different theoretical and epistemological approaches, most scholars in the policy and administration spheres who study and analyze narrative agree generally with the idea that “the social act of assigning meaning to objects and processes” is important and central to understanding policy development (Jones and McBeth 2010).

Deborah Stone who is among the most influential scholars in the realm of policy narratives, advocates for the researcher embedding his or herself in the space they are attempting to study in order to understand policy issues and contexts, taking precise note of the specific language and

stories used to define or process issues or problems (2002). She further explains how narratives are relevant to policy issues:

Definitions of policy problems usually have narrative structure; that is, they are stories with a beginning, middle, and an end, involving some change or transformation. They have heroes and villains and innocent victims, and they pit forces of evil against forces of good, (2002, p. 138).

Stone's scholarship can be grouped with that of Fischer and Forrester (1993), as both emphasize the ways language is used to process public policy issues and challenges (Jones and McBeth, 2010). Specifically, Fischer and Forrester's (1993) research examines how narratives can help individuals make sense of complex and seemingly incongruent phenomena that might comprise policy issues. They argue:

The narrative form can offer a powerful tool to an analyst seeking a hermeneutic explanation. This is partly because the narrative structure, with its organized beginning, middle and end, requires the establishment of a readable, coherent plot. A plot in such a form provides the policy analyst with a tool that can grasp together and integrate into one whole and complete story, multiple and scattered events, (1993, 172).

Similarly, Roe (1994) draws on literary theory to argue that notions of narrative can be useful in understanding complex policy problems. Hajer relies on the tradition of discourse analysis and discourse analytic theory to reinforce the important role that stories play in the policy making universe. His most significant contribution is the concept of the discourse coalition, which he defines as "the ensemble of a set of story lines, the actors that utter these story lines, and the practices that conform to these story lines, all organized around a discourse," (1993, p. 47). This

reinforces the idea that stories about public policy issues can bind individuals together and drive the way in which they advocate for their own interests in the policy arena. Stories enable people to find common ground, and engage with others who see or understand policy issues in a frame similar to their own.

**Narratives as tools for political power.** A great deal of research on narrative influence considers narratives as powerful tools that can be used by policy elites to cede certain outcomes or limit others (Riker, 1986; Edelman 1964). These elites vary by government regime, and the mechanisms they use to control the policy process vary as well. The concept of heresthetics was originally developed by William Riker, who identified it as the art of changing political outcomes and manipulating the decision-making process by controlling the political stories that are dominant. Riker argues that policy actors will actively work to redefine policy situations by creating or diffusing political coalitions that adhere to certain stories (1986). Derthick and Quirk's (1985) scholarship on deregulation examines the ways in which policy elites use narrative and storytelling to achieve broad-based reforms and to bring the wills and desires of concentrated interests (versus those of the general public) to bear. Their analyses find that the way in which the narrative is developed or the way in which a policy is proposed renders it impactful (or not) in the policy arena. The authors explain that, "To be useful in an age of sound bites and thirty-second campaign commercials, expert advice must be responsive to the needs of leaders for solutions to politically salient 'problems.' Such advice must be 'graspable,' meaning capable of being rendered by the media and other agenda-setting actors 'in simple, symbolic, intuitively appealing terms'" (247).

Much of the control exercised by policy elites involves using narratives to limit the scope of certain conflicts, and these narratives specifically limit the choice of policy response to a

disruptive technology. The notion of elites using narrative as a tool to drive or limit policy outcomes was earlier introduced by E.E. Schattschneider, who famously subscribed to the notion that “policies make politics” meaning that a policy that is developed and implemented today impacts the ways in which people and groups act and engage in the political process tomorrow. In addition to pointing out policy as merely the beginning of the political story, he addressed the fact that the interest groups that drive policy narratives seldom perpetuate stories that represent the will of the masses, and that their narratives and ideal policy instead tend to have bias toward the upper class and other elites (1985). This argument is based, in part, on Murray Edelman’s seminal work, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, in which he argues that symbols and language are used by elites to manipulate certain policy narratives so that they yield benefits to those groups, specifically money and power (1964). This implies that often, policy elites in a particular coalition or urban setting might use political symbolism to manipulate a policy narrative and to place boundaries around the governing choices available.

Narratives can be used by elites to restrict the policy choices available to other democratic participants, and thus when a punctuation or disruption occurs, those participants respond according to the choices they perceive to be available (Edelman, 1964). In this age of “fake news” when different political parties subscribe to vastly different ideas, and the spread of misinformation on technology platforms is rampant, many scholars and research efforts acknowledge the action or reaction of policy elites as embedded in one or a series of stories. Sometimes they are convenient in the greater context of the political landscape and most times there are a number of conflicting narratives that make up a debate surrounding an issue. Stories are central to the ways in which the policy makers and the public consume and comprehend issues, the ways in which people

participate in civic discourse and discussions, and the ways in which policy makers respond to new policy challenges or dilemmas (Stone 2002).

**Relevant scholarship.** The phenomena of policy narrative and its impact on decision making and outcomes has been used to study many different contexts and issues. In Michael Jones and Mark McBeth's seminal work, in which they presented their 'Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) the scholars present a framework that they argue is an empirical approach to studying policy narratives (2010). Like in this dissertation, Bridgman and Barry use case studies and interviews to look at telephone portability, and to explore the ways in which narratives can be utilized to put boundaries around both problem definition and the available solutions or outcomes (2002). Gray and Jones use narrative analysis to examine the stories that emerge around U.S. campaign finance reform, but also more broadly to address the ways a qualitative research approach can be complementary to the tenets of the more positivist NPF approach. They argue that qualitative research approaches actually complement the NPF's quantitative tendencies, and call for more of this hybrid approach to research (2016).

Several studies look at the ways in which narratives reflect values of individuals or groups. Chapman (2005) explores policy narrative in the context of watershed management policies, looking at the ways in which Costa Rican values are reflected in policy outcomes. Hendriks utilized embedded research techniques and interviews to gauge the way dominant narratives encouraged Australians to engage in public forums and deliberation (2005). In addition to these issues, narrative analysis has been used to study several issues relevant to public policy and administration, from conservation (McBeth, Shanahan and Jones, 2005) to gun policy (Smith-Walter et al., 2016). This previous work helps to guide my dissertation research. The diversity of issues that scholars have explored using narrative analysis justifies using the same approach to



explore the ways that cities approach regulating TNCs and other technology-based market applications. There is also scholarship to support the ways narrative analysis can reflect individual values. Where this scholarship diverges is with its use of Urban Regime Theory as a way to understand narrative development, and its focus on narrative as a causal link to policy action.

## **Disruption**

While there is still limited scholarship that speaks directly to the abrupt impact of TNCs, there has been past study of the impacts of other types of “disruptive” impacts on government. The notion of disruption has largely been discussed in two different ways that are relevant to this research—one uses the term ‘disruption’ or ‘disruptive’ in the context of new business models, technologies or innovations that abruptly or rapidly changes the ways in which individuals live their lives and/or the social and service delivery expectations they have and the other refers to the disruption of the status quo as public policy making is concerned.

Disruption has been defined very differently across academic disciplines. The concept of disruptive innovation was first coined and explored in the scholarship of Clayton Christensen (2003), who identified it as the introduction of a new input or creation that adds new value to a market and simultaneously replaces or outperforms an existing actor in the market. Building further on Christensen’s scholarship, James McQuivey (2013) defined the concept of digital disruption. He makes the distinction between what he refers to as traditional disruption and digital disruption:

Disruption was previously done to and through physical things, things like the assembly line, the commercial jetliner, the heart transplant, flat panel LCD screens, and so on...  
(McQuivey 2013, 8)

While his definition is limited to new technologies and innovations, he uses these examples to illustrate the important notion that traditional disruption, per Christensen's definition can and does disrupt markets, and also that it can take years to do so. He then goes on to specify the differences in digital disruption:

The power of digital disruption is that it can disrupt any aspect of any product or service, including processes deep within companies focused on physical things, processes that govern partnerships, data collection, pricing, and the management of labor or capital resources. In fact, digital disruption's power multiplies precisely because it can apply to industries that are not even digital, (McQuivey, 2013, 9).

While this definition of disruption is limited to the scope of digital and technological advances, it does provide some value in addressing the ways in which disruption has changed over time, as well as the ways in which its impacts can transcend economic markets to affect processes and norms. Perhaps because of their unique position at the center of civic life and policy innovation, city governments are often the first ones to respond to disruptive technologies or incidents, which urges us to question whether there are any existing trends regarding how and why city policymakers respond to disruptive market innovations.

Within the realm of policy process literature, several scholars have developed and addressed the concept of policy disruption, which is built squarely on the policy subsystem and punctuated equilibrium scholarship of Baumgartner and Jones (1993). This model argues that public policy exists in stasis or only accomplishes incremental change in the face of several institutional restraints (vested interest, party control). Accordingly, significant change only occurs when there are swift shifts or interruptions to the status quo, resulting in extended periods of

constancy that are interrupted by significant changes or punctuations. As this research is concerned, a punctuation might result in a swift shift in the dominant narrative that significantly alters an ultimate policy outcome or results in a policy change (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993).

In some cases, the two types of disruption described above have the ability to work simultaneously. In this analysis, the ‘disruptions’ caused by TNCs harken to instances of ‘punctuation’ according the scholarship of Baumgartner and Jones (1993). Their entrance into the market has potential to serve as a pivotal turning point, in which there is an expected shift in policy making or behavior. Further scholarship emphasizes the importance of participants or actors and their capacity to frame issues in new or different ways during times of disruption or punctuation. These sorts of actions represent strategic attempts to control narratives and policy outcomes. Actors can frame an issue/disruption in a way that reduces attention, thus maintaining the status quo, or they can frame an issue/disruption in a way that draws attention, with hopes of stimulating deliberation and policy change (True, Jones and Baumgartner, 2007).

The notion of public attention on a policy issue was described by Downs, who argued that often-times actors fail to pay attention to an issue or a punctuation long enough to effect real policy change. He also argues, however, that responses to disruptive events can create new types of policy in place of the old, and that these new policies can live on after the deliberation has concluded (1972). For instance, the entrance of a TNC into a metropolitan market might garner attention from an actor who is favorable toward the operation of these services in the community. This actor might adopt and promote the frame that the city’s for-hire vehicle ordinance needs to be changed to accommodate TNCs, and other actors might adopt that same frame for similar or different reasons. This might result in a new TNC policy being passed at the municipal level that regulates transportation differently than it was regulated before.

Political systems work, according to Baumgartner and Jones, on the basis of emotion and friction, among other forces:

Political systems, like many social systems, are characterized by considerable friction. Standard operating procedures in organizations, cultural norms, and facets of human cognitive architectures provide stability of behavior in a complex world. In politics, ideology and group identifications provide strong and stable guides to behavior in complex circumstances. In politics, a second source of friction exists: institutional rules that constrain policy action (2012, 8).

The passage above, in which Baumgartner and Jones reflect on the elements that make up a political system, might be compared to the similar components central to urban regimes. Elements such as institutional rules and cultural norms, and ideas about the ways things are approached and done have a lot to do with the political identity of a city. In most cases, disruptive forces such as TNCs do not fit into those existing institutional rules, and this friction presses actors to try to process information in a way that culminates in a story (Baumgartner and Jones, 2012). Baumgartner and Jones' recent work and development of the general punctuation thesis emphasizes this information processing. They define this to include collecting, assembling and interpreting information, and prioritizing other relevant policy signals from the environment. Once this information is interpreted into a story or narrative, it is usually then parlayed or translated into a possible policy action (Baumgartner and Jones, 2005). That story might be consistent or inconsistent with past precedent in a community or group—meaning the narrative itself can be a type of disruptive force. Since there is scant literature that specifically addresses or describes the policy responses to TNC disruptions, this study looks to other types of technologies and business models that disrupted urban environments as examples.

**Examples of disruption.** Chang, Kauffman and Kim's study (2013) examines the impact of smartphones as a form of disruption. Thus, their definition of disruption is especially relevant to TNCs in that it focuses specifically on a disruptive technology. The authors explain that:

Disruptive technologies introduce a different level of performance or change the nature of consumer demand, by introducing new functionality and performance. They have the potential to change business processes in organizations and markets. They also cause consumers to shift their purchases to products based on the new technology. Technological disruption occurs when a new technology displaces the mainstream technology in the market, (Chang, Kauffman and Kim 2013, 2892).

This definition offers a value in that it asserts the likelihood of displacement, or the preference and embrace of one way of acting over another (likely more traditional) way. The smartphone has almost ubiquitously replaced the standard cellular phone, and in the majority of households, the landline telephone as well. However, the impact of the smartphone is far from limited to replacing the previous technology. The smartphone has dramatically changed the way people go about their lives, the way they purchase things and conduct business, and the expectations they have for communication and entertainment. While the smartphone itself represents one type of new disruptive technology that did not exist a decade ago, the impacts of how it is used have rippled out to transform many elements of daily life (Wagner, 2011; Wu, 2003). Similarly, the emergence of TNCs created a mobility alternative that, for many people, replaced the most similar transportation service provider that preceded them, taxi cabs. However, the app and the efficiency of the business model also prompted a significant change in the ways in which users preferred and expected to be served by mobility providers. Users quickly developed preferences for the immediacy of the app-based mobility platform, in which no money needed to be exchanged

between drivers and passengers. The success of the app-based model quickly proliferated to a multitude of other services, from food delivery, to handyman services, to pet sitting, all due to the fact that new developers were trying to emulate the success of the TNC business platform.

Food trucks are another example of a business model that disrupted an existing industry and regulatory framework. While food trucks differ in that they are not an app-based business platform, they depend significantly on social media and represent a unique business model that entered into city markets, upending existing regulations and consumer patterns around food service (Williams, 2013; Wessel, 2012). Just as TNCs threatened incumbent transportation providers, food trucks not only created more competition for traditional restaurants, but they also reoriented consumers demands, expectations, and preferences for food consumption. The ultimate result, in both cases, is a loyal customer base that vehemently defends these new business models when regulatory deliberations take place in cities. Williams (2013) noted in her scholarship on food trucks that (similarly to TNCs) cities responded in very different ways to the disruptive arrival of food trucks. Some cities responded to food trucks by forcing them to comply with existing regulations for traditional or existing mobile food vendors (i.e. ice cream trucks). In many of these instances, this translated to cities banning mobile preparations and only allowing the sale of pre-packaged food. This move essentially treated new, full-service food trucks like ice cream trucks, and prohibited them from operating. These original ordinances were developed in adherence with narratives and concerns about food freshness and traffic congestion and never considered the possibility of a full service food vendor operating out of a truck (Williams, 2013). This response parallels instances in which cities set forth the expectation that TNCs that entered the market should adhere to existing transportation-for-hire regulations that were on the books. Many times, the conversations and narrative themes that emerged in these cases were focused on the fact that

the city already had rules in place regarding ground transportation that TNCs refused to follow. This would be met with an assertion from TNCs that the existing regulations were developed for and applied to a very different business model, and that insisting they follow old regulations was akin to fitting a square peg in a round hole.<sup>2</sup> Other cities took a light-touch regulatory approach to food trucks, often by recognizing that they did not have relevant regulations on the books and insisting only that food trucks follow basic sanitation or health code rules. Indianapolis, IN exhibited a light-touch regulatory response to food trucks, requiring them only to comply with the city's existing Food Vending Vehicle ordinance and operate during certain time frames. Indianapolis initially also took a light-touch regulatory approach with TNCs, in part to encourage the growth of these new companies in ways that could support the city's tourism industry. In both cases, this approach resulted in rapid growth of food trucks and TNCs. Finally, some cities acknowledged the changing market and opted to develop new regulations to accommodate food trucks. These new ordinances often included spatial and equipment requirements for the trucks, established certain locations where they could legally operate, and required operators undergo background checks and equipment inspection. Again, similar to the case of TNCs, the development of new regulations for food trucks was often undergirded by narratives that sought to protect consumers or users while also encouraging the economic surge that the new business model caused in the local economy.

**The sharing economy.** The particular innovation or disruption central to this dissertation, ridesharing, is often categorized as part of what is referred to as 'the sharing economy.'<sup>3</sup> Because this is a relatively new business model, there is a limited amount of existing scholarship on the

---

<sup>2</sup> After years of deliberation and the expansion of TNCs into markets of all different sizes and geographies, there are cities that have opted to ban TNCs altogether, cities that have opted to amend their transportation-for-hire ordinance, and cities that have opted to create a new ordinance to address the operation of TNCs.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 1 for definition of ridesharing.

topic. One recent book-length study by Sundararajan (2016) aims to explore what the author deems “crowd-based capitalism,” by analyzing companies like Airbnb, Lyft, Uber, Etsy, TaskRabbit, and several international examples. The book also explores the labor implications of these models in depth. Other research focusing exclusively on TNCs and ridesharing is sparse and, to date, has not focused squarely on policy responses to TNCs. Early on, some researchers focused on defining these business models in the context of existing or more traditional services (Birdsall, 2014; Cohen and Kietzmann, 2014). Krueger (2015) was among the first academics to collaborate with Uber to present a study on this topic, looking at the preferences and modes of engagement for Uber’s driver-partners. Survey data and aggregated administrative data indicated that many individuals who were attracted to driving for Uber desire to do so on a part-time basis, and that they are attracted to the flexibility of the business model. A study by Hamari, Sjöklint, Ukkonen (2016) also used survey data to better understand why people participate in the other end of the sharing economy, as recipients of services. Some scholars have applied transaction cost theory to TNC models to better understand how they works in particular settings (Hensen and Windekilde, 2016; Motala, 2016; Cramer and Krueger, 2016). My previous research looks at the narrative themes and policy outcomes of TNC emergence in four mid-sized communities (DuPuis, 2017).

Much of the early research that explored the policy implications of TNCs was pursued and published by legal scholars and focuses on regulatory outcomes. Posen’s (2015) research calls for a new way forward with regulation, suggesting that policy makers should experiment with new regulatory structures for TNCs rather than force the companies to comply with existing transportation-for-hire regulations. Similarly, Bryant and Chung (2105) suggest collaboration between the public sector and industry to develop regulations for platform-based business models.



## **Governance, Innovation and Regulation**

This dissertation sets out to explore TNCs and the ways in which they operate in different cities and policy contexts. More broadly, it seeks to consider all types of technology-based market innovations, especially those that do not fit into existing regulatory frameworks, and evaluate the ways in which the narratives that emerge about them ultimately impact regulatory and governance choices that are made. TNCs are a good unit of analysis for considering disruptive technology-based market innovations. Their emergence in city mobility markets was abrupt, and their growth was rapid. TNC business models also saw rapid adoption, as the public quickly grew accustomed to them quickly (Clewlow and Mishra, 2017). Their technology platform business model was new, but the service they provided stood in direct competition to traditional incumbent service providers, such as taxis, livery vehicles, and public transit. Like many other technology-based market innovations, existing regulations at the time of their entrance proved insufficient, and this prompted many cities to create new transportation for-hire ordinances.<sup>4</sup>

Cities have differing governance models, institutional and social histories, shared values and ways of knowing, and partisan leanings (Stone, 1989; Feldman, Khademian and Quick, 2009). All of these factors impact governance decisions that are made and policies that are set in place. Policy actors might use what they know about their communities to make governance decisions. Sometimes these governance decisions respond to pressure from the public, taking into consideration the concerns and desires of coalitions, constituents, and similarly regulated entities

---

<sup>4</sup> In many cases, cities argued that there were relevant laws that addressed TNC operation, and TNCs operated despite existing transportation for-hire ordinances. City officials and regulators argued that TNCs were operating illegally, while TNCs argued that they are a technology platform, not a transportation provider and thus, not subject to existing transportation for-hire ordinances.

(Stone, 1989). Other times, policy actors might leverage narratives to meet their needs, with aims to create a political space that is consistent with their own agendas or aspirations (Edelman, 1964).

This study draws on the governance scholarship of Mark Bevir and R.A.W. Rhodes, and Clarence Stone. Bevir and Rhodes' (2006) decentered theory of governance asserts that politics is comprised of many differing accounts or ways of understanding issues that can be best conceived as narratives. They argue that courses of action in government are the results of aggregated choices made by policy actors. The authors suggest that while traditions or social contexts influence the beliefs of individuals, individuals also have the capacity to adopt novel beliefs and transform their beliefs depending on certain dilemmas or experiences that they encounter (Bevir & Rhodes, 2006). Clarence Stone's scholarship on urban regimes emphasizes the relationships that form between public and private actors as they seek resources and institute policy interventions. Stone defines urban regimes as "the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together to make and carry out governing decisions," (1989).

Often, technology-based innovations create disruption because they do not fit into existing regulatory systems and/or they are inconsistent with official or unofficial mores or rules set forth in the community. This presses policy actors to process the inputs and outcomes of the innovation as a new, never before experienced event. Narrative development is one of the many ways that policy actors and groups organize and process new information, and understanding new disruptive innovations often culminates in a story or narrative (or often times many conflicting narratives) about how these innovations work (or do not) in said policy actors' jurisdictions (Stone, 2005). Those narrative(s) might be consistent with or complementary to existing community values, or institutional and governance frameworks (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006). For instance, if a city tends to emphasize social good or locally grown businesses, they might move to regulate a new

technological innovation in alignment with those values. Alternatively, if a city is more driven by market forces, a regulatory effort might be more aligned with those priorities.

**Regulation.** In *The Politics of Regulation* James Q. Wilson makes an argument consistent with the theoretical contribution in this dissertation that regulatory action is based in political tendencies, ways of knowing and doing, policy environments, history, and dominant policy actors. This underscores the idea presented here, that regulatory response to TNCs in cities might be tightly linked to urban regime classification (1980).

Much of the literature focused on regulation and innovation comes from the fields of economics, administrative law, and environmental policy/studies. Innovation is defined by one scholar as “the commercially successful application of an idea from invention, the initial development of a new idea, and [its] widespread adoption,” (Ashford and Heaton, 1981 as cited in Stewart, 2010, 1). This same scholarship distinguishes between economic and social regulation of innovations, explaining,

*Economic regulation* sets market conditions; it often changes the market efficiency and potentially affects the equality and fairness of the market. *Social regulation*, on the other hand, seeks to protect the welfare of society or the environment. (2010, 1)

Economic theory often addresses regulation as a hindrance to innovation, making the arguments that regulations are costly to firms, and that the money they spend on compliance diverts resources away from innovation. Hauptman and Roberts (1987) study of the effects of increased regulation on biotechnology firms producing medical devices found that an added regulation that tightened preapproval processes for said devices created compliance uncertainty, subsequently reducing market innovation and the production of advanced technology products. Early work by Stigler

argues that regulators face two types of pressure—that of the firms that produce the good or provide the service and thus have a vested interest in fending off stringent regulation, and that of voting consumers who want some degree of benefit or protection. His model and theory of regulation asserts that special interest pressure from firms tends to have more influence over the regulatory process than the electoral pressure from consumers, and thus that regulations tend to be more advantageous to firms (1971).

Literature in the realm of environmental policy tends to argue in favor of the benefits of regulation, underscored by the idea that social good, safety, and justice should take precedence over firm efficiency. Taylor et al.'s study of scrubber units in energy plants and the ways in which Clean Air Act regulations impacted market innovation of these units indicates that in circumstances of policy uncertainty, government regulation can actually increase market innovation (2005).

Another paper put forth by the OECD examines the linkages between regulatory efforts and innovation, and argues that in order to be successful, regulatory reforms that adjust for new technological developments must consider the impacts of said regulation on innovation. The authors argue that in some cases, properly designed regulatory frameworks can encourage new technological innovations, by enhancing competition and thus ensuring more efficient diffusion of new technologies (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, n.d.). This idea is promoted most vigorously by the “Porter Hypothesis” which argues that, “environmental, health, and safety regulation regularly induces innovation and may even enhance the competitiveness of the regulated industry” (as cited in Stewart, 2010, 8). In this study, the specific market-based technology innovation studied will be TNCs such as Uber and Lyft. Some city officials and policy stakeholders welcome TNCs, embracing them as innovative solutions to plug existing gaps in a

city's mobility network. Others craft new regulations for them, or insist that they follow the same rules as traditional transportation service providers such as taxi cabs. Some cities use the crafting of these new rules to substantially restrict the operation of TNCs and others ban the services outright, arguing that their failure to adhere to the same rules that apply to taxis makes their operation illegal. Just as there is diversity in the regulatory responses cities have toward TNCs, there is significant diversity in the stories that dominate discourse about the development of local public policy as it relates to these innovative business models in different settings.

## **Summary**

There are two types of disruption central to this research—policy disruption and technological disruption. The former relates to the ways in which significant exogenous shocks (or disruptions) can have significant influences on dominant narratives and policy outcomes surrounding an issue. So for instance, in the case of this research, it might not be the entrance of TNCs that constitutes this type of disruption, but rather, the fierce deliberation that follows and the narrative that takes hold. The second type of disruption refers to a new technology or business model that impacts the social mores or expectations related to a service or activity. In this case, we are talking about the introduction of TNCs. These sorts of technology driven business models constitute disruption in that they render existing regulatory structures insufficient. Regulations that exist for more traditional business models often do not apply to them, even when the new innovation or application is providing the same service as an incumbent provider (such as the case with TNCs vs. taxis). This sort of nuanced distinction between two entities that operate very differently but provide similar services, creates a sort of ambiguity, in which actors are pressed to rely on stories to make sense of new actors. Sometimes these stories are positive in nature and sometimes they are negative. Sometimes they are riddled with confusion and sometimes there are

multiple, conflicting stories. Often, stories are consistent with existing governance conditions and ways of knowing. For instance, in the formerly referenced food truck example, cities with robust identities related to their food scene tended toward narratives that encompassed that important identity, and sometimes approached these new disruptive business models with a more stringent regulatory response. The dominant narrative that moves policy in these cities often defends and emerges from the perspectives of the traditional brick and mortar restaurants, who argue that they are required to follow regulations and adhere to health codes, and that food trucks can poach their customers without having to do those things. This often results in a call to level the regulatory playing field for all participants in the market, food trucks included. The ultimate policy outcome might be more stringent regulation of food trucks, or at the very least, an effort to establish parity in the way that all food service establishments are regulated. Alternatively, cities in which the food scene was less robust and food was not as central to their identity, tended to be more welcoming. The dominant narrative in those cities was focused on the improved food options offered by food trucks, and encouraging these new businesses to operate so that residents have more options. Policy outcomes in these places tended toward more lax regulations. In urban settings, elites and coalitions will often use disruptions as opportunities, and will thus frame issues using narratives that fit their views, desired outcomes, or policy interests. All of this narrative development is tightly tied to urban regime characteristics.

## **Chapter 4 – Research Design**

### **Setting and Approach**

The cities in this analysis include: Indianapolis, IN, Washington, DC; Austin TX; and Portland, OR. Cities were selected based on regulatory responses. As part of the analysis, I will describe the regimes that have developed in each city, the regulatory response to TNCs, and then, from elite interviews, identify the narrative themes expressed by important actors in each city's policy deliberation over TNCs. These cities exhibit diversity in geography and political orientation, which is relevant because narratives and regulatory responses might come about in accordance with different social cues, political leanings, or traditions.

Because Bevir and Rhodes adhere to an interpretivist epistemology in their scholarship, this research design will also be guided by interpretivism so as to be consistent with their theoretical framework. This means that the approach and frame of this study will be inductive, flexible, reflexive and responsive. There will not be predetermined categorical boundaries or codes, and themes will be allowed to emerge organically. Adhering to this epistemological approach allows for analysis of the fluidity that is inherent in both city governance structures as well as the way stories about policy issues emerge and change.

### **Part I: Comparative Case Studies**

Part I of this dissertation includes a case study comparison across the four cities. The case studies will focus specifically on the city's response to TNCs entering the metropolitan market, with specific emphasis on regulatory outcomes or policy deliberation that took place (actions of the city council or other regulatory bodies), as well as major stakeholders involved in the discussion from outside city government.

To conduct this case study comparison, I relied on the guidance of both Yin (2002) and Merriam (1998). Yin defines the case as “a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context,” (13). Furthermore, he identifies the act of case study as a methodological approach that examines policy issues “by addressing the ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions concerning the phenomenon of interest,” (as cited in Yazan, 2015, 138). Merriam defines the case as “a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (27). She is liberal in how she defines a case, allowing it to be “a person, a program, a group, a specific policy and so on,” (as cited in Yazan, 2015, 139). Since one of the objectives of this research is to understand why cities respond differently to technology-based market innovations, I developed multiple case studies to understand the differences and similarities in the regulatory approaches of each city in the sample. Yin points out that one advantage to this approach is that it allows the researchers to better understand the phenomenon studied within each case, and also across several cases (2003). He also asserts that the researcher should determine a composition for the case early in the design phase of the study (2009). In this study, I opted to compose each case study in the same way, to allow for comparison across cities/cases. Each case has an introductory section, which offers a general overview about the city, its governance structure, its economy and its demographic features. The next section details the city’s urban regime classification. The following sections explore the city’s transportation network, the entrance of TNCs, and the city’s regulatory response. The cases conclude with detail about any state-level policy intervention that took place, and a section about the current state of TNC operations. Yin explains that composing cases with subsections, allows for easier cross-case comparison (2003).



Both Yin and Merriam present scholars with a different step-by-step approach that can help to guide case study design, but Merriam's is more appropriate for this study, in that her epistemological approach is more in line with Bevir and Rhodes' chosen interpretivist tradition, which I aim to follow. Merriam advises scholars to conduct a literature review of the prospective subject, develop a theoretical construct or framework, identify a research problem or questions, and use purposeful sampling to develop a comparative case sample. While her approach is flexible, it still requires certain steps be taken to design a sound study (Yazan, 2015).

For this research, I followed Merriam's approach. I completed a literature review on the subjects of TNCs and policy narrative. From there I developed research questions, ensuring they were consistent with my theoretical framework and contribution. I then used purposive sampling to select cities that could be classified as certain regime types. The case studies for each of the four cities were developed using publicly available documents such as meeting minutes and recordings, policy documentation, newspaper articles, and other media sources. This approach has been used in other research and the sources have been established as valid (e.g., McBeth et al., 2005; Roe, 1994; DuPuis, 2017). I also relied on the interviews (design detailed below) as a way to augment my understanding of each case city's experience with TNCs. Using these different types of analysis to develop a deeper understanding as to why a city acted in the way that it did and how certain narratives became prominent in each place is what Yin refers to as triangulation (2009).

Urban regime theory is drawn upon to identify different regimes or coalitions that formed in each city, and to assess the ways in which those coalitions influenced the ultimate policy responses of the city. Mossberger and Stoker's examination of Stone's urban regime theory presents several criteria that must be met to apply an urban regime concept to a city (2001). They

argue that urban regimes reflect the following characteristics in both formal and informal relationships:

...partners drawn from government and nongovernmental sources, requiring but not limited to business participation; collaboration based on social production—the need to bring together fragmented resources for the power to accomplish tasks; identifiable policy agendas that can be related to the composition of the participants in the coalition; and a longstanding pattern of cooperation rather than a temporary coalition (829).

Regimes must also have some sort of identifiable purpose that drives policy action. However, the authors also point out that the composition of like regimes might vary from city to city, due to the different types of resources that drive each local economy (2001).

**Case selection and justification.** To select the cities for my case comparison, I sought to understand the different regime classifications set forth by different urban regime theory scholars. There are four regime types classified according to their coalition makeup and development outcomes: corporate/development, progressive, caretaker, and intergovernmental regimes (Stone, 1993; Levine and Ross, 2006). For this dissertation, I selected cities that represent each of these four regime types. The characteristics of regimes types were identified and then subsequently four cities were selected by assessing the resources, coalitions and actions that emerge from them, and also more specifically, the ways in which different local governing coalitions in the city act(ed) toward TNCs. Regime classifications are explored and explained more in depth in each city case/chapter.

I started with a longer list of cities in which TNCs operated and there had been some deliberation or policy activity surrounding the regulatory response to them, and then, relying on

purposeful sampling techniques, selected cities that were truest to each regime classification and offered some geographic diversity to the sample. Stone explains that urban regime classifications are somewhat normative in nature, and that to understand the nature of governing coalitions, a scholar must closely examine the city's dynamics as well as those of the policy actors:

Inquiry needs to focus on the character of local governing arrangements, what enables them to pursue an agenda, and what shapes the strength and direction of a locality's problem-solving efforts. Put in general terms, as urban actors construct their responses to the problems and challenges around them, how do governing arrangements take shape? What matters as urban actors adapt their political and civic relationships to the task of governance? (1993, 9)

Selection of cases across different regime types proved reasonable in a study that aims to determine whether regime characteristics can impact narrative dominance and policy outcome. For this study, I wanted to be sure that cases represented different types of cities, tendencies, coalitions, resources, and values. Kantor, Savitch, and Haddock (1997) used a similar selection method in their comparative study of cities' urban regimes. DiGaetano and Lawless (1999) also utilized Urban Regime Theory to conduct comparative research among different cities experiencing industrial decline. Urban Regime Theory provides a useful frame with which to organize cities according to their governing behaviors. Considering geographic diversity in my sample, ultimately left me with an east coast city, a Midwestern city, a city in the Southwest, and a west coast city. While there is a fifth non-regime typology, I determined that including in my analysis would bring little value due to the fact that the non-regime classification represents lack of governance structure and effectiveness. Limiting the scope of my study to four cases, one in each standard regime category gave me a diverse sample of cities with unique governance tendencies and interests.

As a corporate regime, Indianapolis tends to consider private sector interests and the business community plays a huge role in the city's coalitions. Important actors in Indianapolis include corporations, prominent philanthropies, and representatives from athletic teams and the professional racecar driving arena. Austin is a progressive regime, and considers the needs of less powerful and protected classes as well as prioritizes environmental concerns. The city is resistant to corporate interests or takeovers. Important actors in Austin include community organizers, activists, labor interests, and local nonprofit organizations. As a caretaker regime, Portland tends to emphasize maintaining the status quo and preferring to retain its quirky way of life. While the city has changed drastically in recent decades, it established an urban growth boundary to control urban expansion and sprawl. Influential actors in Portland include bureaucratic figures and regulators. Finally, due to its unique governance arrangement, Washington, DC qualifies as an intergovernmental regime. While intergovernmental regime status is often used to classify cities that are mismanaged and require intervention from federal policymakers (Levine and Ross, 2006), Washington is unique in that its designation as the U.S. capitol city (without representation in Congress) leaves it with significant federal oversight. Important actors in Washington, DC include city policy officials, federal liaisons, and members of Congress. From this comparative analysis, I also developed a typology of regulatory responses to TNCs (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Typology for city regulatory responses to TNCs**

Regulatory Response Typology	Case City	How the city regulated TNCs
No regulation	Indianapolis, IN	When Uber and Lyft entered the Indianapolis market, the city opted away from regulating the companies and instead decided to initiate an unofficial pilot program to allow Uber and Lyft to operate while local officials determined the right course of action. The city and the tourism bureau were pleased with the prospects of having Uber in the city, as they felt it bolstered their chances of booking mega events. Subsequently, the state legislature passed an ordinance in 2015 that prohibits the city from regulating TNCs.
Light regulation	Washington, DC	In 2014 the city passed an ordinance that Uber touted as “a model for the rest of the country and maybe the world.” Specifically, the bill, entitled the “Vehicle-for-Hire Innovation Act of 2014” required background checks (non-fingerprint) on TNC drivers, vehicle inspections on an annual basis, and \$1 million in insurance coverage during time of service. The ordinance also prohibited street hailing with TNCs (Fischler, 2014).
Strict regulation	Austin, TX	Uber entered the Austin market in March of 2015. In May of 2016, the city held a referendum that, if passed by voters, stood to dismantle a city ordinance requiring TNC drivers to undergo fingerprint-based background checks. Passage of the ballot measure would have allowed Uber and Lyft to continue adhering to their background check systems, which do not require more thorough fingerprint scans. Voter rejected the referendum, meaning TNC drivers would need to submit to fingerprint background checks. Uber and Lyft subsequently pulled out of the city, arguing that the extra step of fingerprinting drivers slows down driver sign-ups, and increases wait times. They were replaced by other like services that were willing to meet the requirements of the regulation
Outright ban	Portland, OR	Uber launched in Portland in December 2014. The city initially sued and suspended TNC operations, leading to a public battle between Uber and Lyft and the city. After 4 months, the city initiated a 120-day pilot program in April of 2015, with temporary regulations. The program allowed TNCs to operate, if they followed a certain set of guidelines, including drivers submitting to background checks, ensuring vehicles met accessibility standards for disabled customers, and special liability coverage for drivers.

## **Part II: Elite Interviews.**

Part II of this dissertation includes interviews with policy elites and stakeholders, such as local elected officials, business owners, union leaders, individuals who represented Uber and Lyft, and other relevant actors who played a major role in the policy deliberations around TNCs. This part of the study involves narrative analysis based on Bevir and Rhoads decentered theory of governance, which argues that individual beliefs, desires, and traditions combine to create stories, and that those stories drive policy related and political tendencies and actions. Interviews offer a nuanced view of the way different groups in a community understood and reacted toward TNCs. Conversations with policy actors in each city provided what Clifford Geertz called “thick description,” for this study illuminating the ways in which these technology-based market innovations impacted different members of the same community (1973). Geertz defined thick description as critical to defensible ethnographic and qualitative research, the act of “sorting out the structures of signification...and determining their social ground and import.” (1973, p. 9). It enables readers and researchers to understand the context of what is taking place. Several other scholars have described this idea aptly and succinctly:

Geertz described the practice of *thick description* as a way of providing cultural context and meaning that people place on actions, words, things, etc. Thick descriptions provide enough context so that a person outside the culture can make meaning of the behavior (Ray, 2011, 1.

For instance, in this study, it enables the reader or researcher to peel one additional layer of complexity away from the policy issues at hand. Archival research on the policy response or outcome would indicate which policies were enacted following the deliberation surrounding

TNCs. However, interviews yield information about the dominant forces at play, the negotiations, the conciliations, and the winners and the losers.

**Interview protocols.** Because Bevir and Rhoads interpretive approach places emphasis on the reflexive relationship between the researcher and the subject, this study employed a semi-structured interview approach guided by several pre-determined questions (see Appendix A), but conversations were kept generally open-ended. Interviewees were encouraged to respond openly, and the interview was able to develop organically. This method allows listening for narrative themes.

**Interview sample.** In seeking out the appropriate policy elites and stakeholders for an interview sample, I began with purposeful sampling technique, by curating a list of individuals who played a major role in the policy deliberations around TNCs. Patton defines purposeful sampling is “a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases...” (as cited in Palinkas et al., 2015, 1).

After conducting preliminary research on TNC deployment in each case city, I developed an initial list of interviewees. I included local elected officials, business owners, union leaders, representatives from Uber and Lyft, TNC drivers and TNC rider activists and other relevant actors from each case city. Many of the individuals I wanted to interview were public officials and thus had publicly available contact information. I used websites like LinkedIn and phone correspondence to reach out to individuals whose information was not publicly available. I aimed to balance the sample with a similar number of interviewees from each city, in order to ensure that the themes that emerged from coding were not heavily weighted toward one particular city’s experience, policy traditions, or urban regime.

After confirming and conducting interviews with the initial list of individuals, I relied on a snowball sampling technique to identify additional interview candidates (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). This enabled me to incorporate additional appropriate interviewees I may have overlooked based on suggestions and referrals made by the earlier rounds of subjects in the sample who were intimately familiar with each city's policy actors and deliberations. I opted toward snowball sampling to capture other important policy actors that subjects in the first wave of interviews knew were involved with or influential over the process of TNC regulation in the city. This enabled me to better understand the important actors in each city, and thus the nature of each city's urban regime players.

**Data collection.** I spoke with 23 people, four from Washington, DC, eight from Portland, OR, four from Indianapolis, IN, and six from Austin, TX. One interviewee was an industry expert who is based in New York and follows the issue of TNCs at the national level. In total, I conducted 22 interviews over a period of 12 weeks. One interview included two participants from the same city. Interviews lasted between 15 and 80 minutes and averaged 34 minutes long. Prior to the initiation of the study, research protocol was approved by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, and all interviews and data collection efforts were conducted accordingly (see Appendices A-D).

Upon confirming a date a time for each interview, I asked participants to review and sign a consent form (See Appendix D). I conducted all interviews via telephone. Prior to conducting each interview, I verbally reaffirmed much of what was included in the consent form, asking each participant once more for their permission to record the discussion, while assuring said participant that no identifying information would be disclosed in the final output and/or subsequent publication. I used an audio recording application, called Tape-A-Call, to record the interview



data. When each interview was complete, I downloaded the interview recording to my computer. Recording the interviews enabled me to take notes of interest while also continually listening to and engaging in reflexive conversation with the interviewee.

Before beginning with my predetermined interview questions, I provided an overview of my dissertation research. Some interviewees or their staff asked for the questions in advance, which I obliged. I employed a semi-structured interview approach, keeping the conversation open-ended, and allowing it to flow naturally, but guiding it with several pre-determined questions (see Appendix A). This method allowed me to interject new questions where appropriate that were relevant to unanticipated or interesting subjects that came up, pursue more information about issues specific to the interviewee's city, and better engage in the conversation so as to listen for narrative themes. This is consistent with the interpretive tradition of Bevir and Rhodes, which emphasizes a reflexive relationship between the researcher and the subject (2006).

The predetermined interview questions created structure for the interviews and acted as a point of consistency across all of the different conversations. However, the questions were crafted in a way that encouraged interviewees to speak to the specifics of their experiences with TNCs in each city. By keeping some fluidity in the interview, and allowing conversation to flow naturally, interviewees were able to speak freely and in-depth on the topic in a way that helped me to discern whether there are prominent narrative themes that stood out in each city's experience with TNCs. I took guidance from Kvale (1996) who likens qualitative interviews to conversations and defines them as "attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (1). This means I allowed for silences, pauses, and exploration of interesting ideas that might veer from the pre-determined questions.

After explaining the basis of my study, I started each interview with the same question, which was: “How did TNC services like Uber and Lyft enter into your metropolitan market?” This often resulted in the interviewee telling a long backstory about how and when TNCs came to their city. In some cases, additional questions in my predetermined list were answered in this telling. In other cases, I used subsequent probing questions such as “Was the city’s response to these new services positive or negative?” or “How would you classify the relationship between your city/organization and TNCs?” These questions enabled me to better understand and register narrative themes without specifically inquiring about them. Throughout each interview, I asked for clarification when necessary. I also inquired about interesting issues that interviewees mentioned that might not fall within the pre-determined interview parameters. The semi-structured interview method ensured that during each interview, the same 13 questions were addressed or answered, but this approach also allowed for each interview to be unique and for complexity to be captured. Some of the interviewees delved into interesting nuances about TNCs in their cities that added depth to the interview data and sometimes required follow-up.

I concluded interview data collection after speaking with several a representatives from each city and after referrals from interviewees became redundant or circular. This redundancy, called theoretical saturation, is based in grounded theory and was first presented by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The scholars defined it as such:

Saturation means that no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category. As (s)he sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated (Glaser and Strauss, as cited in Saunders et al., 2017).

While each interview added a new perspective and each city's story about TNCs was different, themes and similarities began to emerge. After I spoke to several policy actors from each city, and I was able to clearly identify narrative themes across interviews, I determined that sampling could cease due to adequate saturation (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007).

In addition to recording each interview, I also kept an interview log, which included detail about each potential interviewee I contacted, their position, the city they were with, date of first outreach, date of second outreach, confirmed interview date, whether they completed the consent form, whether the interview was complete and transcribed, and whether it had been coded. I kept a separate tab in the spreadsheet for individuals who declined or did not respond to my outreach.

**Transcription, coding and analysis.** Per the interpretive research tradition, I took an inductive approach, to allow for themes to emerge naturally (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). My coding process allowed themes to emerge from the data, an alternative approach to applying a pre-determined template of codes to the data in order to identify themes that fit. In order to follow a replicable procedure and bring some degree of rigor to my analysis, I looked to the analysis style of Crabtree and Miller, who suggest a process in which the researcher “engages the text naively, without a template” (1992, 20).

I started by using an online transcription service, Rev, to transfer the audio files from my recorded interviews into Microsoft Word text documents. Having the transcriptions of the interviews to review enabled me to begin drawing out potential themes and codes that might be applied, and thinking how themes and codes emerged differently across different cities and different interviewees. They also helped me to better construct my case studies for each city, as well as understand the roles of certain actors in the different urban regimes. In re-reading and re-

familiarizing myself with the interview content, I was able to begin organizing and analyzing my data early in the collection and transcription process.

After I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews, I began thinking systematically about how to organize my data. I first listened to each recording once more, then used the transcriptions to code for themes. I used Dedoose, a qualitative analysis computer program, to apply codes to the data. This was an iterative process, so some interviews yielded new codes and themes that had not emerged in previous interviews. Approaching the coding in this way helped to surface previously unaccounted for connections and nuances between narrative themes. Per the inductive approach, I did not rely on pre-determined coding schemas (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), and instead, allowed codes and themes to emerge from the interview data. Marshall and Rossman argue, “In qualitative studies, data collection and analysis typically go hand in hand to build a coherent interpretation. The researcher is guided by initial concepts and developing understandings that (s)he shifts or modifies as (s)he collects and analyzes the data” (2011, 208).

In some cases, I discovered interviewees’ expressions as having multiple codes, or relevance to several different elements of the study. I used Saldana’s simultaneous coding method which the scholar asserts is appropriate “when the data’s content suggests multiple meanings that necessitate and justify more than one code” (2009, 62).

After initially coding the interviews, I assessed all of the codes that emerged and began considering the ways in which they might fit together thematically, across cities, and within the context of urban regimes. I then used Saldana’s approach to conduct a second coding cycle. This helped me further understand existing codes, how they might merge together as categories and themes, and how they might fit into conceptually into my theoretical framework (Saldana, 2009).

I looked for comparisons across cities, and considered the ways in which different themes emerged from different perspectives.

**Trustworthiness.** Haverland and Yanow (2012) assert that interpretive research should be flexible and responsive, and that researchers that choose this path should avoid rigidity and pre-defined coding structures. However, the reality is that research questions and ideas begin naturally with inquiry and/or knowledge, and the scholars acknowledge that a project might be developed or framed by existing literature or “by prior knowledge of the field setting,” (Haverland and Yanow, 2012, 405). As a researcher cannot eliminate his or her existing knowledge or tendencies, there must be careful consideration of the coding approach, and attempt to uphold and exhibit rigor in the research approach. In conceiving of coding categories, I considered some of the standard themes I expected would emerge from discussions about regulating new, innovative business models: leveling the playing field; following existing regulations or laws, expanding choices in the market. These expectations helped me to formulate and organize my ideas around coding categories.

Because I cannot use intercoder reliability assessments as validation measures, I have instead chosen to rely on Lincoln and Guba’s trustworthiness criterion. Lincoln and Guba’s important work, *Naturalistic Inquiry* presents the following criterion to prove the trustworthiness of qualitative work: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). These criteria were applied to my own previous research in this space (DuPuis, 2017) and have also been utilized by Gray and Jones (2016), to substantiate their attempt to combine a qualitative epistemological approach with elements of the NPF. This research is quite similar to their study, in that it also utilizes case studies and narrative analysis of elite interviews. While my study does not utilize the NPF, there are outstanding validation and replicability questions that

arise inherently with the use of interpretivism and qualitative narrative analysis. In seeking to additional validation of the research approach and findings presented in this dissertation, I relied on the four trustworthiness criteria as guides, and detail the ways in which they substantiated my efforts.

***Credibility.*** Lincoln and Guba affirm that a “study should be credible to those from which the information was gathered as well as to critical readers,” (1985) and that those who read the research output should feel confident in the feasibility of the findings. This dissertation meets this criterion by detailing the research process in depth—how the data was collected, analyzed, and coded. Case selection, analysis and coding procedures were approached with transparency and sample diversity in mind, as both of those relate to cities’ regulatory responses and urban regime types. The presentation of these research approaches and procedures should reinforce the conclusions drawn here, and create a sort of roadmap for the reader as to how they were reached. Additionally, much of the dissertation is committed to providing background and contextual settings for the research—specifically the impacts of market-based innovations on cities across America, and the different priorities cities have as they respond to disruptive mobility providers (DuPuis, 2017).

***Transferability.*** Despite the fact that TNCs are the unit of analysis in this dissertation, the design of and findings from this study could easily be applied to other technology-based market innovations. In fact, much of the literature explored in Chapter 2 refers to other similar examples (e.g. food trucks) and how cities moved to regulate them. This analysis focuses on the narrative themes that emerge on the issue of TNCs in different urban regime settings. This research approach can be used to analyze many other circumstances and policy issues (DuPuis, 2017). While TNCs are used as the subject in this case, they only represent one example of a disruptive technology that

upended existing regulations and consumer patterns in cities. What is more central to this analysis, are the values and priorities set forth by elite policy actors, the stories they tell, the contexts and power structures in which they tell them, and the ways in those stories lead to policy outcomes. This dissertation and the case studies herein are also supported by thick description of the cities, their urban regime contexts, the emergence of TNCs in each market, and the ways in which different actors responded to them. Lincoln and Guba place the responsibility on the researcher to provide sufficient context and thick description about the objects of study and the study design, so as to allow readers and other researchers to draw comparisons between this and their own research, and transfer the methodological and/or epistemological approaches (1985).

***Dependability.*** Per Lincoln and Guba scholarship, this criterion is meant to evaluate the whether the research processes and findings are replicable (1985; DuPuis 2017). They also assert that this criterion is closely tied to that of transferability and that “a demonstration of the former goes some distance in ensuring the latter,” (Shenton, 2004, 71). Again, this might include reporting the study’s research process in detail, in a way that allows other researchers to emulate the approach. To meet this criterion, I have included a detailed section on the research design and how it was executed as well as detailed description of how the data was gathered. This presents a reader with the opportunity to understand exactly how the study was designed, planned, executed, and assess whether appropriate, replicable protocols were followed

***Confirmability.*** Lincoln and Guba assert that in order to meet some standard of confirmability “results should be supported by the members of the community they are derived from and other external sources whenever possible,” (1985). This criterion reinforces the notion that the researcher(s) should acknowledge his or her position in or influence over the data collection or research results. One of their suggestions for addressing this criterion is

acknowledging reflexivity, or the position of the researcher(s) relative to the subjects or data throughout the research process. The reflexive approach to research is central to the interview process used for this dissertation's elite interviews.

### **Limitations and Challenges**

Findings from this study are not necessarily generalizable to other cities. While the comparative case studies presented in this dissertation illuminate the ways in which policy outcomes in the four cities compare to one another and the ways in which they might be tied to urban regimes, this study, like many others before it, “cannot definitively conclude that two like cities, under identical circumstances” with identical urban regime classifications would exhibit the same responses to technology-based market innovations (DuPuis, 2017, 29). While we can find many different instances of similar regulatory responses to new technologies, cities present nuance and complexity that is evergreen, constantly changing, and often difficult to generalize. Every city has a unique set of political, social, and geographical features and each one is subject to unique challenges and pressures. There is also a challenge inherent in studying a rapidly evolving and changing business platform such as transportation network companies. Over the course of five years, this technology and business model has changed enormously, and so too, have the ways in which local governments respond to and regulate it. Finally, while this dissertation aims to explore the ways in which urban regime structures and narrative development lead to policy outcomes and collective action, the process of narrative development in the individual psyche is unwieldy and sometimes unpredictable. There is much we still do not understand, psychologically, about how individuals comprehend and form their own stories, and the roles stories play in cognition and action. There are also other factors beyond those studied here that undoubtedly influence the ways in which individuals and groups come to know and act on policy issues.



## **Summary**

Part I of this dissertation includes a case study comparison of four cities-Indianapolis, IN, Washington, DC; Austin TX; and Portland, OR. The case studies focus specifically on each city's response to TNCs entering the metropolitan market, with specific emphasis on regulatory outcomes or policy deliberation that took place (actions of the city council or other regulatory bodies), as well as major stakeholders involved in the discussion from outside city government. Part II of this dissertation includes interviews with policy elites and stakeholders from each city, such as local elected officials, business owners, union leaders, representatives from Uber and Lyft, TNC drivers and TNC rider activists and other relevant actors who played a major role in the policy deliberations around TNCs. Lincoln and Guba's trustworthiness criterion for qualitative research is applied to substantiate the work and claims made within.

## **Chapter 5 – Indianapolis, Indiana**

Indianapolis has a projected population of 853,173, and it is the capitol of the state of Indiana. It is also the largest city in the state of Indiana and, after Chicago, the second most populous city in the Midwest region. It ranks as the 12<sup>th</sup> largest city in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018) Like many communities in the Midwest, Indianapolis once relied on manufacturing as a major industry and economic force, however, in the eighties, when the city was faced with the displacement of many of those jobs, leaders shifted the focus toward generating revenue by hosting sporting and mega events. This resulted in the city quadrupling investment in tourism and hospitality. By doing so and beginning to host first amateur, then later major sporting events and conventions, the city was able to make tourism one of its major industries. In addition, the city serves as a major Midwest transportation hub and has a long established insurance industry. Some of the major employers in the city include Clarion Health and Dow AgroSciences, and the city also houses the headquarters of Eli Lilly and Company (City-data.com, 2018).

Indianapolis is governed under a city-county council system that represents both the city of Indianapolis and the county in which it is located, Marion County. The city-county council is comprised of 25 seats, each of which represents a district in Marion county and is up for reelection after four years. While cities in Marion County outside of Indianapolis still retain their autonomy in name, they are governed under the consolidated council structure and represented by their council member. The city-county council president is elected by the majority party in the first meeting of the term. Currently the council is controlled by Democrats 14-11. Tension between the state's Republican controlled legislature and Indianapolis' Democrat controlled City-County council often results in politicking and preemptive moves that aim to undercut the city. For instance, the city-county council once had four-at-large seats. In an attempt to overhaul and control

the city's/county's government, the state legislature moved to eliminate the four at-large seats, all of which were held by Democrats. Indiana is a Dillon's Rule state, but that is only applied to townships.

In addition to the city-county council, there is a mayor. The mayor of Indianapolis is also elected every four years, and serves as the chief executive of the city of Indianapolis as well as Marion County. The current mayor of Indianapolis is Joseph Hoggsett. There is also a county Clerk elected every four years, who handles the day-to-day administration of many city/county programs. Maya Eldridge currently serves in that seat.

### **Urban Regime**

Indianapolis can be classified as a corporate regime, given its significant reliance on private sector interests, corporate entities and market forces to guide and sustain its economic boon and success. Compared to other similar cities in the Midwest, Indianapolis (and the state of the Indiana) is relatively low sales, income, and property taxes (Exner, 2014).<sup>5</sup>

The Lilly Endowment and Foundation is one of the largest philanthropies in the world and a formidable player in Indianapolis governance and development. While the foundation was originally established through gifts of Eli Lilly and Company stock and contributions from the Lilly family, the foundation today operates separately from the pharmaceutical company. The foundation's grant portfolio includes community development, health, religion and education, and disperses a great deal of its funds in Indianapolis and in Indiana. The Lilly Foundation has contributed to several major construction projects in the city of Indianapolis, including the Indiana

---

<sup>5</sup> While the city has low property taxes, it does have a relatively steep passenger vehicle excise tax, and it has used ballot measures to pass transit related taxes.

Convention Center and many of the city's arts and cultural institutions (Bodenhamer and Barrows, 1994).

Sports teams and figures are significant players in Indianapolis' urban regime as well. Indianapolis is considered a sports destination, and in recent decades has focused on accommodating the large influx of people that come into the city for sporting events and other mega events such as conventions and marathons (Green and Sweeney, 2012). The city is highly regarded as a racecar mecca, and hosts the Indianapolis 500 and many other races on its renowned Indianapolis Speedway. One interviewee explained the value that the city places on these types of sporting events and how that might have translated to quick embrace and adoption of TNCs:

...with Indianapolis being a convention destination and then some of our big events like the NCAA and the Indy 500, it does draw large crowds from out of town. And the thing about the TNCs is the app is portable that people are able to come in to Indianapolis and they already have their Uber app on their phone and can just load it up. Whereas here coming in we have over 30 taxi companies who each have their own phone number. So if you're an out of townner a little more difficult to figure out which taxi company to call (personal communication, October 5, 2017).

Catering to tourism acknowledges that it is a significant source of revenue for the city, and that investments and policy that enables it and the economic boost it brings is a priority for the city's government. The city was also very open to the idea of embracing a private sector company as a primary mobility provider. In addition to sporting events, the city hosts conventions:

We hold some pretty sizable conventions. A lot of that does happen through traffic. People rent cars. They'll either drive in, or they'll fly in, and they'll rent cars, and they'll ferry between whatever hotel they're staying in in the metro region to downtown, and then drive

back at the end of the day. We have a huge gaming convention, and that's kind of what happens there. We have the Future Farmers of America, and that tends to happen there, although that's a little bit different animal because a lot of high school students, so there's lots of buses. The other big one is, we hold an international firefighters' convention every year, so there's firefighters from all over the country, and probably all over the world. They tend to kind of take up hotel rooms throughout the metro area, and then tend to drive in, drive out (personal communication, August 7, 2017).

In initially choosing not to regulate TNCs, and instead instituting a pilot in which city leadership implied they would leave it to the market, the city lost its ability to regulate TNCs to preemptive state legislation. The city's subsequent move, which is also consistent with its status as a corporate regime, was to deregulate the taxi industry in order to level the playing field.

### **Transportation System**

Indianapolis' transit system, Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation (known locally as IndyGo) currently consists exclusively of a bus service. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the city had an expansive streetcar network as well. However, like many other American cities, Indianapolis discontinued streetcar service in the 1950s. In 2011, a group of business and community leaders assessed the possibility of bringing a new streetcar line to the city, but the proposal never achieved much traction. IndyGo is currently planning for the first phase of a bus-rapid transit line that will take riders from the north side of the city to the University of Indianapolis on the south side of the city. The city also has a people mover that connects the Indiana University School of Medicine to various hospital campuses throughout the city. Though it is open to the public, it primarily serves the medical community and people traveling between medical centers. The city is also served by several taxi-cab companies, including Indianapolis Yellow Cab, Hosier

Cab and Indy Airport Taxi, among others. According to the city's website, there are more than 30 taxi companies that operate there, and over 800 individual vehicles (2018). Indianapolis also operates a carshare service called Blue Indy, which operates a 100% electric fleet (Blue-indy.com, 2018).

The city's transit system considers TNCs a complementary opportunity for first mile, last mile service. Currently IndyGo is in the process of a significant system redesign, in which the system will add approximately 70% local service. As part of the comprehensive operations analysis that informed some of that early work, the transit agency discussed whether it would emphasize high-ridership corridors, or coverage areas. The system redesign will leave certain parts of Indianapolis and Marron County with lower frequency service. One interviewee from the city's transit agency explained further:

What we see is a lot of opportunity for the TNCs to serve those areas, and get them to our frequent routes, and then in that way work complementarily...There's a question, are we going to lose a rider that maybe could've taken transit from after an evening out periodically? Yeah. I'm sure that that happens, but I think the bulk of our ridership are folks that are taking transit to and from work every day (personal communication, August 7, 2017).

He explained that ultimately, IndyGo feels that opportunity for complementary service outstrips the competitive approach. This willingness to rely on the private sector to provide the city's mobility options is consistent with a corporate regime status in that it puts the provision of a traditionally public sector service in the hands of a corporation.

Despite the fact that the city has several transit and mobility options, Indianapolis is a car-centric city, and the majority of trips taken by people that live there are in single-occupancy

vehicles. One individual I spoke to implied that high car ownership in the city resulted in residents showing mediocre reception to TNCs:

...it got it seems like kind of a lukewarm reception. Most people here in Indianapolis are drivers. There aren't many people that use taxis or even now the Uber and Lyft services. So they were more popular with people coming into town and uhhh with college campus people (personal communication, October 7, 2017).

Other interviewees implied that Indianapolis did not have a robust taxi network to begin with:

Ummm the TNCs came into the marketplace in 2013-2014. Probably because it was not a big city, we do not have a lot of taxi use, you know we only have 600 taxis total in the city, it didn't make a big splash (personal communication, August 1, 2017).

Again, our taxi cab service is not a robust service. It mostly provided, and still to some degree provides, rides between downtown and the airport, and then some of the entertainment districts on Fridays and Saturday evenings to neighborhoods. It was not a robust system. I couldn't walk outside on a weekday in downtown Indianapolis and hail a cab (personal communication, August 6, 2017)

The lackluster taxi service was also cited as the reason few people took the side of the taxi drivers when Uber and Lyft came into the market.

### **Entrance of TNCs**

Uber entered Indianapolis in June of 2013 and Lyft entered the market in August of the same year. Because TNCs are not metered or hailed on the street, and initially payments to the Uber and Lyft were technically classified as “suggested donations” the companies were allowed to disregard the city’s existing Public Vehicle-for-Hire ordinance. This protected Uber and Lyft

from being forced to adhere to the same licensing requirements as taxis, such as submitting to background checks and ensuring encrypted credit card systems (Schoettle, 2014). They were also not subject to driver training requirements (anyone with a car was able to drive for Uber once the company expanded service beyond their original black car model), and vehicle safety inspections.<sup>6</sup>

Taxi operators in the city pushed back against the operation of the two TNCs, arguing that they were not following the local ordinances and that it was subjecting them to an unequal playing field. They felt that the presence of Uber and Lyft was unfair in the market, due to the fact that the incumbent taxi markets were forced to adhere to different regulations than TNCs but the services they were providing were identical. Differences in insurance requirements also raised concerns among incumbent providers and the public alike. One interviewee explained the makeup and response of the taxi driver community in Indianapolis

...a large portion of the taxi cab industry here in Indiana is African immigrants. Many of them feel like they don't have too many other job options that will pay the same as what they used to make with the taxi industry. They're very proud of their service. They consider themselves ambassadors to Indianapolis and the uhhh they like the fact that they have a safety background check. Their customers can feel like they know who they're riding with and they don't want to put Uber and Lyft out of business. They just want Uber and Lyft to basically admit that they're taxi companies and follow the same rules (personal communication, October 7, 2017).

Another city councilmember from Indianapolis described the response of the taxi-cab industry:

---

<sup>6</sup> When Uber first deployed in many cities, the company was still operating under what has come to be known as its 'black car model.' Under this original model, cars available were officially livery service vehicles with trained and specially licensed drivers. Once Uber launched its 'UberX' model, anyone with a personal vehicle could apply to be a driver.



From taxi drivers and professional drivers there was a righteous indignation. These are folks who are professional drivers. We have allowed folks who are not professional drivers into the market to compete with them. There was this thing of feeling like this was a great imbalance, that it wasn't fair. We are trained, we are commercial drivers, we have to have special testing, our vehicles are regularly inspected, and yet these folks are being allowed to come into the market, unregulated. We don't know if their vehicles are up to par, or if they have background checks. Here in Marion County, your car has to be licensed in Marion County. You had people from other communities driving into the city to drop off and pick up. How can you do this to us, when we are abiding by your recommendations?! It's just not fair.

One of the common rejoinders of Uber is that they are a technology platform rather than a transportation company. Taxi companies and other incumbent transportation providers disagree vehemently with this notion, arguing that picking people up and giving them a ride in exchange for money classifies a company as 'transportation for hire' and thus subjects them to the same regulations as other similar companies in the jurisdiction.

### **Regulatory Response**

When Uber and Lyft entered the Indianapolis market, the city took a laissez-faire approach and opted away from regulating the companies. Local leaders instead decided to initiate an unofficial pilot program to allow Uber and Lyft to operate while they determined the right course of action. The city and the tourism bureau were pleased with the prospects of having Uber in the city, as they felt it bolstered their chances of bringing in both people and mega events.

When Uber and Lyft entered Indianapolis, the market was one of the fastest growing in the nation, and the number of mega-events taking place there was on the rise. Thus, the city opted initially to take a free-market approach, allowing Uber and Lyft to operate sans regulation.

There was also a general sentiment that Uber and Lyft could add options to the local mobility network. One interviewee explained,

I think the city generally welcomed it, particularly the administration that we had, the mayoral administration at that time, when it emerged. The mayor was formerly a logistics officer in the armed forces and was kind of a transportation guru. He was certainly abreast of the changes that were occurring before it came to Indianapolis, and he really was a leader in terms of bringing additional transportation options into Indianapolis. He was a big supporter of IndyGo, so it wasn't at the exclusion of IndyGo, but certainly I think the idea was certainly embraced as an alternative option here in Indianapolis (personal communication (August 6, 2017)).

### **State Policy Interventions**

Before the city could craft a regulation, the state legislature passed a law in 2015 that prohibits cities in the state of Indiana from regulating TNCs. Referred to more generally as state preemption, this dynamic between the state legislature and the city of Indianapolis is common, and has played out with other policy issues as well. Indiana's state legislature often acts to inhibit the actions of the state's largest city, in some cases, for partisan reasons. One interviewee explained the dynamic between the city and the state legislature, using a different policy issues as examples:

A few years ago we wanted a minimum wage increase for state workers. A few years before that [Democrats] used to have 29 council members. Our balance at the time, was 15-14. We had all four of the at-large seats which means that the district seats were

predominantly held by Republicans. The state came in... as I said the state has a right to come in and do what they want... they came in and eliminated our at-large seats. It just so happens that we won enough seats that we had a 13-12 majority. When the state does something, we recognize that there is no point in pushing back. When they did that it was like “Why are we fighting?”... So you asked if there was any discussion with the state. No... This is what we’re up against, (personal communication, August 1, 2017).

This ongoing battle between the Democratic leaning Indianapolis’ City-County Council and the Republican leaning Indiana State Legislature is not limited to the issue of TNCs. Nor is it limited to Indianapolis. Many cities across the country are experiencing preemption challenges from their state legislatures on issues from minimum wage and workforce policy to marijuana usage, to autonomous vehicles and many other issues. In many cases, like the one presented here, state legislators pass preemptive bills that restrict municipalities in the state from taking any regulatory action that might inhibit technology companies, as an attempt to take a “pro-innovation” stance.

### **Current Status of TNC Operations**

Because the Indiana State Legislature preempted Indianapolis’ ability to regulate Uber and Lyft before the city could pass any ordinances, TNCs still operate essentially unregulated in the city of Indianapolis. The city’s taxi cab industry and organized labor representatives continues to push back against what it perceives as an uneven regulatory playing field, arguing that taxis are forced to operate according to a much stricter and completely different set of rules than TNCs. In 2016, the Indianapolis City-County Council launched a commission to explore the possibility of leveling the playing field between taxis and TNCs. The objective of the commission is to evaluate and explore overhauling taxi regulations that might be barriers to taxis operating and competing

with TNCs. In addition to looking at eliminating necessary regulatory hurdles for taxis, the commission is also considering ways to modernize the taxi fleets that serve Indianapolis (Briggs, 2017; Allbritten, 2016). One interviewee explained the commission further:

We're doing a Reform Study Commission to see if it's possible to do some city deregulation on the Indianapolis taxi drivers...for the most part a majority of the issues that we're working on with the Reform Commission would decrease the cost burden to taxi drivers individually. Like one thing is that one of the main differences between the regulations is the background check level between what TNC drivers do when they're initially in and then the fact that taxi drivers do FBI or Homeland Security level background checks every single year including fingerprinting and they pay for that out of their own pocket every single year. So one of the potential things to come out of this Reform Study Commission is the recommendation that they go back to bi-annual background checks. So that would essentially cut their cost in half... (personal communication, October 7, 2017)

At the time this research was conducted, this effort was still under way, and no reforms had been finalized.

## **Summary**

The city of Indianapolis initially took a hands-off approach to regulating TNCs in order to both embrace innovation and stoke tourism prospects. This approach enabled the city to utilize TNCs to fill some of the vacuums in its mobility network. However, when the State Legislature passed a preemptive bill to keep cities in the state from regulating TNCs, city councilors were no longer able to act. This resulted in a disparity among for-hire transportation drivers in Indianapolis,

with taxi drivers being forced to follow existing regulations, and TNCs operating unregulated. In an attempt to address this, the Indianapolis City-County Council launched a commission to re-examine the rules set for taxi-cab drivers, and attempt to make things more equitable for them in the transportation market.

## Chapter 6 – Washington, DC

Washington, DC, the nation's capital, has an estimated population of 681,170. Because D.C. serves as a hub for government jobs, the population during the work week hover around 1 million. It is located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, and serves as a hub for all matters related to the federal government. The District of Columbia was established in 1970, as a federal district under the jurisdiction of Congress. The city hosts all three branches of the U.S. federal government (U.S. Congress, the Office of the President of the United States, and the U.S. Supreme Court). In addition, there are 177 foreign embassies located there.

Until 1973, with the passage of the Home Rule Act, D.C. did not have locally elected representative government. The Home Rule Act relinquished some of the control previously held by Congress back to the local level and ceded to some powers to a mayor and twelve additional members of a city council, all elected. Residents elect a city council member to represent each of the city's eight wards, as well as four at-large members and a mayor. Currently, the city's mayor is Muriel Bowser. While the establishment of a local government body in the District enabled significantly more autonomy for the city, U.S. Congress still maintains oversight authority in several areas and review and potentially overturn any laws or regulations passed. This preemption of local authority, among other things, has fueled a long-lived campaign for statehood and governmental autonomy in the District (Statehood.dc.gov, 2018).

While the city serves as a federal hub, only approximately 29% of the jobs in Washington, D.C. are federal jobs. Counter to popular belief, the dominant industry in Washington, D.C. and the D.C. Metropolitan area is professional and business service jobs. In 2017, over 170,000 people in D.C. worked in business service professions (District of Columbia Department of Employment Services, 2017). Other dominant industries not related to government include, tourism, education

and healthcare. The top five non-government-related employers in the District include Georgetown University, George Washington University, Washington Hospital Center, Children's National Medical Center, and Howard University (District of Columbia Department of Employment Services, 2009). The city also hosts the headquarters of four Fortune 500 companies, many non-profit organizations, trade unions and professional associations.

### **Urban Regime**

Because of the unique governance structure in D.C. and the consistent oversight and intervention from the federal level, D.C. can be classified as an intergovernmental regime. While Levine and Ross's classification of intergovernmental regimes tends to imply that these types of urban regimes arise from a sudden and necessary intervention that serves as a response to the mismanagement of a city or the inadequacy of a city's governing body (similar to a sudden takeover by an emergency manager), D.C.'s governance arrangement is more a reflection of historical precedent.

The city was managed by a federally appointed D.C. Control Board from 1995 to 2001, an arrangement that was more reflective of the intergovernmental regime typology. The Control Board was established as an intervention, in response to bad management and fiscal waste. During this time the city was at a low and federal oversight usurped much of the local government's power. Since 2001, when the Control Board was dismantled, the District has managed to slough the reputation for being ill managed that arose in the 1980s (DeBonis, 2018). Today, much of the intervention and meddling from Congress falls along partisan line and arises from fights that are tightly coupled with social and political issues. Washington, DC has evolved into a world class city in its own right, developing a place-based identity that far outweighs its status as the U.S.

capitol. While the city council is perfectly capable of governance, Members of Congress will sometimes step in and preempt the city on issues that elicit partisan tension.<sup>7</sup>

Even though Washington DC can be classified as an intergovernmental regime, as a strong market city, its governance actions are more consistent with those of other regime typologies. The city's residents and city government are incredibly politically progressive. The city is also experiencing a period of extreme growth, and in many neighborhoods, displacement and gentrification. The city has a robust economic development portfolio, and this is, to some degree, driven by the influx of people who have returned to the city in the last 10-15 years.

While federal level policy makers are still significant actors in the city, treating it to some degree as a sort of public policy laboratory, other significant actors include members of the policy research, non-profit and advocacy communities, the legal community, and increasingly, the tech community.

### **Transportation System**

Washington, D.C. has a robust public transportation system. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, known locally as WMATA operates both a heavy rail rapid transit system and a bus system. The train system is called Metrorail and known locally as Metro. It consists of 91 stations and 118 miles of track (WMATA, 2018). It provides approximately 1 million trips a week during the day and ranks as the second highest capacity transit system in the United States, behind the New York Subway. Washington D.C. also hosts two bus systems, WMATA's Metrobus, which serves the region with approximately 400,000 bus rides each weekday, and the

---

<sup>7</sup> When voters in Washington D.C. approved Ballot Initiative 71, which legalized the recreational use of marijuana in the city, Republicans in Congress vowed stop it. Their omnibus spending bill included a rider that indicated the money could not be used to enact any law related to recreational marijuana usage.



DC Circulator, which is run and managed by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). DDOT also manages a streetcar line which serves the city's H Street corridor.

The city's train station, Union Station, also provides access to Amtrak's Northeast Corridor line as well as commuter trains that serve both Maryland (MARC) and Virginia (VRE). The station also serves as a hub for several intercity bus lines. In addition to the many motorized transportation options the District is also one of many communities in the Washington Metropolitan region that is part of the Capital Bikeshare program.

The city has several car-sharing programs including Car2Go and Zipcar. D.C. is also served by several taxi cab companies, the largest of which is D.C. Yellow Cab. All of the taxis in the city were overseen by the D.C. Taxi Cab Commission, which has reorganized and is now called the Department of For-Hire Vehicles.

### **Entrance of TNCs**

Uber entered Washington, DC in December of 2011, and Lyft came to the nation's capital in August of 2013. Another smaller TNC, called Sidecar, arrived in DC in March of 2013 and subsequently halted service in February of 2015 (Berman, 2013). Yet another TNC, Via, entered the DC market in August of 2016, specializing in pooled rides and initially only serving some parts of the city. When Uber entered the market, it did so with its black car/limousine model. There was initial response and push-back from different powers in the city government, but ultimately Uber was able to manipulate the policy process in its favor. One interviewee explained the initial response:

When the limos came, they were illegal. D.C. took them off the street as illegal cars. That was more of a lobbyist response. It was like, "This is a small program. Let's give it some type of reprieve. It's a luxury item, so it's not a threat to the larger vehicle-for-hire market."

The limos, although independent, a lot of those are companies, so they looked at it as more as a direct competition, company to company. So, they towed a few cars. The lobbyists came, stepped in, and the legal response centers around two people. Mary Cheh, at the time she was the chair for the... D.C. Council's Transportation Committee. So, if you targeted her office, you can change the transportation policy of the District of Columbia. Then, there was Ron Linton at the time, and he was appointed by Mayor Gray as the chairman of the Taxicab Commission. Ron Linton had somewhat of a police background. He was ...basically a lifetime of government work, and was a regulatory enforcer. His response to illegal activity was stop it. Stop the limos. Mary Cheh had more say over him. He had to respond to her for the budget. Mayor Gray didn't really care. So, when you put those two against each other, you lose (personal communication, August 31, 2018).

In recounting the political actors and coalitions that ultimately favored TNC's operation, this individual also added the influence of wealthy Ward 3 residents. He explained that Uber mobilized them to flood Councilwoman Cheh's office with letters and emails, and that they used and viewed TNCs as a luxury service. Despite the fact that there were no safety measures defined for the service, these individuals were interested in it as a status symbol:

These are the people who are experienced with Uber as the luxury brand, experienced with Uber as a taxi brand, are now are experienced with Uber as just ... It's a product for them. They know it. They're [inaudible 00:28:40]. So, they got her constituents to say, "We like this product. Don't do anything about it. Just let them develop." Free-market thinkers. Of course, another thing about higher-wealth neighborhoods is they're more free-market thinkers. They don't think about the economic realities of taxis... (personal communication, August 31, 2017)

## Regulatory Response

The DC City Council passed emergency legislation in September 2013 to allow TNCs to operate temporarily while a permanent regulation was being deliberated (Murphy, 2013). In 2014 the city council passed an ordinance that Uber touted as “a model for the rest of the country and maybe the world.” Uber was heavily involved in the crafting of the bill, and the city worked with the company to craft the ordinance. One individual explained: “they worked with the city very closely. They wrote the legislation that eventually went into place, (personal communication, August 31, 2018).

The legislation, entitled the “Vehicle-for-Hire Innovation Act of 2014” required background checks (non-fingerprint) on TNC drivers, vehicle inspections on an annual basis, and \$1 million in insurance coverage during time of service. Like many other cities, DC developed a tiered coverage system, making the insurance requirement lower for times when TNC drivers not transporting a passenger but have the app engaged. The ordinance also prohibited street hailing with TNCs (Fischler, 2014). The Teamsters and the D.C. Taxicab Commission opposed the bill, calling it unfair in its establishment of an unequal playing field. The issues these groups had with the bill were focused on the fact that DC taxi cabs must adhere to different rules than TNC drivers. During the deliberation process, when the legislation was being crafted, representatives from the taxi industry and regulators pushed for more equity in the rules:

We wanted the regulations and the legislation for Uber to say, "Okay, you can drive in the city, but you have to have a license." Right? “At minimum, you guys have to have a license, you have to have a background check, you have to be fingerprinted, and your car has to be inspected and meet standards." Inspected by the District of Columbia, not a private mechanic (personal communication, August 31, 2017).

This individual, who represented the Teamsters and taxi drivers at the time, went on to explain the breakdown of the and process of the voting process that resulted in the passage of the legislation:

So, none of those things happened. I remember the day, we had about seven votes ... No, we had six votes, and we thought we had a seventh on fingerprinting. We thought, "If we get these six people to vote, we might not lose." ... Councilmember Grasso, he basically called all our amendments out of order, and all of them were ruled out of order. None of the amendments we had proposed went through. So, what we ended up with was the least-regulated TNC or vehicle-for-hire, private vehicle ... The least-regulated structure in the country. It literally became the model for every other piece of legislation around the country (personal communication, August 31, 2017).

Another individual I spoke to, a regulator, had a consistent but more measured approach to what happened with TNC policy in Washington, DC:

...the bottom line is that the City Council passed laws to get the legal TNC to operate, ...in spite of the backlash that existed between taxis and the private vehicles for hire. Fast forward to 2015, people have come to terms that the ride sharing now is more synonymous with private vehicles. So, when people think of Uber, they don't think of Uber Black, which is [the service] that uses professional drivers. They think more of UberX, and when they think of Lyft, they think of private vehicles... That is what is the status quo now (personal communication October 11, 2017).

This individual also offered personal insight as to the true role that residents of Washington, DC played in the policy making process:

To the casual observer, you could make an argument that the residents were heavily involved in crafting, influencing, or shaping the legislations, all the regulations that were

put in place. But there's more to it than just that narrative. The way that these legislation and regulations were put in place is through what I call like an influence group. There were a lot of lawyers involved, a lot of lobbyists involved, and obviously the ride sharing companies, and the taxi companies were involved as well. So it was shaped more by the industry... the new industry than the average resident, the average user. Most people don't really invest heavily in shaping laws and regulations (personal communication, October 11, 2017).

While there is some discrepancy as to the role that DC residents played in moving the legislation forward, both of these accounts reinforce the significant role that the private sector companies and their lobbyists played in the shaping the city's regulatory response.

### **Current Status of TNC Operations**

TNCs operate legally and relatively uninhibited in Washington, D.C., much to the consternation of some of the long-established taxi cab companies. Uber's praise of the bill that was passed by the city council signaled that the company perceived the regulatory stance of the city as not being incredibly onerous or limiting. One individual, who worked for the city council, explained the approach they took, and how they saw it as being a net advantage for the city's mobility network:

Essentially, my boss's position at the time was, "Let's be pro-innovation. This is something that might be good for residences of the district. Let's see how it operates and let's see how we can make it work in the district's transportation ecosystem" (personal communication, September 5, 2017).

There have been instances of protest from city's cab drivers, and one particular protest in which cabs blocked the areas near city hall and in nearby parts of downtown during following the

city's vote to pass the legislation. One interviewee provided a breakdown of where different groups weigh in on this debate:

I think legislatively, I think the DC Council is, you know, it's a status quo. They're happy Uber's here. They feel like the legislation they put in place protects consumers. And, of course, the company is happy with it. Regulators have a more tense relationship with Uber because they are very limited in what they can do to regulate Uber versus taxi cabs. You still have this, what cab drivers will call an uneven playing field with a far more regulations burdening cab driver than there are Uber drivers. And, of course, cabs are technologically behind the situation. Uber and the ride-hailing companies are still better at technologically keeping people happy because of what the average person's expectations are now (personal communication, September 29, 2017).

The TNCs operating in Washington, DC have established relationships with Washington Metro in several instances. Most recently, Uber promised to assist locals with their commutes and other trips during Metro's Safetrack program implementation, in which system upgrades shut down and delayed different lines in the transit system at different times. In this case, Uber agreed to offer discount pricing through its UberPool service for the duration of Metro's Safetrack Maintenance program.

In June of 2018, DC City Council approved a tax increase on ridesharing services that went into effect this past October. The increase was passed unanimously by the council and raises the tax from one to six percent on every ride (Pascale, 2018). The revenue will be divided between the DC's Department of For-Hire Vehicles and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), with each agency receiving 17% and 83% respectively (Well, Petzhold and Pasqual,

2018). DC Council member Brandon Todd announced plans to introduce a bill that would shift the tax to a tiered system (Siddiqui, 2018).

## **Summary**

Washington DC embraced TNCs passing an ordinance that made was uplifted as a pro-innovation example for other cities by Uber and Lyft. This eagerness to embrace TNCs as a new mobility option brought push-back from the taxi industry and ultimately had a negative impact on the taxi industry in the city. Since Uber and Lyft have entered the mobility market in Washington, DC, they have worked closely with the city in different ways to augment the mobility network. In 2018, the DC City Council opted to increase the tax on rideshare services, in order to provide revenue for the city's share of WMATA funding.

## Chapter 7 – Austin, Texas

Austin sits in central Texas, and it is the capital of the state. As of 2016, the city has a population of approximately 947,890 people and the metropolitan region has a population of over 2 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Austin is the 4<sup>th</sup> most populous city in TX and the fastest growing large city in the U.S (Weissman, 2015). Austin is most readily known as a center for state government and as the hub of the state of Texas' flagship secondary education institution, University of Texas at Austin. Outside of government and higher education, the city's economy revolves around technology, with several tech companies locating their offices and headquarters there, including Amazon, Google, IBM, Oracle, and Dell (Fortune, 2017). This influx of technology corporations has resulted in the city being nicknamed Silicon Hills.

Austin has a manager-council governance system. The Austin city council is comprised of 10 council members that represent geographic districts and a mayor, elected at-large. Municipal elections in Texas seats are non-partisan, and candidates for public office run on issue based platforms. The current mayor of Austin is Steve Adler. The city manager is a hired position, currently held by Spencer Cronk. This administrative structure is relatively new and has only been in effect since 2014. Previously, the city council was comprised of six at-large council members and a mayor. A referendum to switch to the current 11-member council structure was approved by voters in November of 2012.

Because the city is also the state capital of Texas, there is a formidable state government presence there as well. The city houses the Texas State Capitol Building, the Texas Department of Transportation, and the Texas Governor's mansion. Austin is also the county seat of Travis County. While consolidated city-county governments are not allowed in Texas, cities and counties in the state can strike agreements to share services.



Texas is a Dillon's Rule state, however, cities in the state with populations over 5,000 may opt toward home rule by asking voters to adopt a city charter. Austin has done so, and is a home rule city, meaning the city council "can pass any regulations or laws it deems necessary unless the state law prohibits it," (Centertexas.org, 2018).

### **Urban Regime**

Austin can be classified as a progressive regime, in that the city's government and residents are primarily concerned with needs of less powerful and protected classes as well as environmental concerns and local will. Austin's politically liberal tendencies stand out in contrast to the traditionally conservative state of Texas and the majority conservative state legislature. The city is considered the state's liberal enclave, and is sometimes credited with Texas' gradual transition from a red to a purple state (Ramirez, 2018). Voters in the city often show support for alternative and Green Party candidates, and in 2016 Travis County residents voted overwhelmingly for Hillary Clinton in the presidential election (Leip, 2016). The city also has a deep stake in the environmental and conservationist movements (Zaragosa, 2009).

In recent years, as the city has grown, experiencing an influx of new tech businesses and residents, discussions about conservation have transitioned to discussions about preservation. Residents have become more focused on preserving Austin's 'sense of place,' retaining high quality of life, and pushing back against corporate and development interests (Swearingen, 2008). A consistent theme in Austin during deliberations over TNCs was the interest of city voters in pushing back against corporate entities that do not share their values. One interviewee underscored this, explaining, "...one of the issues clearly that showed in the polling was the idea of a corporation coming in and trying to run over the city and establish... 'we provide a service, and we are going to decide how we do it, and you don't have anything to say about it...the city.' That right

there, that's going very much against the culture of Austin,” (personal communication, August 8, 2017). Another interviewee, who held public office during the time of deliberations, explained:

...when we started the campaign, started the opposition and the fight, there were two main themes of the opposition campaign. The first theme was that Austin should not allow profit-driven corporate interest to write our laws, because their value is profit, as opposed to the value of the community, (personal communication, August 4, 2017).

This anti-corporate sentiment and the emphasis that the city placed on safety and the wellbeing of the drivers in its deliberations are reflective of progressive regime characteristics. One long-time resident explained the history and growth of Austin:

That's what the rest, a substantial part of the rest of the city voted against. The older you were, the baby boomer generation, of which I'm one, had been here, come here probably in the '60s and '70s, sort of cut our teeth on the Vietnam War, and environmentalism, and in Austin progressive politics, and all that, however you want to define that. We didn't necessarily like everything that happened to our city, not in just the TNC issue, just the growth, the worship of real estate, and its cost both in dollars and patience, and so the older population being more permanent, having probably a car, more likely have a car, and that is tied into tech, some were on course, but many are not, they didn't see ... they didn't connect to the TNCs (personal communication, August 8, 2017).

As a progressive regime, the city also placed a great deal of emphasis on the potentially detrimental effects on the environment:

...we get days of high ozone levels and there was a possibility that that was going to increase, and Travis County is definitely a progressive county in the area of environment.

We pride ourselves on partnering with environmental organizations, labor and environment, to make sure the safe quality of life is there for all. So, that I remember was a big issue--the added exhaust that would be added to the air, and some sort of solution and all of that that goes with it (personal communication, September 20, 2017).

The emphasis and research on traffic congestion is only truly starting to come forward. While people were making anecdotal observations about TNCs increasing traffic congestion in 2017, this year, research is showing that they actually are.

### **Transportation System**

Austin's transportation system caters to mostly to drivers, and the American Community Survey estimated in 2016 that nearly 74% of residents solely depend on an automobile to get around the city (ACS, 2015). The Capital Metro Transportation Authority, known locally as Cap Metro, is the public transit agency in Austin. Cap Metro is comprised mostly of bus service, with a few routes featuring bus rapid transit, and a commuter rail system called Capital MetroRail. Capital MetroRail was opened in 2010, has nine stations, and serves downtown Austin, East Austin, North Central Austin, Northwest Austin, and Leander (Capital Metro, 2009). Exurbs of Austin and rural areas of Travis County are also served by another transit system called Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS).

Austin is also known as a walking and biking friendly community. While single-occupancy vehicles are the primary mode share in the city, biking is much more popular within the University of Texas sub-population. One survey conducted by the University of Texas showed 57% of student, faculty, and staff respondents commuting to campus by bike (BikeUT, 2017). There is also a great deal of walking and biking friendly infrastructure. Austin was ranked the 35th most

walkable of the 50 largest U.S. cities, and the city features the well-known 10-mile Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail along Lady Bird Lake (Widner, 2017).

Austin is served by several taxicab companies, including Yellow Cab Austin, South Austin Taxi, and Lone Star Cab, among others. The city also has RideAustin, a nonprofit rideshare company built for the city following the dispute with Uber and Lyft (Ride Austin, 2016).

Austin is also served by inter-city passenger rail and bus systems. The Texas Eagle is a 1,306-mile train route operated by Amtrak, which runs daily between Chicago, Illinois, and San Antonio, Texas, serving Austin on the way. Greyhound and Megabus lines also serve the city.

### **Entrance of TNCs**

Uber entered the Austin market in 2014. This was the company's original black car service.<sup>8</sup> According to one city council member, initially, Uber did not follow any of the existing transportation-for-hire regulations. In October of that year, the Austin city council passed its first piece of ridesharing legislation—part of a temporary pilot project--which Uber acknowledged at the time as “progressive.” Lyft came to the city shortly afterward. The temporary ordinance was only in effect for a limited period of time, which essentially implied the responsibility of the next group elected to city council to draft more permanent legislation. In the midst of this, the Austin City Council changed dramatically. The entire city council turned over with the exception of one member, as the council structure moved from city-wide, at-large elections to single member

---

<sup>8</sup> TNC service has evolved since it first emerged in metropolitan markets. Initially, Uber operated exclusively under what it called its Black Car service. This type of service was no different than a standard taxi or livery service, with the exception of the car being summoned via app rather than a traditional dispatch system. Uber next rolled out its UberX model, in which individuals, driving their own vehicles, could serve as drivers and offer rides to patrons in need via the app. This is the model most similar to Lyft, in which drivers and riders are matched up via the app, and the vehicle is the driver's personal vehicle. This model is also the one that caused the most strife for policy makers, regulators, and insurance companies. Uber and Lyft also both rolled out carpool services, called UberPool and LyftLine, respectively, in which the app will coordinate riders who are going in generally the same direction and willing to share one vehicle.

districts. The city also added to its council moving from seven at-large council members to 10 district representatives and a mayor. When the new council was elected November 4, 2014, the new council members had a clear mandate to update the law regarding TNCs. While they were not required to follow the legislative path of the previous council, the existing law needed to be updated and it had a clear time limit. In March of 2015, Uber deployed its UberPool service prior to the South by Southwest music and media festival.

### **Regulatory Response**

Shortly after the new city council was sworn into office, in spring of 2015, city councilmembers formed committees, including one that focuses exclusively on the city's mobility issues. The mobility committee very quickly began dealing with ground transportation issues, and identified TNCs as a priority. In evaluating all of the city's ground transportation regulations, the mobility committee considered whether there was an equal playing field for all transportation providers. The council member who chaired that committee explained further,

They all provide basically the same kind of service, which is the ride, through different kinds of mechanisms. When we started looking at this, one of the first things we did is got our staff to give us a matrix that showed us all the different kinds of regulations or aspects that were regulated and what applied to what. So for example we looked at fees, we looked at finger printing, we looked at safety inspections on the vehicles, we looked at data reporting... basically we looked at all the ways in which the city had some responsibility for overseeing how ground transportation's done. So that quickly revealed that TNC's were treated differently on a number of fronts.

For example, TNCs were the only form of ground transportation in the city where the driver was not required to be fingerprinted. The committee also found that TNCs did not have the same

requirements around data reporting and that they did not pay any fees for road usage or for operation. While the temporary ordinance that the previous council put in place mandated that TNCs should pay a fee, there was no amount indicated, and payment had never been enforced. This was another issue that the committee had to address in considering a new ordinance. In August of 2015, the committee started working on a new TNC ordinance to replace the temporary ordinance in play during the initial pilot. This led to a number of hearings with both the mobility committee and the full city council, as well as ongoing negotiations with Uber and Lyft. There were a series of meetings in which the council passed different pieces of the ordinance, and finally the council voted 9-2 in favor of the full ordinance in December of 2016. The vote took place after nearly five hours of debate, and the approved ordinance required drivers for TNCs to pass fingerprint-based background checks. The ordinance was set to take effect on February 1st of 2017, but provided a yearlong window for TNC drivers to come into compliance, as well as proposed a centralized and expedited system for them to get their background checks completed.<sup>9</sup>

In the deliberation and discussions leading up to the crafting and passing of the ordinance, both Uber and Lyft threatened to leave the city if fingerprinting was incorporated into the new ordinance. The companies had recently pulled operations from another Texas city, San Antonio, for the same reason, but acted differently in Houston, where fingerprint-based background checks were also required. When Houston included this requirement in the city's vehicle for-hire ordinance, Lyft left the city, while Uber stayed (Batheja, 2015). Uber and Lyft waged an aggressive campaign against the city council, which included attack ads that targeted specific council members. While the city council and mobility committee attempted to negotiate with the TNCs on

---

<sup>9</sup> The city set up a mechanism whereby drivers, who often drive for more than one company, could get their qualifications expeditiously and in central location.

the regulatory framework, both Uber and Lyft continually threatened to leave the city of Austin if their demands were not met. Ultimately, the city passed an ordinance that compromised with Uber and Lyft, but still included fingerprinting. One Austin city councilmember offered a justification for how and why the council decided to include fingerprint background checks in the ordinance,

...the reason that we went forward with fingerprinting was three fold actually. First from a policy perspective, everybody else is required to do it. Second, it was not a burden for the drivers. We did not hear from the drivers that they didn't want to be fingerprinted, we only heard from Uber and Lyft that they didn't want to include that in the process. We made it quick and easy. We set up a mechanism...whereby the city made the fingerprinting process happen, which was helpful for drivers too. Because drivers always drive for more than one company, so it allowed them to get their qualifications in one place. And then thirdly, we heard from our police, and our police department, sheriff department... and our state DPS said that fingerprinting is best practice for identifying the person whose background you're checking, and it makes sense (personal communication, August 8, 2018).

When the city passed that ordinance, Uber and Lyft did not act on their threat to leave, but instead set into motion a citizen's petition in the city to override the city's ordinance. Austin residents have the ability to gather a number of signatures via petition to put an issue on the ballot for a vote. Uber and Lyft collected the necessary number of signatures and they presented them to the city council with an implied threat: the city council could either move to adopt an ordinance that met their needs and demands, or they could honor the signature and put the issue on the ballot. The city council opted to put the issue on the ballot, an action that was underscored by the sentiment that it was important for the public to weigh in on the matter.

Putting the issue on the ballot prompted two campaigns. One was run by a local grassroots group that advocated for voting to uphold the city's ordinance and requirement of fingerprint-based background checks. The other campaign was run by Uber, and advocated for voting to overturn the ordinance passed by the city. The two campaigns spent drastically different amounts of money. Uber spent around 10 million dollars on their campaign and the community based campaign had a budget of around 200,000.

In May of 2016, the city held a referendum that, if passed by voters, would have repealed a city ordinance requiring their drivers to submit to fingerprint-based background checks. Passage of the ballot measure would have allowed Uber and Lyft to continue adhering to their background check systems, which does not require more thorough fingerprint scans. Voters rejected the referendum, meaning TNC drivers would need to submit to fingerprint background checks. Uber and Lyft subsequently pulled out of the city the next day, arguing that the extra step of fingerprinting drivers slows down driver sign-ups, and increases wait times for rides.

They were replaced by other like services that were willing to meet the requirements of the regulation. At one point, there were eight other TNC companies that came into the city and offered rides using a TNC model. Austin is highly regarded as an entrepreneurial and tech oriented city. One of the city's entrepreneurs started a non-profit TNC, called Ride Austin. This model differed from original TNC models in that it allowed drivers to designate or round up the cost of their fair and tip and give money to the charity of their choice. While many of the other TNCs have ceased operation, Ride Austin is still operating.

The eight TNCs that took the place of Uber and Lyft phased into the local mobility system over the course of a year to provide the rides no longer fulfilled by the original companies. The city took up the cause of helping the drivers, who, as one interviewee put it,



...were left high and dry. We helped connect the drivers to these new companies that were coming in...we hosted some driver fairs...we also had a hotline for the drivers so... you could imagine you have income one day and the next day your company just leaves you (personal communication, August 8, 2017).

When the city instituted the fingerprint background check system, the new TNCs were given a choice: they could use the service provided by the city, or they could seek their own fingerprint-based background checks. They all opted to use the city's centralized fingerprinting process.

There were other public safety measures in Austin's ordinance including a requirement for vehicles to have trade dress or signage indicating their affiliation with a TNC along with requirements around data reporting. The ordinance also prohibited TNCs from stopping in the middle of a street lane to pick up or let people off. While these revisions were in contrast to the original ordinance, the main difference, and the one that caused the greatest pain point and ultimately drove Uber and Lyft to leave was the requirement for drivers to have a fingerprint background check.

### **State Policy Interventions**

Uber and Lyft left the city of Austin, and began pushing a piece of legislation that was ideal for their uninhibited operation with the Texas State Legislature which meets annually from January to May. The bill pushed by Uber and Lyft's lobbyists preempts all local regulation on TNCs by cities in the state of Texas. The legislation also requires state legislation be in place for TNCs but simultaneously allows for TNCs (in this case it is essentially referring to Uber and Lyft) to enter a community before the state set up any kind of system. One councilmember explained, "They required state regulation, but there's no regulation essentially, and there's no enforcement

written into the bill.” The statewide TNC legislation was passed by the Texas State Legislature in May of 2017.

### **Current Status of TNC Operations**

Once the Texas State legislature passed the bill pushed by Uber and Lyft that preempted local authority, both companies immediately returned to Austin. Upon their return, one of the local TNC companies that began operating in the city when Uber and Lyft departed, ceased operating in Austin. The other companies continued to operate. Uber and Lyft now face substantially more competition for both drivers and riders in the Austin market.

### **Summary**

In the city’s attempt to pass a TNC regulation that was consistent with the values of its residents, Austin came up against a difficult and contentious battle with Uber. This battle escalated to the national level and resulted in a ballot measure designed to halt the city’s regulation. The resulting campaigns on each side of the measure’s outcome saw Uber asking voters to strike down a regulation that required fingerprinting and background checks and the grassroots/community driven campaign fighting to uphold that regulation along with the anti-corporate values of the city’s residents. This response from TNCs in Austin stood in stark contrast to the way they reacted in other cities where fingerprinted background checks for drivers were implemented, such as Houston and New York. Throughout the deliberation and the campaigns leading up to the ballot measure vote, Uber and Lyft threatened to leave the city if the background check conditions of the city’s ordinance were not lifted. When the voters opted to keep the city’s original ordinance intact, Uber and Lyft left the next day. Ultimately, several other ridesharing companies filled the void they left, and some continue to operate to this day. When Uber and Lyft left the city, they took

their influence to the Texas State Legislature. The state legislature passed a preemptive bill that usurped the rights of cities in the state of Texas to regulate TNCs. Once this legislation passed, Uber and Lyft returned to Austin.

## **Chapter 8 – Portland, Oregon**

Portland is the largest city in Oregon, with an estimated population of 639,863 people (Exner, 2017). The city is located in Multnomah County, Oregon and is situated in the Pacific Northwest's Willamette Valley region. The port city was founded in the early 1800s due to its proximity to both the end of the Oregon Trail and the water that allowed it to be a hub for the goods transport. The city's early economy was mostly focused on the timber industry, and in the pre-World War II era and the 1950s shifted to steel. Today, the metro region serves as a hub for both technology companies and athletic and footwear manufacturers.

Portland's governance is managed by a city council and an auditor. The council is comprised of four city commissioners and a mayor, each elected to four-year terms. The auditor serves a role similar to that of a city manager, ensuring the accountability of the council, serving as an information conduit between the council and the public. Each neighborhood in the city is represented by volunteers that make up a neighborhood association. Those associations communicate with the city administration through an entity called the Office of Neighborhood Involvement. In addition to the city government, the Portland Metro area is served by an elected metropolitan planning organization (MPO) referred to as Metro. This is the only directly elected MPO in the country, responsible for waste management, land use and transportation planning, and mapping along with several other city and regional assets. The Multnomah County government also serves the Portland area.

### **Urban Regime**

Portland, OR can be classified as a caretaker regime due to the city's tendency toward maintaining the status quo. The city is notoriously skeptical and pragmatic toward forces of growth

and development, a sentiment reflected in its unofficial slogan (co-opted from Austin's similar slogan) 'Keep Portland Weird.' This slogan refers to the local desire to both support locally operated businesses and retain the local, artistic, and eccentric feel of the community (Abrego, 2011). The city has also resisted the forces of urban sprawl. In 1979, the city adopted an urban growth boundary, which makes a strict distinction between urban areas and rural or farming areas in the region. This adoption was part of a statewide policy intervention focused on land conservation. It was especially unique for the time, given that many other regions were investing more heavily in growth, annexation, and their suburban communities outside of the urban cores. The growth boundary designates urban areas, where high density development is allowed and farming areas, where any sort of non-agricultural development is restricted (Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, 2007).

Portland's unique commission form of government sets each of the four commissioners in charge of a city bureau. With this oversight, comes the responsibility to set policy in place, which can make for a sclerotic and sometimes conflicted governance system in which every commissioner is committed to their own separate agenda. One interviewee explained it further:

One of the important things to know about Portland, is we have one of the most screwed up forms of government that any city in America has... we have a Commission form of government, instead of the City Manager form, which means that... we have four Commissioners, plus a Mayor, and they're all at-large. And then if you are an elected Commissioner, then you are tasked with overseeing Bureau. So in addition to being a ... proposing your own policy, you actually have to then implement that policy, if it's your particular Bureau. You're almost like a mini-mayor in a way. As you can imagine, that

makes it really hard to get stuff done, 'because everybody thinks that they are the appropriate Mayor (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Some policy actors in the city are also averse to the idea of corporate interests or bullies and tend to push back at any implication that a corporation is pressuring the city. One interviewee explained the difficult position Portland's former Commissioner Novick was in:

Part of the problem, I mean, this all comes down to politics, right? And so you had Commissioner Novick, who really, Uber is the antithesis of everything that he hated, right? It's a big corporation, at the time I forget what they were valued, but certainly in the \$30-40 billion range. They were really aggressive, they sometimes followed the rules. He just saw them as the ultimate bad actor. The problem was, is he was in a really tough spot politically, because public opinion ... the weight of public opinion was on the side of having TNC's in town. I mean, you didn't have folks necessarily protesting in the streets, but, your polling numbers show that the majority of your residents wanted TNC's in some capacity. He was going into a re-election year, and so it was really kind of difficult, and as the Transportation Commissioner, he was in charge of ... this is his jurisdiction, so he had to lead, he couldn't just simply throw stones. He had to actually do something about it (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

This value conflict of between the Transportation Commissioner and the city's residents was further complicated by the fact that Portland is renowned nationally for its robust, multimodal transportation system. So while the city is committed to maintaining things as they are and not giving into corporate interests, the residents are accustomed to having access to the latest transportation technologies and options.

Adding another layer of conflict was the general inconsistency between the city's values and Uber's reputation as a bad actor. One interviewee explained:

Uber again is a ... I would argue they're better, but were certainly not a good actor at the time. And Portland is a ... I mean there's a reason why the city has the nickname Little Beirut, right? I mean it is one of the most progressively active [places]... well there are factions within the city that are louder and even more militant sometimes, than just about anywhere else in America (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

### **Transportation System**

Portland's MPO has significantly incorporated transit-oriented development and tenets of new urbanism into its regional plan. This means that the city aims to center high density development near transit accessible corridors and that it has historically invested heavily in multi-modal transportation.

The city's transit operator is the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (commonly referred to as TriMet for short), and it serves well beyond the Portland city limits, into Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. TriMet operates the MAX light rail system, the Westside Express Service commuter rail line (WES), the region's bus system, and its paratransit service, called LIFT. TriMet also provides maintain and operator personnel to the Portland Streetcar system, despite the fact that the system is owned by the City of Portland. TriMet's bus system operates 610 buses in the Portland region. The system as a whole provides over 300,000 rides per weekday and is managed by a board of governors appointed at the state level (TriMet, 2016).

In addition to transit and commuter rail, the city is served by the Portland Aerial Tram, an aerial cable car that connects two neighborhoods in the city and runs 1 kilometer. Portland has a comprehensive bicycle network, and the city's population uses it, with approximately 8% of commuters biking to work. This is one of the highest bike commuter percentages in the country. In July of 2016 the city voted to start a bikeshare system. Portland is also served by the car-sharing company Zipcar.

### **Entrance of TNCs**

Uber launched in Portland in December 2014, despite the fact that local officials had not approved their operation, and it was against local law to do so. The city initially sued and suspended TNC operations, leading to a public battle between Uber and the city. One of the starkest criticisms of the lawsuit and ban focused on the fact that the city of Portland is so oriented toward providing citizens with transportation options, but TNCs were banned. The city argued that Uber disregarded the existing laws in place, and that this was an unacceptable approach. There was also instant pushback from the taxi operators in the system, who argued that the new operators were operating illegally and were not subject to the same rules as them.

This cease and desist order enabled the city time to adjust its transportation-for-hire ordinance to accommodate TNCs. The city instituted a task force to determine next steps. After four months, in April of 2015, the city moved to start a 120-day pilot program, with temporary regulations (personal communication, August 1, 2017). The pilot ended up taking longer than the originally planned 120 days:

That task force was to last, I believe it was four months, then we would have a pilot program, and then depending on how the pilot program did, they would ratify the ordinance around that, and make that permanent. That's kind of the basic process of how that



happened. We ended up having to spin the pilot program an additional four months before things were ratified, just because [of] the internal dynamics on commission, (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

The pilot program allowed TNCs to operate legally, if they followed a certain set of guidelines, including drivers submitting to background checks, ensuring vehicles met accessibility standards for disabled customers, and special liability coverage. Lyft launched in the city the following April, after the pilot program was instigated. The pilot aimed to level the playing field between taxi cabs and TNCs by giving cabs the ability to institute variable, on-demand pricing (Lowensohn, 2015).

While the pilot program was taking place, the city was negotiating with TNCs to determine the best way to bring them into the mobility network. In addition to conflict between the commission members, there were also other political forces at play:

It required just months, and months, and months of negotiations on every little nuance, every little thing. And the Mayor was also going into re-election at the time, and understood that he needed this for his re-election, right? He claimed to be the technology Mayor, claimed to be very forward thinking and wanted to put Portland on the map. And it was a pretty tough to square that with not having TNC's in town (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Ultimately, Portland was one of the first jurisdictions in the country to have a full regulatory framework put in place. By the end of 2015, the city had a licensing program in place. There was a lot of community involvement and the city worked with several stakeholder groups to develop the regulation. One individual who worked with the city at the time explained, “Portland is a very process-friendly place. We like to put together a lot of community groups of advisory bodies and things like that. We did that very early,” (personal communication, August 1, 2017). The city also

referred to academic research the regulatory actions of other cities where Uber had entered including New York, Seattle and San Francisco. In developing the ordinance, the city ran into some challenges. First and foremost, there was no consensus nationwide on what adequate insurance should look like for these business models. The city also found out about Uber's use of a software called Greyball during these deliberations, which allowed the company to program to identify and avoid accounts associated with local officials so as to avoid being audited or fined for illegal behavior (Isaac, 2017).

After talking with experts, advocates and other city officials from across the country the city initiated a system of staggered implementation. They allowed some drivers to operate using interim licensing agreements, and then continued to refine it the ordinance using best practices and all of the information they could find (personal communication, August 1, 2017).

### **State Policy Interventions**

The Oregon state house made two attempts to legislate on TNCs statewide. Both bills, introduced in January and February of 2015, attempted to establish statewide regulations for TNC drivers and preempt the city. Both bills failed to pass (Graves, 2018).

### **Current Status of TNC Operations**

In December 2015, the Portland City Council voted 3-2 to approve permanent transportation regulations that allowed TNCs to operate legally. This formalized the fare structure allowed for taxi-cabs to operate, but also set into play some new rules for Uber and Lyft. TNCs were thereafter required to provide the city with trip data, uphold minimum levels of insurance, and conduct driver background checks (Soper, 2015). The city has amended the original ordinance several times:

We've done some refinement with regard to background searches and expanding what vehicles are eligible. We [implemented] some requirements that their vehicle couldn't be more than 10 years old. I think we've expanded that right now, or maybe we're about to expand that to include vehicles that are 15 years old or something like that... We've also actually eased up some of the regulations on the taxis in response to seeing some successes in the TNC market, and we have an advisory group that continues to meet monthly or at least quarterly to dive into the minutia of our code language.

## **Summary**

While the city of Portland initially banned Uber operations, the city commission ultimately established a pilot program that presented the opportunity for TNCs to operate legally, and for the city to develop an ordinance that could level the playing field between TNCs and incumbent transportation providers. While the state's legislature tried twice to intervene and regulate TNCs at the state level twice, both bills failed to pass. The city managed to uphold the values and of residents and pass an ordinance that would provide the city with trip data, maintain minimum levels of insurance, and conduct driver background checks.

## Chapter 9 – Findings

### Introduction

This chapter presents findings from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 23 policy actors from the four cities in my analysis. The chapter begins with a review of the theoretical basis for my study, as well as the research questions this study aims to address. Then, I present the thematically organized narratives that emerged from discussions with interview subjects from Washington, DC, Portland, OR, Indianapolis, IN, and Austin, TX. In each section, I address the ways in which these narratives add to the theoretical contribution made in this dissertation. These dominant narratives add to our understanding of the way technology-based market innovations emerge in cities, and the ways cities with certain urban regime classifications react toward them, specifically TNCs.

### Theory

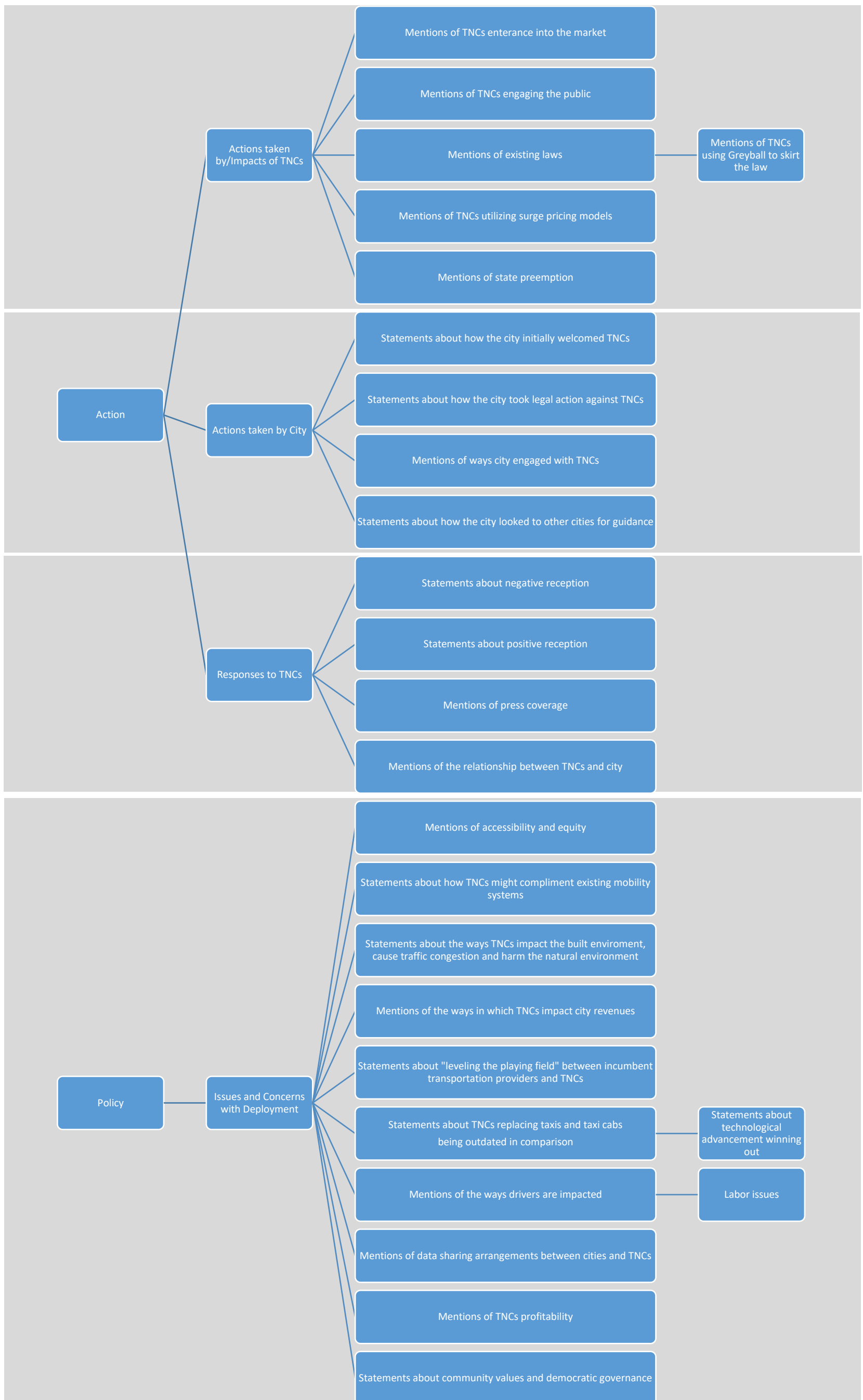
This paper seeks the answers to two research questions: *1) Why do cities respond differently to technology-based market innovations?* and *2) How do different narrative elements or patterns surrounding the emergence of innovations affect the ways in which city decision makers respond to their regulatory choices?* This study attempts to answer these questions by exploring the ways in which cities with different urban regime characteristics respond to TNCs, the policy narratives that emerge around these services entering communities, and how those narratives might influence the ways policy actors respond to and regulate TNCs (DuPuis, 2017). More specifically, this dissertation explores the policy deliberations, urban regime formations, outcomes, and the narrative themes expressed by policy stakeholders in Indianapolis, Portland, Washington, DC and Austin, as well as how narrative themes affected/shaped the subsequent regulatory policy outcomes in response to TNCs in each place. In order to capture those narrative themes, this

dissertation presents analysis of interviews with policy elites and stakeholders, such as local elected officials, business owners, union leaders, TNC drivers and TNC rider activists and other relevant actors who played a major role in the policy deliberations around TNCs in each city. At the theoretical level, this dissertation attempts to present the complementary relationship and synergy between Bevir and Rhodes Decentered Theory of Governance and Clarence Stone's Urban Regime Theory. These two theoretical camps dovetail to explain the ways in which the dominant stories in certain places, driven by certain forces and actors, influence policy outcomes. My primary argument and contribution here are that a given urban regime has a shared or dominant narrative/understanding of an issue. That dominant or shared narrative is embedded in the characteristics of the regime, and drives the policy choices that are made in each city or region.

### **Coding and Organizing Interview Data**

Interviews were coded for narrative themes that emerged within and across the four cities. Once themes began to emerge consistently, they naturally sorted into several higher-level categories, including: 1) Actions/Impacts of TNCs, 2) Issues and concerns, 3) Actions taken by city, and 4) Responses to TNCs. From there, I was able to link these secondary categories to themes that tie in with the theoretical elements presented in this dissertation. Figure 1 illustrates the ways in which I organized narrative themes.

**Figure 1. Interview Data Themes and Sub-Themes**<sup>10</sup>



<sup>10</sup> Figure adapted from Keeney, K.P. (2014). *Encouraging the Arts through Higher Education Institutions: Arts Policy Implementation in Virginia*. Page 75. Virginia Tech: Blacksburg; Saldana, J. (2009) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Page 12. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

In order to present my interview and narrative analysis findings, I will revisit the work of Deborah Stone, presented in an earlier chapter. Stone's scholarship contributed many of the narrative elements central to modern day narrative policy theory and research. In the passage below, she presents some of the core plot and character elements found in policy narratives:

Definitions of policy problems usually have narrative structure; that is, they are stories with a beginning, middle, and an end, involving some change or transformation. They have heroes and villains and innocent victims, and they pit forces of evil against forces of good, (2002, p. 138).

This chapter presents the prominent narrative themes that emerged from my elite interviews, and augments them with the use of Stone's aforementioned narrative elements. The final two chapters will present my discussion and conclusions from this research.

### **Actions/Impacts of TNCs**

The following narrative themes focus on actions or approaches taken by the TNCs and the ways in which these actions shape the perceptions of policy elites toward these business platforms in different places.

**Entrance into the market.** Due to the sometimes unexpected nature of TNCs, many of the interviewees reflected on the actions of TNCs and the impacts of those actions on the community and existing economic, social and political infrastructure. Even though each city responded differently to TNCs, interviewees from each city addressed the fact that TNCs entered their market abruptly and with little regard for existing transportation-for-hire laws. One interviewee from Portland explained:

TNCs generally, made a forceful entry into the city of Portland...They are an aggressive company, Uber specifically is an aggressive company, and they have done this in other jurisdictions, where they decide to declare that they are showing up and then, force a jurisdiction to impose a regulatory scheme (personal communication, August 1, 2017).

This abrupt entry in the city of Portland was met with legal action, and TNC operation was halted until the city could determine the best regulatory steps. An interviewee from the taxi industry in Washington, DC explained that entering a market without informing the city or complying with existing laws is standard for TNCs, specifically calling out Uber for using this approach:

So at first, simply, Uber just shows up. That's how they operated in many places where they don't seek permission beforehand from regulators and they, of course, would say they don't need permission. They just start operating in a city and they build a small customer base like that, a loyal customer base for their service (personal communication, September 29, 2017).

This was met with what was classified as “pro-innovation” emergency legislation in Washington, DC that allowed TNCs to operate while the city established permanent regulations. This action was not necessarily consistent with the city’s classification as an intergovernmental regime, but rather reflective of corporate regime behavior. In addition to stories about TNCs entering cities without prior consent or communication, some interviewees reflected on how TNCs were inclined toward confrontation with city officials and regulators. One national transportation expert recalled:

But the way Uber was handling it, they were just fighting with the regulators and getting in their face, and you don't do that to government officials (personal communication, (October 17, 2017).



In Austin, Texas a former council member explained:

Uber and Lyft waged a very contentious and nasty campaign against the council and against me personally. It was like they were in ... It was the kind of campaign, and I use the word campaign deliberately, because they did it like we have seen political campaigns. Very very nasty political campaigns with attack ads. They basically attacked me personally. And attacked the city and the council in a way that was not truthful, plus just amazing. Really out of the norm for what is the normal process for working out how the city regulates. It was not helpful, let's put it that way (personal communication, August 8, 2017).

Part of this response from TNCs could possibly be attributed to Austin's resistance to TNCs, which is consistent with its progressive urban regime characteristics. When the city of Austin passed an ordinance that required fingerprinted background checks, Uber and Lyft initiated a campaign against the city, which, according to several interviewees, included personal attacks on city council members. These reflections on the tactics of TNCs when they entered city markets were often shared in the context of breeding tension between the city and the TNCs. In some instances, the abrupt or unexpected emergence of TNCs in city markets was simply acknowledged, or cast as the modus operandi of 'Big Tech' and Silicon Valley.

In this narrative theme, there is consistency among the characters. The TNCs can be classified as the villains, for their presumed disregard of the existing city ecosystem and institutional rules. The victims, in this case, are the cities themselves or the city officials that are subjected to TNC's business tactics or attacks (Stone, 2002).

**Existing law.** A theme that emerged in several interviews was cities' existing for-hire transportation laws. Some interviewees reflected on TNCs disregard for these laws when they launched their services in cities. One interviewee from Austin addressed this:

...they entered without following any of the requirements. The previous council was in a situation where they were having to deal with companies that were operating outside of the regulations in town. So the previous council went through a process of dealing with that and put a temporary regulation in place to quickly deal with them... (personal communication, August 7, 2017).

A former city council member from Austin who served during that time mentioned this as well:

Well, initially it was extremely combative because the city staff said that the TNCs were breaking the law, and the TNCs were like, "Well, we don't care, we're going to keep operating." Which is not really the way we do business here in town, and I think there was not a lot of good feeling about that, and then the transportation department put together some sting operations, which obviously caused a lot of additional tension between them (personal communication, August 8, 2017).

Interviewees from Washington, DC and Portland also addressed the illegality of TNCs operating in their respective cities:

It was illegal from the beginning. Washington, D.C. and Title 31 had pretty strict regulations for all livery services or all vehicle-for-hire services (personal communication, August 13, 2017).

In early December of the same year, 2014, Uber started operating in Portland without a permit. The city confronted Uber with legal actions and fines (personal communication, August 15, 2017).

Despite the fact that the company entered both markets illegally, Uber was allowed to operate in DC and temporarily banned in Portland. The juxtaposition between these two cities' responses represents the reality that some cities were willing to accept TNCs operation, even if they were breaking the law. One interviewee chalked public acceptance of this behavior up to hatred toward the taxi-cab industry:

I try to think of an example in modern history which is equivalent to this organized acceptance of lawless behavior. And the only thing I can think of is Bonnie and Clyde holding up banks, where the American public hated banks and the American public hates the cab industry. Every mayor, including mayors that I worked for, they've reformed the cab system, they went up in the polls. Everybody's got a bad cab story (personal communication, October 17, 2017).

In these narratives, the plot is somewhat similar to the previous theme, which focused on entrance into the market. Cities have a status quo, in the form of existing law or mobility providers. The TNC enters the market with no regard for that status quo, and the disruption forces city officials to act or respond in some way. The villain here is the TNC, the victim is the city resident forced to exist in a realm of "lawless behavior" and the hero is the city, which often intervenes to restore control (Stone 2002).

**Greyball.** Several interviewees mentioned Uber's use of a program called Greyball in their city. Greyball is a software program that was used by Uber to help drivers avoid government

officials and regulators that might enforce local laws. Uber would use the program to identify accounts associated with local officials through geofencing, data mining and other means. The program would then often times deny rides to these individuals (Isaac, 2017). Uber's use of this software garnered attention in Portland, and investigations in into its use were conducted by both the city as well as the Department of Justice. An interviewee from Portland explained how the Greyball controversy began there:

We found out later at that this point, was when Uber came in, they started by using a software called Greyball. It's a software that they claim has legitimate uses, but was specifically used to identify and exclude city employees in order to prevent any sort of regulatory oversight (personal communication, August 1, 2017).

Others from Portland who mentioned it indicated the significant rift that it created between TNCs and city officials, and expressed fear that it could be used to limit service access to less desirable rider populations. When the city found out about Uber's use of Greyball, they filed a lawsuit.

This narrative theme diverges to create two different narrative offshoots and sets of characters. In one narrative, the villain is the TNC, the victim is the city official who cannot do his or her job, and the hero is the U.S. Department of Justice, which shed a national spotlight on the illegality of using the software in that way. In another related narrative, the villain is the TNC, the victims are the residents of the underserved neighborhoods that the software helps Uber avoid, and the hero is the intervening city (Stone, 2002).

**Surge pricing.** Another issue raised by interviewees was TNC's use of a surge pricing model. This is a flexible charging model in which prices for rides are calculated based on demand, time, congestion, and other factors. For instance, if a late night concert ends and hundreds of people

are paging TNCs for rides in one general vicinity, TNCs will charge a premium price for those rides. This was mentioned by policymakers in the context of consumer protection and fairness. It was also mentioned in conjunction with the ‘leveling the playing field’ narrative, since taxi fares are established in accordance with local for-hire transportation regulations. One interviewee from Austin addressed this:

...they'd wind up spending \$200 or \$300 to go 10 miles, they called that surge pricing. We call that being ripped off, and something that the city should have...protect the consumer against that kind of conduct. With the taxi, the taxi is regular, they are going to ... the price per mile is going to be the same whether it's Christmas or it's the hottest day in August, (personal communication, August 8, 2017).

There are two distinct plots and two different sets of characters that emerge in this narrative theme. In one plot, TNCs use surge pricing models, and those surge pricing models are unfair to the consumer. In this narrative, the villain is the TNC, the victim is the rider/user, and the hero is the intervening city. In the other narrative surrounding TNCs use of a surge pricing model, it is condemned as being unfair to traditional transportation providers (taxis) whose fares are determined by the local regulations. In this case, the villain is the TNC, and the victim is the taxi cab driver who cannot choose to raise fares in competition with Uber and Lyft (Stone, 2002). This shift of the victim character to the taxis reinforces the idea of fairness in the mobility market, an issue that came up prominently in the ‘leveling the playing field’ narrative.

**Public engagement.** When deliberations began around the issue of TNCs operating in different cities, Uber and Lyft very effectively engaged the public/riders to take a pro-TNC stance in public forums. The companies sent large groups of individuals to city council meetings wearing Uber or Lyft shirts and also encouraged supporters to speak during public comment periods. Many

city council meetings in which the issue of TNC regulation was addressed saw the attendance of large, very visible groups of TNC supporters, often with signs and branded clothing. One interviewee from Austin reflected on the city's residents partaking in public meetings:

If they show the audience it is all shirts, it's all drivers, they're all wearing Lyft and Uber shirts and... and so as majority drivers talking about how great you know their company was basically which I understand is great. And it had unfortunately turned into, "Don't make you know this service go away," and we were saying, "We're not we don't want it to go away we're just we're just trying to understand what the pushback is in fingerprinting drivers," that's what the real issue was (personal communication, August 7, 2017).

Another interviewee from Washington, DC argued that this type of engagement is a normal part of public policy making works today:

...they will be quick to forward an email, or comment on social media, or place a call to the elected official to express their opinion when they receive notice from a company saying, "This is what you're going to lose if you don't speak up." So think of like propositions that have gone through in California or happened in Boston when ride sharing got kicked out, or elected officials who get a barrage of phone calls or messages to support an issue. That's how things get done, not somebody just from the public walking off the street and attending a public hearing. Nah, they don't make that kind of investment (personal communication, October 11, 2017).

The differences in the ways Austin and Washington, DC reflected on TNCs engagement of riders is telling of each city's priorities. In Austin, the narrative expression is about the fact that a corporation effectively engaged the public on a political issue. The villain is the city, the victim is

the TNC supporter or driver, and the hero is the TNC (Stone, 2002). Conversely, in Washington, DC the interviewee disregards it as a standard part of the policy making process.

### **Issues and Concerns**

There were several narrative themes that addressed issues and concerns related to the operation of TNCs. These included policy outcomes and ways in which TNCs might operate in a community or disrupt the status quo.

**Accessibility.** Some of the policy stakeholders interviewed expressed concern about accessibility, or reflected on the engagement of disability rights groups in the deliberation around TNCs. One interviewee, a city level policy assistant from Washington, DC, explained that, “[One] constituency has been disability rights advocates who have been concerned about equitable access for people with disabilities,” (personal communication, September 5, 2017). Another interviewee, from Austin, explained that some of the discussion surrounding accessibility, again came down to the issue of disparate standards between taxi cabs and TNCs. The individual explained that disability rights advocates felt that they might be excluded from TNC use, due to the fact that there was no legal mechanism to ensure the companies provided accessible vehicles: “There were the people with disabilities community [who were] involved and interested. Taxi companies have requirements for having accessible rides,” (personal communication, August 8, 2017). Austin’s concern with this issue and the vulnerabilities of the disabled population is consistent with its urban regime classification. This narrative theme was centered on the idea of a new mobility option entering a market, not serving a specific population (the disabled population) and the ultimate responsibility of city governments to do something in response to this failure. The hero in this scenario is the city government, while the victim is the disabled community that cannot use TNC options, and the villain is the TNC (Stone, 2002).

**Equity.** In addition to concerns about the disabled community having access to TNCs, some sentiments expressed in public hearings focused on service equity in a different way. An interviewee from Washington, DC reflected on the public's participation in city council meetings and hearings, and their experiences being denied service because of their race or the neighborhood in which they lived:

We had a lot of people who testified at hearings about how depending on where they lived in the city, they weren't able to get a cab or they were passed over by taxis in the District, based on any number of characteristics, generally, I think race was the number one thing we had heard, how Uber had, because of their app systems, [inaudible 00:14:02] mitigated those problems a little bit, or they were able to get cars in an area that they wouldn't normally otherwise get (personal communication, August 31, 2017).

This argument or narrative was presented in many cities as a form of support for TNCs and a testament to the inadequate service offered by incumbent transportation providers. TNCs themselves actually adopted this argument as well, claiming that the nature of their app-based business platform removes any element of bias from the pick-up and drop-off process, whereas taxis have been known to refuse to pick up certain riders and refuse to drop customers off in certain places. It is argued that the anonymity of the transaction, in this case, has the potential to make transportation more equitable for underserved populations and neighborhoods. In this case, the villain is the taxi industry, the victim is the underserved population or the denied rider, and the hero is the TNC.

The equity narrative was also used to encompass a plot focused on equitable deployment of and access to services for all members of a community. This is tightly coupled with the narrative theme of accessibility, in which the hero is the city government, the victim is the unserved or



underserved community, and the villain is the TNC (Stone, 2002). This represents an example of a narrative theme that diverges into two different sub-narratives with somewhat conflicting plots.

**Complement to transit/mobility system.** Some of the same conversations that addressed equity and accessibility, also addressed whether TNCs might complement existing mobility networks in cities. One interviewee addressed this element of the conversation:

The conversations we were having around TNC's was that the service was a good and useful service, that it was a piece of the puzzle for a transportation system so its service was important, but it's the service that's important, not any one company (personal communication, August 7, 2017).

One interviewee from Portland reflected on different stakeholder groups who argued that TNCs might play a valuable role in building out existing mobility systems:

There are groups that are saying that this service could and will be beneficial. Some of the older adult groups, AARP and things like that, do advocate for expanded choices and opportunities for people who don't have a lot of transportation options. Folks in the disability community are coming in and advocating for options, but as long as those options are fair and are responsive to their needs. The business community has partnered with both Uber and Lyft at different times to find ways to revitalize certain business districts and provide transportation options for events and things like that, (personal communication, August 1, 2017).

An interviewee from Indianapolis discussed the emergence and role of TNCs among a number of new mobility systems and changes that were taking place in the city:

It definitely entered into the discussion about transit and what role transit would play. We also have the same time we had just launched bikeshare just a couple of years before. So our bikeshare operation was brand new. And we launched North America's first fully electric car share system with a vendor out of Paris called Bollere. So we had BlueIndy, which is the car share system and then bikeshare with BCycle and then this transit referendum. At the same time we were adopting a lot of new things into the mobility fabric here. Uber and Lyft, you know, just a little ahead of those, (personal communication, September 26, 2017).

One interviewee, who is affiliated with the transit system in Indianapolis, indicated that TNCs were seen as a complement to existing mobility systems:

Typically, as these things emerge, IndyGo typically tries to find ways where these sorts of services will complement IndyGo and not ... we don't necessarily view things as a competitor because we provide different services, and we recognize that. Much like the city was open to embracing TNCs, I think IndyGo certainly recognized that it could be complementary and look to that (personal communication, August 6, 2017).

This individual went on to explain the role of TNCs in providing first and last mile rides in parts of the city that are not well served by existing systems. Willingness to acknowledge a private sector company as a potential provider of a public service was very much consistent with the Indianapolis' corporate urban regime status. An interviewee from Washington, DC explained that city officials had discussions with TNCs about whether there might be a role for them to play in providing paratransit rides for people with disabilities:

Our engagement with metro tended to be in the form of whether Uber and/or taxis could help with, what we call in the District, Metro Access, which is [crosstalk 00:12:09] transit service that metro operates for people with disabilities (personal communication, September 5, 2017).

The narrative about TNCs as a component of the mobility system, and the potential for these companies to provide complementary first and last mile rides as well as transportation options for different communities is one that was frequently utilized by TNCs in public forums to reinforce their value. In this case comparison, it was most prominently expressed in Indianapolis, the city with the weakest mobility network. When it was used in this way, the TNC was presented as the hero (Stone, 2002).

**Safety.** Many of the interviewees mentioned safety. This narrative theme encompassed several dimensions and was expressed in different ways. Some interviewees were focused on the safety of drivers, while others were focused on the safety of riders, pedestrians and residents. Some emphasized the safety of the vehicle, and tended toward vehicle inspections. There were also much broader conversations about insurance coverage that emphasized safety. These conversations tended to focus more on liability and coverage during trips. One interviewee from Portland emphasized the challenge of setting insurance standards:

When you turn from personal vehicle to a private-for-hire vehicle, what's the coverage levels? Who pays that? That was really the main point, where there was a lot of disagreement. It's a completely new industry, in a way... that was one of the things that the council had a hard time deciphering and figuring out where the right levels [of coverage]... that's a huge public safety concern (personal communication, September 5, 2017).

That same individual went on to address the safety of riders and users of TNC services, citing some unfortunate incidents that occurred:

The other thing I should say is we did... not only were the police telling us the importance of these public safety provisions, but we were hearing from victims of sexual assault and our rape crisis center. Basically, bottom line is there is no way to absolutely prevent one-hundred percent safety risk, but it's a matter of taking prudent steps to prevent safety issues, and that's what we're doing (personal communication, September 5, 2017).

One interviewee compared the insurance coverage of TNCs to that required of taxi drivers:

And taxi drivers, the reason why they have to carry commercial liability insurance is because they're on the road for a sustained period of time, and they get in a ton of accidents. Driving for hire is just riskier (personal communication, August 31, 2017).

Another interviewee, a policy aide to an elected official, addressed safety in several contexts, including insurance coverage, automobile inspections and individual rider safety:

Ensuring that the person has insurance and adequate insurance in order to cover the worst case scenario is really important. Making sure the vehicles are inspected regularly and have some basic maintenance records to follow up on that, and that the person is going to be most likely safe. We also had a number of, early on, a couple of unfortunate events that happened where somebody got into an Uber that wasn't actually an Uber and someone was pretending to be an Uber, and ended up getting called out in the middle of the ride and ditching out of the car in the middle of the bridge. There's really no community consensus outside of the idea that the city has a role to make sure that consumers are safe. What that

looks like, everybody else has a different opinion (personal communication, August 1, 2017).

An interviewee from Austin, where the issue of public safety sat at the center of the dispute surrounding fingerprinted background checks, addressed safety in the context of the individual safety of residents and users:

Some of us witnessed specific events that we thought were a little over the top, like stopping in the middle of traffic to pick up someone. Or just jamming up traffic, and that wasn't a safe thing to do, or a wise thing to do. There started being reports of incidences of assault, rapes, complaints being filed here in Austin. I'm talking about other places too, but in Austin, and so that certainly got our attention (personal communication, August 8, 2017).

The resistance of TNCs in sharing data was also raised as a public safety concern:

The other thing that's really important to understand from a policy standpoint is the data. Having access to that data is critical for public safety. The policy is that it helps with necessary information to understand traffic flow through the city, to understand traffic needs in the city, to have data available for the police if there are incidents they need to access, you know all of that kind of thing. They have universally refused to share data, except on their own terms (personal communication, August 7, 2017).

The issue of safety took on many different forms and thus, emerged in many different ways. It came up, in some form, across all four cities. In Portland and Austin it was among the top three most frequent narrative themes (see Table 2). In Austin, safety was one of the most central issues, given that the deliberations and ultimate dispute over TNC regulations in that city hinged on the

mandate of fingerprinted background checks. In all cases, even though the narrative arc took different forms and followed different plotlines, the victim is the rider, the villain is the TNC and the hero is the city council or regulator that puts the safety measures into place (Stone, 2002).

**Built environment.** Some of the concerns expressed addressed the impact these new mobility companies will have on the built environment of a city. One interviewee from D.C. expressed: “As these companies change, and as new companies with new technologies come on board, it will present challenges to any city and its built environment, right?” (personal communication, August 29, 2017). This concern was underpinned by speculation about TNCs ultimately converting their fleets to autonomous vehicles, and the ways that might press cities to redevelop street networks and curb space that was designed for single-occupancy traditional vehicles. In this narrative, the victim is the city resident and the villain is the TNC (Stone, 2002). There was also concern expressed in regard to cities dealing with an influx of traffic and how that might increase emissions, worsen congestion, and put more pressure on a city’s infrastructure.

**Traffic congestion.** The issue of increased traffic congestion as a result of the influx of new vehicles on city roadways was expressed by multiple interviewees. One interviewee from the city of Portland explained:

Well, over the last few years, traffic in the city of Portland has gotten absolutely insane and I don't think there's ever been really a study that can show that Uber's responsible for that. Over the last couple of years, we've averaged 5,000 new people moving to Portland metropolitan area every month. And we're looking at roads that were created with a 20 year plan four years ago, so we're not in the best situation for that. But I think it did probably have an immediate impact on the core downtown Portland area where all the business is and that typical center hub because we've basically, overnight, had between seven and nine

thousand Uber vehicles just flood into downtown. The numbers were all over the place as to how many there really are, but I think the last number I heard was 14,000 Uber and I think 9 or 10,000 Lyft, (personal communication, September 18, 2017).

In this narrative, the plot is focused on the ways all of the new TNC vehicles might perpetuate bad traffic. The beginning of the plot addresses the already worsening traffic in Portland, the middle is the introduction of TNCs and the end is the notion that between seven and nine thousand new vehicles in the form of TNCs were found to be adding to already challenging levels of traffic congestion. The villain here is the TNC and the victims are the city residents, forced to deal with increased traffic congestion (Stone, 2002). Another interviewee from Portland mentioned this as well:

We also hear from some folks along the environmental side who are advocating against TNCs because the city of Portland's in a period of unprecedented growth and our transportation system is not really keeping up with it because of that, where our traffic is the worst it's ever been in the history of Portland. You look down any busy street and half the cars have an Uber or Lyft logo on them (personal communication, August 1, 2017).

Portland's tendency, as a caretaker regime, to want to maintain things as they are, is quite consistent with anxiety over traffic congestion. Another interviewee from Indianapolis stated "...but then the traffic congestion of the taxi drivers being forced to stay back and go through the cumbersome system while Uber and Lyft can do whatever it also ends up clogging up the lane of the traffic there," (personal communication, October 5, 2018). This narrative expression, while focused on traffic congestion, also references the disparities between taxis and TNCs. In this narrative plot, the victims could be presented as both the city's residents who have to deal with

increased traffic, and the taxis drivers who must adhere to more stringent regulations than TNCs. Despite the varying plots associated with this narrative, the villain is consistently the TNC.

**Environmental concerns.** Concerns about the environmental impacts of TNC fleets being on the road were also expressed. One interviewee from Austin, a progressive regime where environmental considerations rank as a high priority, stated the following:

Some of them that I remember are also environmental, simply because we get days of high ozone levels and there was a possibility that that was going to increase, and Travis County is definitely a progressive county in the area of environment. We pride ourselves, including to partner with environmental organizations, labor and environment, to make sure the safe quality of life is there for all. So, that I remember was a big issue, is the added exhaust that would be added to the air, and some sort of solution and all of that that goes with it (personal communication, September 20, 2017).

This acknowledgement that environmental concerns are a major priority in Austin is especially central to the notion of Austin's urban regime classification influencing the dominant narratives that arise in the city's policy deliberations. The plot focuses on the increased traffic and greenhouse gas emissions from the added TNC vehicles having a negative impact on the environment and thus, the quality of life for residents. The victim is the city's residents, the villain is the TNC and the hero is the intervening city or regulator (Stone 2002).

**City revenues.** Narratives surrounding the impact of TNCs on city revenue streams took on different dimensions. In most cases, mention of city revenue addressed the fact that TNCs used city infrastructure without paying the taxes that supported its upkeep. In this plot, the villain is the TNCs, the victim is the city or the city infrastructure, and the heroes are the intervening city



officials who insist that the TNCs pay their fair share for infrastructure usage (Stone, 2002). One interviewee from Austin explained that an infrastructure fee was included in the city's legislations:

...the cities are deprived of any revenue, and that was one of the other things that the city required, is that they had to provide a small amount of revenue to the cities for using our roads. That was in the ordinance that they were trying to overturn, (personal communication, August 8, 2017).

This narrative plot was concerned with the state of infrastructure and the fact TNCs were using it for free. Another interviewee from Portland addressed the issues of revenue streams in a different way, pointing out that TNCs caused incumbent transportation providers' income to dip, and that the city no longer receives local tax revenue from them because of it:

As far as paying city taxes, if you are [making] under a certain amount, you don't have to pay them, okay? Well, now you have all these cab drivers that are under that amount, so they're losing all those city taxes, and the Uber drivers aren't paying it, (personal communication, August 10, 2017).

The narrative plot from Portland is more about fairness and tax revenue generated from small business in the city. The villain here is the TNC and the victim is the city (Stone, 2002).

**Level playing field.** A narrative theme that emerged in a significant way in every city in the analysis was the notion of ‘leveling the playing field’ between incumbent transportation providers and TNCs. This narrative plot mostly referred to the city ensuring, via regulation or public policy, that TNCs and taxis were subject to the same rules. The argument for parity and fairness was consistently presented by incumbent transportation providers. One interviewee representing the taxi industry in Indianapolis explained: “...there was pushback from taxi operators um... kind of saying it's unfair they don't have to abide by the same rules or same licensing rules that we do,” (personal communication, October 5, 2017). Another interviewee from Portland also addressed this, and reflected on the ensuing negotiations: “... they pretended after the recommendations from this committee, that they were passing ordinances, which gave what we had been asking for, which is a level playing field,” (personal communication, August 10, 2017). In Indianapolis, the city council started a new commission to attempt to level the playing field by regulating taxis less stringently. A councilmember from Indianapolis explained:

One of the things was that there is also a difference in the way they are regulated. Taxi drivers have more stringent regulations on the background checks, on the safety of the vehicles. So we began to ask ourselves, could we create some kind of parity...Eventually, we decided if we cannot regulate the TNCs we can look at the regulations around taxi cabs. We decided to start that commission last year, officially started the commission this spring of 2017. The first meeting was in May, (personal communication, September 1, 2017).

The notion of deregulating the taxi industry in order to make things fairer for all for-hire transportation providers, was also addressed by an interviewee in Washington, DC: “So, to address the issues, there hasn't been as much as, "Let's regulate Lyft or Uber more." It's been, "Let's regulate taxicab drivers less,” (personal communication, August 31, 2018). In these narratives, the

villain is presented as the city or the regulator and the victim is presented as the incumbent transportation providers. The hero could be the policymaker who moves to deregulate the taxi cabs (Stone, 2002). Deregulating taxis to achieve fairness is consistent with corporate regime characteristics. The notion of a level playing field was also addressed by interviewees from Austin:

[We wanted an] equal playing field. One reason we were looking at that is because that was one of the policies that previous counsel had highlighted and said should be looked at with regard to TNC, so it made sense for us to look at an equal playing field with regard to all of the ground transportation regulations (personal communication, August 7, 2017).

In this narrative plot, however, deregulation is not presented as the solution, and city is opting toward stricter regulation of TNCs. Another interviewee from Austin explained further: “It's not a market equal playing field, it's regulatory equal playing field (personal communication, August 8, 2017).

**TNCs and taxis.** Many of the incumbent transportation providers I spoke with expressed anxiety about the impacts that TNCs would have on the taxi industry. Some interviewees expressed fearfulness about taxis being replaced. One interviewee from Portland explained the real impacts of TNCs on the cab industry:

There has been a definite downturn in the number of professional cab drivers in Portland, a lot of the people who are honestly, just defecting the traditional cabs into a TNC model. It's definitely hurting some bottom line. We've had at least two, I believe three taxi companies go out of business in the last two years. I think two of them this year alone, and some serious soul searching on how to operate. They are having their hands forced a bit. The cabs are suddenly coming out with apps and the ability to hail rides differently and respond to what the customers are wanting. It has definitely been a shift for how these folks

are doing business, and it has had a direct impact on their livelihoods (personal communication, August 10, 2017).

Another interviewee, who represents the interests of the taxi industry in Indianapolis reflected on the significantly lower number of taxis operating in the city since the entrance of TNCs:

...when Uber and Lyft came in, the taxicab industry was at its peak level of operators. I think they were around 900 taxi cab drivers and the income was up much higher too. There are graphs available that I can send you that we were shown in the reform study commission that show the-there's a marked decline after Uber and Lyft enter in the taxi cab industry in both their earnings and the number of people employed as taxi cab drivers. At last count there were 551 or 52 registered taxi drivers. And then taxi drivers say that to make the same amount of money that they used to make they have to work about twice as many hours and a lot of them are having to pick up other jobs working like in warehouses or driving for other companies to subsidize the income that they used to have (personal communication, October 5, 2017).

In this narrative plot, the TNCs entered city markets, the competition is hurting cab drivers and companies, and existing drivers are forced to become TNC drivers. In some cases, the city is left with fewer mobility options, and the taxi cab companies that do survive are pressured to invest in apps and modernized platforms. In this narrative, the villain is the TNC, the victim is the incumbent transportation provider and the hero is the intervening city official that attempts to address this market parity (Stone, 2002).

**Drivers.** Many of the narrative plots expressed about TNCs replacing taxis overlapped with narratives expressions about the impacts of TNCs on professional drivers for incumbent

transportation providers. In some cases, concern was expressed for the livelihood of these individuals. An interviewee from Indianapolis explained the makeup of the taxi-cab driver population in the city, and how they were being impacted by TNCs:

...a large portion of the taxi cab industry here in Indiana is African immigrants. Many of them feel like they don't have too many other job options that will pay the same as what they used to make with the taxi industry. They're very proud of their service. They consider themselves ambassadors to Indianapolis and the uhhh they like the fact that they have a safety background checks. Their customers can feel like they know who they're riding with and they don't want to put Uber and Lyft out of business. They just want Uber and Lyft to basically admit that they're taxi companies and follow the same rules, (personal communication, October 5, 2017).

In this narrative, the villain is the TNC driver, the victim is the taxi driver and the hero is the city policy maker or regulator (Stone, 2002).

In other cases, narratives surrounding drivers emphasized the new job opportunities presented by TNCs and defended them as new sources of income. An interviewee from Austin explained that much of the public feedback directed at the city council came from TNC drivers who urged policy makers not to eliminate these services:

Most of the e-mails and feedback we were getting were from the drivers... they were from Lyft and Uber drivers. So while Lyft and Uber drivers are... many of them are my constituents, it was more from a prospective driver 'don't take away my job,' (personal communication, September 25, 2018).

An interviewee who works for a policymaker in Washington, DC reflected on a similar experience:

We also heard from a lot of residents who drove to those services that liked participating as an Uber or Lyft driver. So yes, we certainly heard from people in the community, (personal communication, September 5, 2017).

This narrative plot was adopted by TNCs who in turn used it to activate their drivers to oppose strict regulation. This narrative also encompasses the idea that TNC platforms create new jobs and deserve support for that reason. The hero in this narrative arc is the TNC, the villain is the city or regulator and the victim is the resident who stands to lose out on a work opportunity (Stone, 2002).

*Labor.* Many interviewees addressed the labor implications of TNC business models. They alluded to the fact that even though TNCs might provide new jobs, there is a question as to whether they are good jobs. This narrative plot directly conflicts with some of the others expressed, in which support for TNCs was urged due to the fact that they are job creators (Stone, 2002). An interviewee from Portland addressed the fact that the net workforce outcome was negative:

You will hear people say that your part-timing. You're basically trying to make living wage jobs and you're part-timing them out. The 1099 economy. We're putting taxi drivers' livelihoods and jobs at risk. Uber is evil. We get that a lot, (personal communication, September 5, 2017).

This concern expressed in Portland, which encompasses both regard for incumbent providers as well as blatant disdain for Uber as an unethical company, is consistent with Portland's status as a caretaker regime. The villain is the TNC, the victim is the resident or driver, and the hero is the intervening city official (Stone, 2002). Another interviewee from Washington, DC addressed the economic outcomes of TNCs, and the real impacts on certain communities in the city:

...if you have the background of understanding economics and you're more willing to accept the free market as a theory for growth, then you don't care about these at-living-wage jobs that sustain the family in Southeast, Northeast, and those areas being reduced to a lot of minimum-wage jobs (personal communication, August 31, 2017).

Other interviewees talked about the response to TNCs from the organized labor movement:

The taxi industry in response to Uber created a, kind of, association called the TFA, which is the Transportation Fairness Alliance, which was basically the taxi cab companies. They had one central voice, I guess you could say. Another would have been the AFL-CIO was pretty... somewhat involved from a union standpoint because about a year earlier, they got a new cab company, called Union Cab. So there was some union involvement... (personal communication, September 18, 2018).

All of the varying narrative arcs surrounding the issue of labor focus on three fundamental components: living-wage jobs, the livelihood of professional drivers, and the ways in which technology-based business platforms have undercut both.

**Taxi-cabs replaced by TNCs.** Many of the policy elites interviewed addressed the technological and convenience deficit of incumbent transportation providers, specifically as compared to TNCs. One interviewee from Indianapolis pointed to the public's preference for the convenience of TNCs over the defense or fair regulation of taxis:

The convenience that TNC companies provide the public sort of outweighed the ummm the objective view of the imbalance in regulations. There was not a public outcry that this isn't fair. Folks saw that the use of TNCs was convenient, it's easy to access them, to monitor when they are coming, to pay. There was not the indignation to do something to

save our taxis. To be frank, I don't know that the taxi companies had created a loyalty base, the taxi companies did not have natural allies in the public. One thing about this disruption is that it has shed a light on the level of service that one gets with a taxi. I think taxi cab companies in our neck of the woods had taken for granted that this is the means that people use when they don't have a car to go some distance, so take it or leave it, versus how do we create a culture of avid taxi advocates. So there was not a public outcry, there was an 'oh cool we have another way to get from point A to point B, very convenient, you can rate it, you can track it,' (personal communication, August 1, 2017).

This narrative plot addressed not only the convenience of TNCs over taxi-cabs, but also the level of service and the notion that TNCs provide an improved service for residents. This was especially prominent in mid-sized cities in which the taxi-cab or mobility networks are not robust or proportional to the need or population (DuPuis, 2017). An interviewee from Portland reflected on this further:

In Portland, like most other cities, right, taxis have ... at least in Portland they've failed to evolve over the years. There was only 400, the private for-hire board, was actually taxed, they're the ones that issue permits at the time, for taxi's, and low and behold that Board is run by cab owners. And so they capped it at 400 vehicles, which for a city with a 2.5 million metropolitan population, basically makes it nearly impossible to ever get a cab (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

In this narrative, the hero is the TNC, the villain is taxi-cab industry, and the victim is the resident or rider (Stone, 2002). Other narratives focused more on the actual technological leap made by TNCs, and the fact that the convenience of them raised the bar in terms of expectations of for-hire transportation. An interviewee from Washington, DC, addressed that:



And, of course, cabs are technologically behind the situation. Uber and the ride-hailing companies are still better at technologically keeping people happy because of what the average person's expectations are now, right? (personal communication, September 29, 2017).

While this narrative plot diverges slightly from the previous one, it still tells a story about a traditional company's inability to keep up with and provide the same level of service as a new innovative company.

**Technological advancement.** Some of the narrative themes surrounding taxi-cabs being replaced by TNCs overlapped with narratives about TNCs presenting a new and exciting technological breakthrough. A former taxi-cab union representative from Washington, D.C. reflected on this, while also addressing the reputation of taxis and how those two factors worked together to build up support for TNCs:

Uber and Lyft had this shiny patina. They had the "new car smell." It was technology. It was convenience. It was exciting. And there was a lot of money. Taxi drivers have been around since the '20s, and every horror story you can ever imagine ... In the District of Columbia, there's a reputation for discriminatory behavior in taxicabs. Taxicabs have a reputation for discrimination. They have a reputation for being dirty. They have a reputation for cheating people (personal communication, August 31, 2017).

Another interviewee from Portland addressed the fact that the TNCs themselves encourage and embrace a narrative focused on technological advancement:

The TNCs make this big deal about here's the wave of the future, and its new economy and all this kind of stuff, it sounds very hip and cool, and a lot of people like to have these apps

on their phones. People are moving more and more towards using phones for all kinds of things, (personal communication, August 10, 2017).

The narrative plot expressed in Portland approaches skepticism regarding whether TNCs are as valuable as they make themselves out to be, whereas the plot expressed in D.C. addresses the negative actions of taxicabs. In many cities across the country, this technological advancement narrative took hold and put pressure on taxis to modernize their operations. This included utilizing an app, or standardizing credit card payment options across taxi fleets.

**Data.** The issue of data sharing has been central to deliberations between TNCs and cities. In many cities (some outside the scope of this analysis) there has been discussion about who gets access to the data collected by TNCs. Cities typically argue that TNCs are using taxpayer financed infrastructure and public assets for free, and thus should share trip data that could drive better decision making and policy outcomes for residents and stakeholders. Alternatively, while TNCs will sometimes enter into data sharing agreements with cities or public agencies, they are generally remiss to do so, as they view this data as proprietary. This sets up a narrative in which the TNC is the villain, the resident whose data is being utilized is the victim, and the intervening city official or regulator is the hero (Stone, 2002). One interviewee from Austin reflected on this conflict:

The other thing that's really important to understand from a policy standpoint is the data. Having access to that data is critical for public safety. The policy is that it helps with necessary information to understand traffic flow through the city, to understand traffic needs in the city, to have data available for the police if there are incidents they need to access, you know all of that kind of thing. They have universally refused to share data, except on their own terms and not the data that municipalities need, our states for that matter, (personal communication, August 8, 2017).

Existing data sharing agreements that are entered into are typically limited, and their terms are confidential. One interviewee from Portland implied that the city has established a data sharing agreement with TNCs, but the individual was unable to offer any additional details about the type of data, the parameters, and/or the negotiation of the agreement.

**State intervention.** Two of the cities in this analysis, Austin and Indianapolis, saw state-level preemption of local governments. In both of these cases, the state legislatures passed bills that made it illegal for cities in those states (Indiana and Texas) to regulate TNCs at the local level. This was often a result of the TNCs lobbying the state legislatures in favor of this move. One interviewee from Indianapolis explained:

So the city itself didn't really react formally with any kind of policy. And then the uhhhh the state was working on a bill. It started in the Senate and they were working on it and then it got referred to the House Transportation and Roads Committee. And then from there it became a House bill that passed in 2015. And so because of that and Indiana home rule preemption law, the city never had a chance to formally react to it when they first came in, (personal communication, October 5, 2010).

This was ultimately the outcome in Austin as well, even after the TNCs went through the arduous process of bringing a ballot measure to the people about the nature of the regulation. When voters voted the ballot measure down, Uber and Lyft left the city and immediately began lobbying the state legislature. They ultimately facilitated the passage of a bill that preempted the ability of Texas cities to regulate on this issue. This undercut the local law in Austin, and Uber and Lyft returned. In this narrative plot, there are two villains, the TNCs and the state legislatures. The victim is the city or local regulator.

**Profitability.** Many of the individuals interviewed addressed the fact that TNCs are failing as profitable businesses. One interviewee, who is a national transportation expert, explained:

They lost \$3 billion last year. They have to get off business lines. I think they're not financially viable unless they are able to obtain the patents on the automated vehicles this year. And the Waymo lawsuit on behalf of Google against them, where they alleged to have taken their chief engineer is a serious lawsuit because it could stop the automated vehicle program, which I believe will affect the patent rights and the ability to have a \$70 billion valuation (personal communication, October 17, 2017).

Some interviewees mentioned this in the context of not wanting to invest time and energy to bring a business model into their community and regulate it when it is not sustainable or profitable. Many times this narrative plot was invoked as a reason why TNCs should be considered a short-term trend in transportation.

**Community values.** One common narrative theme was focused on the idea that community residents have the right to govern in a way that is consistent with their values and priorities. In this case, that narrative plot emphasizes the ways that TNCs fit into different communities and the rights of those communities to regulate them in the way that comports with their values. This was expressed by policy elites in the city of Austin:

Well, it's about the right of people to govern themselves. And to protect themselves if they choose to from monopolies. This country fought that battle years and years ago and that's why we have the anti-trust legislature, (personal communication, August 7, 2017).

The idea of community values is consistent with Bevir and Rhodes ideas about beliefs and traditions. These factors drive dominant narrative in communities and build up to form certain

sentiments, values, or ideas that can define a place. They can even be reflected in physical assets and architectural style (Yanow, 1995). That same Austin individual articulated the city's anti-corporate sentiment, explaining, "...the people of Austin were appalled that a company wanted to come in here and tell them what to do," (personal communication, August 7, 2017). This sentiment and narrative theme arose in Portland as well, in which an interviewee alluded to the fact that the city is extremely progressive and would never defer to corporate bullies, (personal communication, August 11, 2017). While Austin emphasized self-governance, in Portland, this narrative plot took on the idea that the community's politics might be inconsistent with Uber and Lyft's operation standards. This narrative about community values was often presented as a reason cities pushed back against TNC's entrance into the market. The notion of local beliefs and values being at the forefront of city governance decisions emerged in the two cities that ultimately passed stricter regulations. This implies that dominant or shared narrative is embedded in the characteristics of the regime, and reflective of residents' value systems. These value-laden narratives drive the policy choices that are made in each city or region.

### **Actions Taken by City**

Many of the narrative themes that emerged during discussions with policy elites and stakeholders emphasized the action taken by city governments when TNCs entered the market. These actions could be efforts to stop or control the operation of TNCs, efforts to partner with them or welcome them into the local economy, or efforts to grasp what the next steps should be.

**Initially welcomed TNCs.** Some cities, in an effort to be pro-innovation, welcomed TNCs to operate, usually as part of a pilot program. Washington, DC was one of those cities. Despite the push back from the city's Department of For-Hire Vehicles, some members of the D.C. city council embraced the new companies. One interviewee who worked for a city councilperson explained:

Essentially, my boss's position at the time was, 'Let's be pro-innovation. This is something that might be good for residents of the District. Let's see how it operates and let's see how we can make it work in the District's transportation ecosystem.' That was our first involvement with it, (personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Other arcs in this narrative addressed the notion of TNCs complementing existing mobility systems. Another interviewee, a councilmember from Austin, where deliberations progressed in a very different way, expressed a similar sentiment: "I've said so many times publicly "We welcome TNCs. They're an important part of our transportation network. We just want a level playing field." (personal communication, August 7, 2017). This statement speaks back to the notion of leveling the playing field, and is reflective of Austin's response to TNCs. While some city policy makers welcomed the companies in theory, they were also committed to regulating them in line with their residents' values. This narrative plot reaffirms that urban regimes characteristics can influence the mood of policy deliberation, and that two cities acting in the same way very well may end up with vastly different dominant narratives and policy outcomes. In the case of Washington, D.C. and Austin, the outcomes were very different despite the fact that narratives from both cities imply that there was an attempt to welcome TNCs.

In some cities local governments and regulatory bodies were reactive. TNCs entered into the market, seemingly overnight, and there was no discussion or negotiation between them and city policy makers beforehand. This sometimes resulted in banning the companies, or legal action. In other cases, city officials tried to negotiate with TNCs to find common ground in the regulatory space. These negotiations sometimes became tense, like they did in Austin, or alternatively, progressed in a collegial manner.

**Legal action against TNCs.** One interviewee from Washington, D.C. reflected on the ways in which the regulatory body attempted to enforce the existing for-hire transportation law and stop Uber, but was ultimately overcome by immense public backlash that put pressure on the local elected officials:

So, when it first happened, the D.C. Taxicab Commission said, "We're gonna enforce the law." They towed a few cars, and then Uber unleashed the public monster on Mary Cheh to get 1,000 emails, and it stopped all regulation (personal communication, August 31, 2017).

In this narrative, the hero is the city residents, the victim is the TNC and the villain is the city.

Another interviewee in Portland reflected on the city's initial legal action to control TNCs: "We ended up filing a lawsuit in order to get them to stop operations, and then moved into conversations with them and other TNCs to develop what ended up being our full regulatory scheme (personal communication, August 1, 2017). This narrative expression reflects both an effort to control TNCs using legal levers, but also an effort to come to a consensus regarding regulations that work for both the city and the TNCs.

**City engaged with the TNC.** Even though different cities took different approaches to regulating TNCs, many of them attempted to engage with the companies to negotiate the boundaries of new regulatory frameworks. Although the city's initial response was to file a lawsuit, the city of Portland ultimately worked with TNCs to find a solution and develop the terms of a pilot program:

Then we press pause and they came to an agreement and they said that they wouldn't operate here ... this is just Uber, by the way ... that they wouldn't operate here any longer

if the city of Portland basically ... the agreement was that the city of Portland would come up with a task force to establish the regulation so that it would be ... that we could adopt the transportation network into our current regulation, and that they would press pause on operating in Portland (personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Austin had a very different experience when the city attempted to engage with TNCs. One former city councilmember reflected on that experience:

Despite that kind of outrageous negative stuff that they were doing, we still talked to them, we still tried to reach some sort of regulatory framework that they could agree with, but ultimately, they would not agree to what we passed in December, and so what they immediately did is they ... And all along the way there were threats. They would leave, if we didn't do exactly what they wanted they would leave, etc. etc. They did not negotiate in good faith either, in terms of sitting down with us. It wasn't the kind of negotiation where you try to solve a problem, which is what we generally try to do. It was more of a we can't accept x, y, and z and that's it, (personal communication, August 7, 2017).

In this narrative, the villain is the TNC and the victim is the city. The city of Washington, D.C. had a very close engagement with the TNCs, so much so that one policy stakeholder I spoke to gave the impression that the companies had a heavy hand in writing the ordinance that was ultimately adopted:

Well, I guess to answer the question, they worked with the city very closely. They wrote the legislation that eventually went into place. Our response was to create a regime that was similar to what taxis have to go through, but less burdensome. Right? (personal communication, August 31, 2017).



Whereas Austin and Washington, D.C. attempted to engage with TNCs, the responses they received from the companies were very different. Austin was attacked for trying to craft an ordinance that made sense for the city, whereas Washington, D.C.'s deference to Uber and Lyft was treated very well. This implies that urban regime characteristics might be read and acted upon not only by city officials, but also by other actors, such as the TNCs themselves. This sort of influence from urban regimes, and the groups, market forces and resources that bind them together can drive not only policy decision making, but the tenor of deliberations leading up to it.

**Looking to other cities.** Many cities look to other similar places for all matter of policy guidance, in order to determine what the best next steps might be in the policy process. This came up in several conversations. One interviewee from Portland explained: “We started getting a lot of academic research from what is working in other places, what is working in places that already had it, such as New York and Seattle,” (personal communication, August 1, 2017). City officials also took cues from other cities in terms of what not to do. For instance, in an attempt to set a pro-innovation tone, Indianapolis initially opted away from strict regulation in favor of a free market approach.

## **Responses to TNCs**

Many of the narrative themes that emerged in conversations with policy stakeholders emphasized the ways in which different groups responded to and developed relationships with TNCs.

**Negative reception.** Many stakeholder groups, from incumbent providers to residents to policy makers, had an initially negative reception to TNCs. Sometimes this was related to the way in which the companies entered the city, other times it was because of their impact on the local

economy or mobility markets. The negative reception narrative from residents tended to focus on their safety, or the notion that their community and way of life was at risk. One interviewee from Austin reflected on why residents reacted the way that they did:

Yeah, well, in general, there were just some citizens that came in, simply because it was an added burden to the congestion and the issue of safety was of concern. And some of these citizens included the general membership of each and every one of these locals as well, because they used it at one point or another, and how safe they felt riding in those and the risks associated with that, (personal communication, September 20, 2017).

In this narrative, the victim is the resident, the villain is the TNC and the hero is the intervening city (Stone, 2002).

Incumbent for-hire transportation providers overwhelmingly responded negatively to the entrance of TNCs, and this narrative theme emerged in every city in the analysis. In Portland, one interviewee explained that incumbent providers became angriest after the city adopted regulations that they considered unfair: “But then, we adopted the regulations. It was hard, it was hostile, I think. A lot of hesitation from the taxi industry, too,” (personal communication, September 5, 2017). Another interviewee from Portland explained the way the city initially shut down TNC operations immediately, and then later passed an ordinance. This explanation addresses the negative reception of both the city and the incumbent providers:

Actually, when they came in, the city told them here no, you can't come in yet. You're not allowed to operate, and they did anyway. Then, you know, the cab companies and stuff were screaming at the city saying wait a minute, (personal communication, September 18, 2017).

These narratives present the victim as the incumbent transportation providers (Stone, 2002). In addition to narrative themes that captured negative reception to TNCs, several instances of positive reception were noted in interviews as well.

**Positive reception.** Expressions about positive reception to TNCs were centered overwhelmingly on residents and the public. One interviewee from Indianapolis reflected on the way in which the local government and the community at large responded in a positive way to TNCs: "...there wasn't much conversation about how to regulate or ummm.... they were pretty well received as a service and that's about it," (personal communication, September 26, 2017). An interviewee from Portland explained that younger residents were especially receptive to the new, technologically forward companies: "...a lot of the tech and a lot of the younger millennial crowd would be in favor of TNCs," (personal communication, August 1, 2017). This point was reinforced by interviewees from other cities as well, with Millennials specifically being called out as the age cohort that supports TNCs.

Another interviewee from Portland cited the novel nature of TNCs and their app-based business model as the reason behind why they were embraced by the public. In Washington, D.C., the city council received TNCs positively. One interviewee explained:

So eventually, this situation rose to the attention of the D.C. Council which was trying to figure out how to ... the word I'm looking for, I'll get it in a second. How do we merge this new technology with the existing landscape, right? (personal communication, September 29, 2017).

Washington, D.C. embraced TNCs and ultimately the TNCs embraced the city back, after they were successful in lobbying for regulation that was amenable to their unhindered operation. In this particular narrative, the D.C. city council was the hero.

**Press coverage.** In several cities, press coverage influenced the dominant narratives that arose about TNCs. Many of the interviewees in this study addressed different types of coverage and different dominant narratives coming from different publications in the city. One interviewee from Portland explained:

In particular, the local newspaper called the Willamette Week has done a series of really good articles unveiling information about TNCs and some of the undesirable behaviors. They were the first to unveil the information about the political consultant who was also a lobbyist for Uber. They were the ones who ran the article about the environmental surcharge. They've continued to really keep some pressure on these folks, both on a local and national scale. When Greyball was first announced by the New York Times, I believe it was, who got the revelation that this existed and was implemented in Portland, The Willamette Week continued to really push on that and get some good information (personal communication, August 1, 2017).

None of the individuals I spoke to specifically called out positive coverage, though some indicated that more conservative media outlets took more of a pro-TNC stance, suggesting that city government and regulators should not stifle the companies. Other interviewees identified the press coverage as either neutral, fair, or sometimes not very noteworthy. An individual from Indianapolis recalled that the press did not report much about TNCs, and speculated that it might be because the emergence of these companies in the city did not cause as much tension as it did in other places:

Not like they did in other cities. I look at newspaper articles... there is very little written about Indianapolis. There was not crime, there was not a situation where the council made demands, like in Austin. There was no news story. We don't have a huge taxi culture. Other cities had news, we didn't have any news, (personal communication, August 1, 2017).

**Relationship.** The theme of the ongoing relationship between TNCs and cities came up frequently. Interviewees from Portland and Austin explained that the relationship between the city and TNCs got off to a rocky start:

For a few months there, they were operating illegally and in flagrant violation of city laws and were subject to thousands of dollars of fines until we finally ended up developing those permitting uses. It was not a good start. We didn't start off on the best foot, I would say (personal communication, August 1, 2017).

Well, initially it was extremely combative because the city staff said that the TNCs were breaking the law, and the TNCs were like, "Well, we don't care, we're going to keep operating." Which is not really the way we do business here in town, and I think there was not a lot of good feeling about that, and then the transportation department put together some sting operations, which obviously caused a lot of additional tension between them (personal communication, August 8, 2017).

In both of these narratives expressions, the TNC is the villain, and the city is the victim. Another interviewee from Washington, D.C. indicated that the relationship between the city and TNCs is a positive one, and that it has improved over time as the city continues to integrate these new services:

It's a healthier relationship today than what it was years ago, and I would like to think D.C. is not isolated in this approach. D.C. may be taken a more forward looking approach to integrating TNCs into the traditional taxi and the limousine businesses to ensure that residents have real choice (personal communication, September 5, 2017).

## **Summary**

Ultimately, the narrative themes that emerged from interviews with policy elites and stakeholders from each of the four cities fell into two broad categories: themes related to intended or anticipated policy outcomes that might result from the emergence and operation of TNCs in these communities; and themes related to actions that took place either as a result of TNCs, as a response to TNCs, or as an outcome of the relationships that developed between TNCs and the community. There were several instances in which similar actions from two different cities yielded very different rejoinders from TNCs. This suggests that not only policy actors, but TNCs themselves might respond to cues from the urban regime. While there were sometimes conflicting narratives that emerged from different communities within each city, overall, dominant narrative themes in each city were consistent with urban regime characteristics in each locale.

## Chapter 10 – Discussion

### Overview of Research

Pursuit of this research began as a result of my interest in the emergence of TNCs, and specifically, why the responses of local governments to TNCs varied so widely. I was also very interested in the stories that we tell about new things that emerge in our communities, and whether those stories can influence the ways in which public policy is developed around them. Essentially, I wondered why when a new, potentially disruptive business presents itself in a community, why are there different stories that are told about it? Where do those different stories emerge from and do they influence policy outcomes.

I began this research by familiarizing myself with narrative scholarship, scholarship surrounding the notion of innovation, and scholarship about sharing economy business models and TNCs. Since TNCs are relatively new, the published literature about them is limited, and rests mostly in legal journals focused on regulation. Since beginning this research, more literature on TNCs and their impacts has been published in policy and urban planning journals. Since I decided to look at impacts, narrative, and policy outcome across cities, I needed a way to consider difference between types of cities, which led me to Urban Regime Theory. Using the different urban regime classifications as a guide, I picked four cities for the case comparison. This gave me a context and logic in which to consider the differences cities exhibit in their responses to TNCs. I also wanted to explore the ways in which policy narratives that emerged when these services entered each city in the sample might have influenced how policy makers in those places acted toward or regulated TNCs. This led me to Bevir and Rhoads narrative theory, which makes a compelling argument for how narratives can explain governance outcomes.

Specifically, this research attempts to connect urban regime formation, the narrative themes expressed by policy stakeholders, and policy outcomes or reactions in each of the cities in the analysis. The two research propositions at the center of this analysis are: *1) Why do cities respond differently to technology-based market innovations? And 2) How do different narrative elements or patterns surrounding the emergence of innovations affect the ways in which city decision makers respond to their regulatory choices?* I approached this research using the interpretivist tradition, combining comparative case analysis with data from the narrative analysis of interviews with policy elites and stakeholders and other relevant actors who played a major role in the policy deliberations around TNCs in each city.

## **Findings**

This study uses TNCs as a specific example, but the research inquiry is broadened to all technology-based market innovations, and how different narrative elements or patterns surrounding the emergence of these innovations affect the ways in which city decision makers respond with regulatory choices. The theoretical argument and contribution is that, contrary to the assumptions made in Bevir and Rhodes decentered theory of governance, it is not really individuals making choices or solely driving policy decisions, but rather, there is influence from urban regimes, and the groups, market forces and resources that bind them together. These regimes set the narrative that drives policymakers' decisions.



**Table 2. Dominant Narrative Themes in Cities**

	<b>Austin</b>	<b>Indianapolis</b>	<b>Portland</b>	<b>Washington, DC</b>
<b>Top Three Most Frequently Mentioned Narrative Themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community values</li> <li>• Drivers</li> <li>• Safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive reception (residents)</li> <li>• Complement to transit/mobility system</li> <li>• Leveling the playing field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative reception (policy makers)</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Skirting the law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leveling the playing field</li> <li>• Positive reception (residents)</li> <li>• Taxi cabs outdated</li> </ul>

**Austin.** As a progressive regime, the city of Austin is partial to considering the needs of less powerful and protected classes in its policy development. The city also has a strong track record of prioritizing environmental concerns. Most importantly to the context of this analysis, the city is resistant to corporate interests or takeovers, a sentiment that was expressed several times by individuals who were interviewed for this research. Because the city holds these values, the debate around TNCs in Austin included significant engagement from policy actors like community organizers, activists and labor representatives. Upon the entrance of TNCs into Austin, the city council took up deliberations and policy activities around regulating these companies with an eye toward safety. The actual regulations the council proposed included requirements for vehicle markings, restrictions on where TNC drivers could pick up and drop off, and most controversial of all, requirements of drivers to get fingerprinted background checks. The city council voted 9-2 in favor of the full ordinance in December of 2016. During the deliberation period that proceeded, the city attempted to negotiate with TNCs, and even adjusted the regulations per this negotiation. Even so, Uber and Lyft threatened to leave the city if Austin’s final ordinance included fingerprint-based background checks. When the city passed that ordinance, Uber and Lyft did not follow through on their threat to leave, but instead collected the necessary number of signatures to challenge the ordinance with a ballot measure. The TNCs threatened the city council (and engaged

negatively with some specific council members), implying they would put the issue on the ballot if the city did not heed to an ordinance that met their needs and demands. The Austin city council stuck to their values and encouraged Uber and Lyft to put the issue on the ballot, an action that was underscored by the sentiment that an issue this contentious should present an opportunity for the public to weigh in. Putting the issue on the ballot prompted two campaigns and a grueling fight that occupied a national spotlight. One campaign was run by a local grassroots group that advocated for voting to uphold the city's ordinance and requirement of fingerprint-based background checks. The other campaign was run by Uber, and advocated for voting to overturn the ordinance passed by the city. The two campaigns spent drastically different amounts of money. Uber spent around \$10 million dollars on their campaign and the grassroots community-based campaign had a budget of around \$200,000. In May of 2016, the referendum came up for a vote. A vote of 'yes' on the ballot measure would have overturned the city ordinance and allowed Uber and Lyft to continue operating, adhering to their less stringent background check system. Austin voters rejected the referendum, meaning the city's ordinance remained the law of the land and TNC drivers would need to submit to fingerprint-based background checks. Uber and Lyft subsequently pulled out of the city the next day, and Austin's values were upheld by way of the voters, despite the significant amount of money spent by Uber to achieve the contrary. A significant part of this story, which ties in with the city's urban regime, dominant narratives and the proclaimed values of its residents is Austin's general aversion toward deferring to outside corporate interests, and the city's preference for supporting local business and acting in ways that reflect community values. When Uber and Lyft left Austin, they were replaced by other like services that were willing to meet the requirements of the city's regulation. Eight new TNC companies came into the city to fill the mobility and driver holes left by Uber and Lyft. One of

these new TNCs, called Ride Austin, established an innovative, non-profit ridesharing model. Ultimately, Uber and Lyft lobbied the state legislature to meet their needs, and put their weight behind a statewide TNC law that was consistent with their asks. That statewide TNC legislation, which preempts all local regulation on TNCs by cities in the state of Texas, was passed by the Texas State Legislature in May of 2017. Immediately after the city could no longer regulate TNCs, Uber and Lyft returned to metropolitan area and continued operating. The most prominent narrative themes that emerged from interviews with Austin policy actors included community values, safety, and the impact TNC operation (and halting of operation) would have on drivers. The dominant narratives surrounding Uber and Lyft during the deliberation and the campaigns leading up the referendum were reflective of Austin's emphasis on protecting vulnerable populations (rider safety, drivers, equity) and passing policy that reflected the will of Austin residents. Even though the city was preempted by legislature at the state level, everything that happened at the local level was reflective of narratives shaped by the city's urban regime characteristics.

**Portland.** As a caretaker regime, Portland tends to try to keep things as they are. The city's urban growth boundary is a prime example of policy efforts to control urban expansion and sprawl, despite rapid growth in the region over the last 20 years. Influential actors in Portland included bureaucratic figures and regulators. When Uber launched in Portland in December 2014, the city took rapid legal action and sued the company, suspending TNC operations. In doing this, the city argued that TNC operations were illegal, per the existing for-hire transportation rules. This action lead to a public battle between Uber and the city, and also resulted in somewhat of an inconsistency in terms of the city's national image. Portland is nationally recognized as embracing and cultivating a robust transportation network. Thus, the action of halting Uber's operations gave the

outward appearance of the city denying a new mobility option for its residents. This was made more complicated by the fact that the public loved the transportation services provided by Uber. The city argued that Uber disregarded the existing laws, and that entering the market without engaging with local leaders was an unacceptable approach to establishing operations there. There was also instant pushback from the taxi operators in the region, who argued that the TNCs were operating illegally and that the playing field was not level. The city stood its ground with the initial injunction, and after four months, passed temporary regulations and initiated a 120 day pilot program that allowed TNCs to operate as long as they followed a certain set of guidelines. The pilot allowed the city to take time to adjust its transportation-for-hire-ordinance to accommodate TNCs in a way that made sense for the region and the residents. The narrative themes most prominent in Portland included the negative reception TNCs were met with by local policy makers, safety, and TNCs attempt to skirt the law. In December 2015, the Portland City Council voted 3-2 to approve permanent transportation for-hire regulations that enabled TNCs to operate legally. The new rules required TNCs to provide the city with trip data, uphold minimum levels of insurance, and conduct driver background checks (Soper, 2015). Overall Portland's response to TNCs was consistent with the city's urban regime typology as well as the dominant narratives that took hold in the city. The city's initial response attempted to maintain the status quo and uphold the law. Even though Portland is highly regarded for its robust transportation network, commissioners and regulators were determined to set boundaries and craft a careful regulation before they let TNCs operate. In addition to the aforementioned dominant narrative themes, many of the interviewees I spoke with lamented the negative impacts that TNCs have had on traffic congestion in the city.

**Washington, D.C.** Washington, D.C. qualifies as an intergovernmental regime due to its unique status as a national capital versus a state, and its continued subjugation by members of Congress. Despite this classification, Washington, D.C. is a large, strong market city, and thus exhibits some governance tendencies that fall outside of the intergovernmental regime classification. While federal liaisons, and members of Congress are often prominent policy actors in the city, the city's council and government is also a significant force. Unlike some cities classified as intergovernmental regimes, in D.C. the intervention from higher government is not a result of inadequacy or limited capacity. Washington, D.C. responded to TNCs much like a strong market city might be expected to, and actually exhibited some of the characteristics of a corporate regime. The D.C. City Council wanted to embrace innovation and new mobility options, so when Uber entered the D.C. market, the city's first move was not to stop operations, but rather to pass emergency legislation to allow TNCs to operate temporarily while they deliberated permanent regulation (Murphy, 2013). When the city council passed an ordinance in 2014, the members of the council who crafted it had worked closely with Uber to develop it, and afterward the company held it up as a pro-TNC model to which other cities should aspire. The Teamsters and the D.C. Taxicab Commission opposed the bill, due to the fact that D.C. taxi cabs were forced to adhere to different rules than TNC drivers. Despite the pushback from taxi regulators, the council carried forth with the pro-innovation ordinance. The narrative themes most prominent in DC included leveling the playing field between TNCs and incumbent for-hire transportation drivers, the positive reception of TNCs by city residents, and the fact that taxi cabs were perceived as outdated. Because of this TNC friendly regulation, TNCs operate legally and relatively uninhibited in Washington, D.C., much to the consternation of some of the long-established taxi cab companies and drivers. There have been instances of protest from city's cab drivers, and one particular protest in which

cabs blocked the areas near city hall and in nearby parts of downtown during deliberations over the city's TNC regulations. In June of 2018, the city council unanimously approved an increased tax on TNC rides, which went into effect in October of 2018. The tax increased from 1 percent to 6 percent and the uptick in revenue will be used to fund Washington's Metro system (Prieto, 2018). Because of Washington, D.C.'s unique status as a strong market city that is also technically an intergovernmental regime, the city did not act according to its urban regime characteristics. The city's coordination with Uber and disregard for incumbent providers was actually more consistent with the characteristics of corporate regimes.

**Indianapolis.** As a corporate regime, Indianapolis' city-county council tends to act in line with the interests of the business community, who have dominant roles in the coalitions that exist in the city. Important actors in Indianapolis include corporations, prominent philanthropies, and representatives from athletic teams and the professional racecar driving arena. In an effort to embrace innovation and provide a boon for tourism, Indianapolis initially opted away from regulating Uber and Lyft when the companies first entered the city, and instead decided to initiate an unofficial pilot program that allowed the TNCs to operate. Meanwhile, local elected officials tried to determine the right course of action on the regulatory side. In many ways this response aligned with the interests of the city's tourism bureau which saw immense prospects in having new mobility options in the city to attract both people and mega events. The city's taxi-cab industry pushed back, and saw significant decreases in the number of drivers. However, many interviewees asserted that taxi services in Indianapolis were largely inadequate to service the needs of the population, and that the taxi-cab industry was not as robust there as it might be in other, larger cities. Thus, it was implied that there was no incentive to fight for it or protect it. The most prominent narrative themes that emerged from interviews with people in the city included

residents' positive reception of TNCs, the fact the TNCs were thought to complement the existing transit and mobility systems in Indianapolis, and the idea of leveling the playing field between TNCs and incumbent for-hire transportation providers. While the city began to develop an ordinance, ultimately, the Indiana state legislature passed a law in 2015 that prohibits cities in the state from regulating TNCs. Since the city's hands were tied in terms of regulating TNCs, Indianapolis ultimately initiated a special committee to address the regulatory disparities between TNCs and taxis.

The act of state preemption in the city of Indianapolis is common, and came up in two of the other case cities as well. In Indianapolis, it reflects an ongoing policy battle between the Democratic leaning Indianapolis' City-County Council and the Republican leaning Indiana State Legislature. It is not limited to the issue of TNCs. Even though the city acted and generated narrative in a way that is consistent with its urban regime characteristics, the state legislature stepped in to usurp local governing power for adjacent political reasons. While many state legislatures have acted similarly on this and other technology issues in an attempt to take a "pro-innovation" stance, this incident of preemption is also reflective of ongoing conflict between state and local governments.

### **Implications and Contributions**

**Theoretical implications.** This research successfully demonstrates the complementary relationship that exists between Urban Regime Theory and Bevir and Rhodes' Decentered Theory of Governance. This dissertation attempts to present the synergy between Bevir and Rhodes interpretive, narrative based theory and Clarence Stone's work on urban regime classifications by showing the ways in which their scholarship can dovetail to explain the ways in which the dominant stories in certain places, driven by certain forces and actors, influence policy outcome.

The primary contribution that emerges from this research is that a city with specific regime characteristics is likely to have a predictable shared or dominant narrative/understanding of an issue. That dominant or shared narrative is embedded in the characteristics of the regime, and drives the policy choices that are made in each city or region. With the exception of Washington, DC, all of the case cities explored in this analysis presented dominant narratives that were generally consistent with their urban regime classifications and characteristics, and those narratives are reflected in the cities' ultimate policy responses.

In addition to this contribution, this research provides more evidence to support Bevir and Rhodes assertion that narratives can explain policy actions/outcomes (2006). In doing so, there is another layer of justification added to the logic behind policy responses to technology-based market innovations. Generally, this dissertation argues that policy responses to these innovations are a result of the dominant narratives that take hold upon their entrance into the market, which are driven by policy actors and coalitions that dominate a city's urban governance regime.

Finally, the analysis presented here suggests that regimes impact narratives, which impact policy outcomes. However, there is also evidence to suggest that perhaps this relationship might be more reflexive in nature, and that narratives might also impact or change regimes. While urban regimes, according to Stone, are built up around resource dependency, power dynamics and coalitions, this research prompts the question of whether a narrative might have the power to alter the composition or change the legacy of an urban regime. For instance, following Washington, D.C.'s passage of an ordinance that was friendly to TNCs, the TNCs operating there lauded the city and identified its policy actors as pro-innovation. Once the city was labeled as pro-innovation, there was an attempt to embrace that title or narrative. Further analysis is needed to determine whether subsequent responses to technology-based market innovations are consistent with that



pro-innovation title. However, the city of D.C. was certainly receptive to that narrative and to this day, works hard to maintain it.

**Practical and policy implications.** This research helps us to better understand the impacts of the sharing economy, other technology-based market innovations, and specifically TNCs, subjects we know little about thus far due to the fact that they are relatively new to the regulatory and city governance spaces. It also sheds light on the differences between regulatory responses in certain cities, and attempts to present a basic typology for the responses of each city in the analysis (see Table 1). This typology, broken out into four categories—no regulation, light regulation, strict regulation, and outright ban—could potentially be used by future researchers to categorize other cities’ responses to technology-based market innovations. In doing so, however, researchers would need to consider the iterative and evolving nature of regulatory activity. For instance, Portland initially banned TNC operations in the city, but ultimately initiated a pilot program and then passed regulations that embrace TNCs as for-hire transportation. Several cities have also adjusted their regulations over time. Thus, the typology reflects the city’s initial reaction to technology-based market innovations. This limitation is true of all typologies, in that they do not adequately capture change. Cities present special challenges here, as constantly changing and complex entities, and do not always fit neatly into typology categories.

***Changing narratives and organizations.*** This research also illuminates the impact that public relations challenges can have on public perception, dominant narratives, and ultimately, policy outcomes. During time period in which I conducted interviews, Uber was enduring some major internal and external challenges. With the exception of the use of Greyball software, which was mentioned by several local elected officials and policy actors I spoke with, none of these issues impacted cities directly. However, they certainly influenced the perceptions that cities had of

TNCs, as well as their tendencies to call out Uber (versus Lyft) as an enemy to cities. While both companies operated simultaneously in all four cities, Uber was called out at the villain directly by several interviewees. Interviewees addressed Uber as a bully and a corrupt corporate entity, and in many ways implied that their actions as a company (versus their actions in cities as mobility providers) were reprehensible. One interviewee addressed this more directly:

I think people got carried away with technology, with convenience, but, slowly but surely, and of course, now, full-blown, people are realizing all number of issues with these ride hailing companies, but especially Uber. Uber's had a number of public relations disasters. Their CEO has been exiled and also there have been a number of stories in the press about Uber drivers with a criminal background somehow slipping through and driving for the company (personal communication, September 17, 2017).

There were also several instances in which interviewees made a distinction between the two companies, indicating that Lyft was friendlier to local policy makers, even though the business models and actions of the two organizations are nearly identical. Lyft, it was noted, tends to “coast” on the actions of Uber, entering markets days after they do, and waiting until they respond to major political events (i.e. the protests at JFK Airport) before responding publicly themselves. Thus, they are able to leverage Uber’s political gaffes to cultivate a more socially conscious reputation as a company. Lyft was undoubtedly a beneficiary and likely proponent of the #DeleteUber campaign that came about a response to Susan Fowler’s essay, which detailed the sexism and harassment she faced as an employee there (Bhuiyan, 2017). While measuring the impacts of public relations and political gaffes on dominant narratives is beyond the scope of this analysis, I would be remiss not to address the unique challenges that Uber endured during the time that this research was

conducted, and the likelihood that they influenced the way interviewees reflected on their interactions with company.

The turmoil and organizational upheaval experienced by Uber also raises questions about the narratives presented by leaders in organizations. During the time I conducted this research, Uber ousted its existing CEO, hired a new CEO, and undertook an organizational transformation. The new CEO made public facing statements about the values that guide the organization, both internally and externally, hired a Chief Diversity and Inclusion officer, and pledged to change the company's culture (O'Brien, 2018). This represents an attempt at changing the narratives that took hold during Uber's backslide, and presents new questions about the ways industry leaders can use narratives to change the tenor of a policy conversation. While this study focused on policy elites and the use of narrative to influence policy outcomes, there were several instances in which TNCs themselves used narratives strategically to foster their reputations and achieve certain regulatory outcomes. While it is beyond the scope of this study, further research might focus on the ways leaders use narratives strategically as mechanisms to endure turbulence.

### **Limitations**

Given that many cities around the world are still working to determine the best ways to regulate the new transportation landscape, and the research in this arena is still limited, this dissertation adds value to a growing body of work and a policy discussion that continues to unfold. However, it is limited in scope and reach, and the findings from my analysis of four U.S. cities are not generalizable to other cities in the U.S. or abroad. While the comparison of cases presented here can provide insight as to how four U.S. cities react to TNCs compared to other cities with different characteristics, this study cannot definitively conclude that two similar cities, with the same urban regime classifications would respond to TNCs in the same way.

While a study with broader scope and a larger sample might glean instances of similar regulatory responses to new technologies that could be typified or clustered in a way that helps us to organize these outcomes, there is no way to determine the outcome of regulatory deliberation over a rapidly changing and disruptive technology like TNCs. It is also difficult to determine whether and how a narrative will become the dominant narrative, and while cities are comprised of powerful and significant coalitions, stakeholders, and interests that frequently influence narrative, there is some degree of democratic and individual spontaneity to the ways in which political dealings unfold in local economies and governing environments. The process of narrative development in the individual and collective psyche is also rather unpredictable. In the vast and interdisciplinary scholarship about narrative development, there is still some gray area surrounding how individuals comprehend and form their own stories, and the roles stories play in how individuals and groups act. As complicated as individuals are, cities, as clusters of individuals, are even more so. Cities are comprised of many political, social, and geographical features that make them complex and that beholden them to unique challenges and opportunities (DuPuis, 2017). One way to consider future study of this phenomena is to cluster cities either regionally, according to the regulatory typology presented in Table 1, or according to other measures such as size, population, or government capacity/structure.

Challenges and limitations more specific to this study include constraints on scope and time. I could only include four cities in my case comparison, and interviews were concluded after references became circular (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and themes, became emergent. While I reached out to many more than the 23 individuals I connected with, my attempt to interview individuals from TNC companies was unsuccessful. Timing is likely to blame, as 2017 was a challenging year for TNCs. Uber, in particular, was enduring a number of internal and external

scandals, leadership changes and public relations crises. While it would have been quite valuable to understand their perspective about entering cities, nobody from Uber or Lyft that I contacted, even those who were had since moved on from the companies, agreed to speak with me. I was able to speak with one individual from a non-profit ridesharing company that was established in Austin after Uber and Lyft left the city. I also made it a point to reach out to policy actors in cities who were in the “pro-TNC” camp. This ensured that I was able to hear from individuals who were coming to the conversation with a different perspective, perhaps one that countered that of incumbent drivers and city policy makers that had recently endured challenging interactions with TNCs.

Despite the challenges with generalization and the somewhat evergreen nature of the discussion surrounding TNCs and technology-based market innovations, this study does demonstrate that there are connections between the way power is balanced in a city, how stories unfold from prominent actors and groups, and what those stories and power centers mean for policy outcomes.

### **Possible Future Research**

This research sought to better understand the ways in which dominant or shared narratives are embedded in the characteristics of an urban regime, and how they might drive the policy choices that are made in each city or region. It also sought, more generally, to understand the differences and nuance in cities’ regulatory approaches to TNCs. While I was able to demonstrate linkages between these elements in each city, there are several possibilities for additional research.

The primary theoretical contribution of this research is that it illuminates a synergy between Urban Regime Theory and Bevir and Rhodes’ Decentered Theory of Governance. It demonstrates that a city with specific regime characteristics is likely to have a predictable shared or dominant

narrative/understanding of an issue. Furthermore, that dominant or shared narrative is embedded in the characteristics of the regime, and drives the policy choices that are made in each city or region. In addition to this contribution, this research provides more evidence to support Bevir and Rhodes assertion that narratives can explain policy actions/outcomes (2006). In doing so, there is another layer of justification added to the logic behind policy responses to technology-based market innovations. Generally, this dissertation argues that policy responses to these innovations are a result of the dominant narratives that take hold upon their entrance into the market, which are driven by policy actors and coalitions that dominate a city's urban governance regime.

There are many critiques of the two theoretical frameworks used in this study that call for more research. One of the biggest critiques of Urban Regime Theory is that it tends to assume too little complexity in terms of how cities arrange and develop coalitions and priorities. There are often cities that do not fit neatly into the urban regime typology, and if they do, they might not act accordingly (Mossberger and Stoker, 2001). Several scholars have addressed the difficult task of defining an urban regime and the fact that the theoretical framework is used in inappropriate ways, often *stretched* to accommodate more cases or concepts (Collier and Mahon, 1993; Mossberger and Stoker, 2001). Bailey argues that Urban Regime Theory is limited in its use to assess issues that cannot be classified as economic in nature (1999). He argues that we need:

...a conceptualization of cities as responding to a larger political environment that includes social movements focused on identity (civil rights, lesbian and gay rights) as well as reacting to economic forces (as cited in Mossberger and Stoker, 2001, 828).

His solution for this deficit is to couple urban regime theory with other theoretical frames and bodies (Bailey, 1999). His suggested approach was taken in this dissertation research, with the coupling of Urban Regime Theory and Bevir and Rhodes Scholarship, but there are certainly other

theoretical bodies that might help to address these challenges just as well. Basset's scholarship argues that in some cases what is classified as an urban regime, might actually look more like a policy network (1996). While his research is focused on a specific case in Bristol, it calls for an examination of the overlap between these two literatures. Finally, more research using Urban Regime Theory should consider the iterative and complex nature of places, whether there might be hybrid classifications (Collier and Mahon 1993) and what happens when regimes change (Orr and Stoker 1994).

While Bevir and Rhodes originally used their theoretical framework to focus on narrative development in individuals (2006) this and other research (Ball and Junemann, 2011), suggests it might be better suited in studying group actions. Per Bevir and Rhodes assumptions, individuals do not act in a vacuum. They are driven by beliefs, desires, and traditions. Those elements are learned, as part of the socialization that takes place on a day-to-day basis, in their communities. In thinking about narratives and values being community-based we can better understand why some regions, communities, and even neighborhoods seem to have clustered ideals and shared stories. Bevir and Rhodes' narrative governance theory implies that governance can be regarded as a series of narratives, but fails to recognize how or why those narratives become collectively adopted. Some scholars have suggested using network analysis to better understand narrative development among groups (Lejano and Ingram, 2013). Others might suggest that this research veers into scholarly realm of debate about structure versus agency (Giddens, 1984). While using Urban Regime Theory as a complement to Bevir and Rhodes helps to address the forces that mold those narratives in different places, future research utilizing the Decentered Theory of Governance could further explore group narrative adoption and the drivers of dominant narrative in coalitions.

As for the research design, expanding the sample beyond the four cities analyzed here could always bring value and additional clarity to the ideas and connections presented in this dissertation. One possibility is to look at the differences in narrative development and policy outcomes across cities of different sizes, by grouping cities in an analysis according to population size. This would help us to better understand why cities make the policy decisions they do, and whether size and maybe corollary capacity of local government has any bearing on dominant narrative or the subsequent action of policy makers.

Another related area that calls for research is specific to the internal and external conflicts and public relations crises endured by Uber throughout the duration of this study. While it was beyond the scope of this study, there would be great value in understanding the ways in which the several public challenges endured by Uber impacted the ways in which their actions were remembered by interviewees. For instance, did the negative press and turmoil that Uber endured during the time I was conducting research impact the ways in which people recounted the company's interactions with cities? A study focused on this nuance could contribute significantly to scholarship on narrative development.

Finally, two of the narrative themes that emerged from this study warrant more research from scholars of public policy and administration: 1) the impacts that TNCs (and technology writ-large) have on the workforce, specifically professional taxi and livery drivers, and 2) the broader impacts of state legislatures preempting local governments' ability to regulate policy issues. While there is some research emerging in the field of public administration on state preemption (Goodman, forthcoming), there is very little data and scholarship on the impacts of this trend. This research is certainly not limited to the subject of technology-based market innovations, as state preemption is impacting cities across a whole host of policy issues. There is also a scholarly gap



to fill in terms of the way Urban Regime Theory addresses state level policy. Both of these spaces are ripe for future analysis by public administration scholars. Research on the impacts of TNCs on professional drivers is also limited. Considering the inevitability that companies like Uber and Lyft are moving toward autonomous vehicle technology, the impacts of these trends and technologies on this segment of the labor market deserve more attention.

## **Chapter 11 – Conclusion**

In looking at the phenomena of TNCs and other technology-based market innovations, this dissertation research is able to present a great deal of insight about stories, the types of communities that share certain stories, and how those stories impact policy outcomes. It also presents a theoretical contribution by demonstrating the complementary relationship between Bevir and Rhodes' Decentered Theory of Governance and Clarence Stone's Urban Regime Theory. In looking at TNCs, I attempt to dovetail these two theoretical bodies to make sense of the ways cities respond to innovation. I use Bevir and Rhodes scholarship to explore narrative development and its connection to/influence over policy and I use Urban Regime Theory to examine the narratives that exist in cities with different urban regimes characteristics. The assumption that drove this research is that urban regimes are not just about resources, but also common or dominant narratives that frame responses to policy circumstances. This research explores the sorts of narratives that are prevalent in different types of urban regimes, as well as the role of dominant narratives in decision making and policy outcomes. This dissertation also has practical and policy significance. As the process of regulating technology-based market innovations still represents a great deal of uncertainty for local leaders and decisionmakers, this dissertation unpacks the deliberation process and regulatory response to TNCs in four American cities. In doing so, it presents data and nuance about the ways TNCs emerge and assimilate in different types of metropolitan markets.

### **Results**

The narrative themes that emerged in all but one city in my analysis (Washington, D.C.) were consistent with the city's designated urban regime characteristics and typology, and reflected in the city's ultimate policy response. While ultimate policy outcomes in cities were subject to

extraneous factors like preemptive legislation from the state legislature, the findings of this research still demonstrate the connections between urban regime characteristics, dominant narratives, and decision making.

## **Context**

In considering the intersection of technology and governance, there arise a number of questions about the ways in which we can utilize technology as a means rather than an end—a means by which to fulfill community goals and needs, improve existing services, and make life more efficient for everyone. However, when private corporations are the ones deploying the technology, and their motives are not aligned with the motives of policy makers and government actors, friction arises. As TNCs are becoming more and more embedded in the mobility networks of our nation’s communities, they are also blurring the lines between the public and private sectors. While they have the potential to provide an efficient, sometimes badly needed service, they are also operating in a traditionally public realm, in which there are values, rules, and community nuances to contend with. Those values and rules mean that the ways in which cities respond to this intentionally rote service vary drastically. This research is a start to better understanding the ways technology-based market innovations impact different types of communities, and more broadly, how community characteristics stoke tendencies to embrace certain stories that comport with values and preferred policy outcomes.

This dissertation builds on my previous research along with the long standing body of scholarship about policy narrative. It aims to further illuminate the connection between stories and the ways policymakers act or regulate. As the act of subscribing to certain narratives or iterations of information has become more and more central to our national political discourse, there is value in understanding the ways in which this act might influence the actions and decisions of local

decisionmakers (DuPuis, 2017). By examining the complementary relationship between Bevir and Rhodes Decentered Theory of Governance and Clarence Stone's Urban Regime Theory, this research attempts to unpack the ways in which city characteristics result in the adoption and domination of certain narratives, and ultimately the ways in which those narratives influence policy outcomes. It provides justification for Bevir and Rhodes' claim that narratives can be causal, and their supporting scholarship about how beliefs, desires and traditions combine to become the dynamic value systems or frames of reference (best recognized in narratives) that guide policy ideas and actions (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006; DuPuis, 2017). It also presents more support for Stone's Urban Regime scholarship, underscoring the ways in which a city's characteristics or typology might predict governing behavior or policy outcomes. The study aimed to consider two research questions:

3. *Why do cities respond differently to technology-based market innovations?*
4. *How do different narrative elements or patterns surrounding the emergence of innovations affect the ways in which city decision makers respond to their regulatory choices?*

In response to these questions, this dissertation uses case studies and interviews to explore the policy deliberations, urban regime formations, outcomes, and the narrative themes expressed by policy stakeholders in four American cities, as well as how those narrative themes influenced their reactions to technology-based market innovations, relationships other stakeholders and ultimate policy or regulatory action.

### **Implications and Contributions**

This scholarship successfully demonstrates the complementary relationship that exists between Urban Regime Theory and Bevir and Rhodes' Decentered Theory of Governance. In addition to this contribution, this research provides additional evidence to support some degree of

causality between narratives and policy actions/outcomes (2006). It explores the differences between the regulatory responses of cities to TNCs, and attempts to present a basic typology for the responses of each city in the analysis (see Table 1). More importantly for praxis, this research helps us to better understand the impacts of technology-based market innovations, and specifically TNCs, subjects we know little about thus far due to the fact that they are relatively new to the regulatory and city governance spaces. It also helps us to think more deeply about the influence of changing narratives, the ways narratives are used strategically, and how narratives might be change agents in urban regimes.

Since TNCs and other technology-based business models represent new forces in the local policy sphere, there is still uncertainty regarding if and how these new forces will fit into existing city ecosystems. However, despite the extraordinary pace at which technology is developing and grasping at public life, it is still up to cities to adhere to their own stories, and pave their own ways forward.

## References

- Allbritten, D. (2016). Council Proposal Aims to Bring Indy Taxi Industry into 21st Century. *Fox59*. Retrieved from <https://fox59.com/2016/07/12/council-proposal-aims-to-bring-indy-taxi-industry-into-21st-century/>
- Abrego, J. (2011). Keep Portland Weird! Retrieved from <http://www.keepportlandweird.com:80/index.html>
- Ash, Sharon, Peachie Moore, Luisa Vesely, and Murray Grossman. (2007). "The Decline of Narrative Discourse in Alzheimer's Disease." *Brain and Language* 103: 181-82.
- Bailey, R. W. (1999). *Gay Politics, Urban Politics: Identity and Economics in the Urban Setting*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.
- Ball, Stephen and Carolina Junemann. (2011). Education Policy and Philanthropy—The Changing Landscape of English Educational Governance. *International Journal of Public Administration*. 34. 646-661. 10.1080/01900692.2011.583773.
- Bassett, K. (1996). Partnerships, Business Elites and Urban Politics: New Forms of Governance in an English City? *Urban Studies* 33:539-55.
- Batheja, A. (2015). With New Rules, Will Uber, Lyft Stay in Austin?. *Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.texastribune.org/2015/12/17/austin-city-council-approves-new-uber-regs-uber-th/>
- Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. (1993). *Agendas and instability in American politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. (2005). *The Politics of Attention*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. (2012). From There to Here: Punctuated Equilibrium to the General Punctuation Thesis to a Theory of Government Information Processing. *The Policy Studies Journal*, 40 (1), 7.
- Berman, M. (2013). SideCar, a new ride-sharing service, arrives in D.C. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/dr-gridlock/wp/2013/03/22/sidecar-a-new-ride-sharing-service-arrives-in-d-c/?utm\\_term=.b7898cdc9118](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/dr-gridlock/wp/2013/03/22/sidecar-a-new-ride-sharing-service-arrives-in-d-c/?utm_term=.b7898cdc9118)
- Bevir, M., & Rhodes, R. A. W. (2006). *Governance Stories*. New York; London: Routledge.
- Bhuiyan, J. (2017). "With Just Her Words, Susan Fowler Brought Uber to Its Knees." *Recode*. Retrieved at <https://www.recode.net/2017/12/6/16680602/susan-fowler-uber-engineer-recode-100-diversity-sexual-harassment>

- Birdsall, M. (2014). Carsharing in a sharing economy. *Institute of Transportation Engineers. ITE Journal*, 84(4), 37.
- Blue-indy.com. (2018). *Blue-indy.com*. [online] Retrieved at: <https://www.blue-indy.com/> [Accessed 12 May 2018].
- Bodenhamer David J. and Robert G. Barrows, eds. (1994). *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. pp. 914–15. ISBN 0-253-31222-1.
- Bridgman Todd and David Barry (2002). Regulation is Evil: An Application of Narrative Policy Analysis to Regulatory Denate in New Zealand. *Policy Sciences*.35 (2) 131-61.
- Briggs, J. (2017). 7 rules for Indianapolis taxis that don't apply to Uber, Lyft. *USA Today*. Retrieved from <http://www.pal-item.com/story/news/local/marion-county/2017/04/28/7-rules-indianapolis-taxis-dont-apply-uber-lyft/100948002/>
- Bryant, A. & Charmaz, K. (2007) Grounded Theory in Historical Perspective: An Epistemological Account, in A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (eds.), *Handbook of Grounded Theory*, London: Sage.
- Bryant, C. and Chung, H. (2015). A Framework for Designing Co-Regulation Models Well-Adapted to Technology-Facilitated Sharing Economies, 31 *Santa Clara High Tech. L.J.* 23. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.law.scu.edu/chtlj/vol31/iss1/2>
- Burns, P. and Thomas, M. (2006). The Failure of the Nonregime: How Katrina Exposed New Orleans as a Regimeless City. *Urban Affairs Review*, 41 (517).
- Capital Metro (2009). *All Systems Go Long-Range Transit Plan*. Retrieved April 23, 2017.
- Chapman, M (2005). Once Upon a Time In Volcon Costa Rica: Integrating Values into Watershed Management and Poverty Alleviation. *Review of Policy Research* 22 (6) 859-80.
- Chang, Ray M., Robert J. Kauffman, and Kwansoo Kim. (2013). How Strong Are the Effects of Technological Disruption? Smartphones' Impacts on Internet and Cable TV Services Consumption. 46<sup>th</sup> *Hawaii International Conference on Systems Sciences*.
- Christensen, Clayton M. (2003). *The Innovator's Dilemma: The Revolutionary Book That Will Change The Way You Do Business*. New York: Harper Business Essentials.
- City-data.com. (2018). *Indianapolis, Indiana (IN) profile*. [online] Available at: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Indianapolis-Indiana.html#b> [Accessed 12 May 2018].
- CityLab. (2018). City Lab Daily: Gotham on the Go. [Accessed 15 June 2018].
- Clewlou R. and Gouri Mishra (2017). *Disruptive Transportation: The Adoption, Utilization, and Impacts of Ride-Hailing in the United States*. Institute of Transportation Studies-University of California, Davis. Retrieved from [file:///C:/Users/ndupuis/Downloads/2017\\_UCD-ITS-RR-17-07.pdf](file:///C:/Users/ndupuis/Downloads/2017_UCD-ITS-RR-17-07.pdf)

- Cohen, B., & Kietzmann, J. (2014). Ride on! mobility business models for the sharing economy. *Organization & Environment*, 27(3), 279-296. doi:10.1177/1086026614546199
- Collier, D., and J. E. Mahon, Jr. (1993). Conceptual “Stretching” Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis. *American Political Science Review* 87:845-55.
- Crabtree, B. & Miller, W. (Eds.). (1992). *Doing Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Cramer, Judd and Alan B. Krueger. (2016). Disruptive Change in the Taxi Business: The Case of Uber. *American Economic Review*, 106(5): 177-82.
- DeBonis, M. (2018). After 10 Years, D.C. Control Board is Gone But Not Forgotten. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/after-10-years-dc-control-board-is-gone-but-not-forgotten/2018/01/30/AB5485Q\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.1a9a42609595](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/after-10-years-dc-control-board-is-gone-but-not-forgotten/2018/01/30/AB5485Q_story.html?utm_term=.1a9a42609595)
- Derthick, Martha, and Paul J. Quirk. (1985). *The Politics of Deregulation*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.
- Digaetano, A., and Paul Lawless. (1999). Urban Governance and Industrial Decline: Governing Structures and Policy Agendas in Birmingham and Sheffield, England, and Detroit, Michigan, 1980-1997. *Urban Affairs Review*, 34(4), 546–577. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10780879922184077>
- District of Columbia Department of Employment Services. (2009). *Top 200 Chief Executive Officers of the Major Employers in the District of Columbia*. Washington, DC: District of Columbia. Retrieved from [https://does.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/does/publication/attachments/DOES\\_Top200.pdf](https://does.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/does/publication/attachments/DOES_Top200.pdf)
- District of Columbia Department of Employment Services. (2017). *District of Columbia Wage and Salary Employment by Industry and Place of Work*. Washington, DC: District of Columbia. Retrieved from <https://does.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/does/publication/attachments/CESdc1Dec17.pdf>
- Downs, Anthony. (1972). Up and Down With Ecology: The Issue-Attention Cycle. *The Public Interest*, 28 (Summer), 38-50.
- Drennan, Lex. (2017). Community Narratives of Disaster Risk and Resilience: Implications for Government Policy: Narratives of Disaster Risk and Resilience. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*. 77. 10.1111/1467-8500.12299.
- DuPuis, N (2017). Stories of the Sharing Economy: Policy Narratives Surrounding the Entry of Transportation Network Companies Into Four Mid-Sized American Cities. *Critical Policy Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/19460171.2018.1437459



- Edelman, Murray. (1964). *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Exner, R. (2017). 2016 Census Population Estimates For Every U.S. City, County, State (database). Retrieved from [https://www.cleveland.com/datacentral/index.ssf/2017/05/2016\\_census\\_population\\_estimates.html?](https://www.cleveland.com/datacentral/index.ssf/2017/05/2016_census_population_estimates.html?)
- Exner, R. (2014). *Indiana and Indianapolis Taxes Are Lower than in Ohio and Cleveland Area*. [online] cleveland.com. Available at: [https://www.cleveland.com/datacentral/index.ssf/2014/07/taxes\\_ohio\\_indiana\\_cleveland.html](https://www.cleveland.com/datacentral/index.ssf/2014/07/taxes_ohio_indiana_cleveland.html). [Accessed 13 Aug. 2018].
- Feldman, M., Anne M. Khademian and Kathryn S. Quick (2009). Ways of Knowing, Inclusive Management, and Promoting Democratic Engagement: Introduction to the Special Issue. *International Public Management Journal*, 12:2, 123-136, DOI: [10.1080/10967490902873424](https://doi.org/10.1080/10967490902873424)
- Fischer, Frank, and J. Forrester. (1993). *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Fischler, J. (2014). *DC Just Passed A Law That Uber Says Could Serve As A "Model For The Rest Of The Country."* Retrieved from <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/jacobfischler/dc-just-passed-a-law-that-uber-says-could-serve-as-a-model-f>
- Fortune (2009). *Austin, Texas*. Retrieved June 22, 2009.
- Fuseini, Issahaka & Kemp, Jaco. (2016). Characterising Urban Growth in Tamale, Ghana: An Analysis of Urban Governance Response in Infrastructure and Service Provision. *Habitat International*. 56. 109-123. [10.1016/j.habitatint.2016.05.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2016.05.002).
- Geertz, Clifford (1973). "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture". In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books. 3-30
- Goodman, Christopher B. and Leland, Suzanne M. *Forthcoming*. Do Cities and Counties Attempt to Circumvent Changes in Their Autonomy by Creating Special Districts? *American Review of Public Administration*.
- Gerrig, Richard J., and Giovanna Egidi. (2003). Cognitive Psychological Foundations of Narrative Experiences. In *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, ed. David Herman. Stanford: CSLI Publications, 33-55.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press.
- Glaser B.G. and A.L. Strauss. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Graves, Z. (2018). Beyond Legal Operation: The Next Ridesharing Policy Challenges - R Street. Retrieved from <https://www.rstreet.org/2018/03/07/beyond-legal-operation-the-next-ridesharing-policy-challenges/>

- Greene, T and Jon Sweeney (2012). *Naptown to Super City* (television broadcast). Indianapolis: WFYI-TV (PBS). Retrieved March 26, 2016.
- Gray, Gary, and Michael D. Jones (2016). A Qualitative Narrative Policy Framework?: Examining the Policy Narratives of US Campaign Finance Reform. *Public Policy and Administration*. 31(3): 193-220.
- Hajer, Maarten A. (1993). Discourse Coalitions and the Institutionalization of Practice: The Case of Acid Rain in Britain. In *The Argumentative Turn*, ed. Frank Fischer, and John Forester. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 43-76.
- Hall, Jonathan V., and Alan B. Krueger. (2015). An Analysis of the Labor Market for Uber's Driver-Partners in the United States. Princeton University Industrial Relations Section Working Paper 587, Princeton University (Princeton, N.J.).
- Hamari, J., Sjöklint, M., & Ukkonen, A. (2016). The Sharing Economy: Why People Participate in Collaborative Consumption. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 67(9), 2047-2059. doi:10.1002/asi.23552
- Haverland, Markus and Yanow, Dvora. (2011). A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Public Administration Research Universe: Surviving Conversations on Methodologies and Methods. *Public Administration Review*, 72.
- Hauptman, O., and E. B. Roberts. (1987). FDA Regulation of Product Risk and Its Impact Upon Young Biomedical Firms. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*. 4(2): 138-148.
- Hawkins, A. (2015). Uber Is on a Collision Course With New York City Again. *The Verge*. Retrieved 24 October 2016, from <http://www.theverge.com/2015/12/4/9851000/uber-nyc-bill-de-blasio-report-investigation-cap-tax-cuomo>
- Hendriks, Carolyn (2005). Participatory Storylines and their Influence on Deliberative Forums. *Policy Sciences* 38(1), 1-120.
- Henig, J. R., R. C. Hula, M. Orr, and D. S. Pedescleaux. 1999. *The Color of School Reform: Race, Politics, and the Challenge of Urban Education*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Henten, A.H. and Windekilde, I.M. (2016) Transaction Costs and The Sharing Economy. *Info*, 18(1), pp. 1–15. doi: 10.1108/info-09-2015-0044.
- Isaac, M. (2017). "How Uber Deceives the Authorities Worldwide." *The New York Times*. Retrieved August 30, 2017.
- Jones, Michael D., and Mark K. McBeth. (2010). A Narrative Policy Framework: Clear Enough to Be Wrong? *Policy Studies Journal*, 38 (2): 329.
- Kantor, P., H. Savitch, and S. Vicari Haddock. (1997). The Political Economy of Urban Regimes: A Comparative Perspective. *Urban Affairs Review* 32 (3): 348-77.
- Keeny, K.P. (2014). *Encouraging the Arts through Higher Education Institutions: Arts Policy Implementation in Virginia*. Virginia Tech: Blacksburg.

- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage Publications.
- Lejano, R., M. Ingram, and H. Ingram. (2013). *The Power of Narratives in Environmental Networks*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Levine, M. A. and Ross, B.H. (2006). *Urban Politics: Power in Metropolitan America*. p 115. 7th ed. Thomson Wadsworth.
- Lowensohn, J. (2015). Portland, Oregon clears Uber, Lyft, and other ride-sharing services to operate. Retrieved from <https://www.theverge.com/transportation/2015/4/22/8471785/portland-clears-uber-lyft-and-ride-sharing-services>
- Maron, A. (2014). Activation via Intensive Intimacies in the Israeli Welfare-to-Work Program: Applying a Constructivist Approach to the Governance of Institutions and Individuals. *Administration & Society*, 46(1), 87–111.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2011). *Designing Qualitative Research* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
- McBeth, Mark K., Elizabeth A. Shanahan, and Michael D. Jones. (2005). The Science Of Storytelling: Measuring Policy Beliefs in Greater Yellowstone. *Society & Natural Resources*, 18 (5): 413-29.
- McComas, Katherine and James Shanahan. (1999). Telling Stories about Global Climate Change: Measuring the Impact of Narratives on Issue Cycles. *Communication Research*, 26 (1): 30-57.
- McQuivey, James. (2013). *Digital Disruption*. [Cambridge, Mass.]: Forrester Research, Inc.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Metro News Release. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.wmata.com/about/news/pressreleasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=5749>.
- Motala, M. (2016). The "Taxi Cab Problem" Revisited: Law and Ubernomics in The Sharing Economy. *Banking & Finance Law Review*, 31(3), 467-511.
- Mossberger, Karen & Stoker, Gerry. (2001). The Evolution of Urban Regime Theory. *Urban Affairs Review - Urban Aff Review*: 36. 810-835. 10.1177/10780870122185109.
- Murphy, C. (2013). Cheh, Evans pass legislation to protect Uber from city regulations. *The GW Hatchet*. Retrieved from <https://www.gwhatchet.com/2013/09/17/cheh-evans-pass-legislation-to-protect-uber-from-city-regulations/>

- National League of Cities. 2014. *The Sharing Economy: An Analysis of Current Sentiment Surrounding Homesharing and Ridesharing*. Washington, DC: National League of Cities. <http://www.nlc.org/Documents/Find%20City%20Solutions/City-Solutions-and-Applied-Research/Sharing%20Economy%20Brief.pdf>.
- Ney, Steven, and Michael Thompson. (2000). Cultural Discourses in The Global Climate Change Debate. In *Society, Behavior, and Climate Change Mitigation*, pp. 65-92. Springer Netherlands.
- Ney, Steven. (2006). Messy Issues, Policy Conflict and the Differentiated Polity: Analyzing Contemporary Policy Responses to Complex, Uncertain and Transversal Policy Problems. Vienna, LOS Center for Bergen: Doctoral Dissertation.
- O'Brien, C. (2018). Uber CEO slams founders' 'pirate' culture, pledges to grow 'responsibly'. Retrieved from <https://venturebeat.com/2018/01/22/uber-ceo-slams-founders-pirate-culture-pledges-to-grow-responsibly/>
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (n.d.). *Regulatory Reform and Innovation*. Retrieved from: <http://www.oecd.org/sti/inno/2102514.pdf>.
- Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (2007). Statewide Planning Goals. Retrieved December 23, 2017.
- Orr, M., and G. Stoker. (1994). Urban Regimes and Leadership in Detroit. *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 30:48-73.
- Pascale, J. (2018). "D.C. Is Raising Taxes On Uber, Lyft, And Other Ridehailing Services." *DCist*. Retrieved from [http://dcist.com/2018/06/dc\\_is\\_raising\\_taxes\\_on\\_uber\\_and\\_lyf.php](http://dcist.com/2018/06/dc_is_raising_taxes_on_uber_and_lyf.php)
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health*, 42(5), 533–544.
- Parking and Transportation Services at UT Austin (2011). Bike Survey Results. [parking.utexas.edu](http://parking.utexas.edu). Retrieved January 31, 2017.
- Phillips, Carol and Martha Barnes. (2015). Whose Legacy is It, Anyway? A Tale of Conflicting Agendas in The Building Of The Hamilton Pan Am Soccer Stadium. *Annals of Leisure Research*. 18. 1-20. 10.1080/11745398.2015.1031806.
- Posen, H. A. (2015). Ridesharing in The Sharing Economy: Should Regulators Impose Über Regulations On Uber? *Iowa Law Review*, 101(1), 405-433. Retrieved from <http://login.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/docview/1770930427?accountid=1482>
- Prieto, C. (2018). "Ordering a Lyft or Uber? Price to increase in DC with tax hike to fund Metro." *WTOP Online*. Retrieved from <https://wtop.com/dc/2018/06/ordering-a-lyft-or-uber-price-to-increase-in-dc-with-tax-hike-to-fund-metro/>

- Ray, K. (2011). The Thick and Thin of It. Retrieved from <http://cognitive-edge.com/blog/the-thick-and-thin-of-it/>
- Ride Local with RideAustin. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.rideaustin.com/>
- Riker, William (1986). *The Art of Political Manipulation*. New Haven: Yale UP.
- Roe, Emery. (1994). *Narrative Policy Analysis: Theory and Practice*. Durham, CT: Duke University Press.
- Saldana, J. (2009). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., ... Jinks, C. (2017). Saturation in qualitative research: exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & quantity*, 52(4), 1893-1907.
- Schattschneider, E. E. (1960). *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Schoettle, A. (2014). Uber, Lyft Barnstorm Indianapolis Taxi Market. *Ibj.com*. Retrieved 23 October 2016, from <http://www.ijb.com/articles/47309-uber-lyft-barnstorm-indianapolis-taxi-market>
- Shanahan, Elizabeth A., Michael D. Jones, Mark K. McBeth, and Ross R. Lane. (2013). An Angel on The Wind: How Heroic Policy Narratives Shape Policy Realities. *Policy Studies Journal*, 41 (3): 453-83.
- Shenton, A.K. (2004). Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects. *Education for Information*. 22: 63–75.
- Siddiqui, F. (2018). “D.C. Council’s vote to increase ride-hailing tax will probably mean higher Uber and Lyft fares — to support Metro.” *Washington Post*. Retrieved from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/dr-gridlock/wp/2018/06/26/d-c-councils-vote-to-increase-ride-hailing-tax-will-likely-mean-higher-uber-and-lyft-fares-to-support-metro/?utm\\_term=.5174f209685b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/dr-gridlock/wp/2018/06/26/d-c-councils-vote-to-increase-ride-hailing-tax-will-likely-mean-higher-uber-and-lyft-fares-to-support-metro/?utm_term=.5174f209685b)
- Smith-Walter, Aaron, Holly Peterson, Michael D. Jones, and Ashley Reynolds (2016). Gun Stories: How Evidence Shapes Firearm Policy in the United States. *Politics and Policy* 44 (5): 1053-1088.
- Solis, S. (2016). Indy Cabbies Not Happy to Share Streets with Uber, Lyft. *Indianapolis Star*. Retrieved 23 October 2016, from <http://www.indystar.com/story/news/local/marion-county/2014/07/04/indy-cabbies-happy-share-streets-uber-lyft/12232969/>
- Somers, Margaret R. (1992). Narrativity, Narrative Identity, and Social Action: Rethinking English Working-Class Formation. *Social Science History*, 16 (4): 591-630.

- Soper, T. (2015). Portland Passes Permanent Laws to Legalize Uber, Lyft. *GeekWire*. Retrieved 23 October 2016, from <http://www.geekwire.com/2015/portland-passes-permanent-laws-legalize-uber-lyft/>
- Statehood. (2018). Retrieved from <https://statehood.dc.gov/>
- Stewart, L. (2010). *The Impact of Regulation on Innovation in the United States: A Cross-Industry Literature Review*. [online] Information Technology & Innovation Foundation, p.1. Available at: <https://itif.org/publications/2011/11/14/impact-regulation-innovation-united-states-cross-industry-literature-review> [Accessed 2 May 2018].
- Stigler, George. (1971). An Economic Theory of Regulation. *Bell Journal of Economics* 2:3–21
- Stone, C. N. (1989). *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta 1946-1988*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Stone, C. N. (1993). Urban Regimes and the Capacity to Govern: A Political Economy Approach. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 15.1: 1-28.
- Stone, C.N. 1998. Introduction: Urban education in political context. In *Changing urban education*, edited by C. Stone, 1-20. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Stone, C. N. (2004). It's More Than the Economy After All: Continuing The Debate About Urban Regimes. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 26.1: 1-19.
- Stone, C. N. (2005). *Power, reform, and urban regime analysis*. Available: <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/stone/power2.html>. [Retrieved: May 15, 2005].
- Stone, Deborah A. (2002). *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Taxis. (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.indy.gov/eGov/City/DCE/Licenses/Pages/Taxis.aspx>
- TriMet. (2016). *TriMet At-a-Glance (PDF)*. p. 6. Available at: <http://trimet.org/pdfs/publications/TriMet-At-a-Glance-2015.pdf> [Accessed 24 February 2018].
- True, James L., Bryan D. Jones, and Frank R. Baumgartner. (2007). Punctuated Equilibrium Theory' in (ed.) P. Sabatier *Theories of the Policy Process* 2nd Edition. Cambridge MA: Westview Press.
- U.S. Census Bureau (2017). *QuickFacts -- Austin, Texas*. Retrieved July 4, 2017.
- Verwiej, Marco, Mary Douglas, Richard Ellis, and Christoph Engel. (2006). Clumsy Solutions for a Complex World: The Case of Climate Change. *Public Administration*, 84 (4): 817.

- Wagner, J. (2011). Anytime/anywhere: Playing Catch up With the Mind of the Smartphone Consumer. *Intl. J. Mobile Mktg.*, 6, 1: 28-54
- Weissmann J. (2015). Population Growth in U.S. cities: Austin is Blowing Away the Competition. *Slate Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://slate.com/business/2015/05/population-growth-in-u-s-cities-austin-is-blowing-away-the-competition.html>
- Welle, B., Petzhold, G., & Pasqual, F. (2018). "Cities Are Taxing Ride-Hailing Services Like Uber and Lyft. Is This a Good Thing?" *World Resources Institute*. Retrieved from <https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/08/cities-are-taxing-ride-hailing-services-uber-and-lyft-good-thing>
- Wessel, G. (2012). From Place to NonPlace: A Case Study of Social Media and Contemporary Food Trucks, *Journal of Urban Design*, 17:4, 511-531.
- Widner, C. (2017). Austin's best neighborhoods for car-free living, ranked. Retrieved from <https://austin.curbed.com/2017/9/19/16334464/austin-most-walkable-neighborhoods>
- Williams, C. T. (2013). A Hungry Industry on Rolling Regulations: A Look at Food Truck Regulations in Cities across the United States. *Maine Law Review* 65(2), 705-718.
- Wilson, James Q. (1980). "The Politics of Regulation." In *The Politics of Regulation*, ed. J. Q. Wilson. New York: Basic Books.
- Wu, T. 2003. Network Neutrality, Broadband Discrimination, *J. Telecom. High Tech. Law*, 2, 5, 2003: 141-178.
- Yanow, D. (1995), Built Space as Story. *Policy Studies Journal*, 23: 407-422. doi:10.1111/j.1541-0072.1995.tb00520.x
- Yanow, D., & Schwartz-Shea, P. (2006). *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe.
- Yin, R. K. (2002; 2003, 2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

## Appendix A – Interview Questions

1. How did TNC services like Uber and Lyft enter into your metropolitan market?
2. Was the city's response to these new services positive or negative?
3. What about the other community stakeholders, how did they feel about the presence of TNCs?
4. Who were the major stakeholders and players in the policy landscape/discussion around TNCs?
5. Did community residents favor TNCs? Did they participate in government meetings where regulation of these services was deliberated?
6. How would you classify the relationship between your city/organization and TNCs?
7. How would you classify the response to TNCs? Was there a clear policy response from the city?
8. Was there a city level regulation passed relevant to TNCs? How did you/your organization/group feel about that regulation?
9. If a regulation was passed, has it been amended since then?
10. What about state policy interventions? What was the interplay between state and city policymakers?
11. How did the press report on the emergence of TNCs in your region?
12. Have there been any unanticipated issues that have arisen around TNCs since they came into your city?
13. Are there other people in the community that you think I should speak with about this subject?



## Appendix B – Code Definitions

### Actions/Impacts of TNCs

- TNC entrance: Expressions about the ways in which TNCs entered a market.
- Skirting the law: Expressions about an instance in which TNCs disregarding existing transportation-for-hire laws in communities.
- Greyball: Greyball is a software program that was used by Uber to help drivers avoid government officials and regulators that might enforce local laws. Uber would use the program to identify accounts associated with local officials through geofencing, data mining and other means and often times deny rides to these individuals (Isaac, 2017).
- Surge pricing: This is a flexible charging model utilized by TNCs in which prices for rides are calculated based on demand, time, congestion, and other factors. It enables TNCs to charge a premium price for rides depending on demand and other extraneous factors.
- Public engagement: Expressions about the ways in which Uber and Lyft managed to effectively engage the public/riders to take a pro-TNC stance in public forums and meetings.

### Issues and Concerns

- Accessibility: Expressions of concern about the accessibility of TNC services for disabled populations, or reflections on the engagement of disability rights groups in the deliberation around TNCs.
- Equity: Expressions of concern about transportation and mobility options and whether they serve all communities in a city.
- Complement to transit/mobility system: Expressions about whether TNCs might complement existing mobility networks in cities.
- Traffic congestion: Expressions about increased traffic congestion as a result of the influx of new vehicles on cities' roadways.
- Built environment: Expressions about the impact these new mobility companies will have on the built environment of a city. One interviewee from DC expressed: "As these companies change, and as new companies with new technologies come on board, it will present challenges to any city and it's built environment, right?" (personal communication, August 29, 2017). This concern was underpinned by speculation about TNCs ultimately converting their fleets to autonomous vehicles, and the ways that might press cities to redevelop street networks and curb space that was designed for single-occupancy traditional vehicles.
- Environmental concerns: Expressions about the environmental impacts of TNC fleets being on the road, such as increased emissions levels.
- City revenues: Expressions about the impact of TNCs using city infrastructure without paying the taxes that supported its upkeep.

- Level playing field: Expressions about the disparities in regulatory structures between TNCs and incumbent transportation providers.
- TNCs replacing taxis: Expressions of anxiety about the impacts that TNCs will have on the taxi industry and the decline in taxi-cabs following the emergence of TNCs
- Drivers: Expressions about the impacts that TNCs will have on professional drivers in a city. This includes negative impacts on taxi drivers and potentially positive impacts on individuals willing and interested in driving for TNCs.
  - Labor: Expressions about the labor implications of moving toward a gig or contractor system with TNCs.
- Taxi cabs outdated: Expressions alluding to the idea that incumbent transportation providers and taxi-cabs are behind technologically.
- Technological advancement: Expressions about the value that TNCs can bring a community as a technological advancement.
- Data: Expressions about data sharing agreements between TNCs and cities.
- State intervention: Expressions about state preemption and other intervention from state level policy makers.
- Profitability: Expressions about the profitability of TNCs
- Community values: Expressions regarding the idea that communities have the right to govern in a way that is consistent with the values and priorities of their residents.
- Safety: Expressions about the safety of drivers, riders, and residents. This includes conversations about insurance coverage.

#### Actions Taken by City

- Initially welcomed TNCs: Reflections on the city's or residents' initial embrace and welcome of TNCs.
- Legal action taken against TNCs: Reflections on the city's use of legal action in response to TNCs.
- City engaged with TNC: Reflections on the city engaging or attempting to engage in negotiations or partnership with TNCs.
- Looking to other cities: Reflections on the city looking to other cities across the country for cues on how to address TNCs.

#### Responses to TNCs

- Negative reception: Reflections on negative relationships between residents, policy makers, or incumbent providers and TNCs.
- Positive reception: Reflections on positive relationships between residents, policy makers, or incumbent providers and TNCs.
- Relationship: Reflections on the changing, improved or deteriorating nature of the relationship between the city and TNCs.

## Appendix C – Interview Recruitment Document

Date

Dear XXXXX,

My name is Nicole DuPuis, and I am a doctoral candidate with the Center for Public Administration and Policy at Virginia Tech.

I am currently conducting research for my dissertation under the advisement of Dr. Adam Eckerd, an assistant professor with the Center for Public Administration and Policy at Virginia Tech. We are doing research on the ways in which different U.S. cities respond to and regulate transportation network companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft. As part of this project, we are talking with government and non-government stakeholders who have recently been involved in any deliberation over this issue, and we would welcome the opportunity to interview you about your experiences.

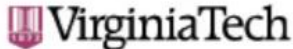
Your participation would enable us to better understand the different ways in which city governments respond to these sorts of technology-based market innovations, and how certain communities and stakeholders see their entrance into local markets. We ask for about thirty minutes of your time and would conduct the interview by phone or in-person to suit your schedule.

We hope you can find the time to participate in our project. If you would be willing to share your time, or if you have any questions, I can be reached at [nmdupuis@vt.edu](mailto:nmdupuis@vt.edu) or by phone at 304-433-6654.

Regards,

Nicole DuPuis  
Doctoral Candidate  
Center for Public Administration and Policy  
School of Public and International Affairs  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, Virginia

## Appendix D – IRB Approval Letter



Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board  
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959  
email [irb@vt.edu](mailto:irb@vt.edu)  
website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** February 8, 2018  
**TO:** Anne M Khademian, Nicole Marie Dupuis  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Stories of the Sharing Economy: Comparing Narratives and Regulatory Responses to TNCs Across American Cities  
**IRB NUMBER:** 17-168

Effective February 8, 2018, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) approved the Continuing Review request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at: <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5,6,7**  
Protocol Approval Date: **March 6, 2018**  
Protocol Expiration Date: **March 5, 2019**  
Continuing Review Due Date\*: **February 19, 2019**

\*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

### FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

*Invent the Future*

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY  
*An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution*

Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

\* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

## Appendix E – Approved Consent Form for Research Initiative

### - Consent Form for Research Initiative -

1. **Study Title:** “Stories of the Sharing Economy: Comparing Narratives and Regulatory Responses to TNCs Across American Cities”

2. **Performance Site:** Interviews will be conducted by phone and in person when the researchers can travel to you.

3. **Investigators:** The following investigators are available to answer your questions about this study

Nicole DuPuis, Ph.D. Candidate  
Virginia Tech  
[nmdupuis@vt.edu](mailto:nmdupuis@vt.edu)  
304-433-6654

Adam Eckerd, Assistant Professor  
Virginia Tech  
[aeckerd@vt.edu](mailto:aeckerd@vt.edu)  
614-353-8699

4. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research project is to investigate regulatory responses to transportation network companies (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft in several American cities.

5. **Subject Inclusion:** Included in this study are local elected officials, business owners, union leaders, representatives from TNCs, TNC drivers and TNC rider activists and other relevant actors and stakeholders who played a major role in the policy deliberations around TNCs.

6. **Number of subjects:** The number of subjects for this project is indeterminate.

7. **Study Procedures:** As part of this study, we will conduct interviews with government and non-government officials, stakeholders, and public participants. The interviews should take approximately 30 minutes of your time, and the interview will be audio-recorded unless you request that it not be.

8. **Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to you for agreeing to participate and be interviewed.

9. **Risks:** There are no anticipated risks to you agreeing to participate and be interviewed. All information you provide will be coded so as to protect your identity.

10. **Right to Refuse:** You may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time.

11. **Privacy:** Results of the study may be published, but neither your name nor personally identifying information will be included in the publication. Your identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the VT IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore at [moored@vt.edu](mailto:moored@vt.edu) or (540) 231-4991.

12. **Signatures:**

The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators.

Subject Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_