



Transition Cities as Niches for Radical Change

How to organise Transition work in cities – what can Malmö, Sweden, learn from Bristol, England? Two case studies on the Transition movement

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Abstract

We live at times with multiple sustainability challenges and rapid urbanisation with more than half of the global population living in cities. This makes urban sustainability an issue of concern. The Transition movement is a grass roots response to climate change, Peak oil and economic contraction. This thesis explores through two case studies, in England and Sweden, how Transition initiatives in cities can be better organised in terms of institutions. I draw on 1) Ostrom's framework on self governing common-pool resource management and 2) sustainability transitions. The main result is a model based on Transition work in Bristol. The Transition movement is young and still largely unresearched, the hope is that the findings can contribute to knowledge on how to do Transition in cities.

Key words: Transition movement, institutions, sustainability transitions, urban sustainability, resilience, Peak oil

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Abbreviations

BP – The Bristol Partnership

CPR – Common-pool resource

EDAP – Energy Descent Action Plan

GCMG – The Green Capital Momentum Group in Bristol

MS – Malmö stad (Malmö municipality)

OS – Omställning Sverige (Transition Sweden)

SCB – Statistiska centralbyrån (Statistics Sweden)

TB – Transition Bristol

TN – Transition Network

TSS – Transition södra Sofielund/Seved (Transition initiative in Malmö)

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Photos by Tina Nyfors and Malmö stad

Key concepts and definitions

Below are key terms and concepts of the Transition movement. In my thesis I will use them as the Transition movement does.

The Transition movement – A grass root movement that addresses climate change, Peak oil ”and increasingly, economic contraction”. It is built on permaculture principles. Transition is a brand that can be used by any community initiative that is ”taking account” of these issues and who is ”striving for resilience and CO2 reductions in an inclusive manner”. The Transition movement was started up in the UK in 2005 by Rob Hopkins, also interviewed for this thesis. (TN 2009:4, Transitionculture n.d.)

Transition Network – Supports, connects and gives training to communities that work inspired by the ”transition model”. In order for initiatives to be registered as ”official” by the Transition Network a set of criteria needs to be fulfilled. (Brangwyn and Hopkins 2008:13;2010c.)

Transition initiative – A community-led initiative that works inspired by the ”transition model”. Initially called ”Transition Town”, but as there are now cities, universities, islands and villages, ”initiatives” is a better word. In order to be registered as an official initiative by the Transition Network a set of criteria needs to be fulfilled. (TN 2010b, 2008:13).

The Transition model – A ”loose set of realworld principles and practices” that have been collected to help communities reduce CO2 emissions and build local resilience (Transition Network 2008:8).

Resilience – Defined by the Transition movement as the ability of communities and settlements ”to not collapse at first sight of oil or food shortages”, and their ”ability to respond with adaptability to disturbance”. The concept of resilience goes beyond the notion of sustainability – an example is plastics recycling, whereas it is good for the environment it does not add resilience. (Hopkins 2008:54). The Transition-way of framing resilience has been criticized for being vague. (For a discussion around this see Appendix A).

Peak oil – Refers to the moment when the ”world will achieve its maximum possible rate of oil extraction”, and after which it will begin to diminish. There is quite broad agreement that it will happen during the coming 20-30 years, however, an increasing number of analysts believe we already passed Peak oil. (Heinberg 2007:1).

Permaculture – Is one of the foundations of the Transition concept, summed up by Hopkins as being a way of designing sustainable human settlements, socially, economically, culturally and technically. ”A process of looking at the whole”, originally it stood for permanent agriculture. (Hopkins 2008:136, Whitefield 2000.)

”Vision without action is merely a dream; action without vision just passes the time; vision with action can change the world.” **Joel Barker**

”No army can withstand the strength of an idea whose time has come.” **Victor Hugo**

1. INTRODUCTION

We live at extraordinary times with multiple sustainability challenges. Global resource use and population keep growing, yet the planet is finite; western consumption patterns are spreading throughout the world, putting the earth’s resources under severe pressure with results such as collapsing fisheries, desertification, and biodiversity loss. The ecological footprint of humanity has exceeded the Earth’s bio capacity since 1970 and it keeps getting bigger; currently it corresponds to the use of 1,5 planets. (WWF 2010:6-8,33, Miller 2007:16, Kemp 2007, Kates and Parris 2003.) Climate change and the realization of “Peak oil” are merely two symptoms of that the pathway that we are currently taking is unsustainable. Taken together humanity is faced with a situation never experienced before (Heinberg 2007:2).

What is now called for is a “sustainability transition” (Kates and Parris 2003:8062). More than half of the world population lives in cities since a couple of years and 80 per cent of the emissions come from cities (Newman et al 2009:4), and this makes urban sustainability a highly relevant topic. The starting points for my thesis is, firstly, that for change to occur, it needs to happen on several levels simultaneously, not the least on the local level; and secondly, that action in industrialized countries is central. This makes the Transition movement interesting to look into. It is a grass root movement that addresses the “twin challenges of Peak oil and climate change” through a “positive, solutions-focused approach” (Hopkins 2008:15,136).

The Transition movement started in 2005 in Totnes in the UK and has grown rapidly. There are now 360 initiatives in 31 countries. However, the movement is “largely unresearched”. (Haxeltine and Seyfang 2009:2,16,21;TN 2011.) There is lack of knowledge in the Transition model and how it has worked, the character and development of Transition initiatives, the strategies of initiatives, and how the concept could be used in cities (Hopkins 2010:377; Seyfang 2009:2,13; Haxeltine and Seyfang 2009:6). In this thesis I touch upon all of the above.

1.1 Aim and research questions

The overall objective is to address how Transition initiatives can be better organised. This is performed through conducting two case studies – in Bristol, the UK and Malmö, Sweden, as well as a brief visit to Totnes. I partly draw upon Ostrom’s (2006) framework for analysis of self-organizing and self-governing common pool resources (CPRs) to create a framework for looking in to how the initiatives have evolved, and also draw upon Geels’ (2004) multi-level perspective on transitions. The aim of my study is, while being informed and guided by theory, to keep the discussion on a practical level so that it can be useful for the Transition initiatives in question, and possibly other Transition city initiatives.

The main research questions are as follows:

- How are the Transition initiatives organised in terms of institutions, and how has the process evolved?
- What could Malmö learn from Bristol, and vice versa?

Additional questions that have been addressed include:

- How did the initiatives start up
- What are the initiatives working with
- What is the role of the Transition concept (the "12 steps")

1.2 Limitations

Among the limitations of my study are that I do not use the whole framework for analysis of self-organizing and self-governing CPRs developed by Ostrom (2006). I did not find it relevant in the context of the Transition movement. I build a model for how Transition cities can organise inspired by Geels' multi-level perspective on transitions. However, elaborating on the transition process through e.g. discussing different stages of Transition (Rotmans 2001:17) is not within the scope of my study. Due to time constraints I have only two cases, which I recognise is a small sample and hence results might not be generalisable. In addition to this, I cover only a small aspect of what could be studied related to the Transition movement. I recognise that there is a wide range of other relevant questions that could have been researched, including who is in the movement and what effect Transition initiatives have on the location where they are, to mention just a few. However, for the purpose of this master's thesis, it was needed to narrow down the scope. Also, I do not address cultural differences in ways of organising.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

I will start with methodology, after which I move to the background section and place the Transition movement in a larger theoretical context. After some background of the cases follow my results, analysis and discussion. I conclude by looking ahead.

2. RESEARCH METHODS AND MATERIALS

2.1 Meta-theoretical starting points

In this study I take a constructionist ontological approach, seeing social phenomena as constantly changing or being reproduced by social actors. Regarding the epistemological considerations I lean towards an interpretive approach. This approach indicates that social sciences differ greatly from natural sciences and hence require different study tools and ways of understanding (Bryman 2004:113).

2.2 Research strategy: case study

My study consists of two cases. Case studies are often used to investigate e.g. group, organizational and social phenomena, that are contemporary and "in a real-life context" and are best suited for "how" and "why" questions. (Yin 2003:1,22.) What distinguishes a case study from e.g. a cross-

sectional design study is that special features of the cases are brought up (Bryman 2008:54).

The unit of analysis is a “Transition city”, which in turn often is made up by several smaller groups of people that identify themselves as being part of it. Time boundaries for Transition Bristol are 2007 till present and for Transition södra Sofielund/Seved in Malmö the first half of 2010. Field work was conducted in Malmö and Bristol during spring 2011, including a brief visit to Totnes. To organise the case study work, I created case study protocols for Bristol and Malmö, as well as a case study data base, as is suggested by Yin (2003:38).

2.2.1 Selecting the cases: Bristol and Malmö

My interest was to look into Transition in a city context in Sweden. Malmö was chosen on the basis of several factors: having had a Transition initiative, being the third biggest city in Sweden, and being located on a commuting distance from where I live. When selecting a city to compare to Malmö I used the Transition Network (n.d.a) website and made a search among initiatives. Based on this I found Bristol, which was also the first city to start a Transition initiative (Hopkins 2008:144). Bristol has many similarities with Malmö: the size in terms of population, history, and a reputation of being a green city. (More details on the selection process in Appendix B). More information about the cities can be found in the case study background section.

2.3 Mixed method approach

I have a mixed method approach with a strong focus on qualitative methods, and I have used methodological triangulation (Bryman 2008:603;Silverman 2005:121). My empirical material consists of:

- ▶ Literature review
- ▶ Semi structured in-depth interviews
- ▶ Document analysis
- ▶ Participant observation

Positive aspects of the selected methods include that it gives a possibility to gain depth through different data and sources. Negative aspects of the selected methods include general critique towards qualitative methods regarding subjectivity, that it is difficult to replicate and generalize as well as lack of transparency (Bryman 2004:285).

2.3.1 Literature review

A literature review has been conducted on relevant books, journal articles, research papers, policy documents and web sites, on topics related to the Transition movement, urban sustainability, institutions and sustainability transitions, as well as background information about the cases. The main authors that I refer to include:

Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition movement, a permaculture teacher. Cited works include “The Transition Handbook” (2008, here referred to as the “Handbook”), a practical guide for helping communities in the Transition process, and Hopkins PhD thesis (2010) about Transition Town Totnes. An updated version of the Handbook is to be published in the autumn 2011, “The Transition Companion”.

Gill Seyfang, a researcher at the University of East Anglia focusing e.g. on low-carbon lifestyles and community based innovation. In 2009 she conducted a survey on the UK Transition movement and

has together with Alex Haxeltine analysed how the movement relates to the academic discourse on “resilience” and “transition”.

Elinor Ostrom, an American political economist, won the Nobel Prize in economic sciences in 2009 for her study on how community institutions can manage local commons without privatization or regulation from external authorities (Nobelprize 2011). I draw on parts of Ostrom’s framework for analysis of self-organizing and self-governing common pool resources (CPRs), mainly using on the book “Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action” (2006).

2.3.2 Interviews

Interviews and ethics

For my research I have followed general ethical research guidelines brought up by Yin (2003), Bryman (2008) and by Lund University (Lunds universitet 2005). Since the focus of my study is the Transition initiatives in question and not the individuals, the informants were interviewed anonymously. Being interviewed anonymously also allowed the informants to speak freely about topics that could potentially be delicate within the group. Informants that were not members of Transition initiatives participate in their own name. (Discussion on potential risks related to studying social movements in Appendix C).

Selecting interviewees

Since the unit of analysis is a Transition city which is made up by a small group of people, the distinction between those that are in the group and those that are not needs to be clear (Yin 2003:26). The people of interest for my study define themselves as members of TB or TSS, they might be members in core teams, neighbourhood groups, or working groups. I identified respondents through a snowball sampling approach and until a point of data saturation (Bryman 2008:48). My primary interest was to interview individuals in the core team. (Details on how initiatives were contacted in Appendix D.)

Interviews and interview questions

In total, 21 persons are being interviewed for this thesis. Eight of them are from Transition Bristol, aged 39-58, five women and three men. In Malmö I interviewed six persons that had been involved in Transition södra Sofielund/Seved, aged 26-49, four women and two men. Also, I interviewed Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition movement, Peter Lipman, chair of the Transition Network, Jan Forsmark, leader of Transition Sweden, Mark Leach at the city council in Bristol, Trevor Graham and Åsa Abrahamsson at the Malmö municipality, Emmelie Brownlee at the Schumacher Institute and Alastair Sawday, chair of GCMG in Bristol.

I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews following the recommendation of Yin (2003:89) that they are “guided conversations rather than structured queries”. (The interview questions can be found in Appendix E). More about the framework that was developed for this study can be found in the Theoretical background section.

2.3.3 Document analysis

The importance of complementing interviews with written sources is brought up by Yin (2003:91). I have done word counts in central documents on key Transition concepts (Peak oil, resilience). I was given access to meeting protocols by interviewees in Malmö, in Bristol protocols were not available.

2.3.4 Participant observation

I participated in several events organised in Bristol, including a meeting on community supported agriculture, a monthly TB occasion and discussions on money and energy. In Malmö I participated in a meeting where permaculture in the region was discussed.

2.3.5 Limitations and issues during field work

The material mainly consists of interviews. Time was a limiting factor regarding availability of people, and due to time constraints only part of the people that have been involved in the Transition activities along the years are interviewed. However, I regard the amount of interviewees to be enough for the purpose of this study. Due to the limited scope of the study, I did not go more into detail with the work of neighbourhood groups in TB.

2.3.6 Reliability and validity

To increase reliability of my study I created a case study protocol as well as a case study data base, as suggested by Yin (2003:34). In order to construct validity I have used multiple sources of evidence and gave all informants the possibility to comment on drafts of relevant sections of the thesis. I recognize that interviews can contain bias and poor recall (Yin 2003:92). To counter this I interviewed several persons.

2.4 Analyzing and interpreting the empirical material

Yin (2003:28) brings up the importance of having a theory prior to data collection. I designed a framework which made up my interview questions, and for the analysis I returned to the framework and displayed the answers in a table according to the questions, as suggested by Yin (2003:134). One of the strengths of case study research is to be able to “trace events over time” (Yin 2003:125). For my analysis, in order to get a picture of how the initiatives in Bristol and Malmö evolved, I started by compiling events in a chronological order, a technique often used in case studies (Yin 2003:125). When compiling a chronology, it does not need to be solely descriptive; it can also be analytic “to investigate presumed causal events” (Yin 2003:125).

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Theoretical background

I will start by presenting some theoretical background, including big shifts in human history and urban sustainability. Then I give an overview of the Transition movement and how they work, as well as present my theoretical framework. After this I proceed to presenting some background of the cases.

3.1.1 Big shifts in human history

In the history of humankind spanning over the last two million years, humans have related to their environment in different ways. The relationship between humans and the natural environment can be spoken about as “coupled socio-ecological systems” (Haberl et al 2011:1). Haberl and his colleagues are part of a social ecology research team in Vienna and work with supporting social systems in their transition towards more sustainable solutions. They have identified three major stages during human history:

1. Hunter-gatherers
2. Agrarian societies
3. Industrial society

Humans were hunter-gatherers until about 12 000 years ago when people started living in permanent settlements living of agriculture and animal husbandry. This first big transition is called the "Neolithic revolution" and brought with it a new concept: "colonization of nature" . The second socio-ecological revolution took place with the industrialisation, called the Anthropocene (Rockström et al 2009:472, Haberl et al 2011). This has led to humankind affecting the environment on an unprecedented, global scale with an uncertain outcome. The question is what is next. Haberl et al put forward that we are standing in front of yet another major transition in human history, a shift to a future sustainable society, what ever that might look like, and that this shift might be as big as was the one from agrarian to an industrial society (Haberl et al 2011:1).

3.1.2 Urban sustainability

Since 2008 more than half of the world's population live in urban areas (Newman et al 2009:4), this makes urban environments a focus of attention when discussing sustainability. In Europe the share is even higher as 80 per cent of the population lives in cities (European Commission 2011). There is little dispute about that sustainable cities are desirable, however, what it means in practice and how it can be achieved is a subject of debate. The challenges are considerable: 75 per cent of the world's energy is consumed in cities and 80 per cent of the green house gas emissions derive from cities. Cities are resource-intensive, and climate change and peak oil present cities with tremendous challenges. Increasingly, the concept of resilience is brought up in connection to creating sustainable and safe communities. (Bulkeley and Betshill 2010:42, Coaffee 2008:4633, Newman et al 2009:4, 15.) What is a resilient city? Often it has been discussed as the ability to cope with natural disasters, however, Newman et al (2009:6) suggests it is cities that can considerably reduce petroleum fuel dependence so it is "socially and economically acceptable and feasible".

The pace of urbanisation increased with the Industrial revolution, and even more so with the globalized economy. However, globalization is a process that has been going on since the Neolithic revolution (Newman et al 2009:4). Turning a 12 000 year trend is an unprecedented challenge. In the context of the "twin challenges" of peak oil and climate change, what the Transition movement founder Rob Hopkins (2008:77) has expressed is true not least in an urban context:

[W]e stand on the edge of the most momentous task in history, thoroughly ill-prepared.

3.1.3 The Transition Movement

The Transition movement started in 2005 in Totnes, a town with 8000 inhabitants in Devon, south west of England (Hopkins 2008:176). The movement has grown rapidly (Haxeltine and Seyfang 2009:21) and as of April 2011 it consists of 360 official initiatives and 377 that are not yet official, in about 31 countries. Out of the official initiatives, 78 are city/urban initiatives (176 not yet official) and 120 are town scale initiatives (146 not yet official) (TN 2011a-e). It is interesting to note the big proportion of city scale initiatives that are not yet official. An appropriate scale of an initiative is "one over which you feel you can have an influence" and can "relate to" (Hopkins 2008:144). Most initiatives are placed in the industrialised part of the world.

Not much research has been done on the Transition movement, however, in 2009 a survey

was conducted in the UK, showing that more than half of the Transition initiatives are in small towns, 28 per cent are in large towns or cities and 9 per cent in a part of a town or city (Figure 1).

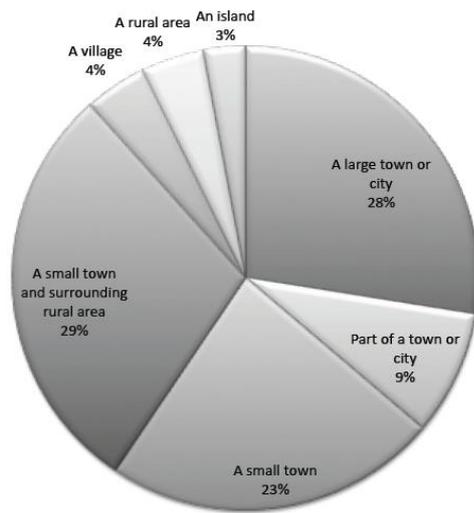


Figure 1. Different types of Transition initiatives (figure from Seyfang 2009:3).

Four key assumptions

Four key assumptions underpin Transition initiatives (Hopkins 2008:135):

- That life with dramatically lower energy consumption is inevitable, and that it's better to plan for it than to be taken by surprise.
- That our settlements and communities presently lack the resilience to enable them to weather the severe energy shocks that will accompany Peak oil.
- That we have to act collectively, and we have to act now.
- That by unleashing the collective genius of those around us to creatively and proactively design our energy descent, we can build ways of living that are more connected, more enriching and that recognise the biological limits of our planet.

As outlined in the Handbook, the Transition approach differs from conventional environmentalism in several ways (see Table 1).

	Conventional environmentalism	The Transition Approach
Outlook:	Single issue	Holistic
Tools:	Lobbying, campaigning and protesting	Public participation, eco-psychology, arts, culture and creative education
Goal:	Sustainable development	Resilience/relocalisation
Drivers for action:	Fear, guilt and chock	Hope, optimism and proactivity
The man in the street:	...as the problem	...as the solution
Level of engagement:	Single level of engagement	Engagement on a variety of levels
Answers:	Prescriptive—advocates answers and responses	Acts as a catalyst – no fixed answers
Carbon footprinting:	Carbon footprinting	Carbon footprinting and resilience indicators
Economic growth:	Belief that economic growth is still possible, albeit greener growth	Designing for economic resilience, albeit a local one

Table 1. The Transition approach vs. conventional environmentalism. Adopted and slightly modified from Hopkins (2008:135).

The Transition model

The idea of Transition initiatives is to build on experience and knowledge of the communities, rather than relying on external experts (Hopkins 2008:36). Transition looks different in different places, there exists no readymade concept that can be implemented everywhere (Hopkins 2008:135):

How this is explored and developed in practice will be different in each settlement: rather than offering prescriptive solutions, Transition Initiatives aim to act as catalysts for a community to explore and come up with its own answers.

The Handbook has a section called "The 12 Steps of Transition", a model for starting a Transition initiative. It is pointed out that they are not intended to be prescriptive, but rather are to be seen as suggestions on steps that can be taken (Hopkins 2008:148,166-172):

1. Set up a steering group and design its demise from the outset
2. Raise awareness. Talks, film screenings, networking
3. Lay the foundations - network with existing groups and activists
4. Organise a Great Unleashing
5. Form groups
6. Use Open Space
7. Visible, practical manifestations
8. Reskilling
9. Bridge to local government
10. Honour the elders
11. Let it go where it wants to go
12. Create an Energy Descent Action Plan (EDAP)

Findings in the UK survey regarding the 12 steps showed that initiatives were following the steps; 90 per cent had set up a steering group and 73 per cent had formed smaller groups. Seyfang (2009:6) suggests this is an indication on that Transition initiatives are taking "institutional structures seriously".

At the time when the Handbook was published the Transition concept was very new and the observations were based on a small number of case studies. "The Transition Companion" has a different approach on how to organise. (Hopkins 2010:365.) I will come back to this in chapter 4. "The Transition Primer" is a document with support for initiatives which is continuously updated and that existed before the Handbook. A central in the Transition model is the "project support" concept, which means supporting and motivating initiation of projects rather than doing all projects themselves (Hopkins 2008:143).

Themes for working groups have often included local food production, eco-housing, local energy generation, local currencies, education, personal development, art, transport administration and support (Seyfang 2009:6, Lundback et al 2010:32).

The Transition Network

The Transition Network was founded in 2006. The role of the Network is to "inspire, encourage, connect, support and train communities as they self-organise around the transition model". (TN 2010a.) Since 2007 the Network has an office in Totnes and 2 full time and 6 part time employees. (TN 2010b.) Two of the three founders of the Network are interviewed for this thesis – Rob Hopkins and Peter Lipman. The Network has a website on www.transitionnetwork.org and has

published a number of books including the Handbook and books on food, local money, sustainable homes, and working with local councils (Green Books 2009.)

3.1.4 Institutions and collective action

One of my research questions is about how Transition initiatives are organised in terms of institutions, and for that I draw upon Ostrom's (2006) framework for analysis of self-organizing and self-governing common pool resources (CPRs). Ostrom (2006:103) has studied small scale CPR systems that have been in place for long periods of time in environments that are characterised by uncertainty. There are several differences between my study and the context from which Ostrom develops her framework. Ostrom focuses on CPRs with up to 15 000 appropriators and looks both into the resource system itself (e.g. a fishery) and the individuals involved (Ostrom 2006:56), whereas the context of my study is cities with more than 300 000 inhabitants and I focus on the individuals only. The framework is still relevant of several reasons; Transition cities are often organised in several smaller groups, and although the scope of this thesis limits me from addressing it, an interesting question is whether lessons could and perhaps should be learned in cities from these very different contexts.

There is no unified definition of what the term "institution" means (Ostrom 1986:3). However, I follow Ostrom's definition:

[T]he sets of working rules that are used to determine who is eligible to make decisions in some arena, what actions are allowed or constrained, what aggregation rules will be used, what procedures must be followed, what information must or must not be provided []. (Ostrom 2006:51)

[I]nstitutions are enduring regularities of human action in situations structured by rules, norms, and shared strategies, as well as by the physical world. (Crawford and Ostrom 1995:582)

"Institutional change" is defined as a change in any rule, set of strategies, control of participants over outcomes. (Ostrom 2006:140).

Given the differences between Transition initiatives and the CPR context as well as time constrains, I have not used the framework itself, but rather parts of the questions that were used to develop it (Ostrom 2006:103) (Appendix F). When creating a framework for my study I also included questions related to how the process has evolved and what challenges have been faced. A framework gives "the questions that need to be asked to clarify the structure of a situation and the incentives facing the individuals" (Ostrom 2006:192).

3.1.5 Sustainability transitions

Modern industrial societies are connected with severe sustainability problems and this has led to a growing interest in sustainability transitions (Haxeltine and Seyfang 2009:2). Transitions can be defined as "transformation processes in which society changes in a fundamental way over a generation or more". The transition concept can be used in different setting, e.g. businesses, regions or nations (Rotmans et. al 2001:19). Where does radical change start? In this context I will refer to Geels (2004:910,899) who writes about socio-technical systems and change from one system to another, taking a multi-level perspective on transitions (see Figure 2).

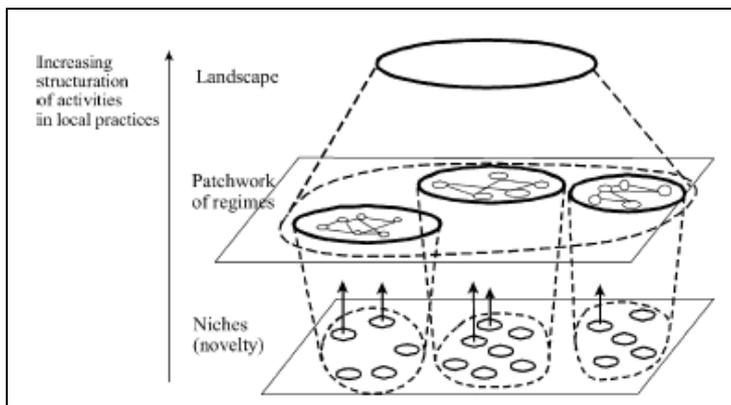


Figure 2. “Multiple levels as a nested hierarchy.” (Adopted from Geels 2004:913.)

The regime level consists of rules and institutions of the current system. In order to understand regime shifts, interaction with niche and landscape levels are central. (Geels 2004:905,899.) Niches can be explained as small entities outside the mainstream system, such as “small market niches with specific [] selection criteria” whereas the landscape level consists of infrastructure and material environments such as highways and factories. Scholars have brought up niches as important places for learning and that niches is where “radical innovations” can emerge (Geels 2004:912):

Niches are locations where it is possible to deviate from the rules in the existing regime.

The arrows in the figure indicate that niche actors aim at influencing or replacing the regime (Geels 2004:913). The robustness and difficulty of change increases higher up in the hierarchy.

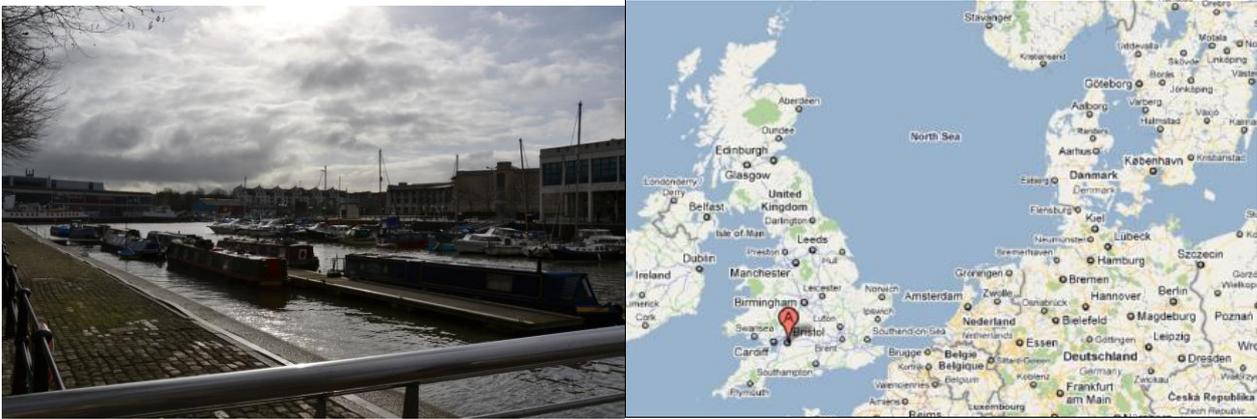
The concept can also be applied to the Transition movement and a Transition initiative can be seen as a “grassroots innovation, a socio-technical niche comprising many constituent projects” (Haxeltine and Seyfang 2009:9). The movement itself does not explicitly draw on the concept of transition, however, the “internal niche processes” of learning, networking and managing expectations are highly relevant for the Transition movement, and the movement seems to address challenges typical for grassroots innovations through e.g. “taking institutionalisation seriously” and wanting to reach beyond the niche. (Haxeltine and Seyfang 2009:7,9-11).

3.2 Case study background

I will now give a brief historic overview and touch upon social, economic and environmental aspects of Bristol and Malmö. Both cities can be said to be undergoing double transformations, from old industrial cities to knowledge and sustainability focused cities. I will start with Bristol. Then I will present the Swedish branch of the Transition network and Malmö.

3.2.1 Bristol, the UK

The city of Bristol is located in the south-west of England, about 170 kilometres west of London. Two rivers flow through Bristol, the Avon and the Frome (Coules 2006:2). Bristol is the seventh largest city in the UK and has 433 000 inhabitants (Bristol City Council n.d.a, BP n.d.:7). It was mentioned as a city in 1051 (Visitbristol 2010a).



Bristol is an old harbour city, located two hours west of London.

(Google maps)

Economy and industry

Bristol has a long history of being a centre for trade, with a thriving port, and for several hundred years it was the second city of England (Coules 2006:2). The city has gone through several transformations (Fleming 1996:1). The past 40 years have meant a shift from an economy traditionally based on industry and manufacturing to a focus on high-tech industry, services in the commercial, financial and government sectors, as well as the creative industries and distribution and retail (Little and Sansom 1999:87, Ollerenshaw&Wardley 1996:125, BP 2011:3).

Shipping and the port has played a central role in the history of Bristol. During the 18th century, Bristol had a golden age based on trans-Atlantic trade (Fleming 1996:1), and it had a key role in slave trade (Little and Sansom 1999:41, Morgan 1996:57). During the 19th and 20th centuries Bristol had a variety of industries including coal, cotton, sugar, tobacco, chocolate and zinc smelting. The time after World War II was focused on reconstruction and also was a starting point of vast changes of the city (Little and Sansom 1999:72-74,87; Little 1991:92).

The use of the harbour in the centre diminished gradually since 1908. The Bristol Port is now situated by the mouth of the river Avon and Bristol is a leading car entry port of the UK. (Eveleigh 1999:18, Little and Sansom 1999:87). Bristol also has two universities (BP 2011:3).

Socio-economic situation

The population of Bristol is predicted to increase with more than a fourth by 2026. (Bristol City Council 2009:1). There are great differences regarding wealth – out of 252 areas, 39 belong to the 10 per cent most deprived in the UK at the same time as the average income in Bristol was 28 per cent higher than the UK average in 2005 (BP n.d.:11,23). Bristol has a centuries long history of being ethnically diverse and is becoming increasingly diverse. Coinciding to average figures of England, 11,9 per cent of the inhabitants are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The unemployment rate is 7,9, the national average is 7,7 (Little and Sansom 1999:87;BP n.d.:11;Bristol City Council n.d.a). 35 per cent of the population has a higher education qualification, a degree or higher degree level qualifications, compared to the average of 30 per cent in England and Wales. The biggest party in the city council is the liberal democrats, followed by labour and conservative (Bristol City Council n.d.a; n.d.b).

Sustainability

Bristol has a reputation of being a "green city". As the only UK city it was one of eight cities nominated to be the "European Green Capital" 2010 (BP 2011:6). Bristol usually ranks high in Forum for the Future's assessment of the UK 20 biggest cities on e.g. environmental performance and quality of life. In 2008 Bristol was number one, in 2010 number four (Forum for the future

2010:5). Bristol is also the first cycling city in the UK (GCMG 2009a, Visitbristol 2010b). Bristol is also the base of a range of organizations doing sustainability related work: Sustrans – a charity working for sustainable transport; the Soil association – the leading charity for organic farming in the UK; and the Centre for Sustainable Energy that gives advice on energy and climate change (GCMG 2009b). Bristol is "a city of contrasts"; it has a reputation of being a green city but is also one of the UK's most congested cities (BP n.d.:3,27).

Bristol has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent by 2020 against a 2005 baseline. This is more ambitious than the UK Climate Change Act which requires at least a 34 per cent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 from a 1990 baseline. (Bristol City Council 2010:2-3, Department of energy and climate change n.d.)

Sustainability documents

Central sustainability documents for the Council is "The Bristol 20:20 Plan. Bristol's Sustainable City Strategy" and the "Climate Change and Energy Security Framework". The 20:20 Plan is produced by the Bristol Partnership, a network consisting of authorities, agencies and organisations in Bristol (BP n.d.:14). It is stated that Bristol will be among Europe's top 20 cities by 2020 regarding "economic productivity, culture, education and sustainability and quality of life" and that Bristol will to be a "worldleader" in a "green industrial revolution" (BP n.d.:3,5,8). The Framework outlines a set of strategic activities and specific action to be taken in order to fulfil the 20:20 Plan (Bristol City Council 2010:3).

Transition Bristol

Bristol has been a Transition city since 2007 with the purpose of reducing "dependence on fossil fuels and promote sustainability" (TB n.d.b.). Transition Bristol consists of a number of neighbourhoods around the city. I will go more into detail with TB in chapter 4.

3.2.2 The Swedish Transition network - Omställning Sverige

The Swedish branch of the Transition Network has the status as a "partnering national transition hub" to the Transition Network, and a Memorandum of understanding has been signed with the Transition Network. (Brangwyn and Hopkins 2008; OS 2011a.) The Swedish Transition network was formally started up in the autumn 2009 and a national steering group was formed, now consisting of ten persons. Transition Sweden springs out of the "Swedish village action movement" (Hela Sverige ska leva n.d.a;n.d.b) that consists of about 4 700 village action groups, mostly in the country side or in smaller communities but also in cities. The Swedish village action movement works since 2003 with a project called "Sustainable Districts" and now it supports local Transition initiatives to start up. The Swedish Transition network has one part time employed person, Jan Forsmark, who is also interviewed for this thesis.

Overview of initiatives in Sweden

As of April 2011 the website Transitionsweden.ning.com has 2282 members and about 85 registered Transition initiatives, excluding working groups and groups working on specific themes (OS 2011c). However, 40 of the initiatives have fewer than 5 members, which is the number that Lundback et al (2010:16) recommend, and 6 initiatives had their last activity on the website one year ago or more, in 12 cases it was unclear when the last activity on the web site was. (OS 2011c.) Based on this one could draw the conclusion that there are around 30 more active initiatives in Sweden.

The 12 Steps in the Swedish Transition network

The Swedish networked published an equivalent to the Handbook, an 84 page booklet, in January 2010 as "inspiration and support" for Transition initiatives (Lundback et al 2010). There is a Swedish version of the 12 steps that coincide content wise with the ones in the Handbook although the order of the steps is somewhat different.

3.2.3 Malmö, Sweden

The city of Malmö is located by the sea in south-west Sweden. With its 300 000 inhabitants it is the third biggest city in Sweden (SCB 2010). The first time it was mentioned as a city was in 1275 (MS n.d.b.). Malmö is part of the Öresund region that consists of Southern Sweden and Eastern Denmark. Since 2000 there is a bridge between Copenhagen and Malmö further tightening the transnational links (Öresundsbro Konsortiet 2010:2).



Western harbour, one of the sustainable areas in Malmö, south of Sweden. (Malmö stad, Google maps)

Economy and industry

The city of Malmö has shifted character several times (MS 2009b:1). Historically, the economy of Malmö was based on ship building and industries related to textiles, leather and food processing. Since the 1990s Malmö is undergoing a transition from being an industrial city to becoming an "ecologically aware knowledge city". Economic focus has shifted from older industries to technology and innovation, and the biggest areas are retail trade, logistics, property and construction. Since 1998 Malmö also has a university. (MS 2009a:2,5,12;n.d.a.;World watch institute 2007:110). The harbor of Malmö is still in use, and the Copenhagen Malmö port is one of the most significant ports in the Nordic region, being the biggest port for the import of cars in the Nordic countries (Copenhagen Malmö Port 2009a;2009b).

Socio-economic situation

Malmö is a growing city with a population somewhat younger (average 36 years) than the Swedish average (41 years). It is a city with considerable socio-economic differences. One third of the population in Malmö was born outside Sweden. The unemployment rate in Malmö is 5,1 per cent compared to the national rate of 3,7. In the population aged 25-64 years, 44 per cent have higher education, the national number being 38 per cent. Malmö is ruled by the social democratic party together with the left wing party and the environmental party. (MS 2009a:2, n.d.b)

Sustainability

Malmö has a reputation of being at the "cutting edge" on environmental issues, also internationally. (MS 2009a, Hallin and Johansson 2008:151), an example includes the World Watch Institute (2007:110) publication about sustainable cities where Malmö is mentioned. The Swedish government has appointed a Delegation for Sustainable Cities, which Malmö is part of (Delegation for sustainable cities 2009). The municipality has developed several sustainable areas in different parts of the city, and Malmö counts itself as Sweden's best cycling city (MS n.d.c:8)

Sustainability documents

The city of Malmö takes a high profile in sustainability issues. In the Environmental programme for the city of Malmö 2009-2020 the vision is that "Malmö will be the best city in the world for sustainable urban development by 2020". It is stated that sustainable cities is "part of global survival", that Malmö is at the forefront of sustainable urban development and hence can develop and provide models for other cities to use (MS 2009a:5). The goal is that Malmö is "climate neutral" by 2020 and that the municipality will use only renewable energy by 2030 (MS 2009a:7).

Transition neighbourhood in Malmö

In Malmö a Transition initiative, Transition södra Sofielund/Seved, was started up in a neighbourhood at the very beginning of 2010 (OS 2011b). The activity of the group ceased after about six months. It was started up in an ethnically diverse and socio-economically weak area (Wettermark 2009:9). I will go more into detail with the work of the group in the next section.

4. RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION



Totnes, the birth place of the Transition movement.

At the very end of my one month field work in England, I went to Totnes, the birth place of Transition movement. I was prepared for that there would still be cars, something that many visitors have not expected (Hopkins 2010:379). However, it was not all that easy to find signs of Transition Town Totnes:

What to look for? Posters, local currency? I checked a handful of shops for the Totnes Pound sign, but none of them had one. A food place commented that they do not really know how the local currency works. The first sign of Transition was at the tourist office – a poster with activities for February-March. When walking up the main road I came across a sweetshop that accepted the Totnes pound.

[Field notes 14.3 after a day in Totnes]

In this chapter I will start by answering the first research question *How are the Transition initiatives organised in terms of institutions, and how has the process evolved?* I present chronological narratives of TB and TSS and look into their experiences of working with the 12 steps. Also, I address the question what caused TSS to stop existing. Then I present a model of TB and address the second research question *What could Malmö learn from Bristol, and vice versa?* In this context I also address challenges in TB and how they were managed. After this I discuss what TB can learn from TSS and “the ingredients”. I conclude with some recommendations and by looking ahead. TB is dealt with more in detail whereas the sections on TSS are shorter due to their rather short existence.

4.1 Bristol

So many cars! Really car centred it seems, it is difficult to bike. Few bike lines, you need to know where to find them – not many bike along the roads. And there are cyclists, but it is not something everyone does, mostly real cycling enthusiasts who have racing bikes and are really well equipped – in their yellow vests they overtake me one by one as I bike to and from the centre. "Everyday bikers" like myself there seem to be not that many of in Bristol. Sign of how car centred Bristol is: long waiting times to cross the roads, and often the air is full of gasoline.

[Field notes: First week in Bristol, "Britain's first cycling city", just borrowed a bike.]



Around the city centre of Bristol. Bristol is one of the most congested cities in the UK.

Working on a city scale is not unproblematic (Seyfang 2009:3). When it comes to sustainability, or urban resilience and what it means, the ones involved in Transition Bristol might have more questions than answers:

Sometimes walking around in the city, thinking of if there would be no oil, what would we do living in cities? All work is related to oil. I do not see and answer to that. It is such a big question; most people don't want to think about it.

What will a city look like in the future? My guess is that we will probably have cities possibly up to about the size of Bristol, what do bigger cities do and how is it organised when there is a lot less energy around and available, I just don't know, really.

[W]hat happened in Totnes, a relatively small community, if you hold a meeting and you decide to do something, it affects the whole community. Whereas in a city, there is already lots of stuff going on, so it is a very different kind of fish in a city, it is about linking up more, that is what cities are I suppose, communicating with ideas, sharing, and looking for the synergies between the different activities so that we can match things, all together in the right direction.

Although there are no fixed answers to the big questions, the people in TB are taking on the challenge. The major achievements by TB include a Peak oil report (Osborn 2009), which investigated the implications for Bristol and what action should be taken. It was the first of its kind in the UK. Other major achievements that are not solely Transition related include a food report,

“Who feeds Bristol” (Carey 2011) and a project on a local currency, the Bristol pound. Now let us look at how they have been organising the Transition work in Bristol.

4.1.1 Chronological narrative of Transition Bristol

I will start by summing up the history of TB through presenting some of the main events during this time, address how it was started up, who initiated action and how many participants were involved. I have identified 4 phases:

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Prior to TB, up til 2007	First year of TB, 2007	6 months intermediate period	Current setup (mid 2008–)

Phase 1. TB started up at the very beginning of 2007. By then the first Transition Town, Totnes, had been running for a bit more than a year (after having one year of awareness raising starting in 2005) and not many other initiatives existed. TB was started up by a permaculture teacher. The first time she heard about Transition was when Rob Hopkins gave a talk in July 2006. She had been trying to work out how to take the permaculture work to a wider audience, and Transition “really struck a chord”. In November she and another woman that later became part of the steering group of Transition Bristol organised a permaculture event, and there she took the decision to start an initiative in Bristol.

Phase 2. At the very beginning of 2007 the initiator invited 5-6 people to join the steering group. There were awareness raising activities and neighbourhood initiatives were starting up around town. In November 2007 “The Big Event” was organised for the public in the council house, by some considered an unleashing of TB.

Phase 3. Towards the end of the first year there were significant tensions between people. There was disagreement e.g. on “how to do Transition” in Bristol and nearly all of those that had set up TB left, new people joined. This went on for about six months.

Phase 4. From mid-2008 till now (as of April 2011) the set up has stayed pretty much the same although the people in the steering group diminished somewhat. The steering group changed its name into administrative team (many also speak about it as the core team). At the end of 2010 Shift Bristol started up, a parallel Transition approach.

How is Transition work organised in Bristol?

I will now look at phase 2 and phase 4 and go more into detail in how the work has been organised, including the internal group structure, funding, as well as how they used the 12 steps.

The first year of Transition Bristol (phase 2)

I will look at the work of TB on two levels: how it is organised and city wide engagement where they work with e.g. the council. For the first year it looks like this:

- 1) Transition Bristol
 - a) Steering group
 - b) Project team
 - c) Neighbourhoods
- 2) City wide engagement

1) Transition Bristol

Phase 2 is characterised by starting as a city wide approach where all of Bristol was seen as one Transition initiative. There was a core team with 8-9 people (four are interviewed), and after some time a project team was set up (two are interviewed). During this time neighbourhood initiatives were also started around Bristol, such as Transition Easton and Transition Montpelier. In June 2007 TB was set up as a limited liability company with directors and that is how it is still working today.

The first year was focused around awareness raising work – film screenings, themed talks and events. Some city wide events were organised, but pretty quickly it was realised that Bristol needed to break down into smaller neighbourhood initiatives. The role of the steering group was to be a coordinating and awareness raising body and they did networking. The project team members were “the ones that ought to make things happen” – they organised events, made flyers, set up a website, posted a newsletter, designed a logo, just to mention a few things. The neighbourhoods were where action should happen. The steering group met monthly and organised monthly meetings for the neighbourhoods which were also open to anyone who wanted to join. They were organised with typical meeting procedures, having an agenda, a chair (at some point rotated among members), minutes were taken, but apart from having also a treasurer there were no other formal roles. During these meetings they experimented much with different forms of communication, e.g. filling a form for the steering group every time someone wanted to do projects, or organising it through an e-mailing list.

There was no major funding of Transition activities, even though there were small grants for certain projects. TB had an office space in the centre, at a place called “The Hub”, which was made possible by external funding. There the project team of four people and volunteers were working. The project team met more frequently than the other groups, at some point once a week. There were no paid people in TB. However, several of the people worked full time with Transition, and had the vision that it would turn into a company that would employ people.

Gradually, tensions arose between people in the steering group and the relation between the steering group and the project team became increasingly problematic. To improve communication the project team was at some point represented at steering group meetings. Also there were conflicts between the neighbourhoods and the steering group about who owned the process. After the Big Event there was practically a complete shift of people.

2) City wide engagement

During the first year of TB attempts were made to create a relation to council. However, to be part of the process it required adjusting to how the council was working, and it did not develop very far during the first year. At the office in the centre they also had a volunteer working on how to take Transition and the Peak oil message out to business.

Current situation (phase 4)

Since mid-2008 Transition Bristol is organised as follows:

- 1) Transition Bristol
 - a) Core team
 - b) Neighbourhoods
- 2) City wide engagement
 - a) BP, GCMG
 - b) Shift Bristol

1) Transition Bristol

Discussions on how to do Transition in Bristol were held over a period of several months and led to the conclusion that the core team should have an administrative function rather than being an “overarching coordination hub”. The current phase is characterised by the view that TB is made up by the neighbourhoods. A general feature is that TB wants to “be a space rather than an institution”, since “there are enough institutions all fighting for money in Bristol”, as one interviewee put it. How many people that are actively involved in a Transition initiative is difficult to estimate, however, there are around 740 people on the mailing list.

Currently, TB has four directors, and there is a core team with six people. Generally the core team is now functioning according to the “project support” concept and liaising at city wide scale, supporting neighbourhoods through e.g. help with funding applications, information sharing among initiatives and connecting people with similar interests. Also, they update the website and publish a monthly newsletter. This way of working has been in place for almost three years, and is a result of previous experience in Bristol on what works and what does not work. As expressed by one of the core team members that joined in the end of phase 2:

You kind of have to learn just to be really loose and flexible and kind of sharing. You cannot have any sort of overarching structure, or if you do it has to be very light and informational.

Once a month the core team also organises a “Sofa session” which is an occasion for the public to come and hear about Transition Bristol. It is held at an office space in the centre during lunchtime, with the idea that people bring their lunches along:

We hold a regular space during the day, for people to come and visit and talk to us, and if they want to join in and help out – a lot of the time they come and want to know about Transition Bristol, if there is a group near where they live we point them to that.

The primary identity of most people is as member of their neighbourhoods, e.g. Transition Montpelier, Sustainable Redland, in the neighbourhoods most projects and events take place. Most people in the core team are also active in their neighbourhoods. There have been around twelve on and off neighbourhood groups. The relation between the core team and the neighbourhoods is a “loose affiliation” as a core team member put it:

There is no real formal structure, to anything, the groups are independent, we do not exercise any sort of official control over them. Or even unofficial. [laugh]

The division between the core team and the neighbourhoods was also described as a “false dichotomy”:

In a way it feels like kind of a false dichotomy, that there is the core team and there is the neighbourhood activities, I mean really, it is a spectrum of things, some are more centrally organised, some are very much local, but a lot of things have been cross over, they have a bit of central support but are happening locally.

There is some cooperation between different neighbourhoods and other local groups resulting in larger citywide projects, e.g. the Bristol Energy Network, an organisation supporting community based energy awareness groups. (Bristol Energy Network n.d.a; n.d.b).



A workshop on renewable energy organised by the Bristol Energy Network, March 2011.

It was also brought up that if neighbourhoods say the core team is not organising big events, then the answer is that they “have gone past big events”, now they are working more behind the scenes to influence on a policy level although they do some projects and events.

2) *City wide engagement*

The work on a city wide scale has been developed during phase 4. It happens through the core team through its involvement in the Green Capital momentum group but also via links with and participation in other groups and networks. Some neighbourhoods also engage on a city wide scale. Shift Bristol influences through training and education.

The Bristol partnership and the Green Capital momentum group

Work of TB on a city level includes attending council meetings and represent Transition, pressure local authorities, and work at the policy level. Mainly this happens through BP, which is the local strategic partnership for Bristol and that brings together businesses, public sector, different organisations and education, and they work to deliver Bristol's sustainable city strategy, the “20:20 Plan”. More specifically, Transition Bristol is part of GCMG, a network for making Bristol more sustainable (GCMG 2009). It started up in 2007 to provide momentum for Bristol's ambitions to be a European green capital, and is funded by the city council. The initiative for creating GCMG was taken by the leader of the council, and is since then it has been made up of companies, the universities and NGO:s in Bristol.

Among the big achievements of GCMG the chair Alastair Sawday brings up the Peak oil report, which is entirely thanks to Transition Bristol. Sawday describes the influence of TB in GCMG as “very strong”:

I think intellectually they have added a lot, particularly through the concept of the resilience – I think that had quite a strong impact on our thinking about food, Peak oil, and energy as well. Also, they have done an enormous amount to lend new energy to the green movement.

Sawday has worked in the green movement for 35 years and has seen an “enormous growth” of the grass roots green movements in Bristol, with hundreds of groups in Bristol working in their communities. In a Bristol wide context Transition Bristol is still rather small:

They, like all of us, tend to exaggerate their own influence when we talk about Bristol being a Transition city, all that is no more sensible than saying that Bristol is a green city, you know, it is not, Bristol is a city with green things happening in it. And the Transition movement is like Friends

of the Earth was back in 1970, it is tiny, but it has had a considerable influence on us, on me personally and on a presence of people in the group, intellectually throughout the city.

The Peak oil report was funded by the city council and a member of TB was commissioned to write it in 2009. As a follow up to the report, members of the core team have given a workshop for multinational construction companies and more workshops are planned. As another follow up to the report, GCMG took the initiative to a food report, "Who feeds Bristol", which was commissioned by the city council and Bristol National health service and published in March 2011. (Carey 2011:1). A local currency, the Bristol pound, is planned to be launched either in October 2011 or spring 2012 with the aim of strengthening the local economy, however, it is not strictly a Transition project. It will be the most advanced local currency scheme in the UK with an electronical payment system and will involve major public bodies such as the council, universities and health organisations (Berry et al 2011:3,4,6). Transition influence can be seen in the reports through frequent reference to "resilience" and "Peak oil" (Table 2).

	Who feeds Bristol report	Local currency draft report
Peak oil	13	7
Resilience	36	5

Table 2. Number of times that "Peak oil" and "resilience" are used in the Who feeds Bristol-report (140 pages) and local currency draft report (84 pages).

The city council

The city council has a sustainability team and in addition to this there are people working with sustainability issues in other departments, in total they are around 20 persons. The work includes a whole range of areas including air and water quality, climate change mitigation and adaptation, construction, energy and planning. Also, they are at the moment trying to find time for one officer to work part time on Peak oil.

Among the policies on sustainability, there is the "20:20 Plan", developed by the Bristol Partnership as an overarching document guiding the work of the council. The council developed its Climate change and energy security framework based on that. The influence of TB is again visible through the concepts of "Peak oil" and "resilience" (Table 3).

	The Bristol 20:20 Plan	Climate change and energy security framework
Peak oil	-	15
Resilience	1	6

Table 3. Number of times that "Peak oil" and "resilience" are mentioned in the Bristol "20:20 Plan" (32 pages) and the "Climate change and energy security framework" (24 pages).

The fact that the council at all made a framework is partly as a response to the Peak oil report, Mark Leach who is a sustainability advisor at the Bristol city council says. At the moment the council is looking into how Peak oil could fit in to the environmental impact assessment. The work by TB is also very much in line with a newly started project around neighbourhood partnerships, and according to Leach it is "really important" that Transition people are there in each area of the city to "influence and scrutinise":

[Transition Bristol has] got people talking about the issues, about Peak oil, they replicate it really well. What they do in Bristol is fantastic, to not do [it] city wide, obviously there is the core team, but to have these neighbourhood groups. [...] what they are basically doing is trying to spread the word I guess, influence others.

At the moment, both for the city council and TB, the next step is to work on how to implement the recommendations in the Peak oil report in policies and the practical work of the council.

Shift Bristol

At the beginning of 2010 a parallel Transition initiative, Shift Bristol, started up, with the attempt to have a city wide approach. It is offering courses in sustainable living based on permaculture principles and is set up as a not for profit Community Interest Company (Shift Bristol n.d.). It is started by the same person took the initiative to start up Transition in Bristol in 2007. Shift Bristol has no formal relation to the wider Transition movement or to Transition Bristol, they do their “own thing alongside it”.

4.1.2 The 12 steps

At the time when TB started up the Handbook was not yet published. The 12 steps existed at that time only as a document, there was “The Primer” and many in the team had heard Rob Hopkins speak. In fact many people in TB were contributing to the Handbook in the form of e.g. surveys. The 12 steps were brought in to a meeting after TB had already been going for a while. By then it was only one person who was very well familiar with the steps. At the beginning they tried to follow them sequentially and they saw the work of TB as eventually leading up to creating an Energy Descent Action Plan, the last among the 12 steps. However, soon it became obvious that the steps needed to be modified and adjusted:

Very quickly it became clear that it is very different to do it on a city scale.

I think we started off trying to use it. It is becoming increasingly clear that the 12 steps are not 12 steps, and they certainly are not sequential. [...] If I am really blunt I don't think they are appropriate or meaningful in a city.

Since the Transition Network did not exist at that time, and no other city initiatives, there were no examples to learn from. However, before TB took off they got help and support by one of the co-founders of the Transition Network, Ben Brangwyn. In a very early phase they were also in contact with the Transition movement founder Rob Hopkins about the 12 steps:

There was an e-mail that went to Rob about it from Bristol, saying 'do we have to follow it in this order', and he just wrote back and said 'Transition is about a community finding its own way and determining its own direction, and the 12 steps, if they are useful guidelines, brilliant, if you don't follow any of them, brilliant'. You know, it really came out like that.

One person commented that Brangwyn was very good at “letting it go where it wants to go”. This seems to be an important aspect when it comes to Bristol; several of the interviewees described the Transition process in Bristol as a reflection of the city:

Bristol is very ... anarchic, [] and I think we just felt [the 12 steps were] not just going to be inspiring to people, [they] felt too prescribed.

I think Bristol is full of very independent, very stubborn, very creative people. They all want to do a lot of good things, but they want to do it their own way.

I think at some point we wondered if that would help structure us more, but I just do not think ... I think we did not want to follow certain rules.

Creativity is very strong, lots of personalities. [big laugh]

The Transition model also includes forming groups around different themes, but doing this on a city scale has its own challenges:

[...] there is so many people, there is no *one* transport answer in Bristol, it might be very different for people who live by the river and people who live by the railway line or live next to motor way, there is a whole different community of different people, whereas in Totnes all have the same way passing, or the same train station.

Breaking into smaller groups happened through forming neighbourhood initiatives, but there were no working groups around themes although there are ideas about starting up a group looking into transport issues.

One issue that was discussed more than any other was the demise of the initial steering group (step 1). Some people thought the initiators should step back and that neighbourhood representatives should form a new steering group. This was one of the issues around which conflicts arose, and as one person put it, “conflict was probably what exhausted us”.

Summing it up, although the concept has shown not to be directly applicable at a city scale, several of the 12 steps can be found in the early phase of TB (Table 4).

Step	Done
1. Set up a steering group and design its demise from the outset	X
2. Raise awareness	X
3. Network	X
4. Organise a great unleashing	X
5. Form smaller groups	X
6. Use Open space	X
7. Do visible manifestations	X
8. Organise great reskilling	
9. Build bridge to local government	X
10. Honour the elders	
11. Let it go where it wants to go	X
12. Create an EDAP	

Table 4. TB and the 12 steps.

The final step, create an EDAP has not been done in Bristol. At the very beginning the focus was on eventually creating an EDAP, however, now the work of the core team is focused on work through the GCMG. In my study I did not come across references to the steps 8 and 10. The results correspond rather well with how Transition initiatives in the UK generally seem to be working. The survey on the UK Transition movement also looked into which of the 12 steps that had been begun or achieved. It showed that around 90 per cent of the initiatives had set up a steering group (step 1)

and raised awareness (2); more than 70 per cent had been networking (3) and formed sub-groups (5) and 65 per cent had started to build a bridge to local government. The steps that are not done in Bristol can be found among the steps that the fewest initiatives have done. (Seyfang 2009:6.) (Appendix G).

4.2 Malmö

I arrive in Malmö in the brand new, light and airy underground train station Triangeln. The area is still partly a building site but what is emerging is elegant and modern. I walk to Seved; it is about two kilometres, and I see cosy small houses along calm streets. But some of them seem abandoned, and across the street I see 5-6 steady policemen putting handcuffs on two men and leading them to a police car. I am struck by the contrasts, two faces of Malmö, existing side by side.

[Field notes: First times going to Seved.]

Now let us move to the Transition initiative in Malmö that existed during the first half of 2010. Let us look at how they organised the work and how the process evolved. (My translations from Swedish).

4.2.1 Chronological narrative of Transition södra Sofielund/Seved

I will start by summing up the history of Transition södra Sofielund/Seved, going through the main events and look at how it was started up, who initiated action and how many participants were involved. I have identified 3 phases:

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Prior to TSS, up til 2010	First half of 2010	Second half of 2010 -

Phase 1. TSS started up at the beginning of 2010. The initiative was taken by a woman who heard the Transition Sweden representative Jan Forsmark speak during a study trip to London in the autumn 2009. That was right after the Swedish branch of the Transition network had started up, and she was inspired by the many similarities between her work and the Transition philosophy. What appealed to her the most was finding a concept “that no one owned” and that had a community perspective instead of being centred around having a project leader.

Phase 2. At the very beginning of the year she gathered 5-6 persons and they started meeting at the very beginning of the year. Main activities include a day around bird boxes in the area and a one day Transition seminar.

Phase 3. After the Transition seminar there were no more meetings of the Malmö Transition group, and as of April 2011 none of the steering group members are involved in something labelled Transition.

How was Transition work organised in Malmö?

I will now look at phase 2 and go more into detail in how the group worked, including the internal group structure, funding, as well as how they used the 12 steps.

The first half of 2010 (phase 2)

I will now look at the work of TSS at two levels: how it was organised and city wide engagement. It looks as follows:

- 1) Transition södra Sofielund/Seved
 - a) Steering group
 - b) Working groups
- 2) City wide engagement

1) Transition södra Sofielund/Seved

MSS had the character of a neighbourhood group and the work was focused on the very area. The core team was made up of 7 people (out of which I have interviewed 5). After some time 12-16 persons were involved.

After getting the core team together, they had meetings every 2 or 4 weeks, and divided into working groups around growing, cooking together, bee keeping and working with a homepage. The activities of the Transition group were focused around the meetings, where awareness raising activities took place, they watched movies, had themed events, discussed and planned for joint activities like growing, berry picking and participating in a local festival. The decision making process was based on consensus.

The group as such had no funding. Central for this group is that several of the people in the steering group were involved in transition related activities through their work – these included a folk high school and a project that worked with social and ecological sustainability in the area. This led to discussions on the role in which people were part of the Transition group, whether it was as representatives of their organization or as private persons.

After a few months some of the people chose to no longer attend the meetings, and after the one day seminar around Transition that was organised in May 2010, no more meetings were held. In the autumn there were no more activities related to the Transition group, and people describe it as that it "petered out" (in Swedish "rann ut i sanden").

2. City wide engagement

In May 2010 a one day Transition seminar was organised that was open to the public and that had around 25 participants. TSS did not have any collaboration with the municipality; however, I will now briefly present the sustainability work of Malmö municipality. It has around 35 persons working with sustainability within the environment department, there are also people working with sustainability issues in other departments. The vision that Malmö will be the world leader in sustainable urban development by 2020, as articulated in the Environmental programme, is the result of political will, says Åsa Abrahamsson, project manager for the Environmental programme. Among the ways to reach the goal it is stated that cooperation will be expanded between "committees, steering boards, government agencies and companies" (MS 2009a:14). Communities are mentioned in the following way (MS 2009a:14.):

For work on the environment to be successful, the citizens of Malmö have to participate, and collaboration with the citizens has to be enhanced.

However, according to Trevor Graham, head of the Sustainable communities programme at the environment department, there is no strategy for how to develop this:

That is one of our big challenges at the moment, how do we take this to the next level [].

Graham is familiar with the Transition initiative but says "generally speaking not many people know about it, it has been fairly quiet in Malmö". However, he says there is an awareness among "some of the key politicians and some of the key officers" that see it as an "interesting initiative", and there is "certainly potential" in it. Also, there is an interest to collaborate from the side of the municipality:

[A]nybody interested in doing the right thing, we are interested in working with. So if the Transition town process in Malmö starts to take shape and to become an active force, we are delighted to work with them, but we are also delighted to help them become a dynamic force.

At the moment an operative plan on environment and climate change based on the Environmental programme is out for consultation, and it will be adopted by the end of 2011 or early 2012.

Current situation, phase 3

Phase 3 is characterized by that there are no Transition labelled activities in södra Sofielund/Seved. The people involved continued with their respective work; the project has been applying for funding and will be continued and sustainability work continues in the folk high school. One person has become involved in developing a network for permaculture activities in the region and expresses Transition and permaculture as being "practically the same".

4.2.2 The 12 steps

In TSS they were inspired by the 12 steps to start with, they used both the English and the Swedish versions. In Table 5 is an overview over which ones they did or started doing:

Step	Done
1. Set up a steering group and design its demise from the outset	X
2. Raise awareness	X
3. Network	X
4. Organise a great unleashing	
5. Form smaller groups	X
6. Use Open space	X
7. Do visible manifestations	X
8. Organise great reskilling	
9. Build bridge to local government	
10. Honour the elders	
11. Let it go where it wants to go	
12. Create an EDAP	

Table 5. TSS and the 12 steps.

4.2.3 Why did Transition in Malmö stop?

When interviewees spoke about the end of the Transition activities in Malmö, they commonly used the expression "peter out". The challenges that I identified include leadership and roles in the group, who owns the process, funding, different views on how to work, burnout and inclusion. This coincides with challenges that many initiatives in the UK experience. Almost 60 per cent reported

that the resources in the form of funding, time and “active group members to take some of the work load” are a challenge (Figure 3).

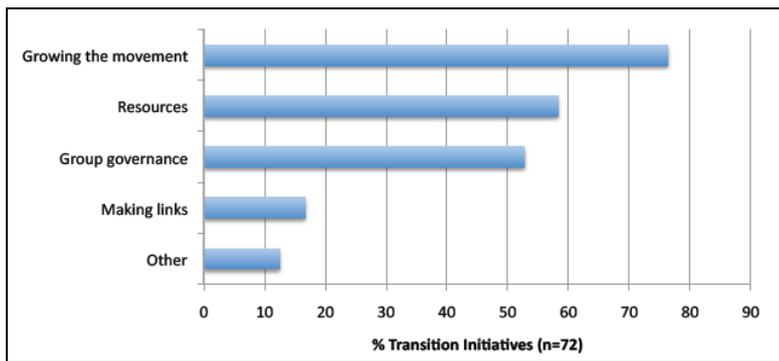


Figure 3. Main challenges experienced by UK Transition initiatives (adopted from Seyfang 2009:11).

As one interviewee put it, they did not work long enough to feel they needed to directly address the challenges, however, if the work had been going on longer, “issues for discussion would have had to be brought up”. It seems like leadership and different views on how to work were two major reasons for why the initiative did not continue. There seems to have been hesitation among participants to take on a leading role, at the same time as recognizing the importance of good leadership. For some participants the workload was the major reason. (For more details see Appendix H).

4.3 Model of Transition Bristol

Developing further Haxeltine's and Seyfang's notion of Transition initiatives as niches, and connecting it to a modified version of Geels's model on multiple levels as a nested hierarchy, I have built a model (Figure 4) based on how TB has worked for the past three years. The model will be the starting point when discussing what Transition initiatives in Malmö could learn from TB. The model is made without reference to details specific for Bristol, and hence the model might also be of relevance more generally for city scale Transition initiatives.

Let us now look more in detail at the model. In the previous section I spoke about two levels of activity: 1) the Transition initiative and 2) city wide engagement. In my model the Transition initiative can be found on the niche level (circled with thicker line), the city-wide level can be found at the regime level. On the niche level there are also other organisations, illustrated by the other circles. There is a platform for interaction between the niche and regime levels; here an overarching plan is created that guides the work of the city council and other actors. The arrows indicate the direction of input and output.

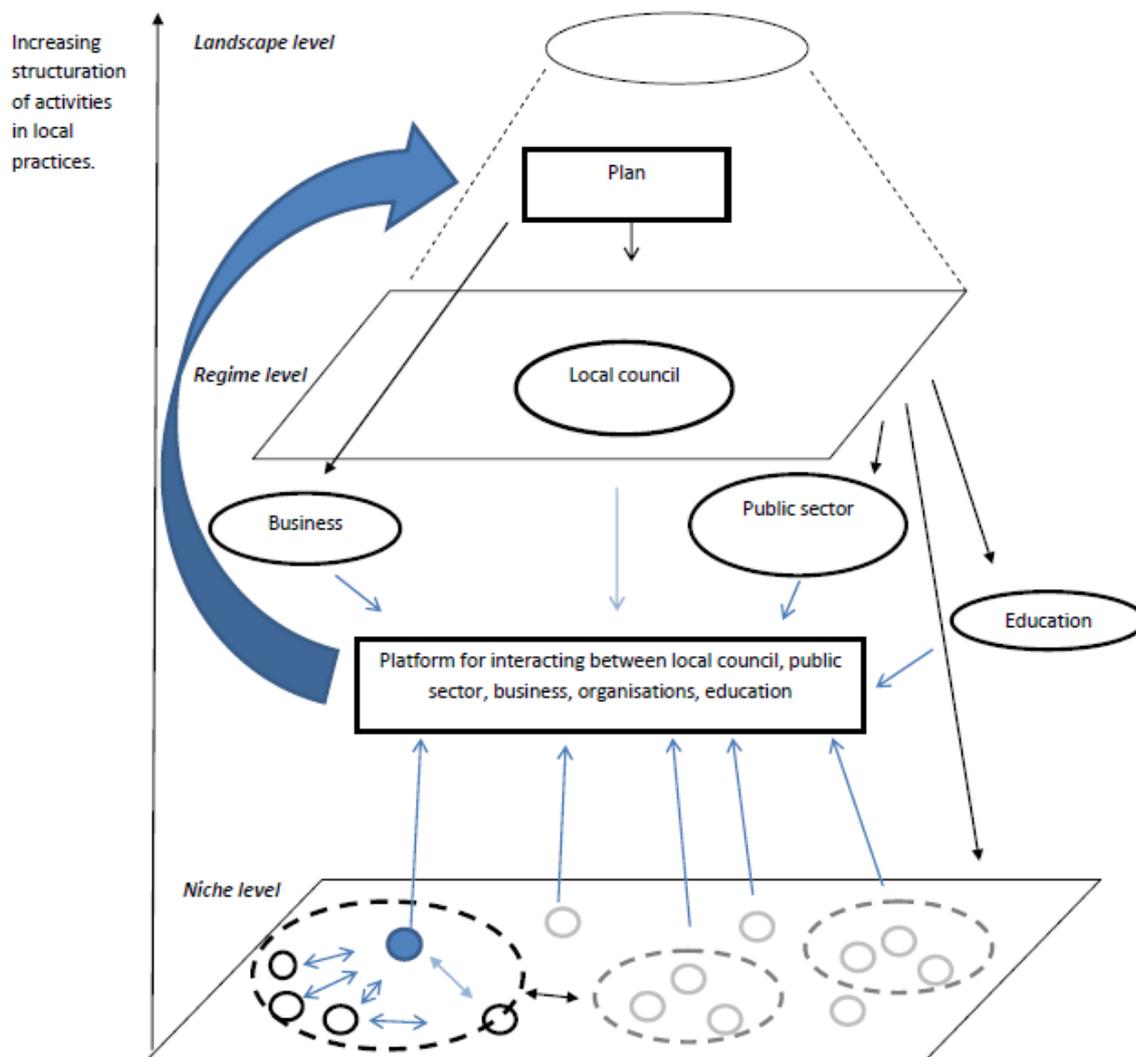


Figure 4. Model of TB. Transition initiatives are circled with thicker line. The model builds on Geels’ (2004:913) “Multiple levels as a nested hierarchy.”

4.4 What can Malmö learn from Bristol

There is no one right way of organising Transition initiatives (Hopkins 2011, Lipman 2011), however, given that Bristol and Malmö are of similar size, have a similar history and aspirations regarding sustainability, I will give some recommendations for Malmö based on how TB works. On the niche level a city Transition initiative can be made up by:

- a core team
- neighbourhoods
- working groups

The core team has an administrative, supportive and information sharing role. The neighbourhoods implement projects and organise events, and have their own administration and communication. The working groups work independently and their activities are not necessarily labelled as “Transition”, although they work with “Transition type of issues”, e.g. transport, energy, food. The relation between the core team and the neighbourhoods is a “loose affiliation” and includes no hierarchy which is why they are all placed on the same level and have the same size in the model.

The arrows indicate contact between different groups, among Transition neighbourhoods, between the core team and neighbourhoods and between Transition groups and other organisations. This is a simplified picture, in reality the boundaries are not as clear cut – in Bristol there are several examples of projects that have started in Transition neighbourhoods, then other local groups have joined in and the projects have become city wide.

In order to catalyze or prepare “for a coming regime shift”, engaging with the regime is crucial (Haxeltine and Seyfang 2009:11), i.e. interact with the city council. In my model this is achieved through a platform where different actors take part; the local council, the public sector, business, and education. The outcome of the work at this level is an overarching plan that determines the work of the local council and other actors in the city. The council implements the plan in their strategic work. In Bristol GCMG has a system of pledges that companies can sign up for.

Peter Lipman, chair of Transition Network, who lives in Bristol and was part of TB during the first year, can give a broader perspective on the TB work. He says different cities work in different ways, and that the current model in Bristol works “reasonably well”, however, he emphasizes work at a city wide scale:

If we in two years’ time have 15 really strong neighbourhood initiatives but nothing happening on the Bristol scale, then I would have to worry about the model.

In the case of Bristol, the main channel of engagement with the regime is through BP and GCMG and as was brought up earlier TB has had considerable impact on some policy documents in terms of bringing up Peak oil and resilience. A few examples in the city council’s Framework document (Bristol city council 2010:18) include:

We will support action by individuals, communities, Neighbourhood Partnerships and community, voluntary and social enterprises on climate change and Peak oil response.

We will review the vulnerability of all council services to Peak oil, energy security and climate change issues and improve their resilience.

In Malmö there is a big interest from the municipality to involve communities, but they lack ideas on how to take it forward, so perhaps a similar platform could be set up to systematically work with a broad range of actors. As it is now, both the Environmental programme for 2020 and the draft of the operative plan on environment and climate change lack references to resilience and Peak oil. The primary target group for the Environmental programme is the municipal organisations and politicians; they were also the ones that set it up. Although the draft was sent out for consultation before adoption, there was not much involvement from NGOs (Abrahamsson 2011). As experience from Bristol shows, organisations such as Transition can provide considerable input. Malmö that aims for a world leading position in urban sustainable development might want to consider a similar way of working.

Is there something else that Malmö could learn? Looking at TB, neighbourhood initiatives could work with different approaches. The project and the folk high school as well as the permaculture community could link up under a Transition umbrella, without needing to change the way they working. A neighbourhood in Bristol, Sustainable Redland, was working with sustainability already before TB was set up, now they are part of it and a member interviewed here expressed it as being “part of a wider family”.

In Bristol there is the example of Shift Bristol as well as neighbourhood groups and working

groups which are not strictly Transition groups. In my model Shift Bristol would be placed between the niche and regime levels with arrows pointing towards the niche level. In addition to the core team work through the GCMG, some neighbourhoods also engage directly on a citywide scale.

Jan Forsmark at Transition Sweden sees "great potential" for Transition in Malmö:

I am not worried that there is no Transition group at the moment, it is like this in some places, one just needs to try again. And the municipality wants to become a world leader environmentally, so they will need to mobilize on all fronts.

4.4.1 Challenges and how they were managed

Having several years of Transition work experience, and having gone through several phases, Transition Bristol is likely to have experiences that can be useful for other Transition cities. It has been a process to get to this point of organising; as a person involved in a Transition related project put it:

Transition Bristol has found its way, but it has not been painless.

A number of challenges can be identified in TB, including issues around who owns the process; leadership; conflict management; managing meetings; decision making processes; working strategically; burn out; resources/funding; working at city level; enormity of the challenges of climate change and Peak oil; institutionalisation/having structures; having a vision; hierarchies, invisible power and authority; keeping the momentum; letting go of things.

One of the challenges that were brought up most frequently was conflict management – "the people politics", "working in a group". This seems to be a wide spread issue in Transition initiatives, in the 2009 survey on the UK Transition movement, more than half of the responding groups identified "group governance issues" as a problem (Figure 3) (Seyfang 2009:10). A parallel can also be drawn to Ostrom (2006:90) who has identified conflict-resolution mechanisms as one of eight design principles that make CPRs survive over long periods of time. Among variables that "are constantly shown to influence outcomes", Ostrom (2006:188) brings up leadership. Given that leadership was one of the challenges in TSS, I will now look more closely into TB experiences of conflict management and leadership.

Conflict management

The major conflict in TB was at the end of the first year. Tensions had been building up between people in the steering group and between different groups about who owns the process, "what right do you have to be the core group", as well as that the initiating group should dissolve and that the steering group then would be made up of representatives from different neighbourhoods. To try and solve the problems in the steering group, both informal and formal mediating processes took place, but without improving the situation in the long run. Eventually the group decided that one person "should not be part of the group anymore". It was described as "painful" and the stage after that was described as a "major fundamental change".

On how to manage conflicts, interviewees acknowledged that every group is going to have some combination of conflict. It is emphasised that "if you find you have a problem and quite a few people are feeling it, then you are going to have to deal with it", and that it is important to acknowledge it as quickly as possible, letting it go on means it can get destructive.

TB has learned much of it the hard way. They do not have a formal way of preventing and dealing with conflict, however, a few ideas of conflict management include:

- Come up with a decision making process
- Agree upon a policy on how to deal with people's disagreements, so you have a framework to work with
- Learn about group dynamics
- Spend some social time together without "doing draining kinds of things".

And on a final note, the ability of letting go of things was brought up by several interviewees:

[...] it is important to acknowledge that there are times when it is not just working and that they do not try and force themselves to make it work. But it is also important to try and make it work as long as possible.

During the conflicts at the end of phase 2, they also considered bringing in a conflict management person but never did:

[...] we could have gone down that road, but I think in fact the way of managing it was more a question of recognizing that some parts of the activity had come to a natural end and that was actually okay. [...] letting go and moving on and coming out as a slightly different organisation was okay and we could be grateful for the work that had been done. So for me the way to manage it is really to recognize what is happening and not locating it too much on individuals.

Leadership

Leadership was another issue that was frequently brought up as a challenge. Invisible power and hierarchy are highlighted, as well as the need for leaders to function "at a place of service to the group rather than the ego". Central was the questions what is meant by leadership and what is good leadership:

I actually think having good leadership skills could potentially become a barrier, because if you have somebody with incredibly good leadership skills, then they will probably be happy to set up a really formal structure, and maybe that is not what you need in a community.

Interviewees brought up that the question on how to handle conflicts is linked to leadership and people with other assets in the group. Facilitation skills and proper mediating skills were said to probably be the "key set of skills" that an initiative can have. TB did have such a person; however, this could not prevent the steering group from dissolving.

4.5 What can Bristol learn from Malmö and the "ingredients"?

In Malmö one of the big challenges has been inclusion. Given that one third of the inhabitants in Malmö were born outside Sweden and that Seved is a socio-economically weak area, inclusion and ethnic diversity is central. However, they experienced the same challenge in engaging people beyond a white middle class in the Transition group although the project has successfully engaged people with different ethnic backgrounds in the neighbourhood:

We had been working with establishing processes, slowly, slowly; it is about seeing many other needs than those that were part of the project, to establish and create trust. And to bring out what the people in the neighbourhood wanted to do.

One of the criticisms that have been put forward regarding the Transition movement has been that it attracts mainly white, middle class citizens. How to make the movement more inclusive and take different ethnic minorities into account is something that the Transition Network has started to address and from the beginning of this year one employee to work with this. Transition Network chair Peter Lipman says what has been missing is listening:

[I]f we had been better at starting from where other people are, from their concerns, struggles and issues rather than starting from our important struggles and issues, I think we would be more diverse. [] And I think that is still generally in Transition, we are better at telling other people about our ideas than listening to their struggles.

Inclusion is something TB could learn from the project in Malmö. Furthermore, TB could learn from Hopkins' forthcoming book, "The Transition Companion" that builds on experiences from the last years. It was produced in a collaborative way where people had the possibility to comment on draft versions of the chapters through Hopkins blog. Instead of having 12 steps, the new way of looking at it is having 43 'ingredients' and 21 'tools', arranged in five stages depending on how advanced an initiative is. As of May 2011 the stages are (Hopkins 2011):

1. Getting started
2. Deepening
3. Connecting
4. Building
5. Daring to Dream

In terms of how initiatives work Hopkins says there will be a focus towards becoming self-resourcing and working as a social enterprise rather than just as a group of volunteers. A key part of the process is scaling it up, and is to create infrastructure to make it possible to live a more local life (relocalisation):

[I]t is about creating new energy companies, creating the new bank, creating the new food system. And you can do a certain amount of that thinking like a small NGO and community group, but actually those things will need to be commercially viable projects, not to be grant dependent in the long run.

4.6 Recommendations

The circumstances in Malmö would probably be envied by many Transition initiatives; the city aims at becoming a world leader in sustainable urban development; there is political support for sustainability work; there is openness from the city council to work with communities, they are even "delighted" to help Transition initiatives become a "dynamic force". In sum, the momentum is there, the table is laid. There should be every possibility for engaged persons to make a difference. Recommendations for Transition in Malmö include:

- Just get started
- Investigate what could be learned from Bristol on working on a city scale, the model created in this thesis might be helpful
- Network with existing groups – a lot is already going on in Malmö
- Let it go where it wants to go
- Remember to have fun

Recommendations for Malmö municipality:

- Create a platform for bringing different actors together (see Figure 4)
- Commission a Peak oil report for Malmö

Transition Bristol has already had substantial influence on a regime level mainly through the Peak oil report and through involvement in the Food report and the local currency. However, below follow some suggestions for further work:

- Work on inclusion and diversity, perhaps some lessons could be learned from Malmö
- Start themed work, on transport; look into inner dimensions of Transition (a unique contribution of Transition)
- Look into possibilities of scaling up the work through social enterprise, and working strategically (advanced stages of the "ingredients")

4.7 What comes next?

The Transition movement has existed for a bit more than five years. What has been learned in terms of how to organise Transition initiatives? The movement founder Rob Hopkins says much has been learned about scale:

[T]he scale on which this works very much depends on the place and the culture and the people who get involved. Particularly in the urban initiatives, is the initiative best to start on a city scale or is it best to start at the community scale, and I think probably the learning is that it is best to start at the neighbourhood scale, but that there is also an important role for a city wide network.

From the perspective of Ostrom's analysis of CPRs, as the Transition movement develops and deepens, and depending on what the world looks like, perhaps it will become highly relevant to include resources flows in a Transition context in the same way as Ostrom has done regarding small scale CPRs. In his book "Collapse", Diamond (2005) discusses how some societies have collapsed and others have been able to adapt. The co-founder of the Transition network thinks we will see rapid

change over the next few years in how "our complex industrial civilisation is run", and then Transition might be a way forward:

[I] see enormous opportunity over the next 2-3 years in terms of far more rapid growth of Transition type ideas, I really hope not just Transition - when we first set up TB we [] wanted to see a range of different responses, so that we could all learn from each other and be stronger that way.

5. CONCLUSION

There is no right way of "doing Transition". The model that I have created based on experiences from Transition Bristol is only one way of organising the work, however, my hope is that it could be helpful for Transition initiatives in Malmö and potentially other cities when trying to work out how to organise and when addressing challenges.

Based on the interviews conducted for this study, perhaps one of the most important learnings is: Let it go where it wants to go. Transition is no panacea; it is not a one size fits all solution. And it might not be a recipe to follow, but perhaps it is a mix of ingredients, as Hopkins has put it in the forthcoming book the Transition Companion. The Transition movement is about changing a whole system. That includes numerous aspects and according to Hopkins, increasingly, Transition work is about keeping a balance rather than focusing too much on a single issue. Below is an extract from a draft version of the Transition Companion, as quoted by Hopkins when interviewed for this thesis:

Transition may well be most successful if it retains its broadness rather than looking too closely at any one facet of the Transition process. It will do best if it is based on practical action, community appeal, inner transition, social enterprise, social justice, careful attention to deep engagement, using the best evidence, creating new economic models for investment and finding skilful ways to involve local businesses and local government.

Its strength and resilience will be in its breadth and its ability to keep moving on all those fronts.

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BRISTOL:

Transition Bristol (8 persons)

Brownlee, Emmelie, Schumacher Institute

Hopkins, Rob, founder of the Transition movement

Leach, Mark, Bristol city council

Lipman, Peter, chair of the Transition Network

Sawday, Alastair, chair of GCMG

MALMÖ:

Transition södra Sofielund/Seved (6 persons)

Abrahamsson, Åsa, Malmö municipality

Forsmark, Jan, leader of the Transition network in Sweden

Graham, Trevor, Malmö municipality

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Discussion about resilience

Resilience

Resilience is central for the Transition movement, and it is defined as the ability of communities and settlements "to not collapse at first sight of oil or food shortages, and to their ability to respond with adaptability to disturbance" (Hopkins 2008:54). It is argued that reducing carbon emissions without simultaneously (re)building resilience is "ultimately futile" (Hopkins 2008:12,54,142). The Transition-way of framing resilience has been criticized for being vague, and resilience theory puts forward that resilience building for one type of disturbance does not automatically provide resilience to other disturbances (Haxeltine and Seyfang 2009:14). Hopkins (2010) has further developed the concept of resilience, however, more detailed descriptions are beyond the scope of this master's thesis. Resilience in an ecological sense has been defined as follows:

Resilience determines the persistence of relationships within a system and is a measure of the ability of these systems to absorb changes of state variables, driving variables, and parameters, and still persist. (Holling 1973:17.)

In social-ecological systems it has been defined as:

Resilience, for social-ecological systems, is related to (i) the magnitude of shock that the system can absorb and remain within a given state; (ii) the degree to which the system is capable of self-organization; and (iii) the degree to which the system can build capacity for learning and adaptation. (Folke et al 2002:438.)

APPENDIX B – Selecting the cases

The search criteria I used for community type were “city/urban” as opposed to village, town, forest, rural or island, and initiatives having the status “official”. The search gave 68 hits. I was looking for a case that would be in Europe, that was one of the early initiatives, one that was comparable to Malmö in terms of e.g. population, and where I could interview people in their own language without an interpreter (the languages I know include English, Finnish and Swedish).

I used a set of criteria to narrow down potential cases and removed initiatives that fulfilled the following criteria:

- Initiatives outside Europe (34)
- Initiatives where language could be a barrier (4)
- Initiatives that were not of comparable size with Malmö (10)
- Initiatives that were too young, i.e. not among the first 100 initiatives (13)

Then I was left with seven options, all of which were located in the UK: Norwich, Bristol, Coventry, Exeter, Liverpool, Edinburgh, and York. Since I wanted to compare Malmö to an initiative with as much experience as possible, I looked at those established first. Bristol was number 11, Edinburgh number 21 and Exeter number 38 (TN n.d.). Based on this I looked further into the oldest of these initiatives, Bristol, which was also the first city to start a Transition initiative (Hopkins 2008:144), and found many similarities with Malmö: the size in terms of population, history, and a reputation of being a green city.

APPENDIX C – Risks of participants in social movements

Risks that social movements and activists might be exposed to when participating in a study are discussed by Blee and Vining (2010:43) and they point out the importance of researchers to "disclose all risks to participants in their studies". They bring up problems related to agreements on confidentiality and "informed consent procedures" in potentially politically sensitive issues (Blee and Vining 2010:44), and list suggestions on how to protect data and reduce risks (Blee and Vining 2010:59-64).

However, I did not see any particular risks related to the study on the Transition movement. I did not expect the data to be politically sensitive nor did I expect illegal actions to be undertaken, and hence I have seen no such risks related to the participants of my study.

APPENDIX D – Contacting initiatives, conducting the interviews

Bristol:

I started with contacting the persons listed as "current directors" and "members of the initiative" on the Transition network (2010) website. I sent them a message where I explained the purpose of my thesis, and got a reply on behalf of the group. In order to map out the four years of the Transition initiative in Bristol, I contacted people that were starting up the Bristol Transition initiative, whose contacts I got through the core team. In addition to this, I contacted people that were involved in visible work of the city wide Transition Bristol. In total I interviewed 8 persons in initiatives in Bristol. Furthermore, I interviewed a representative from the sustainability team at the City Council, the chair of the Green Capital Momentum Group and a person from the Schumacher institute.

Malmö:

I started by getting in contact with members in the Omställning Södra Sofielund/Seved Transition initiative (OS 2011b), which I found through the Swedish Transition network web pages (OS 2011a). I sent all of the members a message where I explained the purpose of my thesis and that I would like to get in touch with members. I got one reply, but from a member that had not been in the core team. I then contacted one of the core team members again and through them I got contact details to others that were active in the group in Malmö during 2010.

I focus on the Transition initiative in Sofielund/Seved, due to time restrictions I have not focussed on finding other Transition neighbourhood groups in Malmö.

Conducted interviews

I started with doing three background interviews in Malmö, with general broad questions. Then I did two more focussed interviews in Malmö with revised and narrowed down interview questions. In Bristol I started by using questions based on the ones developed in Malmö. They were slightly modified during the first interviews. Depending on information I had about the interviewee prior to the interview I designed a few questions on their possible special areas. When coming back to Malmö I used the interview questions developed in Bristol and did the remaining 3 interviews based on these questions.

Procedures I followed in interview situations

Below is the procedures I have followed. Following ethical principles in social research (Bryman 2008:118, Lunds universitet 2005:6) I asked for the interviewee's consent to record the interview. I explained the purpose of the thesis (if that had not been done before), said that the interview answers will be transcribed and analyzed, and that they might be used either in direct or indirect quotes in my master's thesis. I informed the interviewees that their participation in the thesis will be anonymous, and that I will not speak to others in their Transition initiative about what they said. I made a suggestion on how to categorize the interviewee, which they were able to comment upon. Also, I emphasized that participating in the study is voluntary, and that they are not obliged to answer any of the questions. Finally, I told the interviewees that they will have a chance to comment on a draft of the relevant sections of the text before the thesis is handed in. In a few cases this was done over email after the interview.

APPENDIX E – Interview questions

About the initiative

- How is the transition work organized
- How has the process been? How did you plan – how did it go? Why.
 - Different phases of organization. What worked what did not.
 - Problems – how did they change the process, how were they managed?
- How did you start up?
 - Who initiated action?
 - How many participants were involved?
 - Minimum number of participants to get started?
 - What was the internal group structure?
 - Number of decision makers?
 - Similarities of interest?
 - Presence of participants with leadership or other assets?
 - Funding? (Who paid the costs for entrepreneurial activities?)
 - What broader institutions did they use?
- Why did it succeed to start up an initiative in Bristol/Malmö?
- Inspiration from Transition concept, other initiatives?
- Vision?

Expansion of the Transition movement

- How could it grow in Malmö/Bristol?
 - Challenges, barriers, favorable conditions
 - Possible to include whole city in Transition?
- Urban sustainability possible?

APPENDIX F – Questions adopted from Ostrom

Questions used in my thesis adopted from Ostrom (2006:103):

- How many participants were involved?
- What was their internal group structure?
- Who initiated action?
- Who paid the costs for entrepreneurial activities?
- What broader institutions did participants use in establishing new rules?

Furthermore, Ostrom (2006:188) brings up variables that "are constantly shown to influence outcomes", including:

- The total number of decision makers
- The number of participants minimally necessary to achieve the collective benefit
- Similarities of interest
- The presence of participants with substantial leadership or other assets.

APPENDIX G – UK survey results 12 steps

Results form a Survey made on the UK Transition Movement in 2009 by Seyfang (2009).

To what extent Transition groups in the UK followed the 12 steps (Seyfang 2009:6):

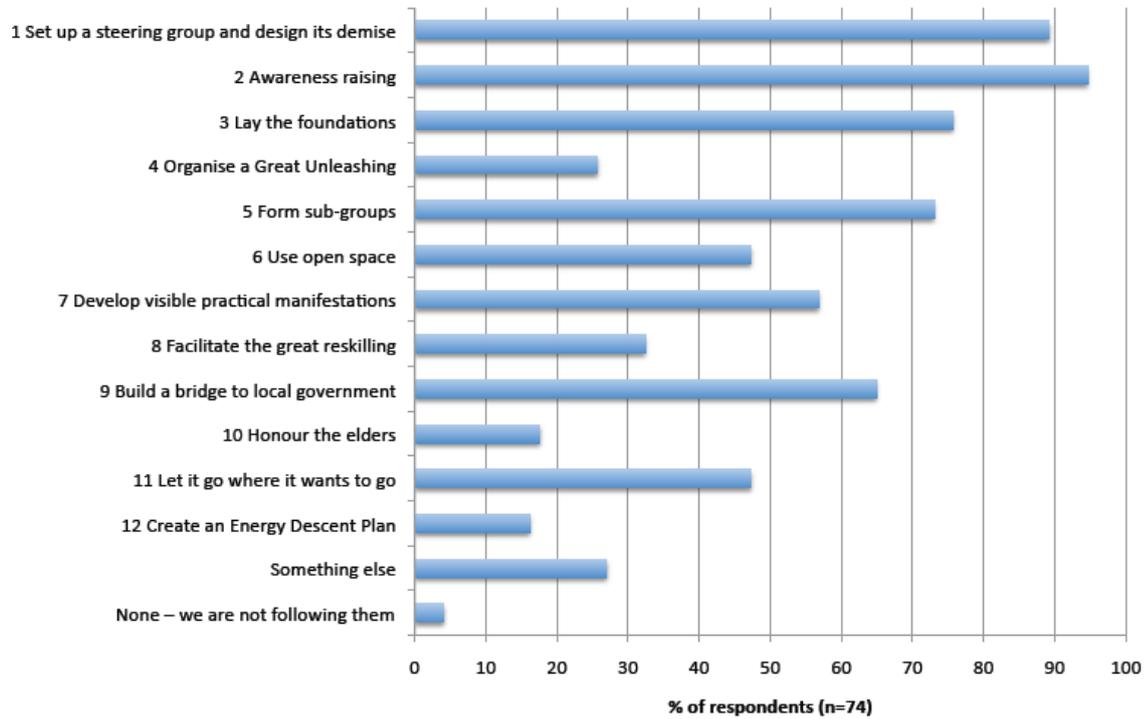


Figure 4: UK Transition Initiatives and the 12 'Key Steps'

APPENDIX H – Challenges experienced in Malmö

Leadership

One person felt there was too much of the work was placed on them, whereas other people experienced expectations that they would take on the role to "inspire and lead". As yet another one expressed it, she thinks many "are hesitant to really take on the work and be part of a steering group", partly due to that the persons involved often are engaged in many other activities. On the other hand, it was emphasized that something that can perhaps be translated as "enthusiasts" (in Swedish: eldsjäl) are needed, that they are central in making things happen and in inspiring others. Many interviewees wanted to avoid talking about the importance of "leaders" and rather speak about having a coordinating role. What many people brought up is the *kind* of leadership that is needed. As one interviewee put it:

[I]t requires people that can be both artists, have visions but also do the logistics [], all of this is needed in order to make it work.

It was also brought up that leadership is not only about having power and perspective, it is also about inclusion, and ability to see who is not there, and "not to be satisfied with the little group that is part of nothing else than its own little movement". As one explanation of what led to that the group did not continue, it is brought up that there were "too strong participants that did not feel a need to hold together as a movement".

Funding / burnout

What is brought up as problematic for the work of this Transition group was the fact that much focus was placed on that the project funding was going to end. This way of working was not seen as sustainable among some of the participants, whereas the people involved in the project felt that they were already working professionally with the issues that the group was trying to start up, and that they did not have the capacity to work with it also in their spare time.

Who owns the process

Many of the persons in the Transition group were involved in Transition type of activities since their work, but without labeling them as "Transition". One source of tension was differing views on how to work. One person brought up as one of the strengths with the Transition concept that it is a concept "that no one owned", and that it thereby could work as something different as a project that is competing for funding. On the other hand, there were persons in the group that worked with sustainability issues within a project. Today, people have continued working with what they did before, and some of them comment that they would be happy to share their experience in a Transition context, but that they have a working concept that they do not want to modify to fit into any specific model:

It still meant something that we were part of Transition, first and foremost because of feeling that we are on the right track, but we have already come so far in our process and are bound by funders, time, target group and aim, and we cannot turn into something that we are not.

Inclusion

Inclusion is one of the major challenges in a city like Malmö, with considerable socio-economic differences and with one third of the population being born outside Sweden. This is brought up as a weakness of the Transition movement, and the Transition group did not succeed to attract people outside a group of white middle class Swedes, although that is what the project is focusing its work around. For a few meetings some of the people involved in the project joined, but then stopped coming to the meetings, since they according to their colleagues did not feel it appealed to them.