Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

disP - The Planning Review

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rdsp20

In-between stability and adaptability

Making sense of innovation platforms

Lina Berglund-Snodgrass, Mats Fred & Dalia Mukhtar-Landgren

To cite this article: Lina Berglund-Snodgrass, Mats Fred & Dalia Mukhtar-Landgren (2023) In-between stability and adaptability, disP - The Planning Review, 59:2, 22-37, DOI: 10.1080/02513625.2023.2257486

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/02513625.2023.2257486

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group ETH - Eidenössiche Technische Hochschule Zürich

Published online: 15 Sep 2023.

Submit your article to this journal

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=rdsp20

In-between stability and adaptability

Making sense of innovation platforms

Lina Berglund-Snodgrass, Mats Fred and Dalia Mukhtar-Landgren

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

Lina Berglund-Snodgrass, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in Urban Planning at the Department of Landscape Architecture, Planning and Management at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Sweden. She has pursued research on the changing conditions of urban planning in the face of experiments and testbeds as well as new collaborative organisations. Currently, she is engaged in research on testbed planning and urban experimentation within the empirical context of smart mobility in the Nordic countries.

Mats Fred, PhD, is an Assistant Senior Lecturer in Public Administration at the Department of Political Science at Lund University in Sweden. Following his doctoral work on projectification (2018), Fred has been engaged in research on temporary and 'experimental' forms of organisation and governance in local and regional government as well as in the context of public transport.

Dalia Mukhtar-Landgren, PhD, is an Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and CIRCLE (Centre of Innovation Research) at Lund University in Sweden. Her research includes new organisational forms of urban planning and development, including projectification, experimentation, and collaborative innovation. She is currently engaged in research projects on testbed planning, urban experimentation and smart mobility in the Nordic countries.

Abstract: Innovation platforms are new collaborative organisations in the urban development context that aim to support innovation. They assemble different organisations and actors and act as flexible intermediary links between the same. By being intrinsically flexible and adaptable in form and function, the innovation platform can be seen as an organisational accomplishment or enactment of adaptive planning. Central to adaptive planning is the balance between organisational flexibility and stability, which is also intrinsic to any public innovation work. Public sector innovations are often perceived to require open and experimental trial and error strategies – while their institutional setting simultaneously requires stability. The aim of this article is to analyse how individuals working in innovation platforms make sense of their organisation at the intersection of adaptability and stability. We describe the tension between adaptability and stability inherent to innovation platforms, as the platforms are set to facilitate relationships between actors while maintaining their role as an independent organisation. This article is based on an in-depth multiple-case study of 15 innovation platforms in the Nordic countries, consisting of interviews with representatives, as well as extensive desktop material and participant observations. By adopting an organisational and sense-making perspective, we analyse how people working in platforms enact their organisations and their environment through processes of belief and action-driven sense-making. We conclude that despite innovation platforms' strong advocacy – and sense-making – in terms of adaptability and chameleon-like characteristics, stability is enacted through making sense of themselves as a legitimate and necessary position/node in urban planning and development.

1 Innovation platforms – new actors in urban planning and development

The pressure and eagerness to innovate are increasingly prevalent in urban planning and development. This is related to wider reform ideas of re-engineering governance and bureaucracy, exhortations to pursue 'sustainable development goals' and austerity measures in the public sector, as well as attempts to create and facilitate markets for new technical products and services – ranging from autonomous vehicles and platform-based shared services to energy-efficient buildings or new social innovations (Sveiby et al. 2012; Osborne 2014; Agger, Hedensted Lund 2017). As a testament to this development, we have observed a proliferation of new forms of collaborative endeavours, organisations and actor relationships, not least in the context of urban planning and development (Eneqvist et al. 2022; Vigar et al. 2020; Berglund-Snodgrass, Mukhtar-Landgren 2020; Kronsell, Muktar-Landgren 2018; Agger, Sörensen 2018; Healey 2004, 2005). One example to this end is the so-called *innovation platform*, a concept used to describe a range of activities at the intersection of public and private actors with the ambition to build, organise and enhance innovation networks (Lehenkari, Pelkonen, Oksanen 2015; Perjanen, Rantala 2021). While innovation platforms have existed within the context of regional and corporate development for some time, they are a relatively new phenomenon in the urban development context and the urban planning literature (Haveri et al. 2021; Parjanen, Rantala 2021; Vallance et al. 2020; Berglund-Snodgrass, Mukhtar-Landgren 2020). In this burgeoning literature, the innovation platform is described as an intermediary, facilitating collaboration between public and private sector actors and civil society organisations in urban planning and development. As an entity in-between several different actor types, the platforms are often funded 'externally' by grants from e.g., European and national innovation agencies or by regional or local governments, or a combination of both. Even though several sectors (public, private, civil society) are represented, the explicit aim of these platforms is often to increase the *public sector's* innovation capacity. Hence, the public sector actors are expected to adapt and respond to a broader collective innovation goal by harmonising and aligning urban planning and development with broader innovation processes and trends.

Routledge Taylor & Francis Group

While these innovation platforms exist and notably operate in the urban development context, there is still confusion as to what kinds of organisational phenomena they are or how we are to make sense of them. From an organisational perspective, they could be argued as constituting something that happens "outside the context of formal organisations" and should perhaps be regarded as *partial organisations* – organisations that have some but not all the elements of formal organisations (Ahrne, Brunsson 2019: 4). One basic premise of innovation platforms, however, is that they are dependent on other organisations. They are designed to facilitate relationships between different kinds of actors, and, in that sense, need to be flexible and adaptable. They are also independent actors operating in line with their own goals and agendas and, as such, can be described as somewhat stable (and almost formal in character). Since the innovation platforms are in-between public and private actors, public sector values (e.g., transparency, accountability, legitimacy) are not per default an intrinsic part. By being inherently flexible and adaptable in form and function, the innovation platform can be seen as an organisational accomplishment, or enactment (Weick 2015) of adaptive planning. Adaptive planning is a normative planning ideal calling on public sector actors to develop the capacity to cope, respond and adapt to change in urban planning and development by opening up its processes to other actors (Rauws 2017; Rauws, de Roo 2016; cf. Janssen, der Voort 2016). Central to adaptive planning is the balance between organisational flexibility and stability (Rauws 2017), which is also intrinsic to any public innovation work (cf. Agger, Sörensen 2018). Public sector innovation is often perceived to require open and experimental trial and error strategies – while its institutional setting simultaneously requires stability, not least in an urban planning context where stability and predictability are related to the legal frameworks and functioning of democratic decision-making bodies (cf. Janssen, der Voort 2016). Conceptually, innovation platforms embody the dual notions of autonomy, flexibility and creativity on the one hand, and control and stability on the other (cf. Mukhtar-Landgren 2021; Fred 2018: 22; Hodgson, Cicmil 2006).

The aim of this article is to analyse how people working in innovation platforms, set in the context of urban planning and development, make sense of their organisation at the intersection of organisational flexibility and stability. Drawing on organisational studies and the literature on sense-making, we approach the innovation platforms as a set of processes in which people not only construct, or produce the platforms, but also their environment and context (Schoeneborn 2019). Hence, they enact reality, e.g., an urban development context, rather than act in, or react to a given reality (see also Ahrne, Brunsson 2019). The following research question forms the basis of the study: What kinds of organisations do innovation platforms enact through processes of sense-making?

The text is structured in the following way; below, we give a short review of the literature on innovation platforms, highlighting their organisational aspects. Thereafter, the literature on sense-making is described and operationalised by highlighting two forms of interrelated sense-making processes (belief and action-driven sense-making). This section ends by outlining an analytical framework consisting of a series of questions we pose to the empirical material. This is followed by a section in which the method and material are outlined, which consist, among other things, of interviews with representatives of 15 innovation platforms in the Nordic countries. Thereafter, an analysis of the empirical material is carried out in line with the analytical framework. This is followed by a conclusion where we argue that the innovation platforms, rather than taking a perception of themselves as the flexible coordinating intermediary whose main purpose is to support the workings of others, consolidate themselves as stable formal organisations working to maintain legitimacy in urban planning and development.

2 Innovation platforms accomplished through processes of sense-making

In the academic literature, innovation platforms have been described as multi-actor collaborative organisations that aim to support innovation, often in the public sector. They are often seen as components in so-called innovation ecosystems (Parjanen, Hyypiä 2018; Kivimia et al. 2019), where they are conceptualised as an intermediary link between actors and organisations (e.g. Parjanen, Rantala 2021; Hakkarainen, Hyysalo 2016; Ansell, Gash 2018). In terms of practices, these multi-actor organisations are described as being set up to undertake "various activities around identified innovation challenges and opportunities" (Kilelu et al. 2013), including brokering and facilitating processes (Blix-Germundsson et al. 2020; Parjanen, Hyypiä 2018). In organi-

sational terms, innovation platforms have been described as a network-based and administrative organisation "that generates and meta-governs a portfolio of collaborative projects and networks" (Ansell, Gash 2018) and organise actors in space and time around a set of resources that emerge, are sustained or change (cf. Haveri et al. 2021). In addition, they are referred to as an organisational solution for public sector actors' risk-taking in testbed planning (Berglund-Snodgrass 2022).

The literature on innovation platforms either describes the platforms related to their activities and processes – e.g., intermediation, facilitation and brokering (Kilelu et al. 2013; Parjanen, Hyypiä 2018; Howells 2006) – or related to the structures surrounding these meta-governing activities (Ansell, Gash 2018; Haveri et al. 2021).

Our point of departure is that innovation platforms cannot be seen as 'set' organisations with a given function that can be 'unpacked'. Instead, we draw on the literature on sense-making to understand how innovation platforms, permeated by the tensions between stability and flexibility, talk, communicate and act themselves into being. Sense-making, which can be described as a perspective more than a theory, draws on interpretative and social-cognitivist approaches in organisational studies (Maitlis, Christianson 2014). In addition, it builds on and has been vital to the development of a *processual* understanding of organisation (Hernes 2022, 2014; Sandberg, Tsoukas 2015), where *organising* rather than *organisation* is emphasised (Weick 1995; Weick et al. 2005).

2.1 Making sense of innovation platforms

Considered broadly, sensemaking is a metaphor that places attention on the idea that "the reality of everyday life must be seen as an ongoing 'accomplishment', which takes particular shape and form as individuals attempt to create order and make retrospective sense of the situations they find themselves in" (Weick 2001: 11). The retrospective perspective approaches sense-making as a process where people, in a way, discover what they have already done (Weick 2015; cf. Sandberg, Tsoukas 2015: 8). That is, through sense-making processes, individuals try to make their situations rational and legitimate to themselves and others. Organisation emerges from an ongoing process in which people organise to make sense of equivocal inputs and enact that sense back into the world to make it more orderly (Weick et al. 2005: 410). In the literature, these sense-making processes are sometimes seen as primarily set within persons (e.g. Hill, Levenhagen 1995; Elsbach, Barr, Hargadon 2005), yet in this article, we follow the strand of research that sees it as fundamentally relational and between people (cf. Maitlis, Christianson 2014: 62).

From this perspective, platforms are not only (continuously) becoming organisations, they are not the origin of organising activities – they are the product of them. Similar arguments are found in the contemporary process-based theories in organisation studies, where organisations no longer are reduced to "entities adapting to the environment" (Hernes 2014: 39; Ahrne, Brunsson 2019) but instead are seen as constellations of individuals co-constituting themselves, as well as their environment, through talking and acting (c.f. Czarniawska 2005: 30). When people in innovation platforms talk and act they "create the materials that become the constraints and opportunities they face" (Weick 1995: 3), but when people try to make sense of what they are doing, they also enact "the environment that they seek to understand" (Maitlis, Christianson 2014: 67). Even though the literature on innovation platforms often highlights the role of the platform in relation to other actors or within an 'ecosystem', the point of departure here is that there is no given or pre-determined role, context or environment in which platforms navigate. This is also echoed in broader organisational theories which emphasise that the environment "is constituted by the actions of the acting system" (Hernes 2014: 48). Instead of seeing organisations as under pressure to adjust to or accommodate their environment (Ahrne, Brunsson 2019: 4), a process perspective focuses on stabilisation: In a "world [that] is continually changing" organising becomes attempts at stabilisation in order "to create a predictable world amid multiple possibilities" (Hernes 2014: 39). In other words, sense-making is a process where people create accounts of the world to make action possible, and in this continuous process they also enact themselves and their environment (cf. Maitlis 2005; Maitlis, Christianson 2014). Below we describe how this can be analysed.

2.2 Belief-driven and action-driven sense-making

Although theories on sense-making are often applied in relation to processes of organisational change, including instances of sudden uncertainties or crises (e.g., Christiansson et al.

2009; Maitlis, Christianson 2014:67), we instead understand sense-making as a process where people are making sense of (and as such also constitute) new organisations. In doing so, we focus on two processes of how sense-making is played out.

To guide our analysis, we follow Weick's analytical distinction between (i) belief-driven and (ii) action-driven sense-making. Here, sense-making can both begin with beliefs and take the form of arguing and expecting, or it can begin with actions "and take the form of committing or manipulating" (Weick 1995:135).

(i) Belief-driven sense-making is a process in which people or groups of people construct meaning around a set of plausible ideas and potentialities by connecting small pieces of information into larger structures of meaning (Wei Choo 2005). Such sense-making can be enacted through arguing and expecting. To put it simply, the process of arguing is when people reason their way from one idea to the choice of another idea, while the process of expecting includes making propositions that guide interpretations (Weick 1995:138, 145). We approach arguments by analysing chains of reasoning and assumptions in our empirical material, i.e., as expressed in interviews or as made evident in webpages or newsletters. Expectations, in contrast to arguments, tend to be held more strongly as people appear to be "more interested in confirming than in rebutting or contradicting them" (Weick 1995:145). What is crucial about expectations is that they can be self-correcting and, as such, operate as self-fulfilling prophecies (or hypotheses or anticipations). This makes expectations inherently adaptable. We approach expectations by analysing a priori propositions about the future as expressed in interviews, on websites and in strategy documents. We understand these propositions about the future as woven-together pieces and potentialities that form a narrative and framework of how to act – which, in turn, prescribes roles, identities and activities not only to the innovation platform, but also other actors in the urban development context.

Weick (1995) makes a specific note on the setting where most arguments (and perhaps expectations) are enacted, namely meetings – a phenomenon we also find of great relevance to the study of innovation platforms where meetings (including conferences, collaborative projects, matchmaking events) are common. Schwartzman (1989), a pioneering researcher in the field of meetings, argues that meetings are pivotal for contemporary organisations – those other organised activities all exist so that people can have meetings, she argues (see also Åkerström et al. 2021). Meetings are not simply sites where arguing occurs but the form that generates and maintains the organisation as an entity (Schwartzman 1989:86; emphasis in original; Weick 1995:143). To conclude, we put forth the argument that processes of belief-driven sense-making play a vital role in constituting innovation platforms.

(ii) Action-driven sense-making is a process in which groups of people construct meaning around their actions by creating or modifying cognitive structures that give significance to these behaviours (Wei Choo 2005). Action-driven sense-making can be enacted through manipulation and commitment. Manipulation concerns those actions that make a visible change in the world that requires explanation, whereas commitment concerns those actions for which someone is responsible and meaning is created to justify actions (Weick 1995). Manipulation includes intervening, making a change or adding something that previously was not there. By putting something out in the world, organisations have to consolidate what it is or what it might be. People's actions lead to changes that in turn become constraints in their own sense-making. This includes actions such as speaking about phenomena in new ways, forming networks or coalitions, or organising events and conferences. Actors can latch onto these activities and show/demonstrate them as a way to better make sense of themselves and their place in the environment. We analyse manipulations with reference to the activities (and descriptions of activities) of the innovation platforms. Commitment, in turn, concerns the basic idea that "people try hardest to build meaning around those actions to which their commitment is strongest" (Weick 1995:156). Organisations routinely create a context that is high in visibility, volitation, and irrevocability. This generates stronger commitments and richer justifications which, in turn, make sense to members. On the other hand, commitment can be viewed as an organisational liability since it may reduce flexibility. We approach commitment by analysing which commitments the innovation platforms gain and how they explain them.

In practice, the processes of belief- and action-driven sense-making are interrelated and intertwined. As such, the distinctions are primarily made for analytical purposes. Based on these concepts we construct an analytical

Belief-driven		Action-driven	
Arguments	*Expectations*	*Manipulation*	*Commitment*
• Which arguments are made? • What assumptions do the arguments rest upon?	• Which expectations are put forward? • What ideas and parts are the expectations constructed around?	• Which activities are performed? • How are those activities explained?	• Which commitments are enrolled? • How are those commitments explained?
How do the innovation platforms enact themselves through the argument posed?	How do the innovation platforms enact themselves through the proposed expectations?	How do the innovation platforms enact themselves through the environment they create?	How do the innovation platforms enact themselves through the commitments they enrol?

Tab. 1: Analytical framework.

framework consisting of questions directed to the empirical material (see table 1).

3 Method and material

This article is situated within a larger research project focusing on the organisational aspects of public sector innovation and draws from an in-depth, multiple case study (Yin 2014) of 15 innovation platforms in the Nordic countries, comprising three types of empirical material; semi-structured interviews, participatory observations and webpages/documents. (For an overview of selected platforms see appendix A.)

We approach platforms broadly as organisations that pursue activities at the intersection of public and private actors with the ambition to build, organise and enhance innovation. Since we are specifically interested in innovation platforms in the context of urban planning and development, we selected platforms on that premise, i.e., that they in various ways engage public sector actors in the context of innovation and urban development. The majority of the platforms are Swedish (11n) but we also include four platforms from other Nordic countries such as Denmark, Norway and Finland. This allows for a broader compilation of material from a similar tradition of a decentralised state and strong local autonomy (Loughlin 2000). The Nordic planning systems can be characterised as a comprehensive planning model and urban planning constitutes primarily a municipal affair (Fredricsson & Smas 2015). The innovation platforms included in the study differ in their funding arrangements and generally employ few permanent and full-time staff, although the platforms engage in collaborative endeavours with a number of stakeholders in the urban development context. Since we were interested in how people working within innovation platforms make sense of their organisation at the intersection of organisational flexibility and stability, we specifically interviewed people who are employed by innovation platforms as project leaders, programme managers or responsible for daily operations, or people who are commissioned to undertake duties on behalf of the platforms but are employed in other organisations. This means that we have interviewed key individuals in and in close proximity to the innovation platforms, people who can be expected to embody the spirit, vision and organisation of the platform and not stakeholders connected to the platforms through partnerships or memberships such as municipalities or developers.

We conducted 38 interviews between 45–60 minutes long. These interviews were conducted between November 2019 and January 2022. They were carried out in Swedish and "Scandinavian" with the exception of the Finish interviews, which were conducted in English. The interviews were semi-structured (cf. Devault, McCoy 2006) and the questions were centred on both formal and informal organisational aspects. In relation to more formal aspects, we used Ahrne and Brunssons' (2019) theory of formal and partial organisation as inspiration and asked questions about (i) funding/financing (including annual turnover), (ii) staffing (numbers and skill sets), (iii) members, (iv) hierarchy/procedures for decision-making and (iv) organisational functions/roles. In regard to more informal organisational questions, we were inspired by the framework of sense-making in asking our respondents to (i) describe the organisation in their own words, (ii) the background/motivation of the platform, (iii) its role/

function in relation to broader innovation-processes, (iv) its vision, (v) everyday work in relation to stakeholders, and (vi) a typical day at work. The answers were then transcribed and coded in accordance with the analytical framework outlined in the section above (table 1). In this, the sense-making perspective helped to advance the research process by gradually redefining the theoretical orientation in relation to the empirical material (cf. Alvesson, Sköldberg 2009).

In addition, we have participated in a broad range of webinars, workshops and events hosted by the platforms. These interactions can be conceptualised on a scale from merely "observational" to more "participatory" (cf. Gustafsson 2016:49; Fred 2019). This study can primarily be understood as observational, as we attended events or webinars, but rarely raised any questions or interacted with the organisers. We did, at times, interact with other participants at these events and could then ask them why they had chosen to attend, or what they were hoping to get out of their membership or attendance.

Finally, we studied a large range of documentation produced by the platforms. This includes following the organisations on LinkedIn and Facebook and subscribing to newsletters, as well as analysing documents available on their websites, such as strategies and communication or events plans. These were also coded in accordance with table 1.

To allow for transparency, excerpts from the interviews and other empirical material are presented throughout the analysis and referred to as platform A–O. The excerpts have been translated into English by the authors.

4 Innovation platforms enacting stability and adaptability

4.1 Creating the innovation platforms through belief-driven sense-making

In this section, we analyse the innovation platforms from a belief-driven sense-making perspective where arguing and expectations are key concepts structuring the analysis. The analysis shows how innovation platforms argue for their own existence using broader narratives of public sector innovation but also create expectations of a future with themselves – perceived as facilitators and trendspotters – as vital collaborative partners.

Arguing platforms into existence

Arguing is a process whereby actors construct meaning by connecting the contradictory (Wei Choo 2005) and reason their way from one idea to another (Weick 1995). Innovation platforms construct meaning from arguments that often are centred on the necessity of their own existence, often by highlighting the need for facilitation, matchmaking or co-creation. One of the organisations posits on their webpage:

"A basic idea is that we cannot solve all the challenges ourselves […] [Platform O] therefore consists of the municipality and partners from universities, organisations and business. The new solutions are delivered in collaboration between us. Through our work, new and established actors gather side by side and everyone is welcome to participate".

In the quote above, innovation platforms are described as necessary to enable change and innovation. This description is based on a number of assumptions. One assumption is the need to think beyond 'business as usual' (cf. Kronsell, Mukhtar-Landgren 2019). Herein lies the notion that the everyday procedures of public sector organisations cannot contain the measures necessary to promote and enable innovation. Instead, it is argued, these endeavours need to be handled in collaborative initiatives preferably 'outside' the public sector domain.

"… I think that …the municipalities … need to be prepared to think in new ways: You cannot continue with the same tools, which will just keep creating problems for us in the future. We have to think completely new, including in how we organise ourselves. The structure of public administration is a product, or a concept, that may not be entirely suitable for taking on the challenges of the future" (Platform J).

This quote is from a representative from a state-funded innovation platform that promotes innovation and sustainability measures in 30 municipalities. The argument is familiar; both theorists and practitioners have been known to describe the public sector as an entity infused with organisational inertia, inefficiency and an unwillingness to change (Czarniawska 1985; cf, Styhre 2007; Fred, Mukhtar-Landgren 2022). However, the argument forwarded by the representatives from platforms is not to reform or change the inner workings of public bureaucracies. On the contrary, the argument is to complement public organisations:

"We want to be a supplement to the bureaucracy… so that [they] can go outside [their] own sphere and move into another to be inno-

vative. [Here, they] can create across borders and work with researchers, agencies, NGOs and then, after they've done that, move back into the bureaucracy. We are not trying to change the bureaucracy; we are trying to supplement the bureaucracy with innovations" (Platform F).

In this sense, the innovation platforms are no threat to the public organisations – municipalities are not persuaded to change – but in order to handle complex or "wicked problems" (Rittel, Webber 1973) in urban development it would be good – or perhaps even vital – to collaborate with/through the innovation platforms. The argument is related both to a perceived problem (a public sector unsuitable for processes of innovation) and to the perceived solution – the innovation platform:

"We do try to minimise, let us say, the project bureaucracy, and especially the project development bureaucracy for the city actors, since it is not their daily business to do these kinds of innovation activities. So, we try to keep it as light and fun for them as possible" (platform A).

As suggested in the quotation above, the offer proposed through these kinds of arguments is to ease the burden of bureaucracy for the municipalities. They do not have to engage in burdensome project administration and bureaucracy, and they do not have to take on the responsibility for innovation alone. The innovation platforms see themselves as offering a fun in-between space in which the municipalities can, or perhaps even should, engage. If municipalities are to be able to handle contemporary and future challenges, their engagements in these platforms are described as more or less vital. This way of arguing is closely related to how actors in platforms make sense of themselves through processes of expectations, which will be discussed below.

Expecting a future …

One pivotal activity that all platforms are engaged in is predicting plausible futures, i.e., expecting what the future could be and what is on the horizon. Sense-making based on expectations involves describing oneself as an actor that will be relevant or necessary for "… what they predict will be there" (Weick 1995). The plausible futures that the innovation platforms predict become guiding facets to which the platforms, actors and activities are expected to adapt.

Several platforms in our material, both in the interviews and the broader desktop material, make sense of themselves as trendspotters that look out for what is around the corner, and what new technologies, regulations and ideas are expected to be developed in the future. For example, platform K states on its website that it offers public actors 'intelligence about the world' [omvärldsbevakning in Swedish] including international forerunners, up-and-coming working solutions and trends in technology. Some platforms develop roadmaps or organise workshops around scenarios for the future, whereas others engage in the future by describing it in broad themes on their web pages, citing societal trends such as the circular economy or smart cities. To this end, they also produce YouTube videos of 'smart mobility' or 'future living and space'. Almost all platforms have newsletters that are available for any actor to subscribe to in which they highlight trends or describe pilots, EU projects or events abroad. Such newsletters can include a note to save the date for a smart city world congress or a brief recap of a previous workshop on learning from a global initiative on Climate Smart Cities (newsletter Platform J), a brief analysis/statement of trends in the mobility startup sector (Newsletter Platform E) or information on the launch of a tool that can help municipalities to get started with sensors and "reap the value of this new valuable data source" (Newsletter Platform B). These predicted futures, as expressed in newsletters, themes, roadmaps and YouTube videos, are often based on beliefs and assumptions about the future development of technology – but they are also based on assumptions about the future role(s) of the public sector in urban development.

Acting on expectations means that organisations subscribe to their own narratives and predictions – which means that these sometimes become self-fulfilling prophecies (cf. Weick 1995). For example, descriptions and roadmaps of a future of smart automated mobility become a concrete plan – including applying for funding for smart mobility pilots or organising events on how to reach that goal, such as seminars on "How can municipality X become the frontrunners in future mobility". In this regard, predictions take the form of persuasive scripts that provide actors in platforms with a sense of stability in how to act. One representative from a member-based platform elaborates:

"… let's say we have been informed that Horizon [an EU funding programme] gives us the opportunity to copy The Netherlands' model for charging electric cars. We are to have a national standard for this – who wants to participate in this development? Here we have to capture the

municipalities' agenda and their role when it comes to charging electric cars… we are to formulate this and sell the idea of collaboration on this matter" (Platform B).

Here, the platform engages in processes of expectation as they enact a predicted urban development trajectory that 'future mobility is smart', presenting the municipalities with few other alternatives than to figure out how they are going to keep up with that agenda. Despite the seeming neutrality of the platform's proposition of the future, it is important to keep in mind that expectations of what the future holds also include omitting ideas of what the future will not be.

…and expecting an innovation platform involvement in it

Despite their active role in enacting a future that 'we all need to adapt to', actors in innovation platforms often present themselves as neutral and without any agenda of their own. Instead, they describe themselves as acting on behalf of the public actors' needs and interests. Two representatives from two different platforms elaborate on this matter:

"We do not really have our own agenda, but our agenda is the one that our owners and funders … around us want us to pursue. So we are like… not a passive platform but we are a platform that acts on the needs of others" (Platform G).

"We have no personal interest, but our interest is that our owners, our stakeholders and the business community in the region get better. That is our goal" (Platform L).

Actors in innovation platforms perceive themselves as inherently flexible, describing how their objective is to accommodate the needs and interests of others, i.e., public and local business actors. One platform emphasises on its website that the innovation work they promote does not concern buying an off-the-shelf solution but rather that "the partners develop a new solution together based on the public partner's needs" (website, platform B). Making sense of themselves as neutral is an important part of the platforms' identity, as it allows them to present themselves as possible apolitical actors for public actors to ally with. However, as shown above, the platforms actively partake in constructing the needs of these actors through processes of arguing and expecting. Taken together, the combinations of expectations, needs and roles forms a powerful narrative where the platforms are a necessary partner (sometimes modestly described as a 'facilitator') in reaching future goals in urban development. If these expectations appear rational or plausible to everyone involved – they will be treated as the definition of the situation, and innovation platforms become necessary facilitators.

Several respondents describe how they turn to the EU or state actors to piece together plausible parts of predicted futures. This includes national goals or agendas (e.g., related to innovation or sustainability), new regulations but also funding opportunities. Through processes of expectations, innovation platforms make EU or government agendas an intrinsic part of the future urban development agendas of municipalities or other members. Furthermore, when a funding opportunity (e.g., Horizon 2020, JPI Europe) becomes an integral part of an expectation, it provides meaning to their social reality and guides their future actions. For example, EU or national funding opportunities and their specific requirements (e.g., which actors are required, objectives, project management routines) become an unquestioned necessity of how to act. As such, applying for project funding is described as necessary in order to 'keep up' in the development of future cities, and this is an activity that many platforms specialise in, and explicitly offer cities. For example, platform B states on its website that it [the platform] will secure funding for joint climate projects across municipalities and regions. Another platform is more modest and offers help in directing actors to funding sources for their innovation needs (platform L). A third emphasises that the platform offers a testbed to which external funding applications can be linked (platform H). Expectations based on funding opportunities also prescribe roles and identities – for instance, public actors are prescribed as having to change or adapt to new technologies, and the innovation platform is prescribed as an indispensable actor to ally with in order to ensure the envisaged urban development ends.

Based on assumptions of a rapidly or constantly changing innovation ecosystem – as one representative from a platform exemplify by stating "what was said in 2013 is not valid in 2021" (Platform N) – actors in innovation platforms stress that they have to continuously adjust the narratives of the future so that their organisations will be suitable. Such adjustments could include re-assessing the plausibility of a technological application in a predicted future, or the probability that standardisations will be issued within building and construc-

tion regulations. The adjusted expectation of the future operates as a (new) direction for decision-making within the platforms, e.g., what areas and realms of work they should focus on and what they should leave behind. One respondent conceptualises this in terms of creating value:

"Internally, there are decision-making processes, strategic discussions about which areas we should work with, where can we do the most good? … What can we do that no one else can do and how do we contribute with value? So one has to try to continuously review the project portfolio." (Platform K)

As highlighted here, the respondent describes how the platform continuously assesses and re-assesses which futures they should work with, and which roles they should take on in these processes. People working in innovation platforms make sense of their undertakings as having to focus on those futures that external funding currently supports, or where they see an urban development that can include or necessitates them. So they adapt the platforms by (re)formulating, or manipulating, expectations of the future so that their organisations make sense, are perceived as legitimate and can be maintained.

4.2 Action-driven sense-making

In this section, we analyse the innovation platforms from an action-driven sense-making perspective using the key concepts of manipulation and commitment. The analysis shows how innovation platforms do not passively react to but actively construct and manipulate their environment, e.g., urban development context consisting of an 'innovation ecosystem' in which they are a constitutive part. This is accomplished by organising a wide range of activities such as tests and demonstration projects, as well as an array of events and news. In addition, the platforms enrol actors in commitments and manipulate the environment by making the activities appear high stakes, publicly visible and also as parts of irrevocable project agreements.

Enacting an innovation 'ecosystem' through manipulation

Action-driven sense-making processes encompass manipulations and commitments. Sense-making by means of manipulations includes acting "in ways that create an environment that people can then comprehend and manage" (Weick 1995). In interviews, several respondents describe the need for matching actors and forming coalitions. In terms of actions, and processes of manipulation, the innovation platforms thus work actively toward rearranging actor relationships and creating new constellations. One action in which this takes place is the pursuit of externally funded tests and demonstration projects, another is in organising events or sharing news and opinion pieces where they describe what they do (Platforms A, B, E, G, H, I, J, K, L.). To exemplify, platforms organise events such as matchmaking events for future energy solutions (Platform B) or "extensive training packages for stakeholders to learn about urban air mobility" (platform A). Other platforms stage testbeds where they invite actors to pilots (Platform A and H). These ventures are launched with the intent to generate change and make (the predicted future) urban development possible or "at least initiate processes in as many cities as possible" (Platform J). One respondent notes that they do not have the mandate to carry out everything they want to do, instead they emphasised the need to "keep a course of action and not run on every opportunity that arises" (Platform G). Others emphasise the complete opposite, that they try to do everything that is possible (Platform F). By organising all these activities, the innovation platforms are active participants in constructing the urban development context – the innovation ecosystem – that renders their organisation meaningful, as both a collaborating partner and as a source of knowledge and information. As noted by one of the respondents:

"[the platform] is partly an actor in that ecosystem, but it is also a facilitator or, like some type of enabler… Because before [the platform existed], there was not really such an established ecosystem. There were activities around the country, but not very structured and it was a bit like one gang in Stockholm, one gang in Gothenburg but nothing that held them together […] So I think that [the platform] has helped to create this … understanding of what it is and now there is like a much, much, greater interest" (Platform E)

Here, the representative makes sense of the platform by conceptualising it in terms of 'facilitator' and 'enabler'. In addition, their actions actively construct the environment through manipulating existing actor relations, ideas and practices, constructing an urban development context – or an innovation ecosystem – that they are a part of and can act upon.

Making actors committed to the 'innovation ecosystem'

Our interviewees often return to the fact that people working in platforms rely upon other actors and stakeholders – they simply cannot generate urban development or future society alone. It is also access to relevant partners and networks that the platforms understand that *they* offer. As such, several respondents emphasise the need to enrol members or partners (e.g. Platform A, B, D, O). One respondent highlights that some partners or members are 'forerunners', which to them are pivotal actors in creating this new urban development context of an innovation ecosystem (Platform A). Forerunners are public actors that the platforms consider 'early adopters' of new technologies, which they believe will inevitably generate a set of 'followers'. Several platforms also display all their enrolled members or partners on their websites, including an organisational map showing their role and position in the perceived ecosystem.

Commitment is a specific form of an action-driven sense-making process that makes actions irrevocable (Weick, 1995). In addition, commitments provide the platform with legitimacy but also organisational structure (e.g., projects, events). As such, getting actors committed is pivotal in the platforms' sense-making processes. Commitment can be enacted in different ways. One central activity is organising project funding applications or other forms of collaborations that require membership or agreements. In funding applications, all parties are ascribed with obligations and dedicated areas of work, for example, responsibility for work packages, or the delivery of a specific solution or process. In this way, the commitments become irrevocable; they become something actors (such as municipalities, business actors or civil society organisations) invest in. With this, they also become incentivised to adapt their beliefs and actions accordingly.

Another way that the innovation platforms encourage commitment is by making the different activities appear high stakes. One example is platform J, which makes the city mayors sign a contract (to be renewed each year) which explicitly states what is at stake in the collaboration. The contract is an agreement between the municipality and three state agencies, which declares roles and expectations. For example, the municipality is expected "to reduce climate emissions and to increase their innovation capacity, meaning the ability to collaborate in new and efficient ways within the municipality and together with others in society", whereas the platform is expected to "support the processes of changing rules and policy, to facilitate long-term and systematic innovation work, to coordinate opportunities for funding and to support the cities' possible applications for EU tenders" (platform J).

Another way to encourage commitment is by emphasising that the activities are by active choice and explicit will of (for instance) the municipalities, "they can choose to participate in this development or not" (Platform B). Yet another way is making the activities and intentions publicly visible through social media, websites or larger events. One representative from a partnership-based platform (Platform H) highlighted in the interview that the platform's "first phase began with a declaration of intent […] we announced to the public that we are going to do this together." By publicly declaring intentions and sharing news and projects on social media, websites and other forums, the innovation platforms make the activities appear to be real and actually exist in the world, which generates actor commitment and a sense of shared identity in the urban development.

As mentioned above, one significant way in which innovation platforms enact an environment and configure an innovation ecosystem in urban development is through organising collaborative work that requires agreements, e.g., externally funded projects. Projects and agreements are temporary in character with a clear start and finish. As such, they can be said to temporarily stabilise actors, ideas, and technology in specific units independent of each other, e.g., a group of stakeholders are brought together to pilot an autonomous vehicle, thus creating a temporal and partial organisation (cf. Mukhtar-Landgren 2021). At the end of a project or agreement period, actor constellations and ideas are open for re-configuration. However, in interviews with representatives from innovation platforms, they often highlight the necessity of relating delimited projects to each other, either on an ideational level (similar themes, concepts, tests) or on an actor level (similar actor constellations). This collective of projects constitutes the environment. Our respondents often speak in terms of managing the platform's 'project portfolio' so that it is aligned with 'their' overarching objectives and strategies. In order to accomplish such a collective whole, the innovation plat-

forms emphasise continuity and stability in project themes and actor constellations. Here they, for example, strive to renew actor commitments when one project ends (e.g., allowing perceived successful collaborations to remain working together), or merge commitments in two separate projects (e.g., themes and actors) into new ones. By renewing commitments, stability is ensured. In the words of one of the respondents:

"This year I think they [the unit working with mobility in the platform] have ten projects running within the scope of smart mobility, and they [the projects] are all again building to the common goals, but also … not at the same time, so some projects last longer and some are for a shorter period. But yeah, as I said, it is a continuity, so when we get to somewhere with project A then we continue with those results in another project which might be parallel to the one or then we take the outputs and learnings and then have them put in the next project." (Platform A)

However, as highlighted by a representative from the same innovation platform in the quote above, organising activities through temporary projects is perceived as an obstacle to retaining competence and expertise as well as motivating and training staff. After all, there is no funding that can accommodate staff in instances of gaps between projects. People in innovation platforms manage this by trying to create permanence in project relationships. Once project actor constellations are set up a new urban development context is produced, and it is essential that this does not exclude potential collaborating partners. Instead, this process needs to be open-ended and fluid. One representative of a platform reflects upon this:

"So it's very much about networking. And like building a bank of friends or whatever you want to say … Which you can work close to. And if you find successful constellations, it is not unusual to continue to apply for projects together. In mobility, for example, we have a well-established collaboration with [the name of another platform]." (Platform K)

As highlighted in the quotations above, always having the next project in mind, and forming lasting relationships through personal networks or project alliances comprise some of the ways in which people working in the innovation platforms make sense of themselves as organisations. Such actor alliances also operate to produce and maintain the stability of the innovation platform in urban planning and development and planning. Yet as highlighted by several respondents, these alliances may be disengaged and loosely committed to the everyday urban planning reality of the different organisations they represent. As two interviewees reflect: "They [the planners] are not infused by the vision in the same way" (Platform H), and they experience themselves as being "a little bit disconnected from the organisation" (Platform C). By enacting commitment through personal networks and actor alliances, the innovation platform configures an innovation environment that, in part, is separated, or at least operates with distance, from the everyday reality of public sector urban planning. We previously showed that the innovation platforms made the argument that they are to complement the bureaucracy with innovation and not replace the bureaucracy, but here, the public actors also establish distance to the urban planning and development processes they seek to have an impact on.

5 Enacting legitimacy and stability in urban development

The aim of this article is to analyse sense-making processes in innovation platforms set in the paradoxical configuration of adaptability and stability. Drawing on organisational studies and the literature on sense-making and with empirical material from 15 Nordic innovation platforms, we have analysed how people working in platforms enact their organisation in broader urban planning and development processes.

Our analysis shows that the platforms, through processes of belief-driven sense-making, argue themselves into existence by describing themselves, and acting, as necessary actors for accomplishing innovation in urban development. If municipalities are to handle the expected future challenges (presented and enacted by the platforms), innovations are required and the organisational setting, or solution, for this is the platform. Through processes of action-driven sense-making, the platforms produce, or enact, "the environment they face" (Weick 1995: 30). Here, the metaphor of an innovation ecosystem is used to create an environment and institutional context where the platform plays a vital part. The platforms connect the dots, the actors, the funding, et cetera, via stakeholder meetings, projects, conferences or the production of information (roadmaps, newsletters, scenarios). Representatives of the

platforms often emphasise that the platforms do not have their own agenda, but merely act on the basis of the needs and interests of other actors. Yet, they are (to a large extent) the ones that are formulating and acting in accordance with these very needs. This is not least related to the belief that urban planners cannot innovate alone – which also justifies the platform's legitimacy and necessity in the innovation ecosystem and broader urban development processes.

Taken together, the innovation platforms construct and proclaim an idea of themselves as organisations that are a legitimate actor and source of knowledge in urban planning and development. Maitlis and Christianson (2014) argue that sense-making is triggered when actors confront events, issues and actions that are surprising or confusing and when there is a need for explanation. In our study, this confusion or need for explanation is due to the fact that the innovation platforms, in processes of sense-making, constitute both themselves and the environment calling public sector actors to adapt and rethink their role and function in this new, or emerging, urban development context – in which innovation platforms are presented as a pivotal part. Hence, sense-making is used to construct, and enact, organisational legitimacy. Relatedly, organisational scholars have highlighted that processes of sense-making predominantly are used in instances of crisis (cf. Maitlis, Christianson 2014), but our analysis suggests that sense-making is also used to *generate* crises or at least a sense of urgency – something needs to urgently be changed in urban planning and development (due to the pursuit of sustainable development goals, austerity measures, digitalisation, et cetera). Whereas this crisis or urgency (and haste!) is enacted in urban planning and development, there is also a sense of latent crisis *within* the platforms. Many of them are temporarily funded and, thus, constantly under threat of losing funding, closing down or being assessed by other parties as not useful. As a response, the innovation platforms not only work to adapt, mediate and coordinate between other actors, they also act to maintain and form distinct organisational boundaries and become a lasting actor in the urban development context. In organisational terms, this can be regarded as an aspiration to become a *formal organisation* with fixed boundaries, hierarchy, clearly stated memberships, rules for how these should behave and how to monitor others' behaviour, et cetera (Ahrne, Brunsson 2019). In practice, this aspiration toward permanence is enacted through the creation of actor alliances, long-term planning through visioning, and a string of projects, events and partnerships. Yet, as this move toward a formal organisation rolls out, the less formal or the more flexible and adaptable characteristics of the innovation platform are toned down, hidden or perhaps forgotten. This is somewhat contradictory to the rhetoric in innovation platforms, which often highlights their flexibility and in-betweenness. Although the innovation platform theoretically embodies and reconciles the notion of adaptability and predictability, in practice they appear to strive for the latter. In essence, this means that the innovation platforms, through processes of sense-making, not only create organisational legitimacy but also work in favour of becoming more stable and formal organisational characteristics in urban development at large.

To conclude, our analysis shows that platforms – rather than being a flexible coordinating intermediary whose main purpose is to support the workings of others – in fact to a substantial degree consolidate themselves as stable formal organisations working to maintain and create legitimacy for their own existence in urban development processes. This in turn is quite paradoxical, as the formal organisation in turn creates organisational boundaries toward the actors they are set to be responsive to.

Albeit beyond the scope of this paper, the innovation platforms' striving for legitimacy and organisational permanence in urban planning and development begs the question of what happens to the platforms when their funding runs out or they achieve their objectives. Our material shows different avenues, for example, one platform was transformed into a partnership organisation when the state funding stopped – with a new actor constellation and a new kind of funding mechanism. Another example 'managed the growth pains' after a few years and became a seemingly professional and stable – or formal – organisation with permanently employed staff and a communication office. Yet a third example aimed to initiate processes which public actors are expected to take over or embed in their organisations when the platform funding ends. So, the platforms make sense of themselves differently when it comes to organisational permanence/temporality as they strive toward becoming a formal, or at least partial, organisation within a self-proclaimed context permeated by tensions of flexibility and adaptability on the one hand and stability and predictability on the other. However, what

characterises the processes in which innovation platforms are terminating, stabilising or fusing into something else merits further research.

Acknowledgements

The article was written within the framwork of the research project "Organizing innovation: learning from pilots and testlabs" funded by K2 – The Swedish Knowledge Centre for Public Transport. Thank you to the anonymous reviewers for valuable comments, to the people who took their time to participate in the interviews and to Charles Snodgrass for proofreading the article.

References

Ansell, C.; Gash, A. (2018): Collaborative Platforms as a Governance Strategy. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 28 (1), pp. 16–32.

Ansell, C.; Torfing, J. (2016): Introduction: theories of governance. In: *Handbook on theories of governance*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Agger, A.; Hedensted Lund, D. (2017): Collaborative Innovation in the Public Sector – New Perspectives on the Role of Citizens? *Scandinavian journal of public administration*. 21 (3), pp. 17–37.

Agger, A.; Sørensen, E. (2018): Managing collaborative innovation in public bureaucracies. *Planning Theory*, 17 (1), pp. 53–73.

Ahrne, G.; Brunsson, N. (2019): *Organization outside Organizations. The Abundance of Partial Organization in Social Life*. Cambridge University Press.

Alvesson, M.; Sköldberg, K. (2009)*: Reflexive methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*. SAGE publications.

Berglund-Snodgrass, L.; Mukhtar-Landgren, D. (2020): Conceptualizing testbed planning: Urban planning in the intersection of experimental and public sector logics. *Urban planning*, 5, pp. 96–106.

Berglund-Snodgrass, L. (2022): Risk and approaches to risk-taking in testbed planning. *Planning practice and research*, 37 (1), pp. 79–94.

Blix-Germundsson, L.; Augustinsson, S.; Lidén, A. (2020): Collaboration in the making – Towards a practice based approach to university innovation intermediary organisations. *Sustainability*, 12, 5142, pp. 1–14.

Christianson, M. K.; Farkas, M. T.; Sutcliffe, K. M.; Weick, K. E. (2009): Learning through rare events: Significant interruptions at the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum. *Organization Science*, 20 (5), pp. 846–860.

Czarniawska, B. (1985): The ugly sister: On relationships between the private and the public sectors in Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal of Management Studies*, 2 (2), pp. 83–103.

Czarniawska, B. (2005): Karl Weick: Concepts, style and reflection. *The Sociological Review*, 53, pp. 267–278.

den Hond, F.; Järvi, K.; Välikangas, L. (2019): Partial de-organization for innovation and strategic renewal? A study of an industrial innovation programme. In Ahrne, G.; Brunsson, N. (eds.), *Organization outside Organizations: The abundance of Partial Organization in Social Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 359–389.

DeVault, M.; McCoy, L. (2002): Institutional Ethnography: Using Interviews to Investigate Ruling Relations. In Gubrium, J.; Holstein, J. (eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, pp. 751–776.

Ek-Österberg, E.; Qvist, M. (2020): Public Sector Innovation as Governance Reform: A Comparative Analysis of Competitive and Collaborative Strategies in the Swedish Transport Sector. *Administration and Society*. 52 (2), pp. 292–318.

Elsbach, K. D.; Barr, P. S.; Hargadon, A. B. (2005): Identifying Situated Cognition in Organizations. *Organization Science*, 16 (4), pp. 422–433.

Eneqvist, E.; Algehed, J.; Jensen, C.; Karvonen, A. (2022): Legitimacy in municipal experimental governance: questioning the public good in urban innovation practices, *European Planning Studies*, 30 (8), pp. 1596–1614.

Eriksson, E.; T. Andersson, T.; Hellström, A.; Gadolin, C.; Lifvergren, S. (2020): Collaborative Public Management: Coordinated Value Propositions among Public Service Organisations. *Public Management Review* 22 (6), pp. 791–812.

Fred, M. (2018): *Projectification: The Trojan horse of local government* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation). Lund University, Lund, Sweden.

Fred, M. (2019): Local Government Projectification in Practice – a Multiple Institutional Logic Perspective. *Local Government Studies* 46 (3), pp. 351–370.

Fred, M.; Godenhjelm, S. (eds.) (2023): *Projectification. Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Implications*. Palgrave.

Fred, M.; Mukhtar-Landgren, D.; Berglund-Snodgrass, L.; Paulsson, A. (2022): Why getting people in the same room isn't enough. In Oldbury, K.; Isaksson, K.; Marsden, G. (eds.), *Experimentation for sustainable transport? Risks, strengths, and governance implications*. Linnefors förlag, Sweden, pp. 59–72.

Fred, M.; Dalia Mukhtar-Landgren, D. (2022): Productive resistance in public sector innovation – introducing social impact bonds in Swedish local government, *Public Management Review*, DOI: 10.1080/14719037.2022.2123027.

Fredricsson, C.; Smas, L. (2015): Tensions in Nordic urban planning, *Nordregio News*, 2015 (2). Available at: http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1187155&dswid=-3966.

Gustafsson, S. (2016): *Medborgarskapande på olika villkor: självbilder, skolkoder och syn på kunskap*

i den svenska gymnasieskolan. Lund: Statsvetenskapliga institutionen.

Hakkarainen, L.; Hyysalo, S. (2016): The evolution of intermediary activities: Broadening the concept of facilitation in living labs. *Technology Innovation Management Review*, 6 (1), pp. 45–58.

Haveri, A.; Anttiroiko, A.-V. (2021): Urban platforms as a mode of governance. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 0 (0); https://doi.org/10.1177/00208523211005855.

Healey, P. (2004): Creativity and Urban Governance, *disP – The Planning Review*, 158, pp. 11–20; DOI: 10.1080/02513625.2004.10556888.

Healey, P. (2005): *Collaborative planning. Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*. 2nd edition. Red Globe Press.

Hedberg, B.L.; Nystrom, P.C.; Starbuck, W.H. (1976): Camping on Seesaws: Prescriptions for a Self-Designing Organization. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21(1), pp. 41–65.

Hernes, T. (2014): *A Process Theory of Organization*. Oxford University Press.

Hernes, T. (2022): *Organization & Time*. Oxford University Press.

Hill, R.C.; Levenhagen, M. (1995): Metaphors and mental models: Sensemaking and sensegiving in innovative and entrepreneurial activities. *Journal of Management*, 21(6), pp. 1057–1074.

Hodgson, D.; Cicmil, S. (eds.) (2006): *Making Projects Critical*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Howells, J. (2006): Intermediation and the role of intermediaries in innovation. *Research Policy*, 35, pp. 715–728.

Janssen, M.; van der Voort, H. (2016): Adaptive governance: Towards a stable, accountable and responsive government. *Government information quarterly*, 33 (1), pp. 1–5.

Kivimaa, P.; Boon, W.; Hyysalo, S.; Klerkx, L. (2019): Towards a typology of intermediaries in sustainability transitions: A systematic review and a research agenda, *Research Policy*, 48 (4), pp. 1062–1075.

Kronsell, A.; Mukhtar-Landgren, D. (2019): Experimental governance: the role of municipalities in urban living labs. *European planning studies*, 26 (5), pp. 988–1007.

Loughlin, J. (2000): Introduction: The transformation of the democratic state in Western Europe. In Loughlin, J. (ed.), *Subnational Democracy in the European Union: Challenges and Opportunities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–33.

Åkerström, M.; Jacobsson, K.; Andersson, C.E. Wästerfors, D. (2021): *Hidden attractions of administration: the peculiar appeal of meetings and documents*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Maitlis, S.; Christianson, M. (2014): Sensemaking in Organizations: Taking Stick and Moving Forward. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 8 (1), pp. 57–125.

Maitlis, S. (2005): The social processes of organizational sensemaking. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48, pp. 21–49.

Mukhtar-Landgren, D. (2021): Local Autonomy in Temporary Organizations: The Case of Smart City Pilots. *Administration and Society*, 53 (10), pp. 1485-1511.

Osborne, S.P. (ed.) (2014): *Handbook of Innovation in Public Services*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Patrucco, P.P. (2014): The Evolution of Knowledge Organization and the Emergence of a Platform for Innovation in the Car Industry. *Industry and innovation*, 21 (3), pp. 243–266.

Parjanen, S.; Hyypiä, M. (2018): Innovation platforms as a solution to the proximity paradox. *European planning studies*, 26 (7), pp. 1312–1329.

Parjanen, S.; Rantala, T. (2021): Building an open innovation platform as a part of city renewal initiatives. *European planning studies*, 29 (12), pp. 2165–2183.

Rauws, W. (2017): Embracing Uncertainty Without Abandoning Planning, *disP – The Planning Review*, 53 (1), pp. 32–45.

Rauws, W.; De Roo, G. (2016): Adaptive planning: Generating conditions for urban adaptability. Lessons from Dutch organic development strategies. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 43 (6), 1052–1074.

Rittel, H.; Webber, M. (1973): Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning. *Policy Sciences*, 4 (2), pp. 155–169.

Sandberg, J.; Tsoukas, H. (2014): Making sense of the sensemaking perspective: Its constituents, limitations, and opportunities for further development. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 36 (1), pp. 6–32.

Schwarzman, H.B. (1989): *The meeting*. Springer-Verlag New York Inc.

Styhre, A. (2007): *The Innovative Bureaucracy. Bureaucracy in an Age of Fluidity*. Routledge.

Sveiby, K.E.; Gripenberg, P.; Segercrantz, B. (2012): *Challenging the Innovation Paradigm*. Routledge. New York & London.

Vallance, P.; Tewdwr-Jones, M.; Kempton, L. (2020): Building collaborative platforms for urban innovation: Newcastle City Futures as a quadruple helix intermediary. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 27 (4), pp. 325–341.

Wei Choo, C. (2005): *The knowing organization: How organizations use information to construct meaning, create knowledge and make decisions*. Oxford University Press.

Weick, K.E. (1995): *Sensemaking in organizations*. SAGE Publications. Thousands Oaks, London and New Delhi.

Weick, K.E.; Sutcliffe, K.M.; Obstfeld, D. (2005): Organizing and the Process of Sensemaking. *Organization Science*, 16 (4), pp. 409–421.

Vigar, G.; Cowie, P.; Healey, P. (2020): Innovation in planning: creating and securing public value, *European Planning Studies*, 28 (3), pp. 521–540.

Yin, R. (2014): *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage.

Appendix 1

Overview of the innovation platforms (A–O) in the study

Innovation platform	Organisation	Owner	Funding	Duration
A	A limited company. 58 staff (project leaders, communication officers, management and technical staff) + executive board	One public sector actor	Public sector and external funding. Annual turnover: Approx. €8 700 000 of which €6 000 000 is external funding. (2021)	Founded in 2006, ongoing
B	Membership association 60 staff (project leaders, communication officers, managers and IT support)	Non-profit association consisting of public sector and private sector members	Partner and membership fees and external funding. Annual turnover: approx. €5 400 000 (2021) 61 paying partners and 28 members.	Founded between 2007–2008, ongoing
C	Temporary organisation 6, of which 3 full time, and 3 part-time, employed by partner organisations	Shared ownership between public sector actors and research institutes	Co-funded by 8 partner organisations (public sector actors and research institutes) and external funding	Originated from a ten-year state-funded initiative in 2010 which was transformed into a new consortium of partners with an agreement to fund its activities until 2023
D	Membership association 16 staff (project leaders, communication officers, managers and IT support)	Non-profit organisation consisting of members from private and public sector actors	Membership fees and external funding. Approx 100 paying members	Founded in 2010, ongoing
E	Temporary organisation initiated by the state Approximately 4 commissioned part-time staff	Situated in host university	State funded	Operated between 2017–2020
F	Temporary organisation initiated by the state Number of staff has varied, between 1–5	Situated in a public sector organisation	State funded	Operated between 2013–2023
G	Limited company Approx. 100 staff (project managers, communication officers)	Shared ownership between public and private sectors and university actors	Funded by owners (€2 000 000) and partner organisations as well as external funding. Annual turnover approx. €14 000 000 (2021)	Founded in 2000, ongoing

Innovation platform	Organisation	Owner	Funding	Duration
H	Partnership organisation 4 part-time staff (project coordinators and communication officers)	Partnership between 16 public and private sector actors	Co-funded by partner organisations and external funding	Started 2013, ongoing
I	Membership association [ideell förening] 1 staff member (managing director)	Non-profit association consisting of approximately 30 paying members from private and public sector actors	Public sector and membership fees	Started in 2012, ongoing
J	Temporary organisation initiated by the state Programme office with 4 staff	Situated in host university organisation	State funded	Operates between 2017–2030
K	A limited company 40 full-time staff (project leader, communication and IT officers and managers)	One public sector actor	Public sector and external funding	Founded in 2015, ongoing
L	A limited company. 9 full-time staff	Non-profit association consisting of members from private and public sector and university actors	Funded by public actors (approximately €375 000/year) and membership fees (Approximately €100 000/year) and external funding. Annual turnover approx. €1 400 000 (2021).	Founded in 2015, ongoing
M	Partnership 6 staff (project leader, communication officers and experts) and programme board	Shared ownership between 10 public sector and private and university actors	Funded by partner organisations and external (state) funding	Founded in 2009, ongoing
N	Temporary organisation initiated by the state Programme office (4 staff)	Situated in host university organisation	State funded	Started 2015, evaluated every third year until 2027
O	An economic association [ekonomisk förening] with a board. (7 staff)	Public and private sector actors	Initially state funded, now external funding	Started 2013 as a temporary organisation initiated by the state but was transformed in 2022 into an economic association

Lina Berglund-Snodgrass
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Landscape Architecture, Planning and Management
and
K2 – The Swedish Knowledge Centre for Public Transport, Lund, Sweden
lina.berglund.snodgrass@slu.se

Mats Fred
Lund University, Department of Political Science
and
K2 – The Swedish Knowledge Centre for Public Transport, Lund, Sweden
mats.fred@svet.lu.se

Dalia Mukhtar-Landgren
Lund University, Department of Political Science
and
K2 – The Swedish Knowledge Centre for Public Transport, Lund, Sweden
dalia.mukhtar-landgren@svet.lu.se