Making Urban Places
A social innovation transition through placemaking in Lund, Sweden

Sophia Schuff
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Supervisor: Barry Ness, LUCSUS, Lund University
Abstract

Urban design and city planning have historically been a practice undertaken by distanced experts and funded by detached donors and political bodies. The result is often urban sprawl, transit domination, and streets deprioritizing pedestrians. While urban areas do support innovation and knowledge-intensive production, the occurrence of social and environmental urban vulnerabilities is increasing and negatively impacting urban growth. To harness more socially sustainable cityscapes, urban design and development must contribute to a socio-technical transition to social innovation. This thesis assesses, through the lens of the socio-technical transition theory, a case study conducted in Lund, Sweden. The case will analyze a top-down participatory placemaking project led by Lund Municipality in a new urban development. Placemaking is a social innovation niche experiment that integrates resident needs into urban design through methods of traditionally bottom-up community collaboration. Through the analysis of this case, this thesis provides insight into the municipality’s efforts to transition from niche social innovation to regime and if placemaking is able to harness this transition. To address this question, semi-structured interviews, action research based observation, and municipal document analysis is used to collect data, and is framed within a transition theory multi-level perspective (MLP) framework. The theory-guided research complemented by action research suggests that it is highly possible for a Swedish municipality to achieve a social innovation transition, yet unlikely. Social innovation can harness a socio-technical transition in a Swedish context but actors at the landscape level prevent methods such as placemaking from progressing to the regime level. The findings of this study imply that Lund Municipality has the tools to support social innovation niches, and furthermore can shape how sustainability is conceived in urban development. Through an illustration of the transition process, I suggest how the collaboration of the public and political spheres can contribute to a path toward sustainability in Lund.

Keywords

Placemaking, Participatory Design, Transdisciplinarity, City Planning, Socio-Technical Transition, Lund

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1 Introduction

Cities and urban centers are the places where today’s major public policy challenges are played out (Bradford, 2005). Countries who invest in cities and communities, and assess how “place1 matters” for the quality of life for citizens and nations, are at the forefront of progressive change in the 21st century (Ibid). While urban areas support innovation and knowledge-intensive production, they are also where environmental vulnerabilities increasingly occur. The United Nations warns that the continuous evolution of cities, the constant conglomeration of people and business in urban centers globally, is negatively changing the earth’s urban footprint (Brezzi, 2012). To combat urban vulnerabilities, environmental and social sustainability analysts stress, decisions on public policy must emphasize the local milieu and place quality. These urban sustainability challenges have, both in discourse and practice, been problematic, and often result in different and contradictory outcomes (Kärrholm, 2011).

Urbanization and the flow of people, is often regarded as a critical component of the development process, but such alterations without systemic political change affect urban life quality. Rotmans (2005) argues that a societal renewal, a type of social innovation, is required. Social innovation calls for small adjustments, fundamentally changing the basis for which economics, culture, technology, institutions, and the environment exist. Based on sustainability science research, human and natural systems are linked and must face a transition to accommodate social and environmental sustainability (Ziegler, 2011; Kates, 2011; Rotmans, 2005). But how can place-based social innovation impact urban livability? How can municipalities most effectively motivate this process? Can local governments use social innovation to meet the challenges presented to urban areas?

Many societies often question the intentions of top-down community development approaches. However, Scandinavian communities are accustomed to state-run urban development projects. Lund Municipality, in the southern region of Skåne, Sweden, is among many localities undergoing municipal-led (top-down) urbanization. Sweden is the fastest urbanizing EU country, with citizens rapidly moving to cities from the rural countryside (Magnusson, 2012). In response to top-down, municipal-led urban community development this research analyses a case in Lund. Lund Municipality is currently implementing a large city development that will continue over the next 40 years, called Brunnskåg. This development will include a new science park and a large businesses

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1 The term ‘place’ means a locale that embraces different combinations of social, cultural, community, economic, and ecological facets. Place shall be distinguished apart from ‘space’ that represents a cartographic understanding of locale (Marsden, 2012).
sector with 30 per cent residential buildings. The first phase of the plan involves a 100-hectar
development. The Brunnhög development will not only alter the rich agricultural landscape of Lund,
but it will impact urban livability in unforeseen ways.

This thesis proposes Lund has the opportunity to enhance human livability through the development
of Brunnhög, with the use of social innovation methods and place-based public participation. It will
also argue that top-down municipal urban development contributes to societal transition toward
social sustainability when paired with appropriate bottom-up efforts, despite uncertainties, with the
use of placemaking. The concept of placemaking is disseminated from great urban thinkers including
Jane Jacobs, William H. Whyte, and Jan Gehl (Jacobs, 1961; Whyte, 1956; Gehl, 2011). “Placemaking
is a process through which we collectively shape our public realm to maximize shared values”
(Project For Public Spaces, 2013). Traditionally placemaking is a bottom-up community effort for
urban renewal, but top-down approaches to placemaking are seen more frequently in the last
decade. To test the feasibility of a social innovation transition in Lund through top-down municipal
guidance, I use the case of placemaking as a social innovation by the municipal leadership of Lund,
Sweden. For the purpose of this thesis, placemaking will be considered a social innovation, and
represent the “widget” or technology referenced in social-technical transition literature and
frameworks (Geels & Schot, 2007).

1.1 Project Motivation, Aim, and Research Questions

There is a general lack of public participation in urban planning processes in Sweden, so much so,
that when public participation is incorporated into development it is viewed as progressive and
uncommon. In a 2008 participatory planning study conducted in Sweden, 21 per cent of interviewees
agreed that the participatory process was functioning well, while 62 per cent were unsure
(Henningsson, et al., 2014). One-third of the respondents were unsure whether they could influence
planning decisions at all, and out of all people invited to participate only one-third did participate
(Ibid). Urban planning in Sweden needs to incorporate the collaboration and input from citizens,
because through participatory urban development quality of life increases (Bradford, 2005). Despite
the lack of inclusion, there has not been an attempt from Swedish municipalities to incorporate
public influence (Henningsson, et al., 2014). The scarcity of harnessing social capital within the
planning process serves as a motivation for this research. What are the impediments to implement a
participatory design project in Sweden? Is a Swedish municipality able to support public participation
in urban planning, and if so, would Swedish citizens use the opportunity to engage in city planning?
This thesis focuses on a participatory and social innovation case study within Lund Municipality, and ultimately the Brunnshög development. To accomplish this and answer the research questions, I examine the collaboration between Solbjer residents neighboring the Brunnshög development, the Lund municipal employees, Lund University architecture students, and local businesses involved in the implementation of a placemaking project. The Brunnshög department, a municipal department in Lund, drove the project specifically for the Solbjer residents. The placemaking project’s purpose was to empower Lund residents and facilitate ownership of the new Brunnshög development, while simultaneously spreading awareness of Brunnshög and providing a uniquely collaborative approach to urban planning in Sweden.

**Research Aim.** To conduct the research I analyze the process leading up to the municipality’s participatory placemaking event in the Brunnshög development area. According to the multi-level perspective (MLP) framework, which is informed by the socio-technical transition theory, a sustainability transition takes place when niche innovations build up internal momentum through: learning processes, price-performance improvements, the support from powerful groups, and through establishing market niches (Kern, 2012). These MLP concepts serve to inform the research design and indicators for the analysis of Lund Municipality’s social innovation transition, and specifically placemaking as a representative niche social innovation. This thesis draws upon placemaking as a niche experiment that lies within a larger social innovation transition. The socio-technical transition theory serves as both a theory and framework for the research.

I identify the societal and political barriers presented to operationalize a top-down municipal placemaking project. I also establish what processes at the landscape level of the socio-technical transition theory prevent placemaking from acting as a social innovation transition for Lund Municipality. By addressing the limitations presented to implementing a placemaking project in Lund, I seek to provide a perspective on how a socio-technical transition can affect a municipal-led social innovation in Sweden. I aim to look more generally at Lund Municipality’s contribution toward social innovation, and understand if placemaking does encourage the transition from niche social innovation to regime, in a Swedish context. By identifying these challenges I determine how a path to social sustainability can be developed, which will lead to the provision of insights for improvement on participatory planning in Sweden.
To carry out the aim, two research questions are posed:

**Research Question 1**: Does Lund Municipality foster an urban development based social innovation transition in Lund?

*Sub-Question 1.1: What actions have been taken by Lund Municipality at the regime and niche level to enable the breakthrough of social innovation in the socio-technical transition?*

**Research Question 2**: Does municipal-led placemaking harness a social innovation transition in Lund?

*Sub-Question 2.1: What are the challenges to operationalize placemaking on a municipal level in Lund?*

### 1.2 Road Map

This thesis research is structured as follows: section 2 introduces the limitations of the case study; section 3 provides the relevant background about Lund Municipality and the Brunnshög case study; section 4 provides the research design for the thesis. This section illustrates the framework used, and then additional philosophies used for the research. Section 5 is the methodology used for the collection of data, while section 6 presents the research results while simultaneously analyzing them. Finally, section 7 discusses the use of the transition theory framework and its application for analyzing Lund Municipality’s use of placemaking and the socio-technical transition to social innovation. This section will also address the challenges that prevent municipal social innovation in Lund in detail. Additionally, this section will provide opportunities for future research, and sustainability science implications, as well as address a path forward for Lund Municipality, and summarize the study’s research findings.

### 2 Limitations

The main limitation is with the process of data collection for the research. A series of semi-structured interviews with municipal members were given, different in hierarchy and position within the municipality and the Brunnshög department. I acknowledge the research would be strengthened by interviews with the placemaking project’s residential participants and students. Unfortunately, the residents were contacted and involved in the project in mid-May, when this thesis was due for submission. Another limitation presented is that to fully realize the research I would have benefitted
from evaluating the final event held May 24th, 2014. This event was after the thesis deadline also, and was not able to be included into the research. Also I attempted to interview members of the municipal planning department, but all of my messages went without response. Despite these restrictions, I was able to determine empirical evidence of the existence of a social innovation transition through the interviews and content analysis that were conducted.

3 Case Study Context: Brunnslägen and Lund Municipality

3.1 Geographical and Municipal Background

Lund is the 12th largest municipality in Sweden and sits north of Malmö in the southern Skåne region of Sweden. Lund is somewhat defined by its close proximity to Malmö (figure 1 shows Lund’s geographic proximity in Skåne), Sweden’s national growth engine, and by the fact that Southwest Skåne is the transit gateway to the world (Bjärenlöv, & Malmö Stad, 2008). According to “Samverkan Skåne Sydväst” (English translation: Collaboration in Southwest Scania), “Malmö-Lund’s local labor market (commuting region) has increased in recent years through regional expansion when two previous commuting areas were merged into one,” and through the development of better infrastructure and public transport, better commuting opportunities will be provided with increased opportunities for people to choose where to live and work (Bjärenlöv, & Malmö Stad, 2008).

By the end of 2013 Lund’s population was 114,291 people. Lund has the second-largest population growth of municipalities in Skåne (Lund Kommun, 2014). It is one of the oldest cities in Sweden and was founded around the year 990. The city has a density of 3,215 inhabitants per km squared and covers a total area of 25.75 kilometers squared. Lund is located in Sweden’s most profitable agricultural district, and much like this farmland the city topography is quite flat. The flat land of Lund contributes to the popularity of cycling and cycle infrastructure, and there has been no increase in car usage for the past 10 years (BBC News, 2009).

Lund University has a significant presence in the heart of the city. The University has around 47,000 students (Lund University, 2013). Lund University is one of Scandinavia’s largest education and research institutions, and in collaboration with Lund Municipality is developing one of Sweden’s largest science parks located between Lund University’s campus center and where the Brunnslägen development is taking place (Ibid). Figure 2 depicts Lund Municipality, the northern deep purple area along the urban growth boundary is the current science park, and the labeled orange crossed area with an arrow pointing to it, in the north, is the Brunnslägen development. This urban development
collaboration between Lund University and Lund Municipality is a testament to how the two are closely woven, and provides a look into how intertwined Lund residents and Lund University students and faculty actually are.

Figure 1. Location of Lund within the Skåne region. Source: (Primärvården Skåne, 2014)

Figure 2. Map of Lund region and the Brunnsäng development. Source: (Lund Kommun, 2010).
3.2 Case Study Context

Community resilience in urban areas is important and is professed to be of value to those in the municipality. Development in urban areas has historically been a practice undertaken by disconnected experts and conducted from a distance. This ideology has slowly changed thanks to those who research community development and urban resilience, therefore, starting in November 2013, I collaborated with Lund Municipality to implement a participatory project in the Solbjerg area of the Brunnshög development of Lund. I met with the Brunnshög project leader Eva Dalman and architect Christian Wilke about ongoing displeasure among residents surrounding the Brunnshög development. Residents living near the new Brunnshög building site are very unhappy about the development because it will alter the landscape that they have lived on for many years. The community of residents this thesis is focusing on live next to Solbjerg, the location of the first phase of development. The residents not only fear the changing landscape, but they are also apprehensive about the development being a large urban sprawl project that will result in their marginalization. The residential discontent led to the municipality’s interest in developing a participatory project in the Brunnshög area, not only for the residents but also to raise awareness of the new development for the general population of Lund. This project would serve as an integrative tool for the Solbjerg residents to feel increased connection to the development, and it would showcase the development to the city as an inclusionary city planning process meant for the people of Lund.

To begin the collaboration with the municipality, I held a workshop and brainstorming session with members of the Brunnshög development team to discuss placemaking as a tool they could use to implement a participatory design project. Placemaking is a bottom-up community-based urban design tool, encouraging the feeling of urban community ownership, and improving social sustainability in urban areas (Project for Public Spaces, 2014). In particular, the intervention and
theory of placemaking has the potential to help communities and residents feel more empowered by their urban surroundings and engaged in the development processes surrounding them; however, not enough is known about placemaking for it to be a consistent, reliable, and commonly used urban design method, especially for municipal use (Nicodemus, 2013). North American municipalities are increasingly using participatory design methods such as placemaking to foster community resilience, but this has not gained traction as an urban design or planning approach in Sweden thus far.

A final decision was agreed upon to implement a project and event to connect the aforementioned displeased residents surrounding Solbjer with Lund University architecture students. See figure 3 above for the location of Solbjer within Brunnshög. The 30 students and residents would be divided into teams of one family per two-three students. The families would guide the students through what their dream homes would look like for this area, allowing the students to come up with rendered drawings of these dream homes. Subsequently, in May 19-23rd, 2014 the students would build representations of the resident’s dream homes. Then finally, a scaled representation of these homes would be showcased at a placemaking event on the weekend of May 23-25th, 2014. A timeline of the project and its parallel with the thesis research process is provided in figure 4. The placemaking event would involve children’s games, the student’s new model homes, food, music, and lastly, and perhaps most importantly, large walls for Lund residents and event participants to write on. These walls would allow residents of Lund to give suggestions for what they would like to see in the Brunnshög development. Additionally there would be large signs of information about what is to be expected from the development and how the municipality would like to work with residents to make the development as inclusive as possible.
Figure 4. Thesis timeline: The overlapping of time for the placemaking project and the research process.
4 Research Design

4.1 Research Philosophy and Strategy

My position within the research is that of an insider, and due to the nature of being an insider, I attempt to see the taken-for-granted aspects from as much of an observation-based perspective as possible. I take a deductive approach to linking data and theory in this study. The theory predominately used is transition theory, which drives the process of gathering data (Bryman, 2008). Transition theory is used for analyzing ‘socio-technical systems of innovation’ and serves as not only the theoretical lens but also the framework for data analysis. Therefore in this qualitative research, theory is not so much generated, as it is a tool through which to provide background to the qualitative investigations and analyze them (Ibid). I believe the researcher should investigate reflexively, acting more as a participant than expert.

I take the epistemological standpoint of relativist, assuming that “there are many different and valid versions of social reality, in which people’s experiences can be regarded as both a starting and a finishing point” (Fawcett & Hearn, 2004). In addition, I reject the objective claims of positivism that knowledge can be arrived at through the gathering of facts that provide a basis for laws and can explain human behavior, but I rather approach the research wanting to understand human behavior (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Bryman, 2008). Ontologically I take a constructivist position. I acknowledge that social phenomena are continually accomplished by social actors and imply that these social phenomena are not only produced through social interaction, but that they are in a constant state of revision (Bryman, 2008).

4.2 Action Research

Herr & Anderson’s (2005) guide to action research for students and faculty, suggests that action research should not be judged by the same validity criteria with which naturalistic and positivistic research is judged. Action research is a cover term for multiple traditions, and qualitative validity based criteria are often more outsider-oriented action research (Ibid). Instead I follow the validity criteria of outcome validity and catalytic validity. Outcome validity is achievement oriented, focused on the extent to which action occurs, leading to the resolution of the problem that led to the study. Catalytic validity is the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energizes
participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it (Lather, 1986). Catalytic validity is intended for the education of both the research and participants. This thesis relies on introspection and reorientation, due to quickly changing circumstances of budget and stakeholder involvement. For the achievement of action research, not only the participants, but the researchers and practitioners must reorient their view of reality as well as their view of the their own role (Herr & Anderson, 2005).

Action research explicitly draws on the participatory process for knowledge generation, and combines “action and reflection”; it also creates a real-world change while still enhancing academic knowledge (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). I use action research guided by the socio-technical transition theory influenced by a multi-level perspective (MLP) framework. Transitions are action based and support the use of action research, while the MLP helps to provide the framework for analysis.

4.3 Theoretical Framework

4.3.1 Socio-Technical Transition Theory and MLP Framework

Kern (2012) states, socio-technical systems (ST-systems) are conceptualized as clusters of aligned elements, such as technical artifacts, knowledge, markets, regulations, cultural meaning, rules, infrastructure, and more. For growth and evolution in these ST-systems to occur, changing patterns and dynamics lead to transitions, meaning the structural transformation of these systems (Geels, 2004). While sustainability transitions are important to bring innovative technologies and social innovations to a large global variety of users, in this thesis, I apply the findings and discussion to the context of placemaking’s role as a niche social innovation.

The important differences between a sustainability transition, and a common historical transition are first, that a sustainability transition has a direct purpose to address persistent environmental or societal problems that emerging technologies do not. Secondly, sustainability transitions are unique due to their unobvious user benefits and they often score lower on price/performance dimensions than established technologies (Geels, 2011), meaning a sustainability transition may not initially offer an equal performance for the price paid as is the case with regime-based technologies. Lastly, sustainability transitions must face the scrutiny of the market. Large companies often characterize new technical developments with their vested interests in conception and creation; therefore they are unable to thrive as innovative sustainability transitions. Socio-technical transitions are often long-term processes that involve a variety of stakeholders, often outsiders or fringe actors (Geels & Schot, 2007).
Due to early research on social innovation transitions by Rip and Kemp, Geels developed a multi-level perspective (MLP) framework that can be adopted to better understand the process of socio-technical transition (Geels, 2002; Rip and Kemp, 1998). The MLP distinguishes three levels of heuristic, analytical concepts:

(a) *niche-innovations build up internal momentum, through learning processes, price/performance improvements, and support from powerful groups,* (b) *changes at the landscape level create pressure on the regime and* (c) *destabilization of the regime creates windows of opportunity for niche innovations.* The alignment of these processes *enables the breakthrough of novelties in mainstream markets where they compete with the existing regime* (Geels & Schot, 2007).

To fully conceptualize how the municipality is enabling a breakthrough of novelties to complete a socio-technical transition in respect to social innovation, the analytical concepts from the MLP framework must be assessed. The MLP assumes that a transition comes about if there is pressure from the landscape level on the regime, which destabilizes current practices and creates opportunities for niches to break through (Kern, 2012). The MLP indicators form the analytical framework against which the municipality’s activities will be analyzed. Table 1 provides a summary, where the MLP concepts are bold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>Macro-Economic Trends</th>
<th>Socio-Economic Trends</th>
<th>Macro-Political Developments</th>
<th>Deep Cultural Patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E.g. globalization, oils crisis</td>
<td>E.g. recessions, unemployment developments</td>
<td>E.g. the ‘philosophy’ behind policy making</td>
<td>E.g. trend towards more individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime</td>
<td>Changes in Rules</td>
<td>Changes in Technologies</td>
<td>Changes in Social Networks</td>
<td>E.g. new market entrants gain in importance compared to incumbents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E.g. belief systems, problem agendas, guiding principles, search heuristics, relationships, behavioral norms, regulations, standards, laws</td>
<td>E.g. in the case of electricity: resources, grid, generation plants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niche</td>
<td>Learning Processes</td>
<td>Price/Performance Improvements</td>
<td>Support from Powerful Groups</td>
<td>Establishing Market Niches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E.g. learning processes have stabilized in a dominant design</td>
<td>E.g. price-performance improvements have been made and are believed to continue to improve</td>
<td>E.g. powerful actors have joined the support network</td>
<td>E.g. innovation is used in market niches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Placemaking, as a theory and tool of action, is currently a niche level social innovation, this research focuses on the niche level and its interactions with the regime and landscape levels. The need to pay attention to both innovation and users has been identified by a range of scholars. According to Geels...
(2004), there is an analytic distinction between: systems (resources, material aspects), actors involved in maintaining and changing the system, and the rules and institutions, which guide actor’s perceptions and activities. In order to understand placemaking in Lund as a tool of social innovation and its transition to regime, this study will specifically examine the spheres involved in maintaining and changing the governance system.

Niches have been historically instrumental in the takeoff of new regimes and further development of new technologies, or in this case, tools for social innovation (Kemp, Schot, & Hoogma, 1998). Not only do niches help bring credibility to a new technology and set in motion learning processes and institutional adaptations in management, organization, and the institutional context for the extension of the new technology, but also they provide the opportunity to build a network around the product or innovation (Kemp, Schot, & Hoogma, 1998). Without the presence of a niche, system builders would get nowhere, and the ability for promising technologies or social innovations to become mainstream would be short lived. To assist niche developments fulfill their functions in a more sustainable way, the multi-level perspective (MLP) was developed to describe these complex, long-term transitions and processes. The MLP assumes that a transition only comes about if there is pressure from the landscape level on the regime, which destabilizes current practices and creates opportunities for niches to break through (Kern, 2012). Figure 4 is a diagram of how the multiple levels of hierarchy are nested, then depicted in figure 5 is the MLP framework showing the movement pattern of niche, to regime, to landscape. Figure 5 depicts the MLP analytical concepts used for research design and analysis: learning processes, price-performance improvements, the support from powerful groups, and establishing market niches (Kern, 2012; Geels & Schot, 2007).

![Figure 5. Multiple levels as a nested hierarchy. Source: (Geels, 2004).](image-url)
According to Geels and Schot (2007), the sociotechnical landscape changes slow over decades, and forms an exogenous environment beyond the direct influence of niche and regime actors (such as macro-economics, deep cultural patterns, macro-political developments). The landscape is most literally, beyond the direct influence of actors and cannot be changed at will. On the other hand, the socio-technical regime contains a set of rules and beliefs, and the idea behind the regime is that created cognitive and social barriers develop the shared cognitive routines in an emerging community and patterned development along “technological trajectories” (Geels & Schot, 2007; Kemp, Schot, & Hoogma, 1998). The reason this evolution is referred to as a regime, rather than a paradigm or system is because the regime forms not only rules and requirements, but also roles and practices that are established as societal norms (Kemp, Schot, & Hoogma, 1998).

People adapt their lifestyles to what Geels refers to as artifacts, then new infrastructures are created, thus making it part of the economic system dependent on this artifact. ST-systems rely on the investment in infrastructure, the increase in competitiveness, and the resulting increase in use. Not only are regimes following trajectories but these trajectories are the outcome of an accumulation of steps in particular path dependent directions (Geels, 2004). Figure 6 shows the transition process from technological niche to the socio-technical regime, impacting the landscape development.
4.3.2 Placemaking

The burden of traditional growth falls mainly on creativity: the ability to generate and use new knowledge and find ways of doing it (Tibbett, 2011). Nowhere is the pressure to innovate currently felt more strongly than in regional and local government (Tibbett, 2011; Konwitz, 2010). This pressure seeks to redefine the role of government and change the power relationships of local governments and their citizens, resulting in a crucial ST-system transition. Innovation has complex aspects that exist throughout many sectors, public, business, and municipal. Innovation can result in products or a process. Traditionally the local government was expected to fulfill the ever growing range of social needs and problems in a community, however, a new focus in localism and innovation is providing an alternative to this. To meet citizen needs, municipalities are increasingly encouraged
to involve communities and local businesses directly. In the process of social innovation the local municipality, the local citizens, and the local businesses must engage (Tibbett, 2011).

Placemaking has only taken root in the last decade or so as a fundamental method for community development and urban design or planning. Originally placemaking comes from a form of public observation stemming from seminal urban thinkers in the 1960s (Jacobs, 1961; Whyte, 1956; Silberberg et al., 2013). Their theories covered broad concerns about healthy living, social justice, community capacity-building, economic revitalization, and a host of other issues facing urban residents and workers (Silberberg et al., 2013). Definitions and interpretations of placemaking vary, but all consider placemaking to be a creative process, wherein cross-sector partners strategically shape the social and physical character of a space (ranging from a neighborhood to a region) around the cultural assets of the area – this is generally achieved through initiatives that have place-based physical, economic, and/or social outcomes (Nicodemus, 2013). Put more simply, placemaking is the deliberate shaping of an environment to facilitate social interaction and improve a community’s quality of life (Silberberg et al., 2013).

According to Nicodemus (2013), placemaking has flourished as a practice due to its vague nature and ability to appeal to many within and outside of the urban development, planning, and design fields. According to Tibbett (2011) and Konwitz (2010) placemaking is a social innovation that can be motivated by governments on the local level. Placemaking employs malleable concepts that are open to interpretation, such as livability, quality of life, vibrancy, and social capital (Nicodemus, 2013). This is precisely why placemaking has gained momentum as an urban design trend in North America; it is a soft concept that appeals to a wide range of stakeholders and is flexible in terms of its ability to be temporary or permanent after implementation.

Placemaking can alter in interpretation. It ranges from the act of local citizens occupying space within their community, to organized and highly funded public-space events with the intention to enhance community connection and social innovation. For all intents and purposes, city planning in general is in the early stages of considering the role that social sustainability should play in designing, governing, and planning cities, and placemaking in all forms has found a way to harness this.

The major trend for placemaking is a “making-focused” paradigm. It is important to highlight that the most successful placemaking initiatives seem to transcend the ‘place’ and focus on the process of co-creation should hold more prominence than the end physical manifestation (Silberberg et al., 2013). One of the many reasons placemaking is considered such a positive social innovation and urban development tool is that projects leave behind practitioners who are also the community residents;
no longer is the master-planner a big, top-down bureaucracy (Ibid). Rather, those who create the place stay because they are residents. This harnesses a paradigm that is nonhierarchical, community centered, and fundamentally democratic in character (Ibid). Some consider placemaking to be much like an open source platform, where society has gone from consuming places to making them, and may serve as catalyst to transitioning social innovation niches to the regime.

5 Methodology

5.1 Research Plan and Data Collection

My methods for research data collection is theory-guided and divided into two parts: first the MLP framework is used as the design basis for interviews (appendix A2) and to interpret and frame the final results. Next, a document review and analysis is used to inform what strategies the municipality has thus far planned in regards to a transition from social innovation niches to the regime, and what the impediments are at the landscape that keep social innovation such as placemaking a niche in Lund. The research was guided by the following steps: formulating the research questions to be answered, selecting the theory through which to analyze, defining categories to be applied, determining trustworthiness, and analyzing the results according to the theory (Kaid, 1989). The format for data collection is found in table 2.

Table 2. Specification of research questions, data, and methods to be used in research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ 1: Does Lund Municipality foster an urban development based social innovation transition in Lund?</td>
<td>• Interview Lund Municipality members</td>
<td>• Awareness and strategy plan for social innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Municipal planning document review</td>
<td>• Municipal document coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-RQ 1.1: What actions have been taken by Lund Municipality at the regime and niche level to enable the breakthrough of social innovation in the socio-technical transition?</td>
<td>• Interview Lund Municipality members</td>
<td>• Interview data structured in MLP framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analyze municipal planning documents</td>
<td>• Municipal document coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Place-based observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consult MLP findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 2: Does municipal-led placemaking harness a social innovation transition in Lund?</td>
<td>• Interview Brunshög project members</td>
<td>• Municipal adaptability toward placemaking as a feasible urban design tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implement a placemaking project with Lund Municipality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• MLP framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.1 Semi-Formal Interviews and Observation

Interviews and observation were used to collect data due to their open-ended nature and ability to adapt to the participant’s comments and actions. Interviews were chosen as they provide a more in-depth perspective to the underlying factors and opinions of the municipal actors (Bryman, 2008). The interviews used prescribed indicators guided by the three heuristic MLP framework levels; the MLP framework also determined the foundation for analysis. Interviews were used rather than surveys because survey data collection is less possible when existing theory or research literature on a phenomenon is limited (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The interviews conducted were with 3 Brunnsbogh project members, one of which has had prior experience working for Lund Municipality. The goal of the interviews was to provide knowledge and understanding on how both the municipality and the Brunnsbogh development contributes to the transition of social innovation. All interviews were conducted either in pairs or individually. The interviews used open-ended questions and were often followed by specific probes or clarification questions. To follow the directed method, the interview questions were led by predetermined categories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). All interviews were audiotape-recorded and transcribed. The data was then analyzed by reading each transcript, and then each participant’s answers were highlighted depending on what position in the MLP framework the information existed (Ibid). In the results, the interview findings are placed within the transition MLP framework.

Appendix A1 lists the interviewees; A2 lists the main interview questions for the semi-structured interviews.

5.1.2 Content Analysis

A content analysis was conducted of Lund Municipality and Brunnsbogh planning documents. A content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Bryman, 2008). The specific method used for data collection and examination was directed content analysis, which is used particularly when the goal is to validate
or extend conceptually a theoretical framework (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Directed content analysis preserves the advantages of quantitative research and further adapts them to a qualitative approach (Mayring, 2000). A directed content analysis was necessary to offer supporting evidence to the transition theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Content analysis is only possible if rules are specified in advance, as are the assignment of categories to be analyzed. I conducted the content analysis objectively so that my personal biases did not intrude (Ibid).

This study’s content analysis is of four important planning documents from Lund Municipality and the Brunnshög development. These four documents offer an encompassing view of the municipality; they represent the municipality’s current planning and development ideologies and strategies for future development. All documents are available in Swedish to the general public via the municipality website. The documents are:

- Översiktsplan för Lunds Kommun - Antagen av Kommunfullmäktige 2010-10-28 (Comprehensive Plan for the City of Lund – Adopted by the City Council 2010-10-28)  
  Source: (Lund Kommun, 2010).
- Utbyggnadsprogram för Lunds Kommun 2008-2013 med Utblickar mot 2025 (Development program for the Municipality of Lund 2008-2013 with Outlooks to 2025)  
  Source: (Lund Kommun, 2007).
- BRUNNSHÖGSKONTRAKTET 2013 (Brunnshög contract 2013)  
  Source: (Brunnshög Project Office, 2013)
- Fördjupning av Översiktsplanen för Lund NE/BRUNNSHÖG (Specialization of the Master Plan for Lund NE/ Brunnshög)  
  Source: (Brunnshög Project Office, 2010)

These four municipal documents were first read and sorted by separating all information into categories based on the occurrence of general themes (Berg, 2007). The themes were chosen based on an inductive strategy. First the documents were read to identify meaningful themes, and then their relation to each other created the themes. An inductive strategy was used because it allows researchers to link the identified themes to the data from which they derive (Berg, 2007). The themes chosen for categorizing can be seen in table 3 and were guided by research questions 1 and 1.1. The themes represent insight into both Lund Municipality and the Brunnshög development’s current strategy for social innovation and socio-technical transition level. These themes provide a comprehensive look at the municipality’s policies and future plans to support social and urban sustainability. Once the themes were sorted and the occurrence of the themes was counted in each document, I was able to interpret the patterns apparent from both the municipal and Brunnshög

According to qualitative content analysis scholars, ethical considerations face action researchers involved in participation based projects (Bournot-Trites & Belanger, 2005; Locke, et al., 2013). Gaining informed consent is largely an unworkable process given that researchers can rarely know the full extent of what participation may entail, or that it can predict in advance all the possible outcomes of participation (Locke, et al., 2013). Another ethical consideration is whether categories chosen in a content analysis are informed by personal bias.

6 Results and Analysis

6.1 Fostering Social Innovations in Lund

To answer if Lund Municipality fosters social innovation in their urban development process, a content analysis is provided in table 3. The table identifies the number of occurrences of five different themes in the following documents:

D1 - Comprehensive Plan for the City of Lund
D2 - Development Program for the Municipality of Lund 2008-2013 with Outlooks to 2025
D3 - Brunnhög Contract 2013
D4 - Specialization of the Master Plan for Lund NE / Brunnhög

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>D1</th>
<th>D2</th>
<th>D1+D2 Total</th>
<th>D3</th>
<th>D4</th>
<th>D3 + D4 Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation Environment / Knowledge Generation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Urban Planning / Development</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Sustainability</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder / Actors Participation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sustainability / Quality of Life / Culture</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that the municipality of Lund is focused on the enhancement of sustainable urban development and technical sustainability, while the Brunnhög project focuses on sustainable urban development and social sustainability. In regards to a municipal focus on innovation, there are more
occurrences of the theme innovation in the Brunnshög project documents than municipal documents. The results also show Lund Municipality’s “Comprehensive Plan” and “Development Program for the Municipality of Lund 2008-2013 with Outlooks to 2025”, offer the most comprehensive view of the municipality’s current policies, strategies for future planning, and intentions for development within the city. In the Development Program they proposed the densification and expansion of Lund, emphasizing accessibility to public transport and environmentally sustainable building construction needs (Lund Kommun, 2010). The plan also highlights an environmental framework with the objective of decreasing the municipality’s carbon emissions by 85 per cent, and to further the city’s economic development and social and cultural perspectives (Ibid).

Furthermore, the interviews and content analysis reveal that while the municipality claims equal ambitions to support sustainable development, economic, social, and environmental, there is an emphasis toward economic and environmental details. The “Comprehensive Plan” is considered the municipal helicopter perspective. However, themes such as innovation and social sustainability are only mentioned 13 times. This is in contrast to the occurrence of the themes, sustainable urban development and technical sustainability, which were featured 29 times. In two interviews, when asked if Lund Municipality is working toward social sustainability and social innovation, Annika Andre, Brunnshög’s Communication Officer stated, “A lot of people talk about it, but not many people are doing it,” and in the eyes of Eva Dalman, Brunnshög’s Project Manager, “[Social innovation] is a big discussion but I don’t think we have been successful. We try, but we don’t win because it is all a matter of influence.” The “Comprehensive Plan” and “Development Program” pay clear attention to environmental sustainability, which calls into question the lack of attention given to social sustainability and innovation in Lund. The documented lack of action toward social sustainability and innovation is evidence against the municipality’s willingness to foster social innovation (Heller & Adams, 2009).

The next finding that illustrates the municipality’s stance on social innovation is the occurrence of the themes surrounding stakeholder and outside actor participation. The themes stakeholder and outside actor participation occurred 6 times in the municipal documents, while these participatory themes occurred 15 times in the Brunnshög project plans. This difference suggests willingness to work with outside actors to influence innovation within the Brunnshög project, while transdisciplinary collaboration is not demonstrated as important to the municipality. This is in part due to Brunnshög’s position within the municipality. According to Eva Dalman, most of the members in the Brunnshög project office are not from the municipality, thus they bring new ideas and alternative ways of working to the municipality. For the Brunnshög team to make any decisions they
must consult and collaborate with the planning department, the technical department, and the head of the city. She feels this level of collaboration is “essential to spread ideas and infiltrate the rest of the organization.”

Figure 7 illustrates the current relationship of Lund’s sectoral spheres, the municipality, the public, and businesses, and their orientation surrounding social innovation. The size of circles in figure 7 shows the level of engagement in social innovation and interaction with the other spheres. The current situation is that there is acknowledgement of innovation and social sustainability by each sphere, there is stated desire for participatory urban design and collaboration, but there is a visible gap from legitimizing this into a reality. Next consider figure 8, depicting the desired level of sphere interaction in Lund. Figure 8 interprets what the interviews and critical analysis suggest is desired, through a functioning relationship between all three sectors.

![Figure 7](image7.png)

Figure 7. Author’s own illustration of Lund’s current sphere interaction structure. Based on: (Villumsen, 2012).

![Figure 8](image8.png)

Figure 8. Author’s own illustration of Lund’s desired sphere interaction structure. Based on: (Villumsen, 2012).

### 6.2 Actions Taken by Lund Municipality

If Lund Municipality has not effectively fostered a social innovation transition, will their efforts at the regime or niche level enable a social innovation breakthrough? According to the socio-technical MLP framework (table 1), social innovation remains at the niche level in Lund. After conducting the
content analysis and interviews with the Brunnshög project members, it is apparent that the municipality is not taking long-term actions toward social innovation on a policy level. There is much more political attention given to environmental and economic sustainability. According to the “Development Program for the Municipality of Lund 2008-2013 with Outlooks to 2025”, Lund Municipality aims to be a pioneer in finding solutions to minimize energy consumption and the use of fossil fuels (Lund Kommun, 2007). In Lund’s planning goals for sustainable development it states their future plans are density and transportation, and that development will address climate change, participation and social diversity. However, according to Annika Andre and Eva Dalman, the municipality’s employment of participation is limited to public forums and other basic public engagement techniques.

According to Geels & Schot’s (2007) MLP analytical concepts – learning processes, price/performance improvements, support from powerful groups, and market functions – Lund Municipality has yet to transition from social innovation niche to regime. Innovative technology development at the niche level is not enough to achieve a transition. According to Andre, niche learning processes are spoken about, but not many people are actually doing it. This applies to the municipality’s use of public forums as their method of outreach. Both Dalman and Andre spoke of the need for inclusion in urban development and the Brunnshög project’s intentions to work with social innovation and participation.

“The issues that provoke public participation are [when discussions involve] where to build and how tall to build. People aren’t thinking about social sustainability. People say ‘oh, go ahead’, but not when it comes to where or how high buildings are, then people get really involved and upset. Sustainability is so theoretical, and it doesn’t affect people’s every day lives. [In the Brunnshög project] we want to act, we say we do, but we don’t really because there is a double agenda. We try to be innovative and pick up trends [from] other places. We don’t know if anything is effective yet. A lot is going on but we haven’t seen the results yet. We have to try things even if we fail, of all the new things tried, most fail, so if we try 10 things, we will be happy that one worked.” (Eva Dalman, Brunnshög Project Leader, Interview).
“...[the Brunnshög project] is going well, but they are not applauding us. We have been transparent and we come back frequently. Every year we have a meeting where we invite everyone from the city to discuss how things are going and the plans, and many people come to this. But not everyone can be right. We have to consider unusual methods for working with residents or nothing will be accomplished.” (Annika Andre, Brunnshög Communication Officer, Interview).

The activities of the municipality in comparison to the activities of the Brunnshög project are represented in the following tables (4 & 5) in accordance to the MLP framework (table 1). The municipality’s activities mainly consist of a variety of well-targeted ways to stimulate economic and technical development and growth while harnessing some developments of socio-technical niches as well as a limited range of regime practices. Contrarily, the activities of the Brunnshög project are fulfilling the necessary stimulants for the development of a socio-technical transition. This is perhaps because the members of the project are isolated from the routines of the municipality, thus they have more time to talk to stakeholders than planners are able to (Andre, Interview). Christian Wilke the Brunnshög project’s architect continued that the project has been ambitious. He stated that working on a transdisciplinary level has allowed the project to push innovative ideas further than normal.

Table 4. Lund Municipality’s activities from an MLP perspective. The landscape level is not present because the municipality’s activities are not directly impacting the landscape level. Based on (Kern, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Level</th>
<th>Lund Municipality’s activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovations</td>
<td>Develop social innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solutions</td>
<td>Help companies expand innovative technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insights</td>
<td>Inform business and policy makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprises</td>
<td>Create innovative public projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>Finance the best ideas and business plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niche</td>
<td>Learning Processes X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Price-Performance X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support from Powerful Groups X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market Niches X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime</td>
<td>Change in Rules X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in Technologies X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in Social Networks X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on (Kern, 2012).
Table 5. Brunshög’s activities from an MLP perspective. The landscape level is not present because the project’s activities are not directly impacting on the landscape level. Source: (Kern, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Level</th>
<th>Brunshög’s activities</th>
<th>Innovations</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Insights</th>
<th>Enterprises</th>
<th>Investments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niche</td>
<td>Learning Processes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Price-Performance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support from Powerful Groups</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime</td>
<td>Change in Rules</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in Technologies</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in Social Networks</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While actions taken at both the niche and regime levels impact a socio-technical transition, in Lund it is the landscape pressures that effect the transition most directly. Information about the landscape pressures was attained from the interviews because the content analysis was unable to provide insight into landscape political and societal norms. Andre, Wilke, and Dalman of the Brunshög project discussed the cultural situation of social innovation at the landscape level in their interviews.

“Swedes are getting more engaged in things than before. [In things like] politics, in the environment, in urban planning, in the physical places in life, and in their children’s schools. I think it is the eco trend. Hopefully it isn’t only a trend, but people pay more attention to what they buy now. As a society we used to not have to think about things because society took care of it. Now you have to choose for yourself - who provides your energy, where you put your money... this is quite new in Swedish society. You can’t rely on the state anymore, that’s why I think people are more engaged.” (Annika Andre, Brunshög Communication Officer; Christian Wilke, Brunshög Architect, Interview discussion).

Wilke continued that, from his perspective, in Sweden when trends change it usually affects all of society and the municipality. Lund has still never undergone an economic threat like Malmö, and in Wilke’s eyes, until there is a threat the population will continue to live by the status quo. He feels if there were a direct threat to Lund, the population would be much more willing to seek unconventional niche level solutions, regardless of the price-performance ratio. This was echoed in an interview with Dalman, the project leader. She said that the sphere with the most influence on development and planning in Sweden is the cultural sphere. That the citizens of the cities will have to push for changes and expect innovation before the municipality will feel confidence to push those values or ideologies toward the regime. According to Wilke, the question is always who will pay for...
what, and that there is a careful balance between demanding too little or too much when it comes to innovative sustainability issues. “You want to ensure that you don’t stop projects by setting too tight regulations, while still making sure that you avoid short time solutions,” said Wilke.

An additional planning and development landscape pressure within Sweden is commercial influences. All interviewees mentioned the influence companies have on municipal urban developments. “The municipality is obliged to make businesses grow and to ensure funding by taxes. Without attracting companies there are no work places, and people will move somewhere else. So the municipality must balance the interests between companies and the public,” said Wilke. The central parts of the Swedish urban planning and development regime are organizations such as Boverket and MISTRA, and academies like SLU, claimed Wilke. Dalman also stated that the municipality used to influence companies and developers by setting environmental or cultural demands. However, the government has taken legislation that prohibits the use of setting demands on developers. “This will weaken our position [of innovation] totally, this will change the way we are able to act”, said Dalman. This pressure from governmental policy and deep cultural trends of Swedish society will continue to impact the ability for local municipalities such as Lund to encourage a sufficient socio-technical transition. So while actions are being taken on the niche level by the municipality, pressures from the landscape will continue to stifle a progression from niche to regime in Lund.

6.3 Placemaking as Social Innovation in Lund

Research Questions 1 and 1.1 illustrate that social innovation remains at the niche level in Lund. However, they do not provide insight into what placemaking as a social innovation in Lund is offering to the transition process. The interviewees stated, the political will of Lund hinges on cultural influence. There have been small successes in engaging actors into political decision-making, but ultimately the political system is still defined by corporate guidance. This dichotomy between cultural authority and corporate pressures is a large finding of this thesis. The business sphere impacts almost all urban planning and development decisions, but the opinions of local citizen do as well. The business sphere has a much more prioritized and short-term influence, while the cultural norms of society change gradually and impact the political will over a much longer span of time.

The categorical difference between the approach toward social innovation from the municipality and the Brunnshög development team is that the Brunnshög project members are able to take more risks and use innovative methods such as placemaking for the development process. Because the Brunnshög project members are comprised of experts in many fields, “[they] have the capacity to try
new ideas and use methods the other municipal departments are not using”, said Dalman. Wilke stated that through their encouragement of participation with the neighboring residents to the project, the residents have been able to influence decision-making. This is an example of how a municipal entity such as the Brunnhög project uses social innovation such as placemaking to their benefit while still attempting to demonstrate participatory public action.

Participation is claimed to be a focal point of the municipality, but as reported in section 6.2, the level of participation is beneath that of a democratic society. The “Expansion Program of Lund Municipality from 2008-2013 with Outlooks to 2025” states:

“Lund Municipality should encourage dialogue in the planning stage, construction stage, and management with actors outside of the building and management sector. A mix of people with such different ethnic backgrounds, income brackets, and age contribute to a dynamic, attractive and lively social environment. Sustainable urban development requires that citizens have real opportunities to influence at all levels. This can apply to dwelling design, availability of public services, and dialogue with elected officials and municipal officials.” (Lund Kommun, 2007).

The placemaking project conducted by the municipality is a small step toward a socio-technical transition and the level of participation emphasized by this statement. The project encouraged the municipality to consider alternative methods of public participation and encouraged the municipality to engage outside stakeholders. The project was conceived with help from Lund University architecture students as well as local businesses. All of this collaboration, with the purpose of working with small-scale local community development, does harness a transition toward a socio-technical transition. This placemaking project alone is not enough though. A series of placemaking projects in Lund with an active public participation policy would be a more feasible way to harness this transition.

Citizens must hold the political regime accountable, while simultaneously the political regime must interact at each transition stage with the other spheres. This will progress the current level of engagement between spheres to the desired sphere interaction level in figure 7 to figure 8 in section 6.1. To obtain a socio-technical transition the municipality must involve the public in decision-making processes in a practical manor. In order for the public to gain political influence in broader society they must collaborate and confront the interest-based approaches that characterize politics (Chandler, 2007). Refer to figure 9 for argumentation behind the transition process in Lund to social innovation as a regime.
The mobilization of the public and their engagement in concrete and practical community activities such as placemaking, will result in the critical transformation of the political social structure of Lund. Public influence combined with practical action and political direction is a step toward the core values of social sustainability (Heller & Adams, 2009). Through this participatory transformation of the current political regime, a social innovation transition would be enabled. The structural transition needed can be seen in figure 10, depicting the process necessary for social sustainability and social innovation to transition to the regime. In this case, placemaking exists at the link between “Political Strategy for Social Action” and “Public Engagement in Social Action” serving as a connection between the public and the political system. This model is a representation of the findings from the interviews and content analysis and is a hybrid of the socio-technical transition theory and action research. However, this model does not depict the reality at present. There is still an underlying disconnect between the public and the political regime, and in the relationship between Lund’s sectors.
Figure 10. Author’s own illustration of the social innovation transition to regime. Based on: (Villumsen, 2012).

6.4 Challenges Facing Municipal Placemaking

The largest challenges facing municipal implementation of social innovation tools such as placemaking are actors at the landscape level depicted in research question 1.1. The landscape pressures found were strong commercial influence and Swedish societal norms impacting participatory processes. However, on a small scale, the challenges to operationalizing the placemaking project that serves as this research’s case study through Lund Municipality have been limited. The members of the Brunnhög project have been willing to engage in fruitful discussions about participatory design in Sweden and have in fact made many efforts in creating the best placemaking project possible. Despite the limited problems with mobilizing placemaking, the challenges identified by the Brunnhög project members are first the lack of citizen support in participatory projects such as this. Eva Dalman, the Brunnhög project leader stated, “We have tried
to involve the Solbjør community [in the development process of Brunnhög], we want to listen, and we have ideas, but it has proved to be very difficult to engage the population." When asked what is preventing their participation she claimed it has been the inadequacy of a defined question by the development team.

“We haven’t found an offer that would make people think this is worth their time and that engaging is exciting. Some of what we are doing is good, but it isn’t going to make people think it’s extra. Many municipalities have this problem. When you build in someone’s backyard they want to be involved, but when it is theoretical and about urban livability no one cares. We can argue that we have been successful, because we have accomplished quite a lot, but personally I don’t think we have achieved what we had hoped for yet.” (Eva Dalman, Brunnhög Project Leader, Interview).

Dalman’s opinions about the success of the Brunnhög project’s participation implementation differ from those of Andre and Wilke. When asked their thoughts on the placemaking project’s success they responded, that hopefully this project will turn citizen’s awareness toward the Brunnhög development to increase involvement, and that yes it will be successful. Wilke stated that in the Brunnhög project, their work is not completely about gaining statistics, but about encouraging participation and to do that the project can’t use the normal Swedish democratic tools. He said, “a project such as this is generally made into a survey, posted in the library, and when the public forum happens, less than 99.9% of the population will attend”. Wilke thinks this really needs to change, and we need the tools to change this, not only to improve the quality of the project, but to impact the regime level directly. He also discussed additional placemaking projects occurring throughout the development’s planning stages including, a cycle tour for green places, children’s school involvement, and a “future walk” - tour for visions of the area’s future. Despite the activities taking place to encourage social innovation, all three interviewees stated the same prevailing challenges. In addition to Dalman’s depiction of the lack of citizen willingness to engage, Wilke and Andre discussed the tensions with neighboring residents to the development. The neighbors are reported as being weary of any participatory projects because they fear the projects are mere municipal attempts to win them over and “pacify” them.

This municipal relationship with the residents neighboring Brunnhög presents an additional challenge to placemaking in Lund. Placemaking thrives as a community project, but the neighbors’ disapproval of the development project has given the municipality worries of inflaming their reservations. Thus, even though the municipality developed the placemaking project for the Solbjør residents, they had the advertisement of the project come from the Lund University architecture
students (refer to appendix B1). This was an effort to take attention away from the municipality. This negatively impacted the municipality’s use of placemaking, because for a transition to occur the local population should see this effort by the municipality.

According to Kern (2012), the support of powerful groups such as the investment community is needed for the development of niches. In some cases, developers or governments prefer to remain self financed to be able to define their own pace and direction of development (Kern, 2012). The municipality does not deal with outside funding directly, but as stated in section 6.2 and 6.3 corporate influence adds many pressures to the development process, as well as the ability to create a placemaking project. The funding of projects in Lund can impact the direction they take. The funding for the municipality’s placemaking project was limited, and therefore was not able to reach a wide audience. This project was also not a priority for corporate investment or involvement, and therefore was not able to thrive as well as it could have. Where the placemaking project for this thesis did succeed however, is in how it brought together students, residents, and some local businesses, in connection to the municipality. This provided the forum for a transdisciplinary discourse, kick-starting the municipality’s ability to harness the social innovation of placemaking out of the niche level.

7 Discussion

7.1 Case Findings and Strategies Forward

This thesis has generated insight into the socio-technical transition of Lund, Sweden. Through the above analysis, it becomes clear that Lund’s socio-technical transition will not progress without a push from Lund citizens, local corporations, and larger governmental bodies in Sweden. The results of this thesis show the possibility of growth for the municipality and it’s authority in Lund. A second contribution is the analytical link between the municipality of Lund and the Brunnshög development office, which is a separate municipal branch. This analytical distinction goes against the Swedish urban development trend, in which the municipality holds all development power. This research also explicitly conceptualized the relationships between the three main sectors of Lund and their position within a socio-technical transition, finding that their interconnection is complex and important to the transition process.

This thesis has provided knowledge generation for members of Lund municipality as a way forward with the Brunnshög development, while showing the benefit of including participatory methods into
the development process. An unexpected finding outside of the original aims of the research is the extent to which the Brunnhög project already provokes a social innovation transition, separate from the municipality of Lund. The transition progression through the Brunnhög department will not fully enable a transition without the efforts of the entire municipality. Until the municipality supports social innovation and alters the regime’s priorities, the transition is unable to take place. Several valuable lessons can be taken for the municipality to consider when formulating strategies to transform and strengthen the current regime:

- The Brunnhög development’s successes stem from their position within the municipality. The Brunnhög office members are comprised of experts in their own fields, and must collaborate not only with each other, but also with other departments in the municipality. This mixed-disciplinary approach to development management is a clear benefit to working within the urban sector in Lund.

- The current cultural landscape in Lund is defined by Swedish society’s lack of public involvement. Citizens of Lund feel empowered to engage when their lives feel directly impacted, whether it is due to family, livability, or personal needs. The traditional values of those living in Lund depend on the forward-thinking and innovative choices of the municipality. The municipality commonly changes based on cultural will, while cultural will is altered by changes within the municipality.

- Commercial influence is presently the largest impact on planning in Lund and is the most active regime influencer. Pressure from corporate entities in Lund will not lead to sustainable solutions for livability or development. The municipality must develop a strategy for public-private partnerships to enhance action from local niche and regime-actors. Public-private partnerships are considered an innovative model to development and should be considered as a way forward (Samii et al., 2002).

- Placemaking can work in the favor of price/performance. Participatory methods are often cost effective due to their ability to replace high costing planners and developers. Involving citizens may lower prices by deferring technology and labor costs, while benefiting the community by increasing ownership. By enhancing placemaking’s usability and price/performance, the municipality will be able to increase the transition momentum from niche to regime. The expectation is that, the municipality will accelerate the use of social innovations due to positive price/performance incentives, demonstrating to other actors that public participation is the preferred method for urban development.
For the municipality, and the communities of Lund, this project has given an insight into placemaking as a strategy for community development and a method for promoting citizen participation in urban development. Placemaking and other forms of public participation in urban design are not often used in Sweden, and are traditionally bottom-up community driven enterprises. Placemaking was used in this research as a social innovation as well as a top-down approach to engaging the residents near the Brunnshög development. Throughout this research I focused on placemaking as a top-down approach where the municipality of Lund was responsible for the placemaking project. The top-down nature did not imply that the project was restricting social innovation, rather the municipality’s purpose was to inspire social interaction and relationships between the city and the residents. Therefore, their use of placemaking as a method for creating public space was the correct use of placemaking.

Collaboration with local businesses and residents in Lund is possible given the current political regime. Through outreach programs and community involvement, Lund Municipality could develop co-interests in the growth of social niche innovations and achieve their stated goal of encouraging participation. I propose the municipality should also produce schemes for funding or incentivizing niche businesses and consulting agencies to influence niche development. A barrier for the municipality to engage in niche development is the nature of municipal political flexibility, but this is a minor issue that could be resolved by supporting the public-private partnerships.

Since the entire project chain was unable to be examined there were some constraints. I fully recommend a project evaluation, with at minimum a follow up survey of resident and student participants. A defining element of placemaking today is the need to develop indicators and quantifiable impacts for the restricted fiscal environment in society that values instant rewards (Silbergerg, et al., 2013). This is necessary to enhance understanding by the municipality to whether placemaking can be considered a participatory method to be depended upon in the future. Project for Public Spaces has developed an evaluation framework for measuring the placemaking benefits for communities (Project for Public Spaces, 2013). Evaluation is incredibly important to the placemaking process, for it provides measurable indicators to often difficult to define variables such as the accrual of social capital, or the increase in public health from the implementation of a project (Silbergerg, et al., 2013). The municipality must evaluate their participatory projects because when the impacts of such initiatives are measured it is able to convey information to funders, advocates, city planners, and other urban decision-makers (Ibid).
7.2 Usefulness of Action Research, Transition Theory, and the MLP Framework

“Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out ... The approach is only action research when it is collaborative...” (Locke, et al., 2013).

The use of action research as the research method for this thesis required me to position myself as that of participant, facilitator, researcher, and placemaking advocate. I acted as a participant because I was involved in the events held by Lund Municipality and Lund University students. I was a facilitator because I gave guidance and encouraged the placemaking project with my resources and knowledge. I joined meetings, partook in decision-making processes, and promoted the participatory methods used in the Brunnshög project. I also serve as a researcher because I used my sustainability science education and academic knowledge to inform my research and project analysis.

The many hats I wore throughout the research were a benefit and a hindrance. I assisted the project conception, and I had an active role in the planning and implementation of the project. The benefits of doing action research with the municipality were that they were supportive of my involvement and incorporated my ideas and needs into the project process. It was important for my position as action researcher to hold an active role in the project, because this provided necessary insight into the process, lending itself to the requirements for action research. Despite my involvement in the project though, I did attempt to maintain an objective perspective. However, it was difficult to balance the role of researcher and participant. I had to remain distant for some decision-making choices in an effort to balance my position.

The municipal intention to incorporate architecture students into the project was both a way to deflect attention from the project away from the municipality while simultaneously opening up stakeholder involvement. Working with the students ended up being a perfect approach to contacting residents to participate in the project. Due to socially private norms in Swedish society, residents are difficult to bring out of their areas of comfort. The students were able to use their assignment as a reason to approach residents, which broke down some barriers of communication between the different social groups in Lund. In the end, due to the timeline I am unable to speak to the results of the resident-student collaboration, but the process of engaging a connection between the students and residents was effective.
The MLP framework served as a successful tool for both the development of this research and the framework for analysis. The use of the socio-technical transition theory was structurally important for the thesis conception and implementation, and was not only interesting from an academic perspective, but it significant for the findings related to Swedish society. Based on the heuristic levels of transition theory, the MLP analytical concepts, and the political situation in Lund, I developed the model in figure 10, section 6.3. This model represents both the current political regime in Lund, and the desired process of action taken by the public and political bodies to enact a sustainable socio-technical transition. Through a participatory transformation of the current political regime, a social innovation transition would be enabled. The structural transition needed is between the municipality and the public. In this specific case, placemaking exists at the link connecting Political Social Action and Public Engagement, serving as a bond between the public and the political system. However, any niche social innovation could link these interaction levels. This model is a representation of findings from the interviews and content analysis, but it must be noted, this model does not depict the reality at this present time. The existing gap between Lund’s sectors will continue to derail a transition until social innovation methods are encouraged and represented by top-down municipal approaches.

7.3 Broader Implications and Sustainability Science

According to Geels (2004), ST-systems do not function autonomously, but are the outcome of human actor activities. Human actors are embedded in social groups that share certain characteristics (e.g. certain roles, responsibilities, norms, perceptions), and in modern societies many specialized social groups are related to resources and sub-functions in ST-systems (Geels, 2004). Innovation cannot be accomplished solely through municipal guidance, but will be accomplished through inter-organizational community efforts and the development of a social infrastructure supportive to this innovation transition. Therefore a platform for coordination within and throughout social groups is needed in Lund to provide a method for interaction between social groups without losing their autonomy and identity (Stankiewicz, 1992; Geels, 2004). Additionally, I recommend an incremental path forward for social innovation in Lund. By adhering to the concepts of the MLP framework, it is the responsibility of the municipality to build up the internal momentum of niche innovations through highlighting: learning processes, price/performance improvements, support from powerful groups, and market niches. The next step is a change at the landscape level to put pressure on the political regime and also to destabilize the regime to create windows of opportunity for the progression of niche innovations (Geels & Schot, 2007). Corresponding to Geels & Schot (2007), the alignment of these processes will enable the breakthrough of social innovation in mainstream markets where they compete with the existing regime.
For a socio-technical transition to occur the changes at the regime level should be in, cognitive, regulative, and normative rules. The socio-technical regime of urban planning and development in Sweden is based on municipal guidance and policy. Swedish policy makers, investors, and large-scale developers are who make decisions on urban density, transportation, and environmental sustainability. This sets the status quo for urban planning throughout the country. Lund Municipality has largely followed these norms, putting emphasis in environmentally sustainable development, and maintaining the traditional developmental trajectory. The municipality’s planning methods do not appear to have an impact on the dominant cognitive rules of the regime in Lund. However, the Brunnshög project is attempting to challenge this normative course of understanding through their interactions with politicians, the public, and the fact that the development will sit in the public eye for 40 years. Any changes to the cognitive regime of urban planning in Lund that the Brunnshög project is making are not completely intentional, however. As the project continues, plans are altered, which leads to the unconventional use of social integration and participation methods. The result of this will hopefully be stable communities with their needs met, and a development that is held accountable by the public.

The research conducted in this thesis shows the process of urban community building and contributes to sustainability science, as a result of participatory action research and placemaking. Sustainability science addresses systemic change for both environmental and social challenges, and this project provides insight into local solutions for social sustainability challenges. Sustainability science, defined by Kates (2011), is multidisciplinary, spanning the natural, social, and technological sciences, and deals with how those interactions affect the challenge of sustainability. Sustainability science, Kates (Ibid) claims, is a different science that is use-inspired, and is committed to moving such knowledge into societal action. It is this kind of societal action that I, as a researcher, am drawn to, and why I chose this hands-on action research project. Within an academic context, the research integrates the growing knowledge fields of: action research as a method for creating knowledge from practice (Zuber-Skerritt, Wood, & Dick, 2001), participatory placemaking as a process-driven urban livability method (Marsden, 2012), and sustainability science a multidisciplinary scientific practice merging knowledge and action generation (Kates, 2011). Through this connection, applying a participatory approach to sustainability science enabled a complex and diverse project that can be reoriented for sustainability challenges in other urban areas.

This research is also important because it challenges previous knowledge about bottom-up placemaking projects and how they are considered more effective than top-down projects (Silbergerg et al., 2013). It further demonstrates that a municipality can include community-based
urban design and resident participation into city planning and urban design policy in Sweden through social innovation methods such as placemaking. As a result of this research, actors such as Lund residents and the Lund municipality should have a deeper understanding of the importance of transdisciplinarity, and should now have a strengthened ability to move forward with the Brunnskog development with open communication and a better understanding of each other’s needs.

8 Conclusion

This research analyzed a municipal participatory placemaking event in the Brunnskog development of, Lund, Sweden. A socio-technical transition theory was used to inform the research design and analysis of this research. I identified the societal and political barriers presented to operationalize this project, and I established what landscape processes prevent placemaking from acting as a social innovation transition. The data was gathered through participatory action research, 4 municipal document content analyses, and 3 semi-structured interviews. I additionally formed an analysis of how Lund Municipality contributes to a social innovation breakthrough, and how placemaking encourages the transition. By identifying these challenges I attempted to determine a path to social sustainability for Lund, and insights for improvement on participatory planning in Sweden.

I found Lund Municipality does not foster a transition directly to social innovation, but that the Brunnskog department does fulfill some niche level actions to enable a breakthrough. The municipality’s implementation of placemaking in the Brunnskog development process does fulfill social innovation transition requirements on the niche level. Other actions being taken by Lund Municipality and Brunnskog on the niche and regime level are not enough to support a transition, however. The challenges presented to operationalize placemaking in Lund rely on actors at the landscape level including corporate influence on urban development, and strong Swedish societal norms. These challenges not only impact the use of placemaking as a social innovation niche, but will continue to hinder a transition in Lund. I recommend future studies to follow up on the process of this research and evaluate the long term effects of this placemaking project in Lund. Also, this research only began framing the issue of participatory urban planning in Lund; future research could benefit from implementing additional placemaking projects in Lund and Sweden, as well as encourage residential communities to implement their own bottom-up placemaking efforts.


9 References


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10 Appendices

10.1 A1 – Interviewees

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection. These interviews were approximately 1.5 hours long. Two interviews were further followed up through email correspondence. The permission to use full names was granted by each interviewee.

1. Christian Wilke, Brunshög Architect. Wilke was my main contact for this thesis and with whom I developed the placemaking project analyzed in this thesis.
2. Annika Andre, Brunshög Communication Officer. Andre is also a part of Lund Municipality, and provided insight into the organizational aspects of the Brunshög department and it’s relationship with the municipality.
3. Eva Dalman, Brunshög Project Manager. Dalman has been a part of the Brunshög department since it’s conception. She formerly worked with Malmö municipality.

10.2 A2 – Interview Questions

1. Your name:
   1a. Department you work for:
   1b. Placement of department in municipality:
   1c. What is your position within this structure:

2. How is Lund Municipality structured?
   2a. What is Brunshög’s position within the municipality?
   2b. How do decisions made within Brunshög reflect the rest of Lund Municipality?
   2c. Are decisions made within Brunshög unique to the rest of Lund Municipality?

3. What influences urban planning in Sweden?
   • Policy?
   • Cultural patterns?
   • Community needs?

4. What policies, activities or committees are in place to challenge Swedish planning norms (in Lund Municipality or Brunshög)?

5. Does Lund Municipality have any direct or indirect effect on innovative planning methods?
   Example: participatory design or social inclusion
   5a. If yes, Does the Brunshög project enhance the effectiveness or ability to use these innovative planning methods?

6. How is the municipality contributing to meeting community needs that are not already being addressed with urban planning?
6a. How is the Brunnshög project contributing to community needs?

7. Does the municipality cater to commercial needs versus smaller innovative technologies and policies?

8. Does the municipality use outside funding for urban planning?
   8a. Outside influence?
   8b. Do outside investments influence planning projects?
   8c. Where does funding for the Brunnshög project come from?
   8d. How does the Lund Municipality budget differ from other municipalities?

9. What are Lund Municipality’s medium to long term plans for city planning?
   9a. How are these beneficial in terms of budget (price performance)?

10. Are there conflicts in how environmentally conscious or sustainable an urban development is able to be?
   10a. Are there challenges presented here?

11. What is the municipality’s relationship with politicians?

12. In Sweden, who are the niche actors (small scale innovative actors in urban planning)?
   12a. Who are the regime actors (who set the norms and beliefs)
   12b. How do they integrate?

13. Are there loans or tax breaks provided to architects, city planners, or urban design firms using innovative technologies?
   13a. (In response to the last question) Have building standards or inclusionary practices improved, stayed the same, or decreased as a result to these incentives?

14. Are there projects or activities that Lund Municipality have that aid niche social innovation processes?
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