Urban Sustainability Transitions as Educative Practices: A Case Study of the Solidarity Fridge in Gothenburg, Sweden

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Abstract:
Urban areas will play a decisive role in the sustainability of future societies. As such, there is a need to understand the processes through which cities can become more sustainable. Based on a qualitative case study of a community food waste initiative in Gothenburg, Sweden, this thesis explores the phenomenon of urban sustainability transitions in relation to learning. The thesis attempts to explain how learning at the level of socio-technical niches could be instrumental to broader systemic changes at the regime level. The theoretical framework for the thesis draws on the transactional perspective on learning developed from pragmatist educational philosophy, as well as practice theoretical approaches to studying sustainability transitions which have emerged in recent years. The empirical results gathered from the case are analysed using dramaturgical analysis and practical epistemology analysis. Based on these analyses, the thesis argues that the role and significance of learning in urban sustainability transitions can be understood in terms of educative practices, a concept which is elaborated in the discussion chapter. Thus, it is argued that learning through educative practices can contribute to urban sustainability transitions by challenging prevailing institutional norms and structures, and by establishing pathways through which unsustainable elements within the socio-technical regime can be reconfigured.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Sustainability transition, Practice theory, Pragmatism, Learning, Food waste

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Summary: This thesis pursues the research goal of understanding the role and significance of learning within urban sustainability transitions. The thesis’ theoretical framework combines pragmatist educational philosophy and practice theoretical approaches within sustainability transition studies. The thesis presents a qualitative case study of a community food waste initiative in Gothenburg, Sweden. This case is analysed using tools from sociology and educational science: dramaturgical analysis and practical epistemology analysis. Based on this analysis, the thesis argues that the role and significance of learning within urban sustainability transitions can be conceptualised in terms of educative practices. It is argued that such educative practices contribute to transitions by establishing alternative pathways for action and understanding towards urban sustainability. The thesis thus provides a conceptual account of how learning at the level of small-scale sustainability initiatives can be instrumental to broader systemic changes within an urban context.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Sustainability transition, Practice theory, Pragmatism, Learning. Food waste

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List of Abbreviations

**FAO** – Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

**MLP** – Multi Level Perspective

**PEA** – Practical Epistemology Analysis

**SDG** – Sustainable Development Goal

**ST** – Sustainability Transition

**SWEDESD** – Swedish International Centre of Education for Sustainable Development

**UN** – United Nations

**UST** – Urban Sustainability Transition
1. Introduction

1.1. Wicked Problems and Urban Sustainability Transition

More than half of the world’s population currently live in urban areas, and by 2050 the UN expects this figure to have risen to 68 percent (United Nations, 2018). This widespread urbanisation is taking place alongside international efforts to realise more sustainable societies, as envisioned in the UN’s Agenda 2030 and corresponding Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015). As such, SDG 11 states the importance of future cities meeting demands for social and environmental sustainability (ibid.).

As with many aspects of cities, their relationship with sustainability is multifaceted and complex, presenting both obstacles and frontiers for the SDGs. On one hand, cities produce the majority of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions and can accentuate structural inequalities within society (Hoornweg, Sugar and Gómez, 2011; Musterd et al., 2017). However, as fast-paced centres for activity and communication, cities can also be drivers for innovative responses to sustainability challenges (Mieg and Töpfer, 2013).

Wicked Problems and Urban Sustainability Transition is a three-year interdisciplinary research project (2017-2020) funded by FORMAS, the Swedish government’s research council for sustainable development. The project is a collaboration between the Swedish International Centre of Education for Sustainable Development (SWEDESD) and Ghent University Centre for Sustainable Development. The project’s aim is to explore how political spaces of urban sustainability transition (UST) can function as educative spaces. The research objectives of the project are to advance empirical knowledge and provide a theoretical foundation for future research into the relationship between USTs and learning (SWEDESD, 2017).

The project’s empirical foundation will be four case studies investigating UST initiatives in Belgium and Sweden. A comparative analysis of these cases will then inform the theoretical development and operationalisation phases of the project. This master’s thesis will contribute empirical and theoretical material by conducting and analysing the second of two Swedish case studies. The thesis thus adopts the research project’s aim of exploring the educative potential of political spaces of urban sustainability transition, as well as its conceptual framing of USTs in terms of wicked problems and institutional voids. The thesis also applies the project’s main analytical methods of practical epistemology analysis (PEA) and dramaturgical analysis.

1.2. Outline

Having established the research context of the Wicked Problems and UST project, the thesis will proceed as follows: the next subchapter will provide a literature review covering the conceptual framing and research area of the Wicked Problems and UST project. This will include the concepts of wicked problems and institutional voids, which are used to explain the urban sustainability challenges from which a need for transition arises. This subchapter will also introduce the research gap which surrounds to the role and significance of learning in sustainability transitions (STs). Following from this, the research question and objectives of the thesis will be outlined and elaborated.

Next, the background chapter will present the specific wicked sustainability problem dealt with in the thesis, namely food waste, which will be conceptually framed in terms of wicked problems and institutional voids. This chapter will also introduce the UST initiative chosen for the thesis’ case study: the Solidarity Fridge (Solikyl). Historical background and context for the Solikyl project will be provided, as well as an account of how it forms part of a larger international network of ‘foodsharing’ initiatives.

The theoretical framework chapter will then present the interdisciplinary theoretical approach adopted in the thesis, which draws from educational philosophy, social theory and transition theory. Practice
theory, particularly its recent applications within sustainability transition studies, will here be introduced as the theoretical lens through which the thesis regards social dynamics within USTs in terms of a structure-agency dialectic. The transactional perspective on learning will then be outlined as the learning theory used in the thesis to conceptualize and analyse educative processes within UST initiatives. Elaboration will be given as to how the thesis attempts to integrate these theoretical perspectives and how their potential incompatibilities were considered.

Following this, the methodology chapter will describe the empirical and analytical methods used in the thesis, and how these relate to its research question and theoretical framework. A qualitative case study will be described as the empirical research design used in the thesis, and the benefits, limitations and ethical dimensions of this approach will be discussed. The analytical methods of dramaturgical analysis and PEA will then be outlined, as well as their applications in the thesis and their potential limitations.

The following chapter will present the results and analysis of the case study: the dramaturgical analysis followed by the PEA. Proceeding from these analyses, the discussion chapter will interpret the case study through the theoretical and conceptual perspective developed in the thesis. This chapter will thus attempt to answer the research question of the thesis by arguing that the role and significance of learning within USTs can be understood in terms of educative practices, a novel conceptualisation which is elaborated in the chapter.

Finally, the conclusion chapter will summarise how the thesis’ case study has been theoretically interpreted in order to provide an answer to the chosen research question. This chapter will also evaluate the thesis’ theoretical and empirical contributions with regards to the research objectives of the Wicked Problems and UST project, and discuss the limitations of the thesis and areas where its research could be developed further.

1.3. Literature Review

1.3.1. Wicked problems and institutional voids

‘Wicked problems’ -a term which originates in planning theory- have been used to describe contemporary sustainability challenges (Murphy, 2013; Pryshlakivsky and Searcy, 2013). Wicked problems can be understood as those which do not have clear formulations, are resistant to top-down solutions, are difficult to measure, are unique, and which resist singular, unambiguous interpretations (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Hoppe and Hisschemöller, 1996). The complexity of the interacting social, ecological and economic systems which produce sustainability challenges can be seen as giving rise to many of the traits associated with wicked problems, in so far as it is extremely difficult to measure, interpret or manage systems whose overall activity is irreducible to the sum of their constituent parts (Walker and Salt, 2006).

In an influential 2003 article, the political scientist Maarten Hajer describes novel and persistent societal problems, which in this thesis are connected to wicked sustainability challenges, as creating ‘institutional voids’: situations in which established political arrangements are unable to offer solutions which are deemed legitimate and effective (Hajer, 2003). Hajer’s discussion centres around western liberal democracies, and non-western scholars have therefore commented that his analysis may be less descriptive of different geopolitical contexts, serving as a reminder that this thesis’ discussion of USTs similarly reflects a limited geo-political and socio-historical context (Leong, 2017).

Hajer presents political institutions in the post-war West as following a classical-modernist model: governing through expert-based policy in line with constitutionally defined rules and processes (Hajer, 2003). During this period, Hajer argues that top-down institutional governance was effective due to the convergence of political, cultural and social adherences, which he terms ‘territorial synchrony’, around the nation-state model, as well as widespread public trust in the authority of scientific
knowledge and expertise (ibid., p.182). However, as society became simultaneously more globalised and more individualised, spurred by economic liberalisation and communication technologies, Hajer argues that the centrality of the nation state model; which afforded the authority of classical-modernist political institutions, was significantly decreased (ibid.). In view of this analysis, it is interesting to consider whether Hajer would interpret recent nationalist trends in European politics as seeking to restore the territorial synchrony of the nation-state model (Postelnicescu, 2016).

Hajer also argues that public trust in the efficacy of expert-based policy making has diminished, citing ‘widespread awareness of the ubiquity of unintended, perverse consequences of large-scale rationalized planning and the limits to centralized, hierarchical regulation as the dominant mode of collective problem solving (ibid., p.185). Hajer argues that this disaffection coincides with the emergence of ‘new problems and new problem-perceptions’ which existing institutional arrangements are unable to meaningfully address (ibid., p.177). Thus, it is no longer taken for granted that established institutional arrangements can provide an adequate response to societal problems.

Hajer claims that the trends he describes have led to the emergence of ‘new political spaces’ in which non-state actors, i.e. from the private sector, civil society and NGOs, play a greater role in setting the political agenda, and established political institutions cease to be the central locus of political activity (ibid., p.176). Hajer identifies environmental politics and the new politics of food as spheres in which new political spaces are likely to arise in response to novel and persistent problems (ibid., p. 177). It is within such new political spaces that Hajer’s institutional void manifests itself: namely, as uncertainty around what constitutes legitimate political activity in the absence of institutionally defined rules and norms.

Because of the heterogenous actors involved in new political spaces, and the complexity of the societal problems to which they respond, Hajer argues that singular interpretations of an appropriate course of action are less achievable in this context than they were in prior classical-modernist arrangements. Hajer therefore argues that new political spaces invite more deliberative approaches to politics, which may be better suited to reflexively engage with the uncertainties pertaining to novel societal problems. Hajer claims that such deliberative models can allow actors to ‘negotiate new institutional rules, develop new norms of appropriate behaviour and devise new conceptions of legitimate political intervention’, thereby producing a shared conception of appropriate action (ibid., p.176).

Hajer’s article can be tied to the ‘deliberative turn’ in democratic theory, where he is joined by authors such as John Dryzek in advocating for a deliberative politics which is discursive, reflexive, and operates outside of established political and institutional structures (Dryzek, 2000). It has been argued that deliberative democratic models are more equitable and inclusive than alternative, i.e. representative democratic models, as well as tending to produce better outcomes and knowledge overall; however, some question the empirical basis for these conclusions (Chappell, 2008).

1.3.2. Sustainability transition studies and learning
In recent years, the field of ST studies has emerged as an attempt to understand the mechanisms and processes through which societies respond to persistent sustainability challenges (Grin, Rotmans and Schot, 2010). A transition can here be defined as ‘a radical, structural change in a socio-technical or societal subsystem of society’ involving ‘long-term processes that change structures, practices and culture that are deeply anchored in a society’ and during which ‘a system changes in multiple dimensions: technology, actors, rules, infrastructures, power relations, patterns of thinking, problem definitions and solutions, cultural meanings.’ (Paredis, 2013, p.2).

A major theoretical approach within ST studies is the multi-level perspective (MLP), a framework which ‘distinguishes three analytical levels: niches (the locus for radical innovation), socio-technical regimes, which are locked in and stabilized on several dimensions, and an exogenous socio-technical landscape.’ (Grin, Rotmans and Schot, 2010, p. 495). Within ST research, the MLP is used to explore how ‘transitions, which are defined as regime shifts, come about through interacting processes within and between these levels.’ (Schatzki, 2011, p. 20). Thus, MLP scholars view experimentation at the
niche level as a potential catalyst for changes at higher scalar levels within a socio-technical system (Geels, 2005). Due to its mainly technological focus, recent scholars have argued that the MLP can be complemented using a practice theoretical approach, which can better represent the social dynamics involved in STs (McMeekin and Southerton, 2012; Crivits and Paredis, 2013). Such approaches are described in greater depth in the theoretical framework chapter of this thesis.

Responding to the sustainability challenges surrounding global urbanisation trends, ST scholars have begun studying urban sustainability transitions (USTs): structural changes within urban socio-technical systems which address persistent sustainability problems (Frantzeskaki et al., 2017). Insofar as cities are both a major source of unsustainability and places where innovative solutions are being tested in various ways, the urban context can be seen as a particularly relevant focus for ST studies. Adopting the MLP within studies of USTs, examples of niche experiments may be small-scale initiatives which transform or redesign an unsustainable subsystem within a city.

One recurring theme within ST studies is learning: transitions are described both in terms of ‘learning by doing’ and ‘doing by learning’, implying a dual conception of learning as both a vehicle and outcome of transition processes (Van Poeck, Östman and Block, 2018). However, there is a lack of conceptual clarity and empirical research supporting these appeals to learning within ST studies, which has been tied to an insufficient, or superficial use of learning theories (ibid.). Van Poeck et al. therefore highlight the need for research which conceptually and empirically investigates the role and significance of learning within sustainability transitions (ibid.) In order to conduct such research, these authors recommend the theoretical and analytical approach offered by the transactional perspective on learning, which has its basis in the pragmatist educational philosophy of John Dewey (ibid.). The transactional perspective on learning and its primary analytical method are described in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

1.4. Research question
Proceeding from the research aim of the Wicked Problems and UST project, to theoretically and empirically explore how political spaces of UST can function as educative spaces, as well as the research stimulus presented by Van Poeck et al., to study the relationship between learning and STs through the transactional perspective on learning, this thesis also aligns itself with recent scholarship applying practice theoretical approaches within ST studies (McMeekin and Southerton, 2012; Crivits and Paredis, 2013; Welch and Yates, 2018). The thesis thus sets out to answer the following research question:

*How can the role and significance of learning in USTs be understood through the transactional perspective on learning and practice theory?*
2. Background

Seen at the level of socio-technical regimes, USTs reflect processes taking place across very large spatio-temporal scales. While it is possible to conduct empirical analyses at this scale, in view of studying educative processes in situ, this thesis focuses on niche-level initiatives which address unsustainable elements within an urban socio-technical regime. The case presented in this thesis, Solikyl, is thus seen as targeting unsustainable regime trends in Gothenburg’s food system, including the commercial distribution of food, the way it is handled by the municipality, its distribution between individuals, and the technology involved in facilitating this distribution. As part of an international network of similar foodsharing initiatives, Solikyl also represents a wider set of socio-technical niches, which taken together challenge unsustainable regime trends at a far greater scale. Thus, linking back to the research question of this thesis, Solikyl is the empirical focus through which the role and significance of learning within urban sustainability transitions is investigated. Solikyl is here presented as an UST initiative which responds to the issue of food waste, which is framed in terms of a wicked problem and institutional void.

2.1. The food waste problem

SDG 12, which targets responsible consumption and production, includes a specific target for tackling global food waste (UN, 2015). It is estimated that one third of the food produced globally each year, 1.6 billion tonnes, is either lost or wasted, and this figure is projected to increase in the future (Gustavsson et al., 2011; Hegnsholt et al., 2018). This trend is unsettling in view of new evidence that world hunger is on the rise, with an estimated one in nine people suffering from undernourishment in 2017 (FAO, 2018). Food waste currently accounts for 8% of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, nearly the equivalent all forms of road transportation combined (FAO, 2014). Reducing global food waste is thus seen as one of the most important immediate pathways for limiting global warming (Hawken, 2017).

An EU commissioned study cites some of the main causes of food waste in Europe as ‘the inherent characteristics of food products and the ways through which they have to be produced and consumed’, ‘social factors and dynamics in population habits and lifestyles’, ‘individual behaviours and general expectations of consumers’, ‘other priorities targeted by private and public stakeholders’, as well as ‘non-use or sub-optimal use of available technologies, organisational inefficiencies of supply chain operators, inefficient legislation, and bad behaviours of consumers depending on unawareness, scarce information, and poor food skills’ (Canali et al., 2014, p.5). Perhaps unsurprisingly in view this plethora of causes, the report concludes that ‘The extreme complexity of the food supply chain does not allow the adoption of easy solutions applicable to all circumstances.’ (ibid., p.6).

While in low-income countries the majority of food waste occurs at the earlier stages of the production cycle, like transportation and storage, waste in high-income countries is primarily attributed to retailers and consumers at the distribution and consumption stages (Hegnsholt et al., 2018). Attempts to address these later stages been made in the form of marketing strategies employing branding, packaging and promotions (Calvo-Porral, Medin and Losada-López, 2017). However, concerns have been raised that such approaches amount to ‘greenwashing’, which fails to address the underlying behaviours and attitudes which lead to food being wasted (Oppolecchia, 2010; Blichfeldt, Mikkelsen and Gram, 2015). Tax incentives and legislation have also been implemented (i.e. House of Commons, 2017), which can perhaps have some influence on retailers, but appear limited in their capacity to influence underlying attitudes and behaviours.

A number of factors can be seen to make food waste a wicked problem: its underlying causes are manifold and complex, its scale is immense, and it resists straightforward interpretations and solutions. This reflects the multitude of levels from which the problem arises: supply chains, markets, consumer behaviour and legal frameworks all play an important role, and the combined scope of these make it difficult to grasp or address the problem in its entirety (Hegnsholt et al., 2018). In addition, the different stakeholders involved at these levels, i.e. retailers, farmers and consumers, are likely to see the problem in terms of different priorities and understandings, making uncontested, uniform solutions difficult to realise (Mourad, 2016). The heterogenous actors involved in the food waste problem can
be seen, in Hajer’s terms, as creating a new political space and institutional void (Hajer, 2003). Thus, if we adopt Hajer’s perspective, food waste invites a renegotiation of institutional rules and norms, and a reconception of appropriate attitudes and behaviours.

2.2. The Solidarity Fridge

The website foodsharing.de is a crowd-funded online platform which began in Germany in 2012. The site allows users to coordinate the collection and redistribution of food waste from local vendors such as restaurants and supermarkets; the food is then stored and distributed to the public via collection points (Rombach and Bitsch, 2015). The foodsharing movement can be seen as originating in ‘dumpster diving’: the practice of salvaging food and other items from commercial waste containers, an activity which is illegal in many countries including Germany (Wahlen, 2018). In addition to avoiding the potential health risks of dumpster diving, i.e. contact with chemicals, bacteria or sharp objects (Tibbetts, 2013); the foodsharing model extends this practice to a potentially wider audience, who might for example be concerned about food waste but put off by the social stigma or illegality of breaking into dumpsters.

The Solidarity Fridge (Solidariskt Kylskåp), or Solikyl, is a community food waste initiative in the city of Gothenburg which has been running since May 2016. Modelled on the German foodsharing movement, the project organises a network of volunteers carrying out regular pick-ups of unwanted food items from partners across the city, primarily restaurants and supermarkets. The food is transported to one of six fridges across various neighbourhoods in Gothenburg, which are open to the public at regular hours several times a week, during which people can either collect or donate food (Solikyl, 2018b, 2019b). The fridges’ visitors and volunteers represent a diverse range of ages and demographics, with regular visitors as well as frequent newcomers, and the group is continuing to expand by forming new partnerships and recruiting volunteers (Solikyl, 2019b).

Solikyl holds regular board meetings in order for members to plan their activities and discuss problems, as well as weekly hang-outs where meals are prepared using leftover food from the fridges (Appendix A). The project also forms part of a large number of community sustainability groups active in Gothenburg, many of which are tied to the transition movement (omställningsrörelsens), an international network of community led sustainability initiatives (Omställning Göteborg, 2018). Solikyl’s original fridge was hosted in a multi-purpose space called the transition workshop (omställningverkstan), and several of the venues which currently host Solikyl’s fridges simultaneously operate ‘bicycle kitchen’ (cykelköket) workshops, where people have free access to tools and advice from volunteers to repair their bicycle or to build a new one from scratch (Foodsaving-Today, 2017b).

Solikyl’s members coordinate their activity using the open source online platform Karrot, which was developed by the foodsaving worldwide network (Karrot, 2019). The platform is designed to facilitate independent community sustainability initiatives, which have determination over their own procedures and rules while also being able to interact with other organisations using the platform (Foodsaving Worldwide, 2016). Within Solikyl, Karrot is primarily used to coordinate pickups. When an available pickup is posted, the venue appears on a map along with instructions and the number of volunteers needed; users then sign up for times and locations which suit them. After each pickup, feedback is left describing what was collected, its weight, and any issues which might have arisen during the pickup, and this information is summarised at the end of each week. Within Karrot, users can have live chats as well as open group discussions. Applications for new members are also managed through Karrot, and group approval is required before gaining access to the site. In addition to Karrot, Solikyl has its own online discussion forum, where broader strategic discussions take place, and events such as board meetings are posted (Forum Solikyl, 2019a). While all users use Karrot for the day to day operations of the organisation, the forum is largely used by more active members in order to discuss topics relating the organisation as a whole (Forum Solikyl, 2019)
3. Theoretical Framework

This thesis applies two main theoretical approaches to explore the role and significance of learning in USTs. Inspired by recent ST scholarship, the first is a practice theoretical approach to studying social dynamics within socio-technical transitions. Practice theory is thus introduced in this chapter, both as a social theoretical model and as a recent approach within ST studies. Secondly, responding to Van Poecck et al.’s suggestion that discussions of learning in STs have lacked conceptual clarity due to a lack or superficial use of learning theory, to conduct its investigation of learning in USTs, this thesis adopts the authors’ suggested framework of the transactional perspective on learning. The thesis attempts to use these theories in dialogue with one another; while the transactional perspective deals with learning processes in situ, practice theory can interpret the broader social processes involved in USTs. Thus, it is thought that together these theories can illuminate the relationship between learning and USTs. Both pragmatism and practice theory understands human activity as relationally determined by its social and natural environment, and scholars have therefore argued that ‘a beautiful friendship’ between these theoretical approaches is possible, particularly in studies of organisational learning and change (Buch and Elkjaer, 2015 p.2).

3.1. Practice theory

Led by the sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens, practice theory arose in the 1970s as an attempt to address the so-called agency versus structure debate in the social sciences (Corsini et al., 2019). This debate considers whether individual actors or large-scale social phenomena are the primary determinant of human behaviour, and thus the appropriate focus for social analysis (Schatzki, 2001). An outlook according primacy to social structures can be tied to structuralist thinkers like Claude Levi Strauss, who ‘strongly emphasize the pre-eminence of the social whole over its individual parts’; as opposed to interpretivist approaches such as hermeneutics, in which ‘action and meaning are accorded primacy in the explication of human conduct’ (Giddens, 1984, p.1.2). Practice theory seeks to resolve the dualism it sees as arising from this debate, proposing as an alternative the view that individual actors and social structures are reciprocally shaped by one another at the level of practices.

Bourdieu addresses the debate as to whether structure or agency have primacy in social activity through his dialectical theory of practice, which is built around three central concepts: habitus, field and capital (Bourdieu, 1977). Habitus refers to the ‘systems of durable, transposable, dispositions’ which are internalised by actors within a social group, which ‘functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p.83 1990, p.53). In other words, the habitus represents a shared, normative way of perceiving the world which spontaneously regulates the activity and meaning making of both individuals and collectives. The concept of field then refers to the structured arenas in society in which such activity and meaning making occurs, for example, the social domains of law, education or religion (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu’s theory states that it is the distribution of various forms of capital, i.e. social, symbolic, cultural or economic, which determines the organisation and rules which constitute the structure of a particular field (Power, 1999).

For Bourdieu, practices arise from a dialectical relationship between habitus and field, which is to say that they are shared activities which embody an interplay between social structures and the way in which they are collectively interpreted by a social group. Practices are in this way ‘regulated’ but not determined by social structures. An analogy has here been made with jazz music, where musicians are limited by a set of formal and physical constraints, but nonetheless free to improvise and experiment to produce ‘versions that are barely recognizable’ (Power, 1999, p.49). Thus, although practices are given their underlying ‘rationality’ by social structures, this does not necessarily lead to a ‘mechanical reproduction of the initial conditions’ of the field (Bourdieu, 1977, p.95). Therefore, although necessarily shaped by the social structures in which they operate, practices can evolve through the spontaneous interpretation of the actors performing them. It is in this sense that practices are thought to reveal a dialectic interplay between social structures and individual agency, which becomes the focus for social analysis within practice theory.
Through his theory of structuration, Giddens also describes a process through which individual actors and social structures are reciprocally shaped at the level of practices, placing his theory between the ontological and epistemological ‘empire-building endeavours’ of functionalism and structuralism, and interpretivist approaches such as hermeneutics (Giddens, 1984, p.2). Giddens frames the former group of theories as neglecting the role of individuals’ judgement and rationality in shaping social practices, and conversely describes hermeneutic and phenomenological approaches as reductively viewing society as ‘the plastic creation of human subjects’ (ibid., 26). In order to address the structure-agency dualism he sees as arising from this debate, Giddens develops the principle of the duality of structure, which states that ‘the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize.’ (ibid., p.25). Thus, as in Bourdieu’s theory, practices are understood as the level at which social structures are both instantiated and shaped.

In this theoretical account, similarly to Bourdieu, Giddens presents social structures as a virtual order of rules and resources which spontaneously shape human activity at the level of practices. Rules are here defined as ‘techniques or generalizable procedures’ which guide social practices, something Giddens connects to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s conception of linguistic rules as ‘methodically applied procedures implicated in the practical activities of day-to-day life’ (ibid., p.21). Giddens argues that it is tacit knowledge of such practical rules which gives individuals a ‘generalized capacity to respond to and influence an indeterminate range of social circumstances’ (ibid., p.22). This internalisation of practical knowledge, Giddens claims, is both reproduced and reshaped through a continuous process of ‘reflexive monitoring’ at both an individual and collective level (ibid., p.4). Individuals and collectives can thereby modify the practices they participate in, and in doing so reshape the rules and resources which constitute social structures. Thus, Giddens argues that social structures, defined as virtual systems of procedural rules, both shape and are reshaped through the performance of reflexively monitored social practices.

3.1.1. Practice theory on sustainability transitions

Within ST studies, practice theoretical approaches have recently been applied in response to the fact that, despite seeing society and technology as inextricably linked, MLP analyses tend to focus more on the influence of technological innovation; the MLP has thus been said to provide ‘limited theoretical or conceptual explanation for the social dynamics that occur between different groups’ (McMeekin and Southerton, 2012, p.354). Thus, scholars have applied practice theory to the MLP concepts of sociotechnical niche and regime, relating regimes to ‘the overarching rules and understandings that coordinate and order the actions of producers, policymakers and consumers within a particular sociotechnical system.’ (McMeekin and Southerton, 2012, p.355; Crivits and Paredis, 2013). Practice theory can thus complement ST studies through an account of how strategic and non-strategic forms of activity within a sociotechnical system are enabled or constrained through configurations of practices.

Particularly with regards to patterns of consumer behaviour, Andrew McMeekin and Dale Southerton argue that practice theory can contribute ‘a more robust and suitably nuanced set of conceptual tools for advancing understandings of sustainability transitions’, by emphasising ‘the recursive relationship between practices as socially ordered entities and as performances’ (McMeekin and Southerton, 2012, p.358). This dual understanding of practices as both entities and performances draws from the practice theoretical approach of Andreas Reckwitz (Reckwitz, 2002). Thus, when considering STs from a practice theoretical perspective, these authors argue that ‘it is this recursive interaction (between entity and performance) where the dynamics of reproduction and change are located.’, and therefore suggest that empirical studies of transition processes using this theoretical approach should ‘start by looking at the elements that comprise the practice in question or at the doings that constitute the practice as performance.’ (McMeekin and Southerton, 2012, p.350, 357). Thus, within this thesis, the latter focus of practices as performance is adopted when considering the social dynamics underpinning USTs.

Another set of authors, Daniel Welch and Luke Yates, distinguish three forms of social configuration which are of relevance to practice theoretical accounts of STs. The first of these are bureaucratic organisations with explicit agendas, strategies and divisions of labour. The authors argue that the
efficacy and legitimacy of these organisations is connected to their reproduction of prevailing social practices, which implies that a shift in prevailing social practices will undermine the way these organisations operate, something which can be related to Hajer’s concept of territorial synchrony as establishing the authority of institutions. The second configurations Welch and Yates cite as relevant to STs are non-institutional social organisations such as community activist groups. In such groups, the authors claim that it is the shared performance of practices which produces a collective identity affording these actors political influence and legitimacy. The third configurations described by Welch and Yates are uncoordinated networks of actors whose distributed performance practices can produce unintended, large-scale outcomes. The authors suggest that if they become aware of their participation in such practices, actors within these latent-networks may in turn coordinate with one another to form more deliberately structured groups, an example being community activist groups which address unsustainable social practices (Welch and Yates, 2018).

The case study for this thesis, Solikyl, may be seen as an example of such a situation in which awareness of the food waste produced by commercial and domestic practices has led to a community initiative which responds to the problem through a coordinated performance of alternative practices. Within this thesis, the domestic-commercial food system in Gothenburg—which is interpreted as a socio-technical regime—is thus seen in practice terms as encompassing ‘the overarching rules and understandings that coordinate and order the actions of producers, policymakers and consumers’ (McMeekin and Southerton, 2012, p.355). Within this socio-technical regime, configurations of practices can be seen to produce unsustainable outcomes, such as commercial distribution practices, i.e. discarding aesthetically imperfect produce, or produce which has passed its sell by date but is still edible, as well as institutional practices, i.e., the handling of food waste at the municipal level, the legislative demands placed on businesses, as well as individual consumer practices, i.e. the way food is bought, stored and prepared. Thus, drawing from the theoretical perspective offered by Bourdieu and Giddens, this thesis explores the notion that modifying these unsustainable practices can contribute to reshaping the structuring rules and rationality of the prevailing socio-technical regime, facilitating a transition towards sustainability.

3.2. The transactional perspective on learning

The transactional perspective on learning is a theoretical approach positioned in response to a controversy between cognitivist and sociocultural learning theories. Cognitivist approaches, which focus on the internal mental processes of learners, are criticised for ignoring the significance of external i.e. cultural, institutional and environmental factors in shaping learning. Conversely, sociocultural approaches, which emphasise the influence of environmental factors upon learning, are said to lose sight of the role of individual mental processes in shaping the learner’s interactions with their environment (Ostman and Öhman, 2010). The controversy between cognitivist and sociocultural learning theories has echoes of the structure vs. agency debate in social theory previously mentioned. In both cases, a dualistic tendency seems to arise between theoretical perspectives which afford primacy either to individual actors and their internal experiences, or to the role of the external factors in shaping these. What practice theory and the transactional perspective attempt then is to overcome this dualism by revealing the mutually constitutive relationship between individuals and their environmental context.

The transactional perspective on learning has its theoretical foundation in the pragmatist educational philosophy of the 20th century, particularly the work of John Dewey and his conception of the relationship between experience, language and learning (ibid.). Dewey’s philosophy proceeds from an evolutionary understanding of living organisms as continuously adapting to their environment, and thereby affecting changes upon this environment (Dewey, 1928). This ongoing process of adaptation informs Dewey’s transactional concept of action, which treats individuals’ actions as inseparable from their environmental context. This leads into Dewey’s concept of experience: ‘When we experience something we act upon it, we do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return’ (Dewey, 2004, p.151). Experience thus reflects the transactional process of influence and adaptation through which an individual acts both within and upon its environment.
The second key aspect of Dewey’s concept of experience relates to the continuity of transactions between an individual and its environment: actions do not exist in isolation, but are shaped by those which have preceded them and will in turn shape future actions (Dewey, 1997). Dewey's conception of experience in terms of continuity and transaction shapes his account of learning, as something which takes place when individuals reflect on their experiences in order to shape future actions; thus, ‘To “learn from experience” is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence.’ (Dewey, 2004, p.152). Learning is thus a process of inquiry whereby an individual adapts its behaviour in response to an environmental stimulus, and in doing so attempts to reshape this environment. Pragmatists therefore see knowledge as assertable, or true, to the extent that it guides action towards solving real-life problems (James, 2003).

Dewey’s view of learning in terms of experience is connected to his idea of language, which he conceives as both formal and informal forms of communication representing transactional activity within a social environment, i.e. ‘oral and written speech, gestures, rites, ceremonies, monuments’, (Tesconi Jr., 1969, p.156; Dewey, 2008). For Dewey, communicating through language can thus extend experiential learning to become a collaborative process: language is ‘an active means for the coordination of common behaviour’, which facilitates ‘the establishment of cooperation in an activity in which there are partners, and in which the activity of each is modified and regulated by partnership’ (Dreon, 2017, p.4; Dewey, 1929, p.179). Dewey thus views language as an essential part of the transactional activity which leads to experiential learning: individuals are ‘defined by the linguistic and practical behaviour by means of which they respond to the situations they are continuously faced with.’ (ibid., p.7).

In his theoretical account, Dewey conceives of linguistic meanings as ‘signifying or evidential powers’ which arise when individuals communicate and coordinate their experiences (Dewey, 2007, p.56). Thus, claiming that that ‘meaning is instrumental’, Dewey sees linguistic meanings as produced by a certain communicative context rather than an underlying object of representation (Dewey, 1929, p.128). Linguistic meanings are therefore shaped by the social and practical context in which language is used: ‘a certain communicative context is required – both linguistic and practical – for words to mean what they mean’ (Dreon, 2017, p.5). Moreover, as a tool for communicating experience, which for Dewey encompasses both mental and physical activity, language “expresses” thought as a pipe conducts water’ (Dewey, 1928; Dewey, 1929, p.169). This ‘first-person perspective’ on language is adopted within the transactional perspective on learning, where language is seen as providing direct insight into individuals’ internal experiences. The transactional perspective thus maintains that ‘the relation between language, meaning and reality emerges when we are directly involved in the act of communication’ (Östman and Öhman, 2010, p.7).

In clarifying the first-person perspective on language, the transactional perspective draws on the later philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Similarly to Dewey, Wittgenstein sees linguistic meanings as inseparable from the practical use of language in everyday situations. The various practical contexts in which linguistic meanings are constructed, Wittgenstein terms ‘language-games’ (Wittgenstein, 1958). Wittgenstein shares the first-person view that individuals’ mental processes are directly implicated in their use of language: ‘When I think in language, there aren't 'meanings' going through my mind in addition to the verbal expressions: the language is itself the vehicle of thought.’ (Wittgenstein, 1958, §329). Thus, Wittgenstein’s account informs the transactional perspective’s view of language as revealing a process through which, in response to a problematic situation, individuals interact with their environments and one another in order to learn from experience.

Responding to the debate between cognitivist and sociocultural learning theories, the transactional perspective thus presents the view that both psychological and sociocultural factors influencing learning can be understood by observing the ways in which learners coordinate their experiences through the practical use of language. In their discussions of meaning, language and learning, both Dewey and Wittgenstein emphasise ‘the primacy of practice’, proposing that our knowledge and understanding of the world are inseparable from the practices through which we act within it (Volbers, 2017, p.1). Thus, the transactional perspective understands learning as a process through which an
individual or group forms practical responses to a problem, and proposes that this can be directly observed by studying the use of language.

3.2.1. Dewey's concept of habit

Another important idea within Dewey’s philosophy, which can be used to tie the transactional perspective on learning to practice theory, is the concept of habit. Dewey defines habit as:

that kind of human activity which is influenced by prior activity and in that sense acquired; which contains within itself a certain ordering or systematization of minor elements of action; which is projective, dynamic in quality, ready for overt manifestation; and which is operative in some subdued subordinate form even when not obviously dominating activity (Dewey, 1992, p.40).

This recalls Bourdieu’s description of habitus in terms of ‘systems of durable, transposable dispositions’ which ‘functions at every moment as a matrix, of perceptions, appreciations and actions’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p.83 1990, p.53). Equally, when Dewey writes that:

since habits involve the support of environing conditions, a society or some specific group of fellow-men, is always accessory before and after the fact. Some activity proceeds from a man; then it sets up reactions in the surroundings. Others approve, disapprove, protest, encourage, share and resist (Dewey, 1992, pp.16-17).

his description recalls Giddens’ account of practices as instantiating a virtual order of systemic rules and procedures which are reflexively monitored within a social group (Giddens, 1984). In view of these theoretical alignments, Dewey’s concept of habit can be seen as a bridge between the transactional perspective on learning and practice theory.
4. Methodology

In order to investigate the role and significance of learning in USTs, this thesis adopted a combination of empirical and analytical methods in view of the theoretical framework of the thesis and the research project it contributes to. To inform an analysis of UST initiatives, the empirical approach of a qualitative case study was selected for its ability to provide a broad perspective on a contemporary phenomenon through the triangulation of multiple data sources. The analytical methods chosen to interpret these empirical results were informed by the research goal of understanding the role of learning within USTs through the transactional perspective on learning and practice theory. Practical epistemology analysis (PEA), an analytical method developed to accompany the transactional perspective on learning, was applied to investigate learning processes in situ within USTs. Practice theory is not associated with any particular analytical methods, and dramaturgical analysis was therefore chosen as an analytical approach to studying the interactions between individual performances and structural environments involved in USTs. Dramaturgical analysis was also seen as an analytical approach which could engage broadly with the empirical results of the case study, and thereby contribute to a practice theoretical discussion of learning within USTs.

4.1. Empirical research methods

4.1.1. Qualitative case study

Yin describes a case study as ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.’ (Yin, 1984, p.23). Case study research generally employs multiple sources of data collection, which are then triangulated to give broader insights into the phenomenon under consideration (Gillham, 2010). The case-study approach is said to be fitting when the research is exploring a ‘how’ question, and when contextual factors are relevant to the phenomenon being researched (Baxter and Jack, 2008). This thesis’ investigation of learning within USTs can be seen as fitting these criteria, in so far as it deals with a contemporary phenomenon where there is an ambiguous boundary between phenomenon and context, something which relates to the failure among ST scholars ‘to present a clear, consistent understanding of the relation and distinction between ‘learning’ and the changes in society that may be the result of it.’ (Van Poeck, Östman and Block, 2018, p.6).

In this thesis, criteria for case selection were stipulated by the Wicked Problems and UST research project: specifically, that the case involved a UST initiative in Sweden which could be seen as responding to a wicked problems and institutional void. A practical consideration when selecting a case was that there was sufficient activity and openness among the individuals involved to provide enough data for the analysis, and Solikyl appeared to be an appropriate candidate in view of these criteria. To the extent that Solikyl was chosen as a case to gain insights into a wider phenomenon, namely learning within USTs, this was an example of an instrumental case study (Crowe et al., 2011). Based on the time and resources available for the study, the boundary of the case was the direct activity of Solikyl: its physical locations, the words and actions of its members, and material published online or in information pamphlets. Thus, the study was confined to the members of Solikyl and did not extend to the restaurants and supermarkets they collaborated with, or the fridges’ regular users, although speaking to these groups could have provided broader insights for the thesis’ analysis of learning in USTs.

One method of data collection used in the case study was a combination of semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Where the interviewee was more casually involved with the organisation, the unstructured format was preferred, as it was thought that a more conversational tone would produce more open responses (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009). Alternatively, when the person had a deeper involvement with the organisation, the semi-structured approach was used to raise specific points of interest; interview guides were used here to highlight relevant themes and questions. Consent forms explaining conditions for participation in the study and data use were signed by all interviewees.
(Appendix E). Recording were made using a digital audio recorder which were manually transcribed into text documents (Appendixes A, B, C, D). Two semi-structured and one unstructured interview were recorded with a total length of two hours and forty-one minutes.

Another method of data collection used was participant observation, an approach originating in anthropology in which the researcher takes an active role in the phenomenon being studied (Iacono, Brown and Holtham, 2009, p.39). In this thesis’ case study this involved helping with the operation of Solikyl’s fridges by loading produce into them, interacting verbally with visitors and volunteers, and acting as a recipient and consumer of the food in the fridges. This was intended to develop a practical understanding of the organisation, and to build rapport with the volunteers and visitors, mitigating changes in behaviour due to an awareness of being studied, known as ‘reactivity’ (Russell-Bernard, 2006, p.285). A total of three participant observations took place across two fridge venues, each lasting for the venues’ opening duration of two hours. During these participant observations, attention was paid towards dramaturgical elements discussed in the following subchapter; data was gathered here in the form of written notes. Volunteers were informed of the purposes of the research project and verbal consent was granted before recording details of conversations.

A further method of data collection was direct observation, in which the researcher assumes a passive role in the situation being studied (Woodside and Wilson, 2003). This method was used when recording a board meeting of the organisation, as a minimum of influence on the participants’ interactions was desired. However, an awareness of being recorded is inevitably likely to affect behaviour on some level. Recording was again made using a digital audio recorder and subsequently transcribed into digital text and translated from Swedish to English. Verbal consent was granted by all participants before recording began, with an understanding that they would remain anonymous in all published materials. A final method of data collection used was document analysis; here the online platform Karrot, as well as published materials in the form of brochures, blog posts, and forum discussions were analysed to better understand the operation of the organisation (Bowen, 2009).

4.2. Analytical research methods

4.2.1. Dramaturgical analysis

Dramaturgical analysis is a method for interpreting qualitative data which seeks to understand collective activity in terms of a performance. This method is based on ‘the assumption that there is a performance going on and that the performance has meaning for people participating in and observing the performance.’ (Feldman, 1995, p.49). Thus, borrowing from the vocabulary of the theatre, dramaturgical analysis makes use of concepts such as scripting, staging, setting, and actors. Through these concepts, the performative dimensions of a collective activity are analysed to reveal how meanings and outcomes are produced within certain material and normative configurations (ibid.). Dramaturgical analysis can be linked to performative approaches in the social sciences, which have been connected to Bourdieu’s concept of habitus (Butler, 1999). Thus, in line with both pragmatism and practice theory, dramaturgical analysis operates on the idea that ‘meaning is produced in action’ (Feldman, 1995, p.41).

The empirical object of dramaturgical analysis is a collective activity which has a purpose, in so far as it is being conducted in pursuit of a particular goal or outcome. This purpose is thought to guide the performance of the actors, as well as organisational structures which are formed around the activity. Thus, dramaturgical analysis concerns itself with how performative elements of an organised activity reveal its underlying meaning and purpose. This method is often applied towards public organisations, or those which interact with the public, where there is a sense that action is carried out with an audience in mind. The scale for dramaturgical analysis can range from a specific organisational event to the activity of an organisation as a whole. This thesis adopted the latter approach, considering the dramaturgy of Solikyl’s overall organisational activity (ibid). Dramaturgical analysis complements the
empirical design of a qualitative case study well, as it allows the researcher draw upon multiple data sources when conducting analysis, and to coherently represent these within an interpretative model. The operational concepts of this thesis’ dramaturgical analysis were scripting, staging, setting, actors and performance. Scripting here describes the framing of the performance in terms of purposes, i.e. what it is that the performance seeks to achieve. Staging then refers to the way these purposes are manifested in the setting of the performance, where setting refers to the spaces where performance takes place. Actors are described in terms of their roles and motivations for performance, and finally, performance is described in terms of what these actors do across settings to pursue the scripted purposes of the performance (ibid.). This thesis’ dramaturgical analysis thus began by establishing the scripting of Solikyl’s performance as an organisation, conceived as the main motivations and goals which foreground its activity. Following this, the different physical and online settings in which Solikyl’s activity takes place were presented, as well the way these are staged. Next, the actors involved in Solikyl’s performance as an organisation were outlined, along with their roles and motivations. Finally, the performance itself was described in terms of what these actors do across settings and how this relates to the scripting factors of the organisation.

In so far as an interpretation of dramaturgical elements is subjective, one limitation of this method may be that numerous alternative interpretations are possible, which undermines the researcher’s ability to draw generalised conclusions from the analysis. Such criticisms are familiar to qualitative research, particularly when using case study approaches (Firestone, 1993). Nonetheless, a lack of generalisability can be defended in this thesis to the extent that its overarching aim is to provide conceptual clarification, rather than reproducible statistical knowledge, around learning in USTs. Another limitation worth considering is the relatively few examples of studies using dramaturgical analysis, which makes it hard to situate this approach within an established analytical tradition. However, this can also be seen as an opportunity to explore the breadth of this approach’s application.

4.2.2. Practical epistemology analysis

PEA is the primary analytical method developed to apply the transactional perspective on learning to empirical examples; this thesis thus applied PEA to pursue its research goal of understanding learning within USTs through the transactional perspective. The analysis proceeds from a first-person perspective on language as representing experience and meaning, and thus while the empirical focus of PEA can vary -the method had been used creatively in different contexts (Maivorsdotter and Wickman, 2011; Maivorsdotter and Quennerstedt, 2012, 2018)- verbal exchanges taking place in real-life situations are the most common empirical focus (Wickman and Östman, 2001). In this thesis, PEA was applied to a discussion excerpted from a board meeting, during which participants engage in a verbal exchange to collectively address a problematic situation within the organisation.

Five operational concepts were used in this thesis’ PEA: purpose, stand-fast, gaps, relations and reactualisation. Purpose describes the overall aim which is driving the situation, framed in terms of a problematic situation which the participants are trying to overcome. To give an example, if two friends are discussing how best to cross a stream, then the friends’ purpose would be seen as getting to the other side. This purpose can be either implicit or explicit within the language used by the participants, and individuals may additionally have their own proximate purposes (Wickman, 2013). The first step of PEA is thus to identify the purposes which appear in response to a problematic situation. In this thesis, ultimate and proximate purposes were derived from both the discussion itself and subsequent interviews with participants.

The next operational concept for PEA, stand fast, relates to Wittgenstein’s account of what is fixed in a language game, and thus refers to meanings which are uncontested, or taken for granted within a particular communicative context (Wickman and Östman, 2001). For instance, the meanings of the words ‘across’ and ‘stream’ would be said to stand-fast in the question ‘How can we get across this stream?”. It is not assumed that what stands-fast is always, or necessarily unambiguous, but rather that, based on their shared experience, there is enough common understanding among participants in a verbal exchange that such things do not require further explanation. As with the distinction between
Gaps refer to areas where there is a lack of prior experience and understanding to guide participants’ action in response to a problematic situation. Gaps are thus seen in terms of what does not stand fast within a verbal exchange, and therefore requires further knowledge and meaning-making (Wickman and Östman, 2001). Within the question ‘How can we get across this stream?’ a gap is thus revealed in the words ‘How can we’: which reflects the need to develop a meaningful response to the identified problem. Gaps are in this sense closely related to the purpose of learning, as it is by filling gaps that participants form new experiences and shared meanings in response to a problematic situation (Maivorsdotter and Quennerstedt, 2018). The second step of PEA is thus to study the use of language to identify what stands fast in the discussion and where gaps appear.

Relations refer to the way in which elements of experience are understood with reference to one another (Wickman and Östman, 2001). In this sense, something stands fast in a discussion when there are sufficient relations across participants’ shared experience to establish common understanding, and conversely, gaps appear when the participants’ existing experience is insufficient to establish such understanding. The third step in PEA is thus identifying the relations construed by participants to resolve gaps and respond to the problematic situation. When new relations are construed, meaning-making and opportunities for learning are said to have taken place, in so far the participants establish new conceptions of purposeful action, through which they can modify their interactions with their environment and thereby learn from the resulting experience (Wickman and Östman, 2001).

One way in which participants construe new relations is through a process termed reactualisation, during which past experiences are recalled to fill gaps and establish meaningful pathways for action (Rudsberg, Öhman and Östman, 2013). Reactualisation thus reflects Dewey’s principle of continuity: ‘every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after.’ (Dewey, 1997, p.35). Taking a first-person perspective on language, these reactualised experiences are treated as observable in participants’ use of language. Thus, the final step in this thesis’ PEA was to identify the reactualisation of experiences during the construal of relations within the discussion. This step can reveal the intrapersonal, interpersonal and institutional transactions which have been privileged in creating meaning making and opportunities for learning: and is thus used in this thesis to inform its analysis of learning in USTs (Maivorsdotter and Quennerstedt, 2018).
5. Results and Analysis

This chapter will now present the results and analysis of the thesis’ case study. This will begin with the dramaturgical analysis of Solikyl, where attention was paid to how dramaturgical elements position the organisation within its institutional surroundings, and how actors’ combined performance in this context can be related to a transition towards sustainability. Following this, the PEA will be presented, which analyses a verbal exchange between Solikyl’s members during one of the organisation’s board meetings. Using the operational concepts of purpose, stand fast, gaps, relations and reactualisation, this section will illustrate how participants’ use of language establishes a problematic situation within the discussion, and how meaning making and opportunities for learning are formed in response to this situation. These analyses are carried out in view of the research aim of understanding the role and significance of learning within USTs, and provide the empirical basis through which this relationship is explored in the subsequent discussion chapter.

5.1. Dramaturgical analysis

5.1.1. Scripting

The scripting of Solikyl’s performance has been interpreted from interviews with the organisations’ active members, including the founding member, as well as online materials such as blog posts. From these sources, two main motivations appear as scripts for Solikyl’s performance as an organisation. As stated on the Solikyl website, their first main goal is to reduce domestic and commercial food waste in Gothenburg by targeting the waste of households, restaurants and supermarkets (Solikyl, 2018a). The practical steps laid out for achieving this goal are to ‘spread solidarity fridges across the city’ and ‘to get more food shops to cooperate’ with the project (Foodsaving Today, 2017). Thus, the first script for Solikyl’s performance is their practical target of reducing food waste in Gothenburg: by changing domestic and commercial behaviour, and by expanding their number of fridges and partnerships.

The second scripting motivation for Solikyl’s performance as an organisation reflects a broader, more ideological ambition: to provide a model for self-organising community initiatives which respond to problems of unsustainability. Solikyl’s founding member conveyed this during an interview:

\begin{quote}

it’s about showing a way for people to organise in community projects: self-organising: that’s the most interesting aspect of the whole thing for me... People should empower themselves and take the lead. Organise on a more horizontal basis... I think it’s the only task worth pursuing to solve some really big problems of the way we live which is unsustainable. Instead of, you know, relying on the private sector and companies, and even government. Many of these are the ones that created the problem in the first place.

(Appendix A)
\end{quote}

Thus, another script for the organisation is to provide a model for self-organising community sustainability initiatives which operate outside of established institutional structures.

Several influences were mentioned in the interview which are relevant to these scripts. For instance, the German foodsharing model was ‘basically copied’ when launching the Solikyl project, and thus informed its practical and ideological ambitions (Appendix A). Another important influence cited in the interview was Elinor Ostrom, the Nobel Prize winning economist, who is known for developing principles for the governance of common pool resources without the need for centralized authority or privatisation (Ostrom, 1990). Ostrom’s ideas can be traced within the scripting of Solikyl: ‘You should have a community… and you should also have penalties and sanctions which are proportional. All of these things: I reflect a lot about them and try to, yeah, use them in the real-life expression’ (Appendix A). Thus, the scripting of Solikyl’s performance as an organisation can be connected to the political and academic influences which have informed the project.
Another factor which influences Solikyl’s scripting, which was alluded to previously, is a perception of the inadequacy of institutional responses to the food waste problem:

Because basically the institutional answers for food waste so far has been, like, you donate to charity, right? .... You donate the food waste or the good food to charity and you come up with these market strategies to sell it for a discounted price and so on, stuff like that. But I think all these strategies have reached their potential and their limits. Like you can have apps which is all very good, you can have the supermarkets reducing the price when it’s close to the best before date, and very few like they are donating to the charities. What we’ve seen and what we’ve learned during this process is that, it doesn’t matter how much you give discounted prices, food is still being wasted.... This doesn’t change consumer behaviour very much. (ibid.)

Similar thoughts were raised during an interview with a Solikyl board member, who felt that the bureaucratic constraints of institutions led to an inefficient use of resources:

you could say that these things already exist: government, schools, the private sector, non-profits are already trying to do the same thing basically. They have the resources, they have the knowledge. But we don’t want to use the old models of charities or non-profits. We don’t want to go the bureaucratic way into solving these problems.... charities have to create the bureaucratic structures, they have to fit into a system where they have a lot of expenses, even if their intentions in the beginning were right, after a decade or two it becomes like a brand to feed the organisation itself. Once you grow you get employees, you get offices, you get cars, you build this infrastructure, then it becomes the goal itself just to survive, to keep up all these expenses. And then you have to start thinking of business models.... if you go through a municipality, it’s going to be financed through taxes, it’s going to be very regulated, someone will have to be employed, and they do a lot of great work for sure, but the amount of money that goes into this solution is ridiculously high for the amount of good they actually accomplish.... My point is that when government or the city is involved, the bureaucracy around it is so enormous – it’s understandable why, it’s just that in a resource sustainability way of thinking it’s just a waste of resources. So you can have five bureaucrats for two people engaged in an initiative like this, and they need to document everything and go to meetings and check all the economic... It’s just such a waste of resources that you start thinking do I want to contribute to this system or do I want to be part of this new way of solving problems (Appendix B)

A similar aversion towards institutional bureaucracy was conveyed during an interview with one of Solikyl’s ambassadors. This came up while discussing a proposal being explored by Solikyl, of forming a partnership with the educational non-profit Studiefrämjandet:

- Interviewer: What would be the pros and the cons of being partnered with them?
- The pros is we can be here in this locale and have our fridges here, we can also print things out or put something up on their website
- Interviewer: How about the cons?
- The cons? We have to like make everyone write their names when they sign in
- Interviewer: A lot more bureaucracy?
- A lot more bureaucracy. And if we go for that then we will stop existing because its built around these structures (Appendix C)

In each of these examples, dissatisfaction with conventional institutional models thus appears as an important aspect of Solikyl’s scripting as an organisation. This sentiment is mirrored by the organisation’s intention to demonstrate the possibility of a better model outside of these institutional structures. The benefits of such an alternative model were articulated by the project’s founder:
these projects of community organising, I think they are more effective because they are closer to the ground, closer to people, and people stop becoming passive consumers and they become active agents of change, of problem solving. And there’s also some literature on democratic participation which shows that when you bring problems closer to the people and empower them to solve these issues, it will happen more effectively than say like have a top down structure or some bureaucrats deciding for them, or just maybe some entrepreneurs trying to come up with the latest solutions or ideas for that. There is always a bias in market solutions, and there is also bias in these top down hierarchies of governance. (Appendix A)

This view, that less hierarchical organisational models bring about change more effectively than established institutions, thus feeds into Solikyl’s scripting motivation of providing an example for self-organising community initiatives.

A related benefit introduced by the board member was that Solikyl’s model creates fewer barriers for participation:

these bureaucratic systems put a lot of barriers to entry for anyone. Often, it’s like the people who engage the most in non-profit associations are people who already have a job, are already well educated... But then you have a lot of other groups of people who don’t find it so easy to enter into this association or group of people. And we think this way of doing it, the decentralized, non-bureaucratic, more open way, can invite those other groups. (Appendix B)

Thus, Solikyl is scripted as having an organisational model which is both less hierarchical and more accessible than those of established institutions. This point was stressed by the board member on the issue that Solikyl does not want to be seen as a charity, as this would make the fridges’ recipients see themselves more as passive recipients than active agents:

This point was very clear from the beginning: we are not a charity. And we need to make this clear to people. Because it’s not clear. People know the name, they know the place and they know there is free food, what’s the difference with a church? They don’t really analyse what the difference is, they don’t care. But we are very keen to make people understand, our method is to be open to engagement basically. Maybe they don’t care now, but maybe after the tenth time they will stand in the queue and talk to someone and someone will say ‘oh you know you can actually do something’. And then they see there is something I can do. (ibid.)

Thus, part of Solikyl’s scripting is an effort to encourage people to view themselves as change agents through an active engagement with the project.

5.1.2 Setting & Staging
Proceeding from the scripting of Solikyl’s performance, its main settings and their staging will now be described. Central among the physical settings for Solikyl’s performance as an organisation are the six fridges and their venues. The staging of these spaces can be discerned from their description on Solikyl’s website:

An open fridge or pantry is a point of redistribution, where food from individuals or a grocery store can be stored temporarily until it finds its way to someone’s stomach, instead of just being thrown away. These redistribution points are open to the public, to anyone who wants to either leave or take food from it, with no money or reciprocity required. (Solikyl, 2018a)
Thus, the fridges provide the physical setting for the performance of storing and distributing food waste, and are staged to reflect Solikyl’s scripting as open, non-hierarchical and self-organising:

> There is no need for constant supervision of the fridge by any kind of formal organization (a company, a charity or public authorities), which would be responsible for the giving and taking happening on this food sharing point. There is no need either for a boss, whether from a company or from a non-profit, to organize or dictate how these interactions are going to take place. (Foodsaving-Today, 2017a)

Another setting for Solikyl’s performance are board meetings. As spaces for deliberating on the operation and goals of the organisation, these are staged to reflect the scripting of Solikyl as driven by the engaged participation of its members. As expressed by the project’s founder: ‘we like you to come to a meeting, so that you participate in the meeting, so that you’re also making decisions about it together with the other people who might be not satisfied with what you’re doing’. The more informal setting of hangouts are then staged ‘To create relationships. To create some social capital.’ (Appendix A). Thus, the settings of meetings and hangouts reflect the scripting of Solikyl as self-organising and community driven.

Another important setting for Solikyl’s performance as an organisation are the digital platforms of Karrot and the Solikyl Forum. The staging of these digital settings in relation to the scripting of the organisation is intimated in a blog post:

> I’ve always been very enthusiastic about the level and scale of organization that networks, with no formal hierarchies, can achieve by using digital platforms. It is especially important that this can happen without a for-profit company controlling the platform and setting the framework of how people can interact, which is usually the case for tech companies of the so-called sharing economy. (Foodsaving Today, 2017b)

The staging of Solikyl’s digital settings was also communicated in the interview with the board member:

> We think more sustainable is to build a new platform with the incentive that people want to do things: they want to get food or they want to get bikes: they want to help, they want to share. So once they get off Facebook to communicate with people there are actually two benefits: one is that you get access to these resources and the other one is that you remove your time on these platforms that are designed to make you into a consumer: consuming content. I think it’s double win, because you can get a person away from this consumer promoting machine. For me personally, I couldn’t have a good conscience being on these old platforms, just like with the old structure of non-profits and charities: even if we can reach some more people it’s just going to hurt us long-term. So my viewpoint is that the platform is really important to scale up and connect to these initiatives with similar values (Appendix B)

Thus, the staging of Solikyl’s digital settings reflects the scripting motivation of engaging people more directly as change agents through non-hierarchical, self-organising models operating outside of institutional structures.

5.1.3. Actors

Within its physical and digital settings, there are a number of actors involved in Solikyl’s performance as an organisation; a summary of some of their different roles and motivations was offered during the interview with Solikyl’s founder:

> I usually say that between our peers in Solikyl, you have very clear different levels of participation. And what we want is to make sure that all of these levels are addressed and that they are somehow contributing to the project. So you have like the most basic,
which is just people come to the fridges and consume the food. That’s somehow contributing to the food not being wasted. And then you have like people who become food savers, they do pick-ups and bring to the fridges. They might do that out of different concerns or out of different reasons. Maybe like more environmental concerns, or it might just be for more selfish reasons. Like they just want the food. Which is also fine as long as they do what they’re supposed to do. And that’s sort of the crux of the thing, when people come to us with selfish reasons, well they have an interest and they just want the food, completely fine, as long as they don’t create problems right? Then it’s fine. Then you have people who are really getting involved and really spending a lot of time on it. Probably the people who you are interviewing. They see the whole point of how to organise in this kind of structure, more horizontally and so on. (Translated) (Solikyl, 2019c)

Proceeding from this description, the first set of actors within Solikyl can be seen as the fridge’s recipients. During participant observations this group was made up of local residents who were diverse in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. Solikyl’s pamphlet mentions the diversity among the users of the fridges, who include students, pensioners and immigrants (Solikyl, 2019b). For most of the recipients during the participant observation, their role was a simple matter of checking the food which was available and taking the items they wanted, although others stayed for longer periods of time to converse with volunteers. Most of the visitors appeared to be regulars, some of whom would queue up outside the venue well in advance of its opening hours, while some were coming for the first time and received an introduction on how the system worked.

The next set of actors are the volunteers, or foodsavers, who are responsible for picking up food from partners and transporting it to the fridges. Solikyl’s pamphlet advertises the role in the following way:

There is no better way to get involved in the fight against food waste and to help others than to become a foodsaver. This involves you being responsible, together with others, for picking up food from our partners (shops, cafes, restaurants, etc.) and delivering it to the nearest solidarity fridge. You obviously get to bring some of the food home as well! (Translated) (Solikyl, 2019c)

Thus, as also mentioned in the founding member’s description, foodsavers may have a greater concern with the issue of food waste, and broader environmental or altruistic motivations for their participation. However, it was stated that these motivations are immaterial so long as the foodsavers carry out their practical tasks in line with the organisation’s guidelines (Appendix A). One important aspect foodsavers’ role is making sure that the food being collected passes a quality inspection and can be deemed safe for distribution and consumption (Solikyl, 2019c).

The next set of actors in Solikyl’s organisational performance are ambassadors, who take on an a more strategic role within the organisation. This position is presented in Solikyl’s pamphlet in the following way:

Are you good at communicating, arguing, or even nagging and being stubborn when necessary? We would like you to become a Solikyl ambassador! As an ambassador, you become the face of Solikyl and represent us in different contexts such as events, but above all, you get us new collaborating partners. You play a crucial role in the organisation by contacting supermarkets, restaurants or new premises to house solidarity fridges. The more ambassadors there are in the city, the more food we can save and the more people can become engaged in their neighbourhood (Translated) (Solikyl, 2019c).

The role of an ambassador is thus to gain Solikyl new partnerships and venues for fridges, and thereby expand the organisation, allowing it to save more food waste and distribute to more parts of the city. As public representatives, the ambassadors are tasked with projecting a positive image of the
organisation and building it a good reputation. Another aspect of the ambassadors’ role is making stores aware that they are not legally responsible for the food that they donate to Solikyl. In the document ‘Guide for new ambassadors’, rules are laid out for becoming an ambassador, and an entry exam is included to confirm a person’s eligibility. The rules are that ambassadors must attend a board meeting to get to know other group members and receive guidance, as well as register on the Solikyl forum and answer the test questions: which cover organisational routines, food security policies, and the legal obligations of partners (Solikyl, 2019a).

Another set of actors in Solikyl’s performance are board members, who have an important role in managing the strategic direction of the project, and ensuring that all volunteers and ambassadors are sufficiently well instructed and equipped to fulfil their roles. These actors’ motivations are largely reflected in the scripting factors of the project; nonetheless, a variety of perspectives are represented among these actors, which means that scripting factors are not always interpreted in the same way (Appendix D). Thus, another part of the board members’ role is deliberating with one another, as well as taking on board the opinions of foodsavers and ambassadors, in order to build consensus around decisions made within the organisation (Appendix A). Other responsibilities for the board include facilitating the expansion of the organisation, as well as intervening in disputes and exercising authority when necessary, as described in a post on the Solikyl forum:

The Board of Directors shall complete what is stated in the association's statute: to facilitate food rescue. This means that the board works to facilitate the creation of local groups in different neighbourhoods (with knowledge, contacts, tools, methods and also money when it really is needed) and establish these groups so that they can function as independently as possible, taking into account that these groups can manage their own cooperation and mutual solidarity, in a way that is inclusive and increases participation. The Board is responsible for the collaboration of all local and working groups. The board can intervene when conflicts arise and cannot be resolved locally. (Translated) (Forum Solikyl, 2019b).

Another important set of actors, who are offstage within this dramaturgical analysis, are the partner organisations providing food for the fridges. It is their role to communicate with the ambassadors how this can be arranged in a way that works for them, and to make the food available for foodsavers upon collection. Solikyl’s pamphlet presents some benefits which can motivate these actors, such as ‘reduced waste management costs’, ‘goodwill: your store is visible at our target audience, on social media and news articles’ and ‘long-term customer relationships: people who use the fridges say they have started to shop more often with our partners’ (Translated) (Solikyl, 2019b).

Finally, there are those who can be seen as the audience for Solikyl’s performance as an organisation, and who the organisation would like, through this performance, to encourage to become actors. This includes community members who are not yet aware of the project and could become fridge recipients, or those who are concerned about environmental and sustainability problems and might be interested in becoming a volunteer. Another part of this audience are the supermarkets and restaurants who might be unaware of the organisation or have doubts and concerns which are preventing them from becoming partners: i.e. that they will be held legally responsible if someone becomes ill (Foodsaving Today, 2017c). Thus, through its performance as an organisation Solikyl seeks to encourage this audience to become active participants.

5.1.4. Performance
Solikyl’s performance as an organisation is the practical sum of what its actors do across various settings to realise the scripting motivations of the project. A main element of this is food saving itself, which is initiated in the online setting of Karrot and ends in the physical setting of the fridges. A number of actors are involved in this performance: partners make food available for a pickup; foodsavers collect, transport and store the food, as well as making sure that it is safe for consumption; and recipients finally retrieve and consume the food. This aspect of Solikyl’s performance contributes
to the organisation’s scripting motivations of reducing food waste in Gothenburg, changing domestic and commercial behaviour, and making use of an independent digital infrastructure. A related performance is ambassadors forming new partnerships, which involves them making persuasive arguments and dispelling doubts and concerns partners may have, which corresponds with the scripting motivation of expanding the organisation and ultimately allowing greater quantities of food to be saved. Another important aspect of Solikyl’s performance as an organisation are its weekly hangouts, which function to build social capital within the organisation and allow new members to get to know the group. Hangouts also provide a discussion forum where the members can share and debate their ideas about the project. The organisation’s performance also takes place in board meetings and forum discussions: where strategies for the project are decided and problems addressed, and the scripting of the organisation is thus defined and deliberated within these performances; an example of this is explored in in the following PEA. The discussions taking place in these performances are open to all of the organisation’s members, reflecting its scripting as open and less hierarchical than established institutional models.

5.2. Practical Epistemology Analysis
The object of this thesis’ PEA is a discussion which took place during a Solikyl board meeting, the purpose of which was to establish whether the organisation should continue to structure itself as an association going forward (Appendix D). The underlying problem here was uncertainty and a lack of consensus on whether, or in what form, the association structure should be continued in the future. In particular, two features of the association structure are addressed within the discussion. The first is a distinction between members and non-members, and there being specific requirements for acting on behalf of the organisation. The second is having regular board meetings to define and implement procedural rules and strategies for the organisation.

Some insight as to why these issues came up in the board meeting was provided during subsequent interviews with the participating members. In particular, one incident was mentioned in which volunteers had acted in violation of the organisation’s guidelines, creating difficulties for the group:

*This case that I’m telling you is about when things really started not working… Some people doing the pick-ups at (location), they were really failing to do their jobs, somehow, the minimal things, and not bringing the food to the fridge, they were collecting a lot for themselves on the spot. So that’s when we had to say ok let’s shut them off for a while until they come to a meeting and we solve this. (Appendix A)

Another interviewee also brought up this incident:

- Yeah right now there’s a problem, there has been two persons contacting the same store and not really talking to anyone else in the organisation
- Interviewer: Are they not using Karrot?
- No, and then we had to like have a meeting with everyone involved and we had to set up rules for before you can get in touch with a store in the name of Solikyl…. Or whether they at least need to come to a meeting, or they need to write somewhere on the forum about what they’re doing or if it’s ok to just say we have a concept of foodsaving and a person comes, reads about it, hears someone tells them about it and do the same thing, and do it in the name of Solikyl, or do they have to like report to the board of Solikyl before they can do anything in the name of Solikyl….

This situation thus led to reflections within the group concerning the requirements for participation and membership in the organisation:

- We’re discussing it. I think most of us do have the opinion that we want to have it as open as possible but maybe some see that we have to have some rules. For me, I would
rather that everyone can contribute in the way that they want to contribute. So, we’re discussing it. (Appendix C)

During the board meeting discussion, several gaps: areas where there is a lack of prior experience and knowledge to guide action, are revealed with respect to the problematic situation of uncertainty surrounding the association structure. The first gap is how membership should be defined within the organisation, and whether it is helpful to have this as a requirement for participation. Participant A introduces this gap, asking whether there should be a distinction between members and non-members, and whether membership should be a requirement for participation:

A: - I thought it would be great if we could discuss a little bit…, if we want ‘members’… I am thinking more whether it should be a requirement, but maybe this is missing something

Participant E connects this to the broader question of whether Solikyl should continue to structure itself as an association: establishing the broader problematic situation:

E: - I think the question is whether or not we choose to be an association. Should we continue with that form or not?… do we want this structure and why? Is there, is there any reason left to have this organisational structure…. I think it is important that we decide whether those involved with the group want to continue with the association, so we can invest a bit into it, otherwise this will just be hard work that you want to forget. But it is good if we discuss whether we want to keep the association structure going forward, and whether Solikyl’s project can exist without being an association.

Participant E here introduces several interconnected gaps. The first is whether there are good reasons to continue with the association structure going forward, and whether this is an issue the group can agree. Another is whether there are viable alternatives to the existing association model which would be preferable. These gaps can be seen as creating the purpose of the discussion, namely responding to uncertainty and a lack of consensus around Solikyl’s organisational structure. Participant E establishes this by saying: ‘it is good if we discuss whether we want to keep the association structure going forward.’; and the other participants tacitly confirm this through their engagement in the remaining dialogue.

Over the course of the discussion numerous relations are formed to fill these gaps and respond to the problematic situation. Some of these connect the association with various instrumental benefits, one example being the relation between having an association structure and the organisation being able to gain new partnerships more easily. Participant A introduces this relation while considering the future: ‘I think that sometimes if we can be considered more as an association, it might be easier to present ourselves to other organisations or secure funding. They want to see that it has worked, that it has participating members and so on’. Subsequently, for participants B and E, this relation is formed in consideration of the partnerships the organisation has already been able to gain. Both characterise this in terms of the organisation adapting to its institutional surroundings; while in passive terms Participant E states: ‘we were forced to have the organisational structure to formalise, professionalise and be able to get to a lot of collaborations’, Participant B states more actively that ‘we have used this form as needed because we live in a world where things need to be formalised’. The relation between a formalised association structure and more easily gaining partnerships is uncontested throughout the discussion and thus appears to stand fast. The reactualised experiences informing this relation involve the organisation’s institutional environment: its existing and potential collaborators made up of largely private commercial actors and some in the public sector. This institutional environment is experienced as having imposed external pressures on the organisation: ‘we were forced to have the organisational structure’; ‘we live in a world where things need to be formalised’; ‘They want to see that it has worked’ (Appendixes A, B, D). Thus, these participants’ experiences inform a relation between adapting to this institutional environment and being able to successfully operate within it.
Participant E forms another positive relation between having the association structure and the organisation being able to more easily resolve internal conflicts:

\[E: \text{- } \text{...The organisation must be formalised, and then we can take this opportunity when there is, as might be, a conflict, or someone must have some sort of authority that must make a decision formally. And then there is a forum there, which is where you can gather and can have a voice.}\]

The relation here is thus formed between the association structure and a capacity to authoritatively resolve internal conflicts, which responds to the gap concerning whether the association structure is beneficial for the organisation. The reactualised experiences involved here are on one hand intrapersonal: linked to this participant’s personal vision for the organisation, as elaborated during an interview: ‘we like you to come to a meeting, so that you participate in the meeting, so that you’re also making decisions about it together with the other people who might be not satisfied with what you’re doing’ (Appendix A). Also reactualised here is the participant’s interpersonal experience with other volunteers: ‘It requires more effort to bring them into the mental space of like, you’re not here just to do pick-ups: now you have to sit down with other people and discuss these things.’ (ibid.) Based on these experiences, Participant E thus forms a positive relation between the association structure and the internal cohesion and management of the organisation.

Another set of relations concern the drawbacks of a formalised association structure, and underpinning these is another relation which stands fast in the discussion, namely between the continued existence of the project and the work of members who are driven and motivated. Participants E and B both establish this when they say that ‘there must be people who drive the association on’ and that ‘for an association to have any meaning you need some members who are very, very driven.’ Insofar as participants E and B have been highly active in the organisation from the beginning, this relation can be seen as reflecting these participants’ intrapersonal experience of their own hard work. This is a relation which remains uncontested in the discussion and thus appears to stand fast.

Addressing the gap as to whether membership should be a requirement for participating in the organisation, Participant C suggests that this could have the undesirable effect of deterring people: ‘I have gotten the impression that there were quite a few who do not want to be registered, who want it to be a bit different.’ This relation thus appears to reflect Participant C’s interpersonal experience with prospective volunteers. Proceeding from this idea, Participant E relates the formalisation of the association structure, and the bureaucracy this entails, with the project losing momentum. This is conveyed through macabre imagery: ‘should you drag the whole corpse along with you all the time? Or should you let the corpse die out?... Do you kill the corpse or let it kill you?’ Participant E here reactualises intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences of previous organisations: ‘For some reason I think of Gothenburg Hacker Space’; in an interview the participant stated: ‘we don’t want the bureaucracy… we don’t want more meetings, because all these people are already involved in so many associations. They get sick of going to board meetings.’ Thus, concerning the gap as to whether there are sufficient benefits to justify continuing the association structure, positive and negative relations appear to be in tension for Participant E. On one hand, the association is related to the instrumental benefit of more easily gaining partnerships, and on the other to a loss of enthusiasm which threatens the engagement and participation needed for the project to keep going.

There are two instances in the discussion in which new relations, which go beyond participants’ previous experiences, can be said to appear. In so far as these represent a new way of seeing and acting in response to a problematic situation, they can be seen as instances of meaning-making which create opportunities for learning. The first of these is between the existing digital platform, Karrot, and the bureaucratic and managerial tasks currently carried out by the board meetings:

\[E: \text{- } \text{Or try something new. Because the way I see it, using Karrot as an organisational hub may be able to fill all these functions, so you no longer have a need for an association, or it can have a smaller role.}\]
This relation addresses the gap as to whether there is an alternative approach to structuring the organisation which is preferable to the current model. The reactualised experiences informing this relation, as conveyed in an interview, may be of a shift in the reception of Solikyl by its prospective partners, as well as greater public awareness of the food waste problem:

maybe we are so big that stores will talk to us anyway; whether we are an association or not we are already well known, people can trust us.’; ‘it’s weird, because the project is now two years old, and if you compare those two years, it’s much easier now because of the shift in people’s thinking about food waste. It’s much easier not only because we are known but because the media has picked it up, the public tv has picked up this topic: it’s mentioned on the news... The store owners are much more open to discuss at least. Before it was even impossible to get the meeting. Now at least they want to hear what we have to say because we may be part of their solution... The shift is clear.

(Appendix B)

Participant E thus forms a new relation between the functional role of the association and the existing online platform, Karrot, which responds to the gap as to whether alternative organisational structures are possible and preferable. This can be seen as an instance of meaning making and an opportunity for learning, in so far as a new pathway for meaningful action has been established. The reactualised experiences which are privileged here are of the institutional context the organisation is operating within, and with the inter and intrapersonally derived notion that minimising bureaucracy can preserve the momentum of the organisation. However, it is unclear to what extent the meaning-making of this new relation is shared by the other participants, who might not have the same intrapersonal, interpersonal and institutional experiences as Participant E.

The second new relation formed in the discussion is by Participant A, between the issue of preserving the momentum of the organisation and the question of requirements for participation:

A: - I just wanted to say that I thought about the matter with the board. In case there are many who want to leave, then one can imagine a larger board which is partly made up of volunteers. So that then maybe even people who are not so active, maybe I, can become part of the board also if they are interested. For example, as an alternative... Because you do not get the problem that there are too many people who have the right to vote, rather it can change for the meetings. If some of the ordinary members at the meetings are not active anymore, then another person can inherit their right to vote.

Here Participant A appears to draw on the intrapersonal experience that they would like a greater say in the decision making at board meetings. A pathway for meaningful action is thus established in response to the gap around requirements for participation within the organisation. Here Participant A appears to factor in relations established earlier in the discussion: between engaged members and the momentum of the project: ‘there must be people who drive the association on’; and with concerns over the existing requirements for participation ‘there were quite a few who do not want to be registered, who want it to be a bit different’. Thus, in proposing to give volunteers an opportunity to take a more active role in the association, by having a rotating voting system in board meetings, Participant A responds to the gap concerning alternative models for the association. Again, the new relation Participant E forms can be seen as contributing to meaning-making and an opportunity for learning, by establishing a pathway for meaningful action in response to a problematic situation.
6. Discussion

The discussion chapter will now interpret the results and analysis of the case study to address the research question of how the role and significance of learning in USTs can be understood through the transactional perspective on learning and practice theory. This will be done by taking examples from the performances of Solikyl described in the dramaturgical analysis, and the opportunities for learning revealed in the PEA, and connecting these to the content of the thesis’ theoretical framework and literature review. In this way, the chapter will attempt to conceptualise learning in USTs in terms of educative practices at the level of socio-technical niches. It will be argued that such educative practices can enable learning in USTs through the establishment of meaningful pathways through which niche actors reflexively engage with the rules and rationality of the prevailing socio-technical regime. Thus, the conceptualisation of educative practices presents learning in USTs as a process through which unsustainable structural elements within a socio-technical regime are practically reconfigured at the niche level, establishing meaningful pathways for regime-level change.

6.1. Learning through educative practices in USTs

The role of educative practices within Solikyl can be anticipated in terms of an institutional void emerging from the food waste problem. In the dramaturgical analysis this appeared in the scripting of Solikyl’s performance, as a response to the perceived inadequacy of institutional solutions to the food waste problem: ‘government, schools, the private sector, non-profits are already trying to do the same thing basically. They have the resources, they have the knowledge. But we don’t want to use the old models.’ (Appendix B). Thus, drawing from Hajer’s analysis, it can be said that in order for Solikyl to achieve political legitimacy outside of these institutional structures, there is a need for the organisation to ‘negotiate new institutional rules, develop new norms of appropriate behaviour and devise new conceptions of legitimate political intervention’ (Hajer, 2003, p.176). These processes can be seen as challenging the structuring rationality of established institutional arrangements, and thus connected the notion that, when dealing with novel and persistent societal problems, political influence and legitimacy are distributed outside of established institutional structures (ibid.).

One example of an educative practice in the organisational performance of Solikyl is ambassadors gaining new partnerships, which involves modifying partners’ behaviours and attitudes towards food which is deemed to have lost its commercial value. To the extent that disposing of such food reflects the rationality and norms of the prevailing socio-technical regime, this can be seen as what Crivits and Paredis call a ‘regime practice’ (Crivits and Paredis, 2013); and in Dewey’s terms, the unsustainability of this practice constitutes a bad habit (Dewey, 1992). Thus, the regime enacts a structural influence by normalising the disposal of food which has lost its commercial value, and commercial actors performance of this practice in turn reproduces the regime’s structuring rationality. The educative practice of ambassadors recruiting partners thus facilitates learning in UST by establishing a pathway for the partners to modify these practices to bring about a more sustainable outcome, which is achieved by ‘communicating, arguing, or even nagging and being stubborn when necessary’ (Solikyl, 2019c). The educative practice of the ambassadors thus facilitates learning towards UST through a renegotiation of institutional norms and behaviours.

The coordinated activity of foodsaving is another example of an educative practice which challenges the structuring rationality of the prevailing socio-technical regime. In the dramaturgical analysis, the elements of this practice are revealed in the actors’ roles and performances, which amounts to partners, volunteers and recipients coordinating a set of routinised behaviours to redistribute food which would otherwise be thrown away. What could be seen as the equivalent regime practices are retailers’ conventional disposal of food deemed commercially inviable, and consumers similarly limiting the food they consume on the basis of commercial and aesthetic criteria. In foodsaving, a change is thus sought to minimise the unsustainable waste these practices produce. In this sense, the educative function of foodsaving is revealing a more sustainable way to handle food waste in redistributing it at a community level. Thus, through its effort to engage the fridges’ recipients and partners with the organisation’s goals, Solikyl encourages these actors to reflect on their participation in unsustainable practices, and creates a meaningful pathway for regime level change towards UST.
Community organising can also be seen as an educative practice which is observed in the Solikyl case study. The dramaturgical analysis speaks to Welch and Yates’s description of political legitimacy being achieved through a collective identification with performed practices (Welch and Yates, 2018). It is through the shared performance of practices by volunteers, recipients and partners that the political legitimacy of the Solikyl project is created in the absence of established institutional authority. Thus, this case can be seen as one in which a latent-network of actors becomes a more deliberately structured group through an awareness of their participation in unsustainable practices, which in turn inspires a collective effort to modify these practices to become more sustainable. By performing these modified practices and monitoring their outcomes, community organising leads to experiential learning which can alter the behaviours and attitudes of consumers, retailers and municipalities in Gothenburg, again establishing a meaningful pathway for regime-level change towards UST.

Finally, Solikyl’s deliberative performances can be said to reveal an educative practice which challenges the rationality of the prevailing socio-technical regime. In the PEA we see actors’ deliberation shaping their interpretation of the organisational structures they create for themselves in relation to their institutional surroundings. In the transactional sense, individuals here coordinate their experiences through language to open up pathways for meaningful action and respond to a problematic situation. In the practice theoretical sense, the collective performance of this educative practice allows a reinterpretation and modification of prevailing structural rules and procedures. Thus, proceeding from Hajer’s argument that deliberative political arrangements are the appropriate response to an institutional void, the educative practice of deliberation can be said to enable learning in USTs through a reflexive engagement with the institutional and practical uncertainties surrounding wicked sustainability problems (Hajer, 2003).
7. Conclusion
In order to frame its wider research objective of empirically and theoretically exploring how political spaces of UST can function as educative spaces, this thesis began with an overview of the Wicked Problems and UST research project. Proceeding from this research context, the thesis applied the analytical methods of dramaturgical analysis and PEA to the empirical results of the Solikyl case study. The discussion chapter interpreted these analyses by drawing on practice theory, the transactional perspective on learning, ST studies, and Hajer’s discussion of institutional voids, and thus attempted to illustrate how the role and significance of learning within USTs can be conceptually understood in terms of educative practices. This conceptualisation is the modest contribution the thesis makes to its research area, and could perhaps be drawn upon and developed in future work.

The theoretical approach taken in the thesis drew from Crivits and Paredis’ explanatory practice framework for ST studies, and by combining this with elements of pragmatist learning theory -inspired by the ‘beautiful friendship’ between these traditions proposed by Buch and Elkjaer- the thesis sought to engage with the emerging file of research applying practice theoretical approaches to ST studies. Another area of contemporary research with which the thesis sought to engage is the Studies of Meaning-making in Educational Discourses (SMED) research environment, which is responsible for developing the analytical methods and theoretical approach associated with the transactional perspective on learning. These analytical methods, central among which is PEA, are still relatively new, and as an attempt to test their applications outside formal educational settings, this thesis aligned itself with the work of scholars like Ninitha Maivorsdotter (Maivorsdotter and Wickman, 2011; Maivorsdotter and Quennerstedt, 2012, 2018).

The contributions this thesis offers are limited in a number of respects, which largely stem from the narrow empirical scope through which learning in USTs has been analysed. Thus, the selected UST initiative represents only one among many examples of efforts to transition towards sustainability within cities. Thus, the thesis might have arrived at different conclusions were its chosen UST initiative attempting to improve urban traffic infrastructure, in which case rationalised top down approaches might have played a greater educative role. Nonetheless, the scope of the thesis’ analysis is somewhat broadened in the context of the three other cases studies of the Wicked Problems and UST research project.
8. Acknowledgements

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10. Appendixes

10.1. Appendix A: Transcribed Interview 1

- So maybe we could start by talking about how you first got involved with Solikyl, and how long you’ve been involved?
- It was 2016, around summer time, actually I brought the idea to Gothenburg
- You did?
- Yeah, I was one of the founders. But yeah, I basically copied it after foodsharing in Germany. I was there like the year before at the solidarity economy conference and we did a tour, a bike tour with the foodsharing people. So I really liked it, I was impressed. So I said ok, sounds like a very good idea, why isn’t there something like this in Gothenburg?
- So with your first encounter with foodsharing in Germany, was it just at this conference, or were you involved with these types of movements before in any way? Did you have a history with community organising?
- No, I didn’t have a history like that. I had a lot of interest, yes. Also even from a more academic point of view as well. I was sort of pursuing my curiosity of different forms of organisation and sustainability projects also: different economic organisation and so on. But like as an activist or community organiser or something, this is where it all started.
- So was there anything like Solikyl before that were aware of?
- Nah, there was some kind of similar projects but not exactly the same concept, working with food waste, that I’ve seen. And I just heard some small experiences of people trying to put up a fridge, something like that. You know, these things you stumble across on the internet but then can’t find out anything more. I think these kinds of projects died out.
- You think maybe they weren’t super well organised?
- Yeah there was one I heard about in Uppsala actually, it was called livsmedeller, and I think it was basically organised by students, they put up some sharing fridges in the campus or somewhere in the university. I don’t know if they’re still there, I guess they are not?
- I haven’t heard of them, but I have heard of some similar initiatives in Uppsala which are struggling to stay active.
- I guess its also a problem of being led by students who are not there for a longer period of time.
- They’re temporarily in the community.
- Yeah, maybe that’s why, I don’t know.

- So if you could summarise your main motivations for wanting to bring Solikyl to Gothenburg, what would be the number one point? Was it personal concern with the problem of food waste? Was it a feeling of needing to do something or? How were you thinking about what you wanted to achieve by doing this: what was your main goal?
- It was basically what you said. Also from an experimental point of view. I mean of course there’s always been a concern about food waste and about living in this crazy wasteful unsustainable society, and you know like, feeling I should do something about it. Also having the experience of dumpster diving, seeing the amount of waste.
- So you had some experience with dumpster diving before?
- Yeah some experience, it was really not that ambitious. Well I’ve always had some ambition with the project of thinking, you know, seeing how it scaled up in Germany: how much food was saved and how many people were involved, and that was really inspiring so I thought, well, I think this could be tried out here.
- And what is it that you think made it so successful in Germany? Was it the way it was organised? Do you think it was the kind of infrastructure they put in place? Was it the use of online organising? How would you describe the successful aspects of food sharing that you wanted to do with Solikyl?
Yeah, it’s definitely part of it: how you organise. You set up not only digital infrastructure, and you facilitate for people to become involved a little. So how you set up a framework for people to become volunteers: you sort of make it easy but, you have like very clear guidelines for people to participate. And also because of the amount of wasted recourse, it’s sort of a zeitgeist thing you know? We’re living in a period of society which has really this crazy abundance, and then people realise that it’s also a cultural shift: people are volunteering and participating: they see this material abundance in society and all the food that is going to waste and they also start maybe questioning like how they spend their time and what they do with their lives. You know only then they see the possibility of becoming part of a project like this. I don’t think it’s only about food waste: some of the people I know who have been involved with foodsharing in Germany: they become in many similar projects.

So do you think it’s part of a bigger trend of people becoming engaged in their community and trying to address certain problems in society?

It’s part and parcel for the explanation. So like I said it also has to do with the way it is organised. I took inspiration from that, and like tried to set up like… We’re still doing that, and we still have these discussions of like: ‘Yeah how strict and how should we work with the rules?’ you know? And like with people not following eventually the rules. Should we have some kind of sanctions or not you know? All of these discussions: they are important. And I’ve always been inspired as well by, stuff like you know, coming from the academics with the whole studies of the commons from Elinor Ostrom. How to keep a sustainable commons. You should have a community and the community should have set up, and it should be clear, and you should also have penalties and sanctions which are proportional. All of these things: I reflect a lot about them and try to, yeah, use them in the real-life expression.

So you were basing Solikyl around a particular set of ideas around how best you can organise to address problems of recourse distribution and those type of things?

Do you think there is a large portion of society which is concerned about these problems, or they’re becoming more concerned about these problems, but maybe don’t feel as though they know how to act about it, or they don’t see much they can do personally? And in extension of that question: is that something Solikyl is trying to address: to give people a means to address these concerns that they have?

Definitely. So you asked if we’re trying to give people the tools or the means: the opportunity to do something about sustainability issues?

Yeah, are you trying to provide an example of how people can act on these things, or perhaps give them the power to act on these things? Is that something you’re interested in achieving?

Yeah, actually I’m more interested in that than the issue itself. (Laughter) The issue of food waste itself, which obviously is something that moves me and that I’m very much interested in. And also that’s one of the reasons why I do this project, of course, it’s for the food waste. But it’s so much more than that. As you said it’s about showing a way for people to organise in community projects: self-organising: that’s the most interesting aspect of the whole thing for me. It’s part ideological and it’s part my life experience. The way forward for a better society you know? People should empower themselves and take the lead. Organise on a more horizontal basis. And you need to reflect on the many techniques and tools and methods to do that. It’s not an easy task but I think it’s the only task worth pursuing to solve some really big problems of the way we live which is unsustainable. Instead of, you know, relying on the private sector and companies, and even government. Many of these are the ones that created the problem in the first place.

So this is one of the key interests in the project I’m working on: the idea of institutional voids: so problems that aren’t really being addressed by typical institutional structures: the private sector or government for example. So it’s really interesting this idea that a different type of organising: self-organising or community organising can address these problems in a better way potentially.
So I was wondering if you had any thoughts about what it is about that this type of organising which makes it quite effective at addressing these types of problems. Or do you think that’s the case?

Yeah sure, maybe I’ll try to give a more concrete answer and then maybe wander off in the abstract for a bit. More concretely on the food waste issue: I’ve written a text about that: it has been to the Facebook website, which is trying to argue for its effectiveness, or why this kind of model is needed to solve the food waste issue. Because basically the institutional answers for food waste so far has been, like, you donate to charity, right? And I’m thinking about is part of a supply chain for distribution, as a final consumer. You donate the food waste or the good food to charity and you come up with these market strategies to sell it for a discounted price and so on, stuff like that. But I think all these strategies have reached their potential and their limits. Like you can have apps which is all very good, you can have the supermarkets reducing the price when it’s close to the best before date, and very few like they are donating to the charities. What we’ve seen and what we’ve learned during this process is that, it doesn’t matter how much you give discounted prices, food is still being wasted, we still save a lot of food that is being like discounted prices because they are close to the best before date. This doesn’t change consumer behaviour very much. And also the charity aspects of it: charities are already drowning in food waste, at least the big ones, the established ones, because they are the ones the big supermarket chains trust, and want to do this sort of almost greenwashing campaign, and almost like ‘give to the poor’ you know like foodbanks and stuff like that. And there is so much more food being wasted than poor people need, actually. Even for the poor people maybe that’s not the best way to go about it because its stigmatizing. So: is this the most effective way to reduce food waste, and to organise and distribute it fairly? Of course there are a number of limitation from the point of view of supermarkets and these market actors: they might be a bit wary of that for different reasons. Like you cannot just give away free food or put a fridge right next to the store. They’re afraid of people getting sick and stuff like that. So you always need to overcome these sort of problems. But, seen from the perspective of reducing food waste, I mean, that’s (Solikyl’s approach) sort of the solution left, and its actually the most effective way and like, you get people to collect the food waste, if you organise this in a very simple way, you can have like the tool that we use, Karrot, a sort of digital tool, and people abide by the basic framework of getting food, bringing it to a place where it’s being distributed, taking some with, it works like a charm.

And you also have a way of giving feedback on how the pickups went so you can address problems in real time and with the knowledge of everyone involved?

Yeah, so that’s the concrete aspect of it: how to solve this issue.

So I think, you know, more in the abstract, these projects of community organising. I think they are more effective because they are closer to the ground, closer to people, and people stop becoming passive consumers and they become active agents of change of problem solving and there’s also come literature on democratic participation which shows that when you bring problems closer to the people and empower them to solve these issues it will happen more effectively than say like have a top down structure or some bureaucrats deciding for them, or just maybe have some entrepreneurs trying to come up with the latest solutions or ideas for that. There is always a bias in market solutions, and there is also bias in these top down hierarchies of governance.

This idea of organising as a community and addressing problems as a community seems to be part of what keeps people engaged with Solikyl, or what attracts them to it, because maybe there’s a feeling of empowerment when it’s not as though you’re following instructions, as you said, from some kind of entrepreneur or that type of set up. There’s probably quite a lot of reasons behind it. This is something I’m quite interested in.

But it doesn’t come naturally to people?

You think so?

Well not to all. Definitely not. You have different levels of participation. I usually say that between our peers in Solikyl, you have very clear different levels of participation. And what we want is to make sure that all of these levels are addressed and that they are somehow
contributing to the project. So you have like the most basic, which is just people come to the fridges and consumer the food. That’s somehow contributing to the food not being wasted. And then you have like people who become food savers, they do pick-ups and bring to the fridges. They might do that out of different concerns or out of different reasons. Maybe like more environmental concerns, or it might just be for more selfish reasons. Like they just want the food. Which is also fine as long as they do what they’re supposed to do. And that’s sort of the crux of the thing, when people come to us with selfish reasons, well they have an interest and they just want the food, completely fine, as long as they don’t create problems right? Then it’s fine. Then you have people who are really getting involved and really spending a lot of time on it. Probably the people who you are interviewing. They see the whole point of how to organise in this kind of structure, more horizontally and so on. But, with this. When you left the meeting then we came to the thorny issues. Some people doing the pick-ups at Masthugget, they were really failing to do their jobs, somehow, the minimal things, and not bringing the food to the fridge, they were collecting a lot for themselves on the spot. So that’s when we had to say ok let’s shut them off for a while until they come to a meeting and we solve this. It really required a lot of effort because we see that they are not interested, I mean for them it’s easier to have some boss figure telling them what to do. And sometimes you try to solve it like that: you try to find an authority. I personally try to avoid being seen like this person of authority you know? And say like we like you to come to a meeting, so that you participate in the meeting, so that you’re also making decisions about it together with the other people who might be not satisfied with what you’re doing (laughter).

- And does that sort of way of addressing it always work or?
- Yeah, I mean we’re trying still. I think it works as long as you don’t sort of try to push people in to this. I think they will be much more comfortable with someone telling them: ‘ok you are not doing it right, then you should do it like that.’ It requires more effort to bring them into the mental space of like, you’re not here just to do pick-ups: now you have to sit down with other people and discuss these things.

- So that’s quite an important part of Solikyl’s way of working: having this ongoing discussion among the members. Is that one of the functions of these hangouts?
- Definitely, yeah. To create relationships. To create some social capital. That’s really important. But that’s just the minority of us. Which is fine. Most of the other people saving the food, sometimes they might get together, come to some of these occasions, have a reunion meeting and discuss stuff. Many other people who will save food, they are coming to do the pickups, for whatever reasons, maybe they’re just interested in food, maybe they’re interested in the environment and so on. It’s good. This case that I’m telling you is about when things really started not working. Then it’s like finding a way to actually push these people into this mode of collective problem solving. Because they are just much more comfortable just picking up the food for themselves and then it would be maybe much easier if an authority came from above and said: ‘you do like this or like that’.

- So this is something you’re having to learn as you go along: how to address these types of challenges, because something that came up in the board meeting was this question of how you want to be structured, and how much structure is like helpful and how much is going to put people off. Are you continually trying to think of better ways to organise, or has it kind of stayed fairly solid from the beginning? Or have you changed the structure a lot as you went on?
- It’s constantly evolving somehow, yeah. I mean it’s a kind of work that might be important but that very few people actually bother about it. Those who bother about it are those who are involved with the project. From the beginning I was mainly the one trying to put up the structure, but always checking with people somehow what felt comfortable with them: what worked what didn’t work, Getting feedback and so on. And now it’s interesting, because I’ve had these kind of discussions with Disa for instance, and she’s more like feeling: ‘yeah I don’t like that you have these conditions to become an ambassador and stuff like that’. And I totally get her point. To me it’s all about finds a balance between having a structure and requiring things from people if they want to become engaged. And having some freedom of action,
right? I think if you strike the right balance it’s good. I don’t believe completely in like, unstructured, and like complete…
- Anarchic?
- Yeah you know that’s the common usage of the word anarchy. But anarchy actually is in the historical experiences been very well structured. And that’s what I’m striving for.
- Well structured anarchy?
- Yeah so I’m an anarchist in that sense. Like you need structures that are not solidified somehow. You need people to give feedback and you need people to create these structures somehow. And these structures need to give some freedom. Structures are just a very basic level of consensus. Like, you know the guidelines for becoming a food saver. You need the minimal guidelines or rules. You can’t just go to a shop and cherry pick only the food that you want and just leave the rest and never distribute it to a fridge. Minimum consensus.
- And this idea of consensus, is that quite central to something like Solikyl do you think? Do you think that if everyone had their own agenda it could function as an organisation, or would it just be kind of something else? That wasn’t a very clear question, but I’m interested in this idea of building consensus, and I’m wondering how much you can do in the absence of consensus, because I’m imagining disagreements and competing ideas must be things that come about quite a lot. Do you feel that you can learn from those disagreements, or do you feel like you learn the most when people are along the same page, or trying to organise in the same way? Do you see what I’m getting at?
- Yeah, I see. If I understand you correctly it’s if it works best if people are agreeing or not, to put it very simply. I’m not sure, I mean I’m trying to recall in my mind the periods of disagreement. I don’t remember any really big disagreement. I’m more of a diplomatic kind of person, so I’m always trying to understand points of view and finding the middle ground and arguing for something that makes sense for everybody. I think disagreements are obviously important and people learn from it. Like you’re going to interview Tomasz, you’ll see that he’s much more standing fast in his opinions. He wants to be really provocative and so on. It brings up a lot of interesting discussions and sometimes we disagree, but I think I can understand a lot and find some common solution so to speak. I get a lot of good feedback from him when we talk, I can change my mind on certain things, and then certain things I will not change my mind, I don’t see a point. These are just reasoning between peers, we never had a very strict decision-making process. Maybe that will be needed in the future. You’ve seen we have the board meetings right? But they don’t happen so often and I don’t know if that’s a good or bad thing for the future. I’m interested in finding out if that’s a strength or a weakness in the way we organise. You know having like good methods, I think maybe we need more clear methods and maybe a little bit more structure. I’m tending towards more structure now. It’s all about the kind of structure because I don’t want this to be like a stiff förening (association), where it’s like oh we need to have the board meetings and that’s the main decision making instance and you know nothing happens if you’re always depending on these kind of things. I think I have more questions than answers for that.
- So you’re going to have to learn going forward how much structure is the sweet spot and how much is too much?
- Yeah, exactly. Because one very important thing that you can stifle with too much structure is action and involvement. That’s one of my main concerns. And I’d like to really get to the point when Disa is like: ‘oh you’re putting up requirements for people to contact shops?’. I want to have very basic requirements, but still these requirements they are needed I see. But make it easy for people to participate and take initiative: that’s really important. Taking initiative.

- So maybe I’ll ask two more questions, one of them quite broad and one of them more specific. Because my project is all about learning, and different interpretations of learning: individual and social learning. I was wondering if you had any general comments or insights about what kind of learning has come about through Solikyl: either something that you’ve learnt or something the organisation has learnt, or maybe some kind of process of social learning that the organisation has contributed to: perhaps in the form of changing attitudes among people.
I think there was a lot of learning. On a personal level the thing I learned the most when it got going was many different things on many different levels. It can be just on the issue of food waste, learning about that, like the causes, how it works, what is good food what is not good food. You know? This is one aspect of learning. And then there is like to me some other aspects of learning of how to create some organisation or movement and what works, what does not work, learning about digital tools, and learning about whatever. You know so many things it’s hard to cover. Learning about communication and giving contacts with shops and how they work and stuff like that. That’s on a personal level, and I’m sure many people also had that learning curve. Very similar experience as I did.

Because basically this was all new to all of you going in? You didn’t have much experience doing these types of things?

No, not at all, not at all. So just learning by doing. So now many people will come to us for knowledge and advice and we try to pass on the knowledge and the experience. But it will also work the same way for them, it’s also learning by doing and by experience. And they can benefit of course from the knowledge that we have acquired. And that is actually one of the projects for the next months is to put up a website similar to foodsaving.world which is the people who were trying to kickstart food saving around the world. Try to put up like a Swedish version of it, like I registered the domain matredning.se, because a lot of people contact me from different cities and they’re like ‘oh this and that and how to start, I’d like to have big nice summary adapted to the Swedish context.’ And get people with experience to contribute to this website.

So this process of sharing knowledge and experiences you’re then scaling up to the whole country?

Hopefully yes.

And then there’s also the international one so it’s working on a lot of different levels, from communities to the entire world?

Yeah it’s awesome. And also with this comes the question of like: ok we want people to start similar initiatives in other towns, ok. We haven’t decided on that, but can they call themselves Solidariskt Kylskåp, can they use the logo and can they present themselves as the same organisation in Gothenburg? What kind of structure do we have there? Should there be any requirements, or should we just say no, you can. It’s something similar with foodsharing, then you have like foodsharing in Borås, you have food sharing in Östersund, and it’s mainly German people who came to these town and started. So you can see that there is a really big effect of people in Foodsharing in Germany: this learning experience and how they spread the context. So they come to Sweden and they just do this foodsharing in the city where they’re at. But I was just there and got to know and then I started here but with a different name. I don’t even know how we ended up using Solidariskt Kylskåp, I can’t even remember the point. Because at the beginning I just picked up the name and together with foodsharing. And then it ended up being Solidariskt Kylskåp and the Solikyl, the abbreviation. That is to say basically that, I don’t know I lost the thread, but there is this process of international spreading of the idea, and also to spread it on the national level.

So that kind of covers how learning is going on inside the organisation. Do you think that is has spread out into society at large? Do you think even just through interacting with supermarkets and restaurants and stuff like that, that this is shifting the conversation about these issues a little bit? Do you think this can change how people think about food waste as a problem?

Yeah that’s the main focus. Which is how people relate an issue, and how they learn about the food-waste issue, and how people are somehow educated on it to empower themselves and do stuff. And then it goes beyond food waste hopefully. I’m thinking the most valuable is actually on a personal relationship level where the actual thing happening instead of you know doing PR or campaigns. You know there can also play a very important strategic role, but it’s mostly people hear about solidarity fridge and they come and pick up food or they sign up to become a food saver or they come to hangout or they share experiences and stuff like that.
So last question, I thought I’d ask you a little bit about how politics comes into the organisation, or whether it does, because you mentioned that you subscribe to some anarchist ideas, and I was curious how much Solikyl is formed on the basis of a particular set of political ideas, and how much of that comes into it practice. Is there any requirement on supporting a political agenda to participate?

- It’s implicit, if we have an explicit political agenda or sympathies…
- You think that could be a boundary?
- Yeah of course. But also when you talk to the people who are most active, it can become quite explicit, but that’s just their personal view. Because people who are the most active, they gather around some very similar values, politically right? You cannot find, between the core group of the most engaged people like some really right wing, it doesn’t happen a lot.

It’s kind of interesting, because one of the discussion about the transition movement generally is that it’s not overtly political, and people can say that’s a strength because it makes them open to more parts of the community: more people feel like they can get involved. But people have also criticized that aspect of the movement, because they think that you’re not really doing these problems justice by not addressing them in political terms. I imagine it’s a similar situation with Solikyl. You’re not explicitly incorporating a critique of neoliberal consumerism.

- We do that!
- You do that explicitly?
- (laughter)
- Yeah, we do that very explicitly I think.
- So in some sense there is an explicit political aspect to it? But it doesn’t go as far being a party-political type manifesto.
- No definitely not. How do you call it? It’s not-partisan. It is deeply political, I mean there is no issue that is not political. It is deeply political. And then of course it depends on how far you take it. You have your analysis of the problem and then you might identify more to a right wing or left wing or liberal or whatever. And I think that the people who are mostly involved are like people who are very in the mindset of being critical consumerism and materialist and being critical to the agents that produce waste, which is basically the profit motive from companies. And how the food system is structured.

10.2. Appendix B: Transcribed Interview 2

- To get things rolling I’d like to just ask you how you first got involved with Solikyl and how long you’ve been involved?
- I started to get involved almost from the very, very beginning
- It’s been going since 2016? Something like that?
- Yeah I think since may, or since Summer of 2016. Yeah and I mean I was very active at the omställningsverkstan (transition workshop) where the first refrigerator was set up. So I noticed the project right away. And at that time I was very involved with the bike kitchen project. I spent a lot of time on that. But when I started to be involved with the solidarity fridge project I started to see it as even more important to spend my time on. Because I thought yeah its great if you have a bike and you have the knowledge to repair but if you do not understand how food is produced, or you don’t care how it is produced, or you contribute to wasting it… I mean it’s basically a more essential thing for a human to have food on the table. And then another thing I noticed was that it was much easier to get people involved with food than bikes. Bikes is not a primary thing, everyone is not cycling, everyone is not interested. Some people don’t need to cycle at all, they have cars or whatever transportation. So it’s not like so broad. So food was really interesting in that aspect that you could come in contact with all kinds of people, because everyone needs to eat. And it was also very interesting to study people’s behaviours around this whole project for me. Because I noticed during my time in the bike kitchen project, I learned what the challenges can be and the problems that can arise with this kind of initiatives
- What kind of problems would those be?
All kinds of problems. Firstly you need a space to be able to do anything. That is always the first thing: find space and who is going to finance it? And then of course the volunteers who will drive the project forward and how you will maintain this project. So all these things with like the human aspect, the social aspect, and all the interaction with society. I‘m thinking more of the system when it comes to finance, I mean economy: economic aspects or cooperations with the city, with politicians, with landlords, there are so many parts that you need to interact with. So I saw a lot of similarities with both projects, they had the same challenges basically

So they both started out in the same workshop space, so how much do you think Solikyl and Cykelköket operate on the same principles? Obviously there’s a big community aspect to them. Are there any significant differences you would point out?

If you just look at the bike kitchen project and the solidarity fridge project, since they started out in the same place they automatically took the same form in a way, because it was the same people, we had similar resources we could use, so it automatically had a lot of synergies between the projects. And it’s another aspect I also wanted to mention: what I noticed when I started to get involved with the solidarity fridge is that those two projects can benefit so much from each other. Because we noticed that the food was there, the volunteers from the bike kitchen project started to eat from there, you could have food and sometimes very good food, so we benefited from each other. We used the bike kitchen to maintain our bikes, carts and so on...

So were a lot of food pickups for Solikyl done by bike?

In the beginning it was like that, it was mostly bicycles or by foot, because the distance was short and the project was small. And of course during summer it’s easier. But when we started to grow after like a year or so, we had no choice but to use cars basically. To be able to scale up. Now 90% of all the transportation is by car, and nothing by bikes anymore, very seldom: because of the winter of course. But we still use four wheel carts to transfer by foot if the distance is not far. So yeah the car is really taking over the whole transportation aspect. But it’s just the only way we can do it right now

So building on this idea that those two projects went together quite naturally, I was wondering how much you think the model that Solikyl and to some extent Cykelköket use, can be expanded to other areas. I was speaking to Disa yesterday and she said she had an idea of something similar for citizen science for conservation projects and another guy said something about salvaging furniture. So I was wondering how much you thought this model for community initiatives could be applied in other areas? Or do you think it has certain limits?

I don’t know. Of course we always come in contact with other people: we have similar values so its natural. I can say like this: the solidarity fridge and the bike kitchen, since they have so much similarities, and from the very beginning I noticed a big problem to make communication more efficient. Since the people who are volunteering are very concerned about the environment, or their lifestyle, or about society and community, they also have very different ways of using digital communication. Some people totally don’t care, and then there’s a few people who are interested in open-source or in privacy issues. So you will have this problem where a small group of people don’t want to use these mainstream channels like facebook or google docs, or these other tools that people are using. Then it becomes a problem because we need three different ways to communicate and its very inefficient. When I saw this project in bike kitchen then relived it in solidarity fridge we had many discussions about how we can move to some new platform, so new way of communicating so we don’t run into these problems. So Karrot came after a while into the picture, we realised the people building the platform had similar values

Did people from foodsharing Germany start Karrot?

Yeah they realised they needed a platform to make pickups more efficient: a communication channel, so they started to build a website which made it possible to scale up to the whole of Germany. And then the developers started to have discussions of how can we scale it even further, and there was some political debates and technical concerns, and a new discussion started of should we start the whole thing from scratch, build something new. The original idea was to create an open-source platform which can include all kinds of sharing,
sustainability activities. It could include anything that has to do with sustainability or sharing. We picked up the tool and quite early and thought how to showcase it to other initiatives to make use of it to connect with volunteers or consumers of the service. Basically a lot of resources are not being used because of a lack of knowledge or communication. And that’s what we are doing, every project like this is trying to solve one of these projects that can arise from lack of communication or bad infrastructure or just mentality, just the mindset.

- So you think those are the main things these projects can address. Showing people there is an alternative to address these problems? Teaching people a new way of doing things?
- Of course it is some kind of knowledge transfer, but you could say that these things already exist: government, schools, the private sector, non-profits area already trying to do the same thing basically. They have the resources, they have the knowledge. But we don’t want to use the old models of charities or non-profits. We don’t want to go the bureaucratic way into solving these problems. So you could say the information is already there. But for some reason it’s not interconnected in a smart way and also these bureaucratic systems put a lot of barriers to entry for anyone. Often it’s like the people who engage the most in non-profit associations are people who already have a job, are already well educated, or just have a community and it’s their way of having social connections. But then you have a lot of other groups of people who don’t find it so easy to enter into this association or group of people. And we think this way of doing it, the decentralized, non-bureaucratic, more open way, can invite those other groups. By removing all these barriers and all these needs. ‘You need to do this to solve a problem. You need to form an association, you need to have a space, you need to register, you need to have a meeting, you need to, need to, need to.’ I guess this this is another question of sustainability: you want to have a sustainable system: for food, for transportation; but you also want to have something sustainable for people to engage in this sharing economy.
- So with Solikyl anyone could in principle take part? Anyone could volunteer and anyone could get food from the fridge?
- Sure

- So I was talking about this knowledge transfer. And I was trying to say that the old way of transferring knowledge about these initiatives is maybe a little bit outdated, because more people spend more time on platforms like Facebook or Instagram. So these initiatives either have to move to these platforms and fight for attention there, which I think is unsustainable. We think more sustainable is to build a new platform with the incentive that people want to do things: they want to get food or they want to get bikes: they want to help, they want to share. So once they get off Facebook to communicate with people there are actually two benefits: one is that you get access to these resources and the other one is that you remove your time on these platforms that are designed to make you into a consumer: consuming content. I think it’s double win, because you can get a person away from this consumer promoting machine. For me personally, I couldn’t have a good conscience being on these old platforms, just like with the old structure of non-profits and charities. Even if we can reach some more people it’s just going to hurt us long-term. So my viewpoint is that the platform is really important to scale up and connect to these initiatives with similar values

- One thing I was interested in asking you about was whether you thought the service that Solikyl provides could be carried out by a municipality for example, is there some kind of practical limit on that happening? Would that be a desirable thing in your opinion?
- I think it would be something different than the solidarity fridge project
- And why is that?
- You would maybe create a flow of resources that are shared among people within a city. But in my opinion we are not just about saving food and saving bikes: it’s about the knowledge transfer and about giving people tools or methods to solve problems. So in my opinion if you go through a municipality, it’s going to be financed through taxes, it’s going to be very regulated, someone will have to be employed, and they do a lot of great work for sure, but the amount of money that goes into this solution is ridiculously high for the amount of good they
actually accomplish. Maybe long term they provide some benefits, but very short-term benefits are ridiculous. For example, part of Gothenburg Östra, they allocated money for a space for the youth to meet up: like a meeting place for youth. So I think they have three places. And then they have people working there who move between these three places. Twice a week here, twice a week here. One of the spaces is here in Gamelstan. When I found out I went there to see if we can have some cooperation or if we can use their space to have meetings or whatever. And I also read through all this information that actually the space is meant to be for youth but also for anyone else who lives here. So once the youth hours are done the space is available to anyone. And then I started to dig a little deeper. In this example the rent they are paying for this space is like 100 to 150 000 per month, ok, and then they employ the people who work there, and then the space is only used twice a week. And they have three places like that. In my mind I’m thinking like great they are crating spaces for youth where they can do things, be creative, meet up, but when I look at the money that is being spend on it while giving a few young people in the area a place to meet, when there are a lot of people paying for this thing who cannot get into this space. So it’s another waste of resources. We pay taxes, taxes go to spend on good things, the good things are created and then they are blocking people from access to whatever they paid for. My point is that when government or the city is involved, the bureaucracy around it is so enormous – it’s understandable why, it’s just that in a resource sustainability way of thinking it’s just a waste of resources. So you can have five bureaucrats for two people engaged in an initiative like this and they need to document everything and go to meetings and check all the economic… It’s just such a waste of resources that you start thinking do I want to contribute to this system or do I want to be part of this new way of solving problems from all kinds of aspects, not only save the food and everyone is happy.

- So that maybe feeds in nicely to what you think the benefits of people who are directly affected and involved in the community being the ones responsible for trying to address the issue, rather than having someone address it for them on their behalf. Do you see that as having a greater potential to solve things in the long term, rather than just being an act of throwing money towards something? Do you think it forms stronger solutions to problems?

- Well listen, I’m not against the people who are working within the system. And I think the best would be if you could tweak or change some of it. Keep the government, keep the money that is flowing through. But just change the routines to a sustainability way of thinking. So I think they can play a big role, but they need to start thinking out of the box. It should be some kind of interaction. In Gothenburg we have an authority focused on environmental things which is granting grants, handing out grants to different associations. Cities get so much money and the association can then seek the grants, that’s the system right? And then they want to make it easier for initiatives which are doing sustainability work to get these grants. Because they realise that the system is so outdated that a new group of people who form an association and want to get the access to the grant, there’s such a learning curve to make the applications: to learn how to fill it out, that it creates and imbalance because then those old associations who already learned the whole thing, they can just get money year after year, while those new sustainability initiatives are excluded from this money, and they want to somehow talk to us to make it easier for these new associations to apply. So I said instead of giving access to the money why not give us access to the resources, the infrastructure that is already there, like give us access to the waste. In Gothenburg city you cannot do anything with it. They do donate some stuff to charity but they will never give access to smaller groups and associations. They are excluded again. So I just said that the money is not needed at all within a sustainability association. I mean to some extent, you need some money, but that shouldn’t be the main focus. The point is to create a sustainability environment for citizens to accelerate change. So you need to change the perspectives. The government has to think differently how they want to support the initiatives. That’s basically my view of it.

- So maybe this leads in to another point I wanted to raise, and it is something that came up at the board meeting about how much bureaucratic structure you want in place in order to make
sure things run smoothly, but not to put people off from signing up, and there was this debate about whether to have a föreningsstruktur (association structure) or not. And I was wondering whether this is something that has changed a lot since you first started and how you see it going forward?

- From the very, very beginning when we were just a bunch of people sitting in a room and discussing this, there was a consensus that no association is needed, we don’t want the bureaucracy, we don’t need any grants, we don’t want more meetings, because all these people are already involved in so many associations. They get sick of going to board meetings. So we didn’t see any need at all for this structure. But this topic would come up once in a while. And when we started to grow a little bit, we compromised because we saw that by creating the association and some kind of structure to it, so from outside it looks like this structure, would maybe give us an easier access to cooperate with the stores. So the stores would be more likely to talk to you and cooperate with you if you’re an association than if you’re just a loosely, some group of people with a concept. So we compromised on that fact and we created an association, basically for this, because we were struggling to get cooperations. So we said ok, for the stores we do it, it’s not for the money or for the meetings or that we need some kind of structure, it’s just to get the food waste out of the stores. So we compromised on that fact and we created an association, basically for this, because we were struggling to get cooperations. So we said ok, for the stores we do it, it’s not for the money or for the meetings or that we need some kind of structure, it’s just to get the food waste out of the stores. And now times has passed, it’s almost a year after and we’re bringing up this again that maybe we are so big that stores will talk to us anyway; whether we are an association or not we are already well known, people can trust us, we don’t ever have to sign any contract anyway. So I like to bring this topic up, because maybe it’s possible to dissolve this association part and try to move towards this decentralized way of having a platform where people can create their own groups and they can basically take care of the organisation that way instead of this old way. But there is no consensus on how we should go forward. So it is a learning process in the sense that we still don’t know what the best way is to go forward.

- It’s a difficult thing to balance I guess: what’s too little structure and what’s not enough.

- Are there any other considerable practical challenges you’ve come across in dealing with shops and restaurants? Was there initially more resistance and has it now become easier now that you’ve got a reputation and people know about you?

- I’m telling you man, it’s weird, because the project is now two years old, and if you compare those two years, it’s much easier now because of the shift in people’s thinking about food waste. It’s much easier not only because we are known but because the media has picked it up, the public tv has picked up this topic: it’s mentioned on the news. And people slowly are starting to realised it’s a problem that has to be taken care of, just like all the climate change and everything. So it’s much, much easier now. The store owners are much more open to discuss at least. Before it was even impossible to get the meeting. Now at least they want to hear what we have to say because we may be part of their solution, rather than just another organisation begging for free food so we can hand it out to someone else over there. The shift is clear.

- You see the woman who was here before from the free shop. I came to contact with them before to talk about putting up a fridge in their place, which they did. In Kortadala it’s interesting because there a lot of unemployed people there and there is only one big supermarket and it’s an expensive one, it’s Hemköp, and what struck me was that you have people with less income in a part of a city where there’s one supermarket and the prices there are higher than other supermarkets close to the centre. Why? It creates this weird situation where people who are meant to be paying less end up paying more and it creates more food waste. So I started to work on this store manager to try to get in touch with her. It went on for months. She totally ignored us. It turned out that it was just impossible to get the food from her, from that store, so I gave up. But I was always telling this woman and her people, you live there, you can put some pressure on her, and now they are strategically planning to prepare for the meeting. But the challenge is this. If you have a store that is generating food waste and you get hands on the food waste and start handing it out too close to the business, then you create problems, and you don’t want that. Because the store needs to care about their business, even if they want to save the world, if it hurts they business nothing good can come...
out of this. That means we need to transfer the food waste even further. It’s a fucking challenge.
- But this conflict between business interests and wanting to do the right thing, is that a problem you’ve encountered with other places, other restaurants for example, have they said why would people pay for our food if we’re giving it to them for free? Is this an attitude you’ve come across?
- They don’t expressly say that to us, but when we discuss people often mention: wouldn’t that mean that people start buying? But it’s not that people stop buying 100% percent. I just think it’s a bad argument against it. Because the stores have to adapt every day and change their products to meet demand and, whatever, trends. So I’m a little bit interested to go to the meeting with her. If you are in an area where people have a lower income they will find us maybe for other reasons. They will treat this as another consumption of something that they don’t have to pay for, while there is also people who come because they care about the environment, they want to help others, they think it’s just stupid to waste the food, and the best is if you have a mix of these people, because if you have only people who just have to survive and need to get some food now, it’s very hard to change these people’s behaviours or engage into the problem. It’s much harder for a person who is already very stressed about something. So that’s also a challenge: to keep the balance. Because if you only get really poor people it becomes a like charity
- So you’re quite insistent that it not become just a charitable enterprise? You want it to be open to a wider spread of society?
- This point was very clear from the beginning: we are not a charity. And we need to make this clear to people. Because it’s not clear. People know the name, they know the place and they know there is free food, what’s the difference with a church? They don’t really analyse what the difference is, they don’t care. But we are very keen to make people understanding, our method is to be open to engagement basically, that maybe they don’t care now, but maybe after the tenth time they will stand in the queue and talk to someone and someone will say oh you know you can actually do something. And then they see there is something I can do. So basically we don’t want to get into the trap of a charity because charities have to create the bureaucratic structures, they have to fit into a system where they have a lot of expenses, even if their intentions in the beginning were right, after a decade or two it becomes like a brand to feed the organisation itself. Once you grow you get employees, you get offices, you get cars, you build this infrastructure, then it becomes the goal itself just to survive, to keep up all these expenses. And then you have to start thinking of business models
- So maybe I’ll wrap things up by asking about the political aspects of Solikyl. Would you say that Solikyl’s principles are political principles? And would you say that there are political goals that Solikyl is trying to accomplish?
- Frankly, I’m surprised myself, within the group I don’t know who is voting for who. We seldom discuss this anyway. Maybe there is some tendency of people not caring about the mainstream politics. We want to be independent, so we don’t want to focus on some political party or the other, and if part would invite us to some event we would probably not do it because they’re going to use it for their propaganda.
- So do you think approaching the project from an overtly political standpoint could actually work against what you’re trying to accomplish, or alienate people?
- It’s really a non-issue at the moment. But some people who look at our initiative from the outside, they can have some kind of misconceptions in the sense that they maybe connect us to a party, they maybe think we are leftist or environmentalist, that there must be something political with this because it’s so anti-capitalistic in a way. That I can sometimes feel from people who come: this kind of tendencies of
- I was wondering if you have any reflections on how Solikyl as a group has learned something as it has evolved or how the communities you are involved with have learned something. So you can take that in any direction you want. I was wondering what you understood the role of learning in what Solikyl does.
Well, there is a lot of different learning from different directions. From the beginning we understood that we don’t want to save the food only, and get the free food ourselves, we want to use the opportunity to do the public learning around food waste. People have questions and we have answers or at least can provide the direction to find those. So yeah it’s a big thing of us for explaining food waste: why aren’t things happening, why are the laws as they are? So there is a lot of public learning. We don’t have anything structured, like there is some courses that you can go, we’re doing it basically at the moment when people are meeting. Either it’s during these food sharing hours or during our hangouts, or even when we do the pickups we share a lot of knowledge around us. So there is a lot of learning going on around the food waste. But if you want to take it when it comes to this organisation, we who are the core group are maybe thinking we need to check out some laws or talk to the city people, or talk to the store owners, and we start to get a broader picture. When I started to engage in the project I had a reason to figure out how this shit works so I could actually find a solution I was looking for. So I had to understand how the structure within the government in the city works, who to talk to, how to contact them. For example I started, in Kortadala, the local politicians, once a month they have an open meeting. This is happening everywhere, but very few people know or care. When I went a few times I was surprised by how few people actually came from the public. So I started to go there to see how this thing works, and all these kind of small things I needed to figure out because I had to do this whole journey from finding a space, seeking money, talking to the city. I think one other thing I want to mention to something I said before is that I learned that the most sustainable way of doing things is actually cutting out the middle man. That many times you want to solve a problem and then you have to go through this guy, through this, through this, to get to there. And if you can get to the core of the solution it makes a lot of sense. In this case HSB, this is a landlord. They had this space that had been unused for two years. So they were sitting on an unused recourse, it was commercially not an attractive place, so they were not using it. And then they have a sustainability initiative within the company, and they have a person responsible for that who works with those issues. So then we at the bike kitchen had a problem finding a space. So instead of going to start an association, get some money, and then find HSB give them some money to get access to this space, which is unsustainable because we are dependent on the money that can get cut, and then we are basically homeless or need to spend a lot of energy to find the money. And instead I was lucky to find the person responsible for sustainability initiatives within the HSB company, the company who owns this house. And she just connected the dots: we have an unused recourse, we need to get some life into this area, its saving bikes, we can dump out wasted bikes on this place so it will actually help us some, people who live here will get a chance to meet. So they saw all these values in it and then directly gave us access to the space and so they benefit from it from a sustainability point of view and we benefit as a sustainability initiative. So we cut out the middle man, there is no need for the whole detour.

There’s a lot of this kind of learning process that goes on, that we like to share to the other groups. I often when I go to other initiatives like to tell them: skip the old model, maybe you can try this first.

10.3. Appendix C: Transcribed Interview 3

- So how did you first get involved with Solikyl
- Well I heard about if from friends for like two years ago or something and I heard about Cykelköket long before
- Did you have friends who were volunteers?
- Yeah
- And then I read about it in the website and went to a hangout and talked to Tomasz and Bruno
- And how long ago was that?
- It was in April
- So I guess you’ve met quite a lot of people through volunteering?
- Yeah
- Do you feel like there is a good community that gets built by doing this type of activity?
Yeah, I’m meeting more people than ever before
That’s awesome
I’m meeting new people every week and we get to talk about something that we both are interested in
What do you think it is about having a common project that brings people together? Because I guess that so many people are concerned about food waste but don’t feel like they can do anything, really, themselves
Yeah you can do much more, it’s much easier if you’re several people
Was the food waste problem something you were interested in before you got involved with the project?
Yeah I have been dumpster diving before for many years
Oh, so this is something I’m quite interested in, because it (Solikyl) is based on a lot of the same principles as dumpster diving, or the same end goals, they want to avert food being wasted
There are lots of similarities, but it’s about trying to get it to more people at the end of the day
Yeah, because for young people and students dumpster diving maybe isn’t such a big deal, but for people who have a family, maybe they’re slightly older, they wouldn’t feel comfortable doing that, which is why Solikyl seems like a really nice idea. But anyway, so you were involved with similar stuff before this?
Yeah but most of the time I’d be doing it on my own
So there wasn’t really the same community aspect to it? Are there any other important differences you would make between dumpster diving and what solikyl does?
When you dumpster dive, you try to hide it most of the time, but Solikyl…
You go through the front door?
Yeah
That way you can probably help a lot more people and are less likely to get into disagreements and stuff?
Yeah and that we can also really take all the waste from the store, whereas with dumpster diving we can’t take a tenth of it
Sure, because you have this structure in place to organise the pickups and everything
Do you get many places that will tell you ‘no, we don’t want to give you our food waste’? Is that something you come across often? Or does it seem like the majority of places are quite open to it?
I’ve been talking to a few, mostly small stores but also two a bit bigger, and most of them they’re positive, but they maybe say it will be hard because it’s not me that makes the decision, or they say we have so little food waste or something like that, but they’re always positive to the idea
It seems like most people do want to improve this in some way, people want to do something to solve this problem, no one is happy about food waste, but maybe people feel like they don’t have the power to do anything, but maybe solikyl is providing this feeling. Because there’s a community of people doing it, there’s not so much pressure on you as an individual to solve this whole thing. I’m quite interested in this idea of community and how people learn through their community.
So you were saying that you had some sort of plan to expand it to other sorts of community activities, could you give any examples?
My examples is nature biology guiding, that’s what I would want to happen
Like citizen science?
Yeah
That’s an idea
Why I’m thinking about it is that I’m into many other organisations that are like nature conservation and so on and I know people that would want to do things together, yeah go out to the forest and look at mosses, or bird watching. Maybe like it’s too much tight structure around it when it’s with the organisations. But have it somewhere in between, not a big
organisation holding it, but not just two persons. Something in-between to organise things together.

- So it’s somewhere in between not really being organised, just being individuals or a couple of people, and being so organised that people don’t really feel free to do it their way or they feel pressured to do it a certain way. This is something I’m quite interested in as well, why doing some things in a bit more of an informal community way can work a bit better than having a top down approach to it where there’s an organisation in charge and they tell you how to do things

- I know many people who could contribute very much, who don’t want to go to it when it’s really, really organised because then they can’t decide anything themselves

- Sure, I think that’s a really significant thing, there is not very much hierarchy in organisations like Solikyl

- So have you learned anything through your involvement with Solikyl?

- Yeah I’ve learned how to organise, like send information and try to get new people involved

- So you didn’t have any experience with that before?

- No

- So are you getting a lot of organisational skills through it?

- Yeah and I learned a lot about politics

- I was going to ask you something about that, do you think organisations like Solikyl and Cykelköket are tied to a particular set of political ideas, or do you think you can have them separated, or do you think that you need to have them together?

- I do think we are political, but we are not party political

- That seems like maybe something that could alienate people in a community, if they felt like those guys, they’re…

- I think that could be a problem. I think that has been a problem. I know one person that maybe found that we were too political

- But in general, it seems like you do a pretty good job of not making that the main thing that you’re talking about. It’s a challenge to be open to the most amount of people without compromising what your ideals are, what you’re trying to change in society, because you are trying to change things right?

- Yeah

- So the food waste problem: how much of it do you think can be solved by changing the way people think about food, or do you think it’s something we can solve by changing our individual behaviour, or do there have to be bigger kinds of changes? Like a change in the way the food system works. So maybe…

- Yeah, I do, because otherwise we’re really just like, bara akut (just acute)

- So maybe this is part of the way Solikyl comes into it because they may be challenging a way that people have been used to things working and showing them an alternative way of working things. It’s like teaching by example: showing people that there’s another way of doing it, and we can do it this way and it works.

- You were saying that you dumpster dived for a while before you were involved with this project, are you also concerned about broader environmental problems?

- Yeah

- And do you see the food waste issue as part of a larger set of environmental problems or more as its own thing?

- Yeah it’s a part of…. Everything is overproduced

- So in that way it’s like food waste is part of a bigger cultural problem around attitudes towards products and things in general

- People just work all their time and consume instead of doing something that is meaningful

- So in organising Solikyl’s activities have you come across any challenges or difficult situations?
- Yeah right now there’s a problem, there has been two persons contacting the same store and not really talking to anyone else in the organisation
- Are they not using Karrot?
- No, and then we had to like have a meeting with everyone involved and we had to set up rules for before you can get in touch with a store in the name of Solikyl
- Ok, so this is where the question of whether people need to be members before
- Or whether they at least need to come to a meeting, or they need to write somewhere on the forum about what they’re doing or if it’s ok to just say we have a concept of foodsaving and a person comes, reads about it, hears someone tells them about it and do the same thing, and do it in the name of solikyl, or do they have to like report to the board of solikyl before they can do anything in the name of solikyl
- It’s an interesting problem actually, because you could see how this might lead to trouble if you are an organisation, and you’re presenting yourselves to businesses and restaurants, and then if someone takes your name and starts to do something you wouldn’t necessarily do that could lead to problems obviously. So I see what the difficulty is. So now it’s introducing this question of how much structure do we want to use, without compromising this open community accessibility
- Without scaring people away. Because I have to read in a lot of things and write in a lot of places, and I don’t want to put people off
- That seems like quite a challenge. Do you have a sense that you’re going to find a solution to this, do people have different opinions about the best way forward with it?
- We’re discussing it. I think most of us do have the opinion that we want to have it as open as possible but maybe some see that we have to have some rules. For me, I would rather that everyone can contribute in the way that they want to contribute. So we’re discussing it.
- That was something that came up in the meeting as well: how the old board and the new board is managed
- It’s whether to have the same board year after year, it doesn’t really work
- So you think it’s quite important that there are as many new perspectives, or as many people have a say in the decision making as possible?
- Yeah we always have… The name is board meeting but everyone that shows up has as much to say
- Do you think that’s an important part of Solikyl’s philosophy, being kind of democratic?
- It’s kind of, if you do things, if you involve yourself then you have something to say. If you just show up once and then never again you don’t have anything to say
- So the decision making is then naturally taken more by the people who are most involved
- Yeah and we’re trying to have it as much that way as we can

- So are you related at all with Studiefrämjandet?
- Helena has contact with them, and I’m supposed to report something, but we kind of don’t really want to report to them
- What would be the pros and the cons of being partnered with them?
- The pros is we can be here in this local and have our fridges here, we can also print things out or put something up on their website
- How about the cons?
- The cons? We have to like make everyone write their names when they sign in
- A lot more bureaucracy?
- A lot more bureaucracy. And if we go for that then we will stop existing when nobody continues because its built around these structures
- So you lose a bit of autonomy and flexibility

10.4. Appendix D: Transcribed Board Meeting Excerpt
- Participant 1
  Jag tänkte att det vara bra om vi kunde diskutera lite grann men inte nu, men om vi vill ha medlemmar, för det kan vänta, ah, att medlemslista och så. Tänker jag mer att det

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ska bli ett krav och ska få med skämningen och sådant men fattas något. Man kan registrera sig. Men jag tänker att om ibland annat så kanske vi som förening kan betraktas mer säljer oss från andra organisationer som jag kanske söka pengar från eller så att de vill se att det har fungerat vars medlemmar så inte bara helt

- Participant 3
Jag har fått intråket av att det var ganska många som inte vill vara registrerade att man vill vara lite andra. Så det kanske var uttalat eller. Men det är i alla fall inte en issu för nu men...

- Participant 1
Nej, men jag förväntar mig att en punkt på årsföretag.

- Participant 1
Medlemmarna som ska bestämma inte styrelsen och medlemmar finns inte.

- Participant 5

- Participant 2

- Participant 5

Laughter

- Participant 5
Eller testa något nytt. För att det som jag ser det så karrot själva organisatoriska Knutpunkten och den kanske kan fylla alla de här funktionerna så var ingen förening eller mindre.

- Participant 1
Tre så här kan det bankkontot
- Participant 6
Vi har fått pengar som vi inte bada och vi har inte fått ut några av dem och inte använt dem till någonting.

- Participant 2
Jag kan nu ta min ordförande makt eftersom det är flera som vill tala, så ni kan räkna upp händerna.

- Participant 3
Jag vill bara säga att nu bara en var händerna kvar (coughing, inaudible) kollade, så att ni vet.

- Participant 5
Vi kanske kan ta den diskussionen efter styrelse så kallade styrelsen.

- Participant 2
Jag vill bara säga en sista gren angående den här punkten, som handlar om att planera sättet att för årsmötet och handlar också om att varför en förening. Det är därför jag vill gärna att för en förening ska ha någon betydelse att jag ska till vissa som en väldigt mycket drivande nu och Andrea, att ni vill jättegärna att vi ska vara med på Joakim också, som driver väldigt mycket förvarande så att det är de som är liksom mest aktiva ser faktiskt de som sitter i styrelsen så det finns där en mening och då kommer vi ha något fungerande och då blir det inte tryck då blir det någonting som har tydligt. Men det får vi ta vid årsmötet. Men vi måste ju sätta ett datum. Vill du säga något?

- Participant 1
Jag vill säga bara att jag tänkte saken med styrelsen men i fall det är många som vilja brukar lämna. Då kan man tänka sig en större styrelse var man hittar några frivilligare. Så att då kanske även personer som inte är så aktiv, kanske jag, kan bli styrelsen också om de är intresserade. Till exempel men som suppleant, ah precis, för att de får man inte problemet att det är för många som har rösträtt det är ändringarna för mötena, utan där det snarare att man kan om det är några av de ordinarie ledamot i mötena som inte aktiv längre så är det fortfarande en annan som då får rösträtten.

Translation

- Participant 1
I thought it would be great if we could discuss a little bit, but not now, if we want ‘members’, because it can wait, that member list and so on. I am thinking more whether it should be a requirement but maybe this is missing something. You have the option to register. But I think that sometimes if we can be considered more as an association, it might be easier to present ourselves to other organisations or secure funding. They want to see that it has worked, that it has participating members and so on...

-Participant 3
I have gotten the impression that there were quite a few who do not want to be registered, who want it to be a bit different. Maybe it was announced or? But it is in any case not an issue for now, but...

-Participant 1
No, but I expect a point at the annual meeting.
Participant 1
It is the members who will decide, not the board.

But there are no members!

Participant 5
I think the question is whether or not we choose to be an association. Should we continue with that form or not? For some reason I think of 'Gothenburg Hacker Space', which has been around for many years, and every year the question comes back, should you drag the whole corpse along with you all the time? Or should you let the corpse die out? Because the problem has been from the beginning that when we formed this whole project, in the beginning it was very clear that we did not want to have the structure of an association. Then we were forced to have the organisational structure to formalise, professionalise and be able to get to a lot of collaborations. Now it feels like it will be a recurring problem all the time, do we want this structure and why? Is there, is there any reason left to have this organizational structure? So, I think it is important that we decide whether those involved with the group want to continue with the association, so we can invest a bit into it, otherwise this will just be hard work that you want to forget. But it is good if we discuss whether we want to keep the association structure going forward, and whether Solikyl’s project can exist without being an association.

Participant 2
We can absolutely discuss that. I see both the advantages and disadvantages of the association. I think we can use it in a clever way as we have done so far, I think we have not created a very bureaucratic structure, but we have used this form as needed because we live in a world where things need to be formalised. The organisation must be formalised, and then we can take this opportunity when there is, as might be, a conflict, or someone must have some sort of authority that must make a decision formally. And then there is a forum there, which is where you can gather and can have a voice.

Participant 5
Then there must be people who drive the association on. In case, as you yourself said, someone has gone away, someone has moved, someone has stopped. So then we must always face the question of who will take over, and no one wants to. And there is the question, which is better? Do you kill the corpse or let it kill you?

Laughter

Or try something new. Because the way I see it, using karrot as an organizational hub may be able to fill all these functions, so you no longer have a need for an association, or it can have a smaller role.

Participant 2
I would just like to say one last branch on this point, which is about planning the way to the annual meeting and is also about why we have an association. That is, I would like to say that for an association to have any meaning you need some members who are very, very driven. Now Anthony, that we are glad will be a part of, and Julian too, who has driven a lot in the past. That is, it is those who are the most active who actually seem to be those who sit on the board, so there is a meaning there. And then we will have something working and there will not be pressure and it will be clear. But we must address this at the annual meeting. But we must set a date. Want to say something?
-Participant 1
I just wanted to say that I thought about the matter with the board. In case there are many who want to leave, then one can imagine a larger board where one finds some volunteers. So that then maybe even people who are not so active, maybe I, can become part of the board also if they are interested. For example, as an alternative. Ah exactly! Because you do not get the problem that there are too many people who have the right to vote, rather it can change for the meetings. If some of the ordinary members at the meetings are not active anymore, then another person can inherit their right to vote.

10.5. Appendix E: Interview Consent Form

Urban Sustainability Transitions as Educatve Practices: A Case Study of the Solidarity Fridge in Gothenburg, Sweden

Master Thesis in Sustainable Development, Uppsala University

Paul Plummer

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and the purpose of my participation as an interviewee.
2. The future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.
3. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate.
4. Participation involves being interviewed by a researcher from Uppsala University. I allow the researcher to take notes during the interview. I also may allow the recording of the interview and subsequent dialogue by audio tape. It is clear to me that in case I do not want the interview and dialogue to be taped I am fully entitled to withdraw from participation.
5. I have the right not to answer questions and if I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to withdraw from the interview.
6. I have been given the explicit guarantee that the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.
7. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
8. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

_____________________________________________ Participant’s Signature Date

_____________________________________________ Researcher’s Signature Date