Article

Carsharing Business Models' Strategizing Mindsets Regarding Environmental Sustainability

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Abstract: Carsharing is seen as one of the most promising business model innovations for transforming the mobility system towards sustainability. Yet, carsharing businesses are faced with similar sustainability paradoxes as business in general; whether a company's business model is pushed towards sustainability depends on its strategizing mindset. However, few studies have addressed the strategizing mindsets of carsharing providers. The present study addresses this gap with an empirical assessment of (1) the relevance of environmental sustainability in the strategies of carsharing corporations compared to their proclaimed vision and (2) the underlying type of strategizing mindset, i.e., corporate purpose and vision. In using a Sustainability Balanced Scorecard approach in a reversed manner, accompanied by an objective hermeneutic methodology, we reconstructed strategy maps out of two distinct carsharing business models, unveiling for each company its strategic reasoning, its understanding of corporate purpose and its underlying strategizing mindset. The results reveal that none of the carsharing businesses follow a mindset that orients their strategy to a systems-based view and accordingly do not provide solutions to environmental problems. The study not only adds to our understanding of carsharing companies, it also introduces a conceptual framework that allows the investigation of purpose in comparison to vision, revealing a company's strategizing mindset.

Keywords: strategizing mindset; corporate vision; corporate purpose; carsharing; business model; strategy

1. Introduction

With the environmental impact of accelerated economic activity coupled with increased resource use, business as usual is not an option for a sustainable future in the Anthropocene [1–3]. The sharing economy is one of the promising business model innovations that could stimulate sustainable practices and sustainable economic development [4]. Under the sharing economy, new business paradigms built on the promise of access over ownership [5] and the associated business archetype "deliver functionality rather than ownership" are labelled as sustainable business models [6]. Despite the lack of empirical foundations for the archetype itself [7], the sharing archetype is described as one of the promising research avenues for business models for sustainability [8].

Carsharing is often referred to as a prototypical example of the sharing economy [9–11]. Carsharing business models promise better resource utilization by reducing idle capacity and extending the usage of cars in their product lifespan [12,13], which could set the mobility and transportation sector on a more sustainable path [14,15]. Over time, various business models of the sharing economy in general [16], and carsharing specifically [17], have developed, fueled by the wide introduction of mobile devices and electronic services [18]. However, carsharing in its variants has been criticized as a failed innovation in environmental terms with only limited up-scaling potential [19,20]. Furthermore, some research argues carsharing could even have a negative environmental impact through stimulating use at the expense of greener mobility options and hyper consumption [21–23].

So far, three research avenues about the ecological effects of carsharing business models have been developed. The first is a normative approach that evaluates the ecological

impacts of sharing through logical reasoning by listing positive and negative impacts, accompanied by anecdotal references to companies and consumption habits [22,24]. Even though this research stream is the theoretical baseline for understanding the ecological potentialities upon which other works build, it falls short in empirically backing its arguments. The second, a consumer theory approach, illuminates sharing practices and the motivation behind sharing for consumers [25,26]. This research stream allows insights into the target group of sharing economy business models and assigns sharing attributes to business models. However, researchers are not analyzing if the business models can hold their promises or why they are attributed as such. A third approach focuses on measuring the impacts of sharing business models by comparing consumers of sharing products with control groups [27,28] or by recreating hypothetical past or future consumption patterns [29,30]. The results allow a better understanding of the current consumption patterns of targeted consumers. Yet, consumption patterns are difficult to generalize, as each business model is designed for specific consumer segments. Consequently, observed consumption patterns are misinterpreted as (un)successful integrations of ecological sustainable business models without reflecting on the strategic reasoning behind the observed business model. As Esfandabadi et al. [31] (p. 9) point out in their systemic approach, though carsharing has the potential to reduce environmental effects, it depends on the concrete managerial strategies of carsharing businesses: "a single decision can target a specific loop or variable, skipping its effects on the other parts of the system [and] may lead to inefficiencies and even adverse effects on the environment".

In short, carsharing is not an exception to sharing economy business models and faces the same sustainability paradoxes as business in general, such as rebound effects and negative externalities [32]. The integration of sustainability issues in business models is a strategic task, and strategy itself is derived from the company's vision [3], which depends on the underlying beliefs and strategizing mindsets that push business models and its practices towards sustainability [33–35]. Unfortunately, language and values are often expressed similarly within and across industries, which make it difficult to assess the veracity of mission, vision and value statements [36] and prevents an understanding of why a company exists [37]. As Nansubuga and Kowalkowski [38] (p. 75) point out: "while extensive research has focused on the customer, including customer behaviour, drivers and barriers (especially in relation to access-based business models), few studies have addressed the motives of carsharing service providers". It therefore remains unclear to what extent the carsharing providers actually contribute to sustainability transitions. This study addresses this gap with an empirical assessment of (1) the relevance of environmental sustainability in the strategies of carsharing corporations compared to its proclaimed vision and (2) the underlying type of strategizing mindset, i.e., corporate purpose and vision, behind the business models for venturing into carsharing. This study not only contributes to our understanding of carsharing companies' reasoning on sustainability, it also introduces a conceptual framework on how to analyze strategizing mindsets and evaluate veracity of vision statements. It thereby contributes to remedy the "dearth in the management and sustainability literature on the function of corporate purpose in sustainability management" [39] (p. 7). Following a diverse case study approach [40], car2go and stadtmobil were chosen for our research, as they are two well-established companies in the German carsharing market with distinct carsharing business models.

The article is structured as follows. The next section provides the conceptual basis for linking strategizing mindsets with corporate strategy and business models, based on a literature review. Strategizing mindsets will thereby be differentiated according to the inside-out perspective on the business into corporate vision and the outside-in perspective on the business into corporate purpose. The methodology section focuses on data selection and the objective hermeneutic method with which corporate purposes are derived from the description of the business models based on a systematized, practical procedure to understand and interpret texts in a reflective way. The result and discussion sections present the interpreted corporate purpose, particularly with regards to the environmental sustainabil-

ity imperative, and contrast it with the corporations' proclaimed visions. The conclusion sums up the findings and reflects on the veracity and utility of the objective hermeneutic method to assess corporate purpose for reflecting on sustainability innovations.

## 2. Linking Strategizing Mindsets with Corporate Strategy and Business Models

Sustainability performance measurement and management refers to "the performance of the organisation in terms of the sustainable development of the economy and society as a whole", and thus includes the environmental and social effects of the organization on its broader environment [41] (pp. 109–110). Sustainability performance measurement and management is thereby generic in that it also includes unsustainable performance: it is a subject and goal rather than an attribute to performance measurement [41]. From such an integrated accounting perspective on sustainability, company managers integrate sustainability within the firm's vision and strategy [42], which should allow researchers to access sustainability performance through a corporation's vision.

An assessment of corporate visions on sustainability in sustainability reports remains difficult as these are often not very specific and at the same time influenced by stakeholder communication goals [43–45]. Even though reporting standards such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) promise transparency through the release of information on various indicators [46], its effectiveness is still subject to numerous limitations. For example, the study by Boiral [47] showed the lack of reliability of GRI reporting and concluded that most events concerning sustainability issues were not reported, that information disclosed shows an overemphasis of sustainable achievements and that positive images were widely used to mislead readers. GRI shares critiques with other reporting standards in that data are seldom comparable and lack standardization in monitoring how closely a report followed the standard reporting procedures and a process that assures the quality of information in the reports [48–50]. Even though GRI and other standards are revised regularly, it is unlikely that meaningful and reliable standardized disclosures of contributions to sustainability will emerge any time soon [51].

These weaknesses in reporting are deepened in that corporate social responsibility issues are laden with tensions, contradictions, unintended consequences and conflicting stakeholder demands [52], or as Lynn and Brady [36] (p. 519) put it: "unfortunately, many corporate social responsibility issues are not black and white and therefore may not lend themselves to easy articulation in a way that differentiates one organization from another. Language and values are often similar within and across industries. This lack of uniqueness makes it difficult for stakeholders to assess the veracity and utility of mission, vision, and value statements in a meaningful way, a situation exacerbated by rapidly changing complex environments requiring near-constant adaptation". With regards to new mobility services, this is well reflected in the fact that "operators have a tough time to articulate value. In the eyes of the consumer, e-scooter, e-bikes, carsharing, and ride-hailing providers are at times seemingly indistinguishable" [53] (p. 116).

The integration of sustainability issues in the organizational culture of a corporation is a strategic task, affecting all management levels, i.e., the corporate vision at the normative management level, the corporate strategy at the strategic management level and the implementation of business models at the operational management level [3]. At the normative level, the corporate vision is "a mental conception of the kind of environment [. . .] an organization aspires to create within a broad time horizon and the underlying conditions for the actualization of this perception" based on "identifying a domain for competitive behaviour or arena, a set of sources of competitive strength and a profile for resource capability" [54] (pp. 25–26). Managers and entrepreneurs develop subjective representations of their environments that drive their strategic decisions [55]. Therefore, the subjective representations are heavily influenced by the mindsets and their inherent values and believes, which are pivotal elements of organizational culture, identity and image [56,57].

In practice, the relatively abstract and typically timeless ambitions expressed in a corporate vision are regularly accompanied by formalized corporate mission statements that describe "why the entity exists, what it is striving to accomplish, what it stands for, and how it plans to achieve its objectives" [58] (p. 3). Despite the similar language and the homogeneity of corporate vision and mission statements, as well as their synonymous usage with purpose [36,59] (p. 21), it has recently been reinforced that a clear conceptual distinction between the concepts of vision, mission and purpose of a company is important. "The purpose of a business refers to the reason for its being. It is neither just a description of what it does—a mission statement—nor what it aspires to become—a vision statement" [2] (p. 246). A purpose is about solving problems profitably, thereby enhancing the well-being and prosperity of shareholders, society and the natural world. A company's purpose should be precise in that it is clear about what and whose problems it seeks to solve, as well as when and why the company is particularly well-suited to solve such problems [60]. Purpose is considered "as a process that is directed inside-out and is reinforced outside-in, generating connections and identity with different stakeholders" [61] (p. 108). In the context of this research, we understand strategizing mindsets as the collective term for the concepts of corporate vision and corporate purpose, with corporate vision reflecting the inside-out perspective and corporate purpose resulting from the outside-in perspective (see Figure 1).
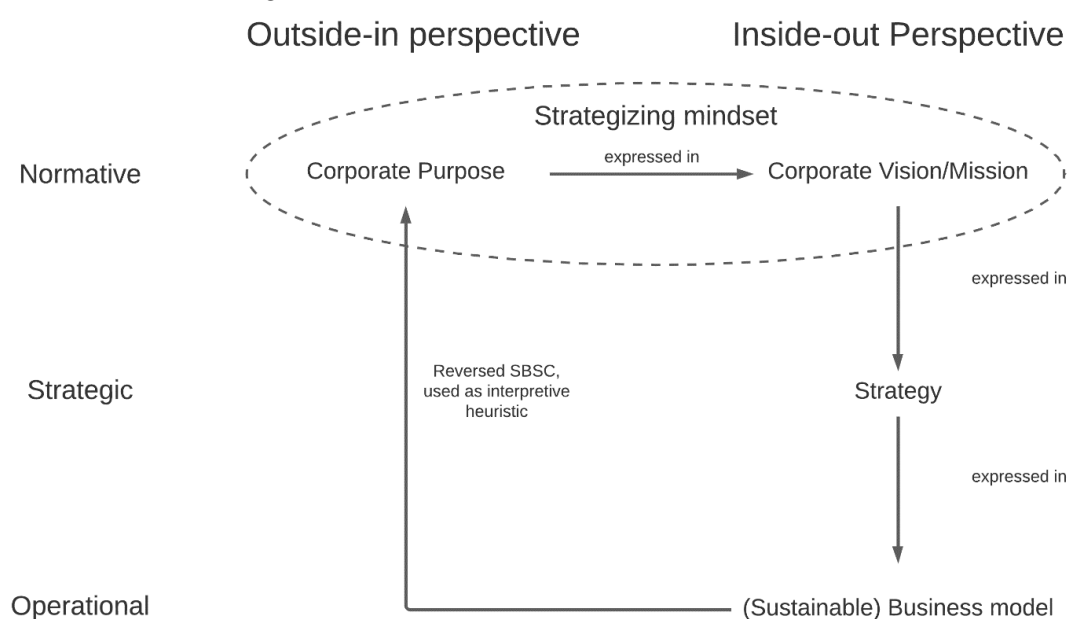
Figure 1. Strategizing mindset as a collective term for corporate purpose and corporate vision.

In the outside-in perspective, corporate purpose should not be conflated with social purpose. Whereas social purpose describes what society might wish from the corporation, companies can have purposes that are neither driven by profits nor society, but rather reflect what a company seeks to do [62] and answers the question of why the company exists [37]. Purpose arises if the company encodes their values into a mission statement that encapsulates the company's aims in the short run as well as into a broader vision that sets aspirational long-term objectives and provides an orientation for strategic decision making [58]. Purpose is the link between hard elements such as vision, strategy and operational priorities, which drive performance, as well as soft elements such as brand promise and core values, which work to create a distinctive organizational climate [63]. In practice, a company would first understand the value created and for whom, then codify the purpose, create a vision for a purposeful future accompanied by a mission that correspond to what the company does, and lastly, design a purpose-led strategy to realize the vision [39].

In the inside-out perspective, the corporate vision translates "as a guiding star" [59] (p. 27) into the corporate strategy, determining long-term objectives and policies at the strategic management level and providing direction for cooperative activities in operational management [64]. Eventually, business models link the strategic and operational management levels, translating the corporation's strategy into daily operations [65]. Business models serve as a translation tool in that they act as cognitive and linguistic schemas, operating as a focusing device, allowing decision making in conditions of imperfect information [66] and being shared and altered by consumers, investors, employees and entrepreneurs [67]. Consequently, business models are quite widely accessible—presented in power points, sales pitches and websites, and visualized in numerous corporate documents [67].

Formalized corporate vision statements are often "lofty and generic, more akin to public relation statements" [36] (p. 517) or "simply another exercise in purpose washing" [68] (p. 30). They are therefore often unsuitable for a direct empirical analysis of sustainability performance of a corporation. Better suited are business models, which may allow an alternative avenue to assess the strategizing mindsets of a corporation, and thus to conclude on its sustainability performance. After all, strategizing mindsets directly shape the creation of (sustainable) business models [69,70]. In this context, applying the logic of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) approach in a reversed manner seems particularly promising to derive the corporate purpose from a re-interpretation of business models, as the BSC is still a widely used concept for performance measurement [71–73] and has a proven track record as a tool for the implementation of visions and strategies in business models [65,74]. In other words, instead of implementing business models and strategy through a strategy map, derived from purpose and vision, the strategy maps were reconstructed out of the business models.

Originally, the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) concept was introduced as an instrument for strategy implementation and assessment, derived from a corporate vision [75] and was used to translate a verbally formulated strategy into operational terms. The BSC is built on four hierarchically linked perspectives [76,77]: (1) the financial perspective describes the outcome of the strategy in financial terms, in regards to its revenue growth and productivity strategy; (2) the customer perspective defines the current and future customer segments, as well as the customer values used to generate sales and loyalty from targeted customers; (3) the internal process perspective identifies business processes that enable the company to meet customers' and external stakeholders' expectations, as well as to improve through innovation and operational excellence; and (4) the learning and growth perspective describes the jobs (human capital), system (information capital) and corporate climate (organization capital) required to support the value-creating processes. The perspectives are interlinked through cause-and-effect relationships. Lagging indicators are formulated for each perspective, which inform whether the strategic objective is reached. Leading indicators express the key performance drivers of the company and represent how the results should be achieved [78].

The BSC was later extended and applied to sustainability contexts and renamed the Sustainability Balanced Scorecard (SBSC) with the intention of incorporating environmental and social aspects into management systems of a firm [78,79]. The SBSC concept has been developed into numerous variants [80–83]. Hansen and Schaltegger [84] argue that an extended SBSC promises the most progressive sustainability strategy by adding a dedicated perspective and integrating sustainability objectives into existing perspectives. In this research, we named a fifth perspective, "environmental performance", to highlight the research interest in environmental sustainability. The fifth perspective can impact a firm's performance on all four perspectives of the conventional BSC [78] and represents all environmental topics in connection to the conventional BSC. Furthermore, a semi-hierarchical SBSC layout was chosen to relax strict cause-and-effect chains, thus allowing non-financial objectives to exist in their own right [84].

The (S)BSC concept was criticized for being unable to address transformational change towards sustainability beyond incrementalism. The SBSC would pretend to translate responses to sustainability issues into measurable and controllable management tasks that can be aligned with financial outcomes at the organizational level in a linear manner, which is diametrically opposed to the complex, multifaceted and ambiguous nature of sustainability challenges. As SBSCs are unable to express these complexities in its architecture, the SBSC would be not a suitable tool for achieving strategic change [85]. In direct response, Hansen and Schaltegger [74] clarify that the function of the SBSC is to support strategy implementation and that it depends on the strategy in place. Reality's complexity—the tensions, tradeoffs and paradoxes—are addressed beforehand in the strategy-making process. The resulting strategy map thus only shows a clear path towards sustainable value creation. The cause-and-effect relationships are best described as finality relations or, as Sundin et al. [86] put it, as a managerial thinking device in which relations can be seen as social constructs, representing beliefs of causal relations, even if not verifiable by statistical tests. Retrieving strategy maps from the re-interpretation of business models should therefore allow an understanding of the strategic reasoning of companies. As corporate strategies and sustainability performance are directly linked [87], understanding the strategic reasoning allows us at the same time to conclude on the underlying corporate purpose, as well as the underlying strategizing mindset.

Following Wunder [88], three ideal-type strategizing mindsets are distinguished for linking strategy and sustainability, in line with stages of sustainability that corporations tend to traverse [89,90]: "Strategizing-As-Usual" focuses on compliance with sustainability regulations; "Sustainable Strategizing 1.0" focuses on efficiency gains through re-design of value proposition, value creation or value capture in the sense of a business case for sustainability [91]; and "Sustainable Strategizing 2.0" focuses on sustainability innovations. The imperative to environmental sustainability shifts with the progression of mindsets, from complying with environmental standards to the reduction of material and energy input, and finally to providing "profitable solutions to the problems of people and planet" [60] (p. 889). (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Strategizing mindsets and their characteristics based on Wunder [88] (p. 14) © Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2019.

Strategizing Mindset	Dominant Strategy Orientation	Value Creation	Performance Imperative	Environmental Sustainability Imperative	Type of Advantage	Time Horizon
Strategizing-as-usual	Market-/Resource-based view	Customer value	Profitability/Shareholder value	Compliance with environmental regulations	Competitive advantage	Short-term
Sustainable Strategizing 1.0	Business case for sustainability	Economic, ecological, social value	Triple bottom line	Reduction of material and energy input	Corporate Sustainability advantage	Short-term, medium-term
Sustainable Strategizing 2.0	Systems-based view	Sustainable value	Positive systems impact	Provide solutions to environmental problems	Systems (viability) advantage	Long-term

If carsharing is supposed to be a sustainability innovation to transition the mobility sector, then the strategizing mindsets and the corporate purpose of carsharing providers should fall in the ideal type of Sustainable Strategizing 2.0, or at least the companies should have started to traverse the continuum towards a Sustainable Strategizing 2.0 mindset. In other words, using SBSC terminology, the environmental performance objective should be on the same level as the financial performance perspective in the strategy map.

3. Methodology

The German carsharing market was selected, as it has a dominating position in Europe and should harbor the most settled carsharing company business models [92]. Following a

diverse case study approach [40], car2go and stadtmobil, two well-established companies in the German carsharing market with distinct sharing business models, were chosen. Car2go, a subsidiary of Daimler, is the biggest free-floating carsharing operator worldwide [93], and a prototypical example for singular transaction models [16], often discussed in case-specific literature [27,30]. Stadtmobil, a subscription-based model [16], is the largest carsharing company network in Germany and follows a station-based carsharing approach [94].

In May and August 2019, the website landing pages of car2go and stadtmobil were extracted and used as primary data material. The landing pages were chosen because they display the company's business model narrative in a way that is easily accessible for consumers. The websites were analyzed following the Objective Hermeneutic (OH) approach [95]. OH is a well-established methodological approach, which is used to analyze all sorts of material, whether spoken or written, but is hardly used in the context of sustainability studies so far [96]. The approach draws a basic distinction between subjective (intended, conscious) meaning that a statement or activity has for one or more participants, and objective (unconscious) meaning, which is latent in the subtext [97,98] (p. 507). The latent structure of meaning can be examined only by using the framework of a multi-step scientific procedure of interpretation [96] (p. 188), described below.

In following the OH process, readings were constructed for each text sequence on the landing pages. An average text sequence had the length of a half sentence. Readings were constructed without anticipation of the following text segments, referring to what the author(s) could have meant. The researchers take the text literal and try to recover all possible meanings—even unlikely meanings—and protocol them. To ensure confirmability, readings were constructed detached from contextual knowledge. After the readings were constructed for a text sequence, thought experiments were crafted and formulated as hypotheses that systematize what possible interactions are available to the actor. Then, the next sequence was analyzed, reflecting on why hypotheses were not chosen by the actor. Subsequently, redundant and falsified readings were eliminated by moving beyond the actual passage and identifying unbroken communicational figures [95,99], leaving behind a thick case description. In the next step, the readings were sorted topic-wise, their main meaning summarized and sorted into one or multiple SBSC perspectives by following the perspectives' definitions laid out earlier. If a reading was present in several perspectives in the SBSC or linked meanings on the same perspective logically in its argument, a finality relation was recorded. In the final step, similar meanings were aggregated and condensed if they had similar logical connections, resulting in the SBSCs of stadtmobil and of car2go. To validate the results, a second researcher constructed readings of both cases until case saturation was reached. The results were then discussed and readings were added when necessary. Additionally, to ensure dependability, pieces of the Daimler business report [100] that mentioned car2go were put into the OH process, enriching the SBSC of car2go. Finally, the cases were formulated by contextual knowledge and background information provided by other studies.

## 4. Results: Reconstructed Strategy Maps

The reconstructed SBSCs of car2go (Figure 2) and stadtmobil (Figure 3), read from top to bottom, show clear similarities in the strategic reasoning of the companies. Referring to the financial perspective, both companies aim to generate profit and foster their profit through cost reductions. No environmental performance goal could be identified at the same height as the financial performance level. Regarding the customer perspective, both companies target business customers and consumers who are young, highly educated and who are currently without the financial resources to buy a vehicle. Both companies promise that through their carsharing service, electrified and emission-free vehicles are introduced, which is proclaimed as the first step towards electrified mobility. However, both companies strategize that only a few customers will be interested specifically in driving electrified vehicles. The goal to reduce emissions, linked to the electrification of vehicles, is classified

in the environmental performance perspective at the same height as the lagging internal process perspective.
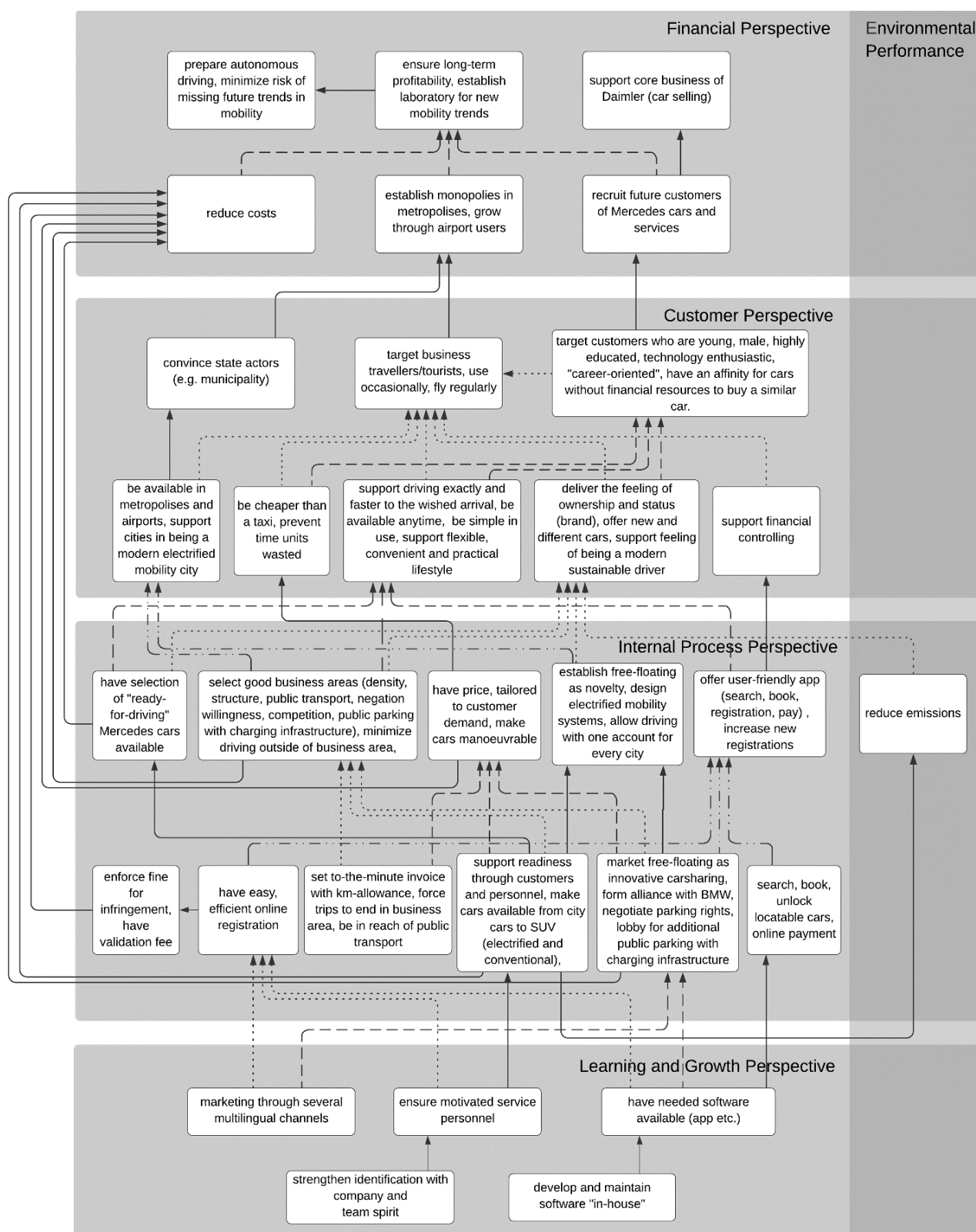
Figure 2. Strategy map of car2go. (The different arrow shapes serve to make the figure more readable, and all have the same meaning in that they express finality relations.)
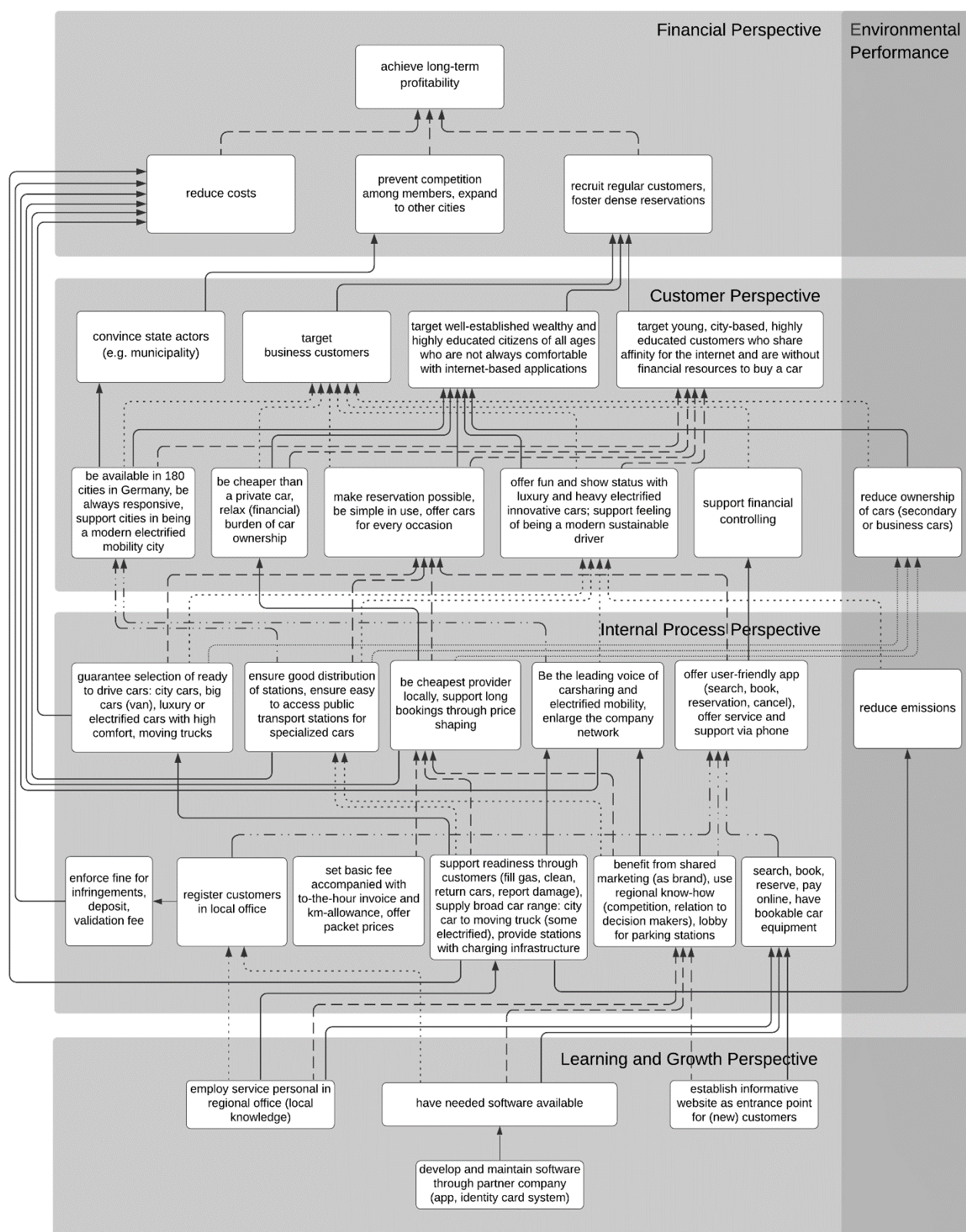
Figure 3. Strategy map of stadtmobil. (The different arrow shapes serve to make the figure more readable, and all have the same meaning in that they express finality relations.)

While in the same business fields, the strategies of car2go and stadtmobil differ substantially in at least five characteristics.

Firstly, car2go is seen as a laboratory for new mobility trends, where autonomous driving can be prepared gradually and the risks of missing future trends in mobility are reduced. In the long term, the sub-company of Daimler should develop into a valuable asset. In contrast, stadtmobil must be profitable and save costs immediately. Therefore, stadtmobil decided to build a company network with an inner core of companies belonging to the stadtmobil group and an outer partner network of aligned companies.

Secondly, even though both companies aim to attract young people with similar characteristics, the importance of this customer group is quite different for each strategy. Stadtmobil sees young customers merely as one additional consumer segment, whereas car2go focuses specifically on the young age group in order to familiarize them with Daimler cars with the expectation that they will buy Daimler cars in the future.

Thirdly, the companies differ in the way they capture value and set prices. Whereas car2go builds on prices, tailored to customer demand, cleared per minute and kilometers driven, stadtmobil uses basic fees, coupled with to-the-hour invoicing and kilometer allowance. The difference in value capture leads car2go consumers to use the service for short distances, comparing it to taxis, whereas stadtmobil consumers use it for longer distances and time frames, comparing the service to private cars and car rentals. Even though free-floating and station-based carsharing systems are often discussed as substitutes for each other [17,101], their strategized use patterns show that they do not compete with each other.

Fourthly, car2go is built on a free-floating system, in that suitable and relatively small business areas are key. A suitable business area has a high population density, a car-friendly structure, minimal competition, a good public transport system, good public parking coverage and an airport. Such characteristics are only present in bigger metropolises. In contrast, stadtmobil is built around carsharing stations that are distributed across the city. The stations should be distributed in a manner that consumers live and work nearby, which leads to the necessity for stadtmobil to constantly lobby for more parking stations.

Fifthly, even though both companies proclaim in their visions that they want to facilitate the replacement of private vehicles with carsharing cars [102,103], only stadtmobil strategizes this in its environmental performance perspective on the level of the leading customer perspective. Stadtmobil's business customers and the well-established customer segment are in favor of reducing costly secondary or business cars. Customers are convinced to use the service mainly because it is cheaper than a private car. Environmental reasons play only a minor role in the company's argument to win over consumers. In comparison, car2go focuses on daily mobility decisions, convincing customers to choose their service because it requires less time than public services, is convenient and has low costs for short distances.

5. Discussion: Strategizing Mindsets behind Business Models

Even though car2go promises in its vision statement that it will help to design cities with fewer emissions, less traffic and a reduced need for private cars and parking spaces [102,104], these potential ecological value creation arguments are not explicitly part of their SBSC. The electrification of cars is put forward as the sole argument of how the company reduces emissions. The electrification of cars coupled with the reduced emissions argument is the only objective in car2go's environmental performance perspective, which is situated in the SBSC as comparable to an efficiency-focused approach.

The reconstructed consumer group of car2go is young, highly educated, technologically enthusiastic, male, career-oriented and has an affinity for cars, but not the resources to own one. The strategy of car2go is primarily oriented towards the values of this specific customer group in being cheap, convenient, time-saving and a well-known brand. The SBSC of car2go uncovers that the aim assumed by several studies, that car2go wants to spread to other customer segments and sell mobility instead of cars [27,29], is not in car2go's interest. Car2go managers construct a finality relation between young customers becoming used to the Mercedes brand and transforming them into Daimler customers,

ensuring an increased shareholder value for its parent company. If the strategy of car2go bears fruit, more Mercedes cars will be on the street in the future. As the average fleet of Daimler is quite emission heavy compared to other manufacturers [105] and as car2go also markets heavy cars (e.g., SUVs), future customers will tend to buy emission-heavy vehicles, leading to a negative impact on CO_2 emissions.

Competitive advantage is reached by being cheaper than taxis, more convenient and faster than public transportation and by using only relatively new cars of the high-class brand Mercedes, making them more appealing in comparison to other car rentals, sharing services and taxis, which are understood as competitors. Furthermore, free-floating is marketed as innovative carsharing that avoids unnecessary return trips. Other studies showed that the potential traffic and CO_2 emission reduction through a free-floating system is spoiled partially by the tendency for car cluster build ups [106,107]. Car2go is aware of the problem and tries to steer cars through clever pricing that is bound to car density and departure points. Whether this operating scheme has a meaningful impact or creates additional car mobility demand is unclear. Currently, car2go still employs staff who regularly have to readjust the vehicle imbalance. Furthermore, car2go is in competition with public transportation but at the same time needs a good public transportation system to complement its carsharing service. An ecological sustainability benefit could arise if car2go could supplement fixed routes of public transport. However, car2go is explicitly choosing business areas with very good public transportation coverage. As parking a car outside of the business area is forbidden and car2go is mainly used during rush hour [108], it is unlikely that car2go will supply areas of the city that are underserved with public transportation.

In terms of investment payback to the parent company, the time horizon is rather long term. Even though car2go should generate profit as fast as possible, a higher importance is put on being a laboratory for autonomous driving—a study result that is reinforced by statements of the CEO of car2go [109]. Currently, car2go is used and designed similarly to a taxi ride and could develop with autonomous driving into a substitute for taxis. This argument in car2go's SBSC is supported by Habibi et al. [108], who show that free-floating systems have an average booking time of 23 to 25 min and cover a distance of 2.5 to 6 km, and Lempert et al. [110], who show that consumers compare car2go to taxi and similar services. Through robotic vehicles, routes of customers could be optimized and taxi fleets could be cut down and operated more efficiently [106]. In an "automated driving future", the car2go strategy could develop into a business case for sustainability. At the moment, car2go has four of six characteristics of a strategizing-as-usual mindset.

Stadtmobil proclaims in its vision statement that the company seeks to relieve environmental pressure through reducing private car ownership, offering fuel-efficient cars and complementing car-free mobility. Furthermore, cities will profit from stadtmobil as the service reduces traffic and the need for parking space [103].

In the SBSC for stadtmobil, value is created for the customer by being cheap, practical and available in 180 cities, supporting financial control and offering enjoyment of cars. Competitive advantage is reached by being the cheapest provider for car mobility. Next to customer value, stadtmobil also fosters ecological value in that it stimulates the replacement of secondary or business cars, which is seen as an additional customer value by two of its three consumer segments. This result is in line with Hartl et al. [111], who found that carsharing consumers perceive sustainability as a nice bonus, next to other advantages such as cost saving. Furthermore, research suggests that a reduction in secondary cars is linked to a reduction in CO_2 emissions [112,113]. However, stadtmobil acknowledges that only business customers and the customer segment of well-established citizens have the ability to shed cars. The young consumer segment is not able to reduce as most cannot yet afford to buy a car and instead are consuming cars earlier than they would without stadtmobil [114,115]. The SBSC mirrors the problem of consumption habit research on car reduction through carsharing, in that it remains unclear if stadtmobil just targets consumer groups that have a low car ownership beforehand (see, for example, Münzel et al. [116]).

It depends on the mix of consumer segments and on the future consumption decisions towards car ownership by young consumers if stadtmobil will lower private car ownership or not.

As young adults prefer to live in dense city centers [114,115], stadtmobil could steer its sustainability effects through clever station placement. If stadtmobil focuses on the outskirts of cities, there could be reductions in the number of cars and decreased parking pressure in living areas. Even though car replacement is the only important ecological argument in the value proposition, the strategy orientation of stadtmobil shows signs of a business case for sustainability.

In practice, however, the majority of station-based carsharing members book cars on weekends and in off-peak periods of traffic for social and recreational purposes. This argument in stadtmobil's SBSC is underlined by carsharing researchers, which found that an average use lasts 837 min and covers a distances of 115.4 km [117,118]. These results show that competition with public transport is unlikely and that promises of reducing parking pressure in the city center and traffic in rush hour will likely remain unfulfilled.

Electrified vehicles are an important argument to convince municipalities that stadtmobil is an important piece in transforming the city's mobility system. However, stadtmobil's strategy does not fit with the weaknesses of electric cars, as consumers regularly drive long distances and book cars for long periods. Furthermore, electric cars have high acquisition costs, acquire low prices in second-hand markets and have high costs of recharging infrastructure for privately managed parking stations. As a result, station-based carsharing providers have a low electrification potential [119]. Furthermore, no other strategic aim next to profitability could be recreated, signifying that stadtmobil expects a rather short-term investment return.

The environmental performance goal of vehicle reduction is placed in the SBSC on the leading customer perspective level, allowing the conclusion that stadtmobil follows a redesign approach that could have a systematic impact if the mixture of customers is in favor of customers who are able to shed cars. However, the company is not introducing the objective with the same importance as profitability. Rather, the placement level of the emission reduction goal fits with a reduction-focused environmental imperative. Stadtmobil is therefore a mixed bag, which has already made some important steps in changing its mindset towards sustainability. In total, three of the six criteria hint in the direction of a sustainable strategizing 1.0 mindset, whereas three criteria are classified as strategizing-as-usual.

6. Limitations and Concluding Remarks

In the face of the current environmental crisis and the realization that business as usual is not an option in the Anthropocene, new concepts are needed that allow researchers to better understand the relationships between purpose, vision, strategy and business models. This includes finding ways to evaluate purpose in comparison to vision in case studies, supporting research to differentiate the proclaimed relevance of environmental sustainability from its strategic relevance. This paper introduces a new conceptual framework built on Wunder's [88] strategizing mindsets and conceptually links the inside-out perspective—represented through a corporate vision—and the outside-in perspective—represented through a company's purpose. Following a diverse case study approach and using an objective hermeneutic methodology, strategy maps were reconstructed out of the business models presented on the websites of the two carsharing companies, car2go and stadtmobil.

A research logic was followed that builds on the reconstruction of meaning behind the text. OH theorizes that each psychological motive, expectation, opinion, value orientation, etc., is not directly visible in the material (in the text), but leaves traces that can be deciphered [120]. These latent meaning structures are seldom reflected upon, are hidden in every kind of material (from interviews to advertisements) and are shaped by their environment. Through extensive creation of each possible reading per sequence, thought

experiments in the form of hypotheses are crafted that embrace every other objective possibility the case could have been [121]. The tension between the falsified readings and thought experiments (meanings of possibility) to the decisions of how the actors say something (meanings of reality) allows an interpretation of the underlying values, motives, expectations and opinions [99] (p. 127), [122]. Through this process, finality relations between the different layers of the strategy map were made visible and the ways the companies under study see their surroundings were uncloaked, separating the companies' purpose from public representation in their vision statements, allowing access to their strategizing mindsets. The reconstruction on strategy and their underlying mindsets is a first step in the direction to qualify "sustainability" in business models.

The SBSCs of car2go and stadtmobil are company-centric. It is likely that companies with similar business models have different strategic reasoning and market understandings [123]. However, at least for the German mobility system, both companies are two of the biggest players in the carsharing market and therefore represent two distinct carsharing business model types [93,94]. Additional analyses would have to take place to empirically undergird the "deliver functionality rather than ownership" archetype of Bocken et al. [6] and to allow for generalizations beyond the German situation or across sharing industries. Although strategy change usually takes decades [124], data collection may have been timed unfortunately. This risk seems to have possibly occurred in the case of car2go, as car2go merged with DriveNow on November 2019 into the joint venture Share Now GmbH [125]. However, car2go and DriveNow management was already preparing the joint venture at the beginning of 2017 [126], making it likely that the strategy shift happened years before data collection and left its trace in the material. The results of this research could be further limited in that a contractor or employee translates the strategy thinking of the management on the company websites. Even though mental models are rooted in the collective [127], hidden meanings could have been lost in this process.

Overall, the reconstructed strategy maps allow access to the companies' purpose and support comparison of their vision statements. Contrary to the expected type of strategizing mindset and vision proclamations, the results reveal that none of the carsharing business models follow a strategizing mindset that orients their strategy to a systems-based view on sustainability, and, accordingly, do not provide solutions to environmental problems in the mobility sector.

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