

Chapter 4

Inertia, Clearings, and Innovations in Malmö

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As social innovations move into the political limelight of many welfare societies, scholars are debating the underpinnings of such an appreciated phenomenon (e.g. Evers et al. 2014). Some argue that social innovations are primarily established as the result of the innovative nature of individual entrepreneurs (Hansson et al. 2014; Fagerberg 2006). The chapters of this book, in contrast, focus less on these types of micro-level explanations and more on how social innovations are connected to local welfare governance and politics (Cattacin and Zimmer 2015). With the support of a policy coalition framework (Sabatier 1998, 1999), local development and the formation of social innovations are studied in relation to local power structures and discourses. Hence, linkages are identified between particular social innovations and the local contexts that have served as fertile grounds, and research findings presented in this book highlight the centrality of these local contexts for how these innovations have developed as projects and processes (compare with Evers et al. 2014). Thus, the main approach in this book is to analyse the degree to which social innovations are embedded in their local welfare environment.

This chapter contributes to the overall focus of this anthology in two ways. Firstly, we will present a case study of the city of Malmö that will serve as an illustration of how urban governance arrangements provide structures for social innovations and where Malmö is categorized as an example of the governance of social challenges (Cattacin and Zimmer 2015). By governance of social challenges, Cattacin and Zimmer imply an urban governance arrangement in which state-oriented initiatives in coordination with private non-profits develop social policies and could serve as a fertile environment for social innovations. The governance of

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social challenges also implies that economic dynamics are handled parallel to social policies, the local state plays a primordial role in the production and distribution of services, and shared values are solidarity and the social responsibility of the state.

Secondly, this chapter also contributes to the debate on social innovations by arguing that one also needs to pay attention to the relationship between inertia, clearings in local contexts, and innovations in trying to understand the underpinnings of social innovations in local welfare regimes. While the policy coalition framework highlights how social innovations are connected to local development, power structures, and discourses (Sabatier 1998, 1999), we combine the framework with the concepts of inertia and clearings in order to explain the particular empirical and analytical results of the city of Malmö. Research on social and organizational change reveals somewhat paradoxically that inability and unwillingness to change may result in clearings being identified or opened in the social landscape in which innovations may develop (Ahrne and Papakostas 2001, 2002). In other words, rather than arguing that social innovations come to the fore as a result of the quality of certain individuals or being locally and socially promoted by various policy coalitions, we put forth that innovations may also emerge in clearings as a consequence of inertia among the various policy actors. The argument will be supported by a theory on how the establishment of new organizations contributes to social change—here adopted to the phenomenon of social innovations—and illustrated with case studies of social innovations in the local welfare regime of the city of Malmö in Sweden (Nordfeldt and Carrigan 2013; Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013).

Specifically, in addition to describing the local welfare regime and a set of social innovations in the city of Malmö, the chapter analyses the different types of clearings that proved fertile for developing the highlighted three social innovations. The main conclusion is that it could be argued that ideological inertia enabled a shadowed, a guarded, and an abandoned clearing to provide time and space for a neighbourhood programme, an incubator, and an employment and empowerment project to develop as social innovations.

4.1 Inertia, Clearings, and Innovations

Before presenting the local welfare regime and a set of social innovations in the city of Malmö, the relationship between inertia and innovation is discussed. Inertia and innovation are often regarded as opposites in the literature. One classical example of such a position is how Schumpeter talked about creative destruction (Schumpeter 1987). Periods of change are short and dramatic and are preceded and followed by longer periods of stability, and new innovations replace old structures by making the old structures disappear (cf. Bell 1974; Castells 1996; Giddens 1990). Ahrne and Papakostas, in their book *Organisations, Society and Globalisation* (2002; see also Ahrne and Papakostas 2001)¹, argue instead that there is a strong interdependence

¹ Translation by the authors.

between inertia and innovation, and that innovations do not have to be destructive in order to be established.

The assumption that inertia and innovations are interdependent does not imply total stability, however, as societies, sectors, and organizations change slowly, oftentimes along paths already laid out (Stinchcombe 1965). In understanding inertia as a driver to innovation, it is therefore useful to distinguish between the inability and the unwillingness to change or adopt quickly (Ahrne and Papakostas 2001, 2002). Inability may be understood in terms of constraints related to and competition over scarce resources, established decision processes, and in the inability to perceive the possibility or need for change. One source of inability to change could be related to resources. The collective resources of, for example, an organization enable it to accomplish its activities. At the same time, however, they set limits for what an organization can do and how things can be done. Unwillingness could be more related to vested interests, ideological or cultural factors, and a fear of change. Unwillingness to change could, for example, be argued to be typical of many civil society organizations whose members will not accept too obvious deviations from the original ideology.

Rather, inertia makes innovation possible as a consequence of spaces—or what we prefer to refer to as clearings—being identified or opened in the social landscape, and therefore enabling resources for new innovations and organizations to emerge. According to dictionaries, the word *clearing* has several meanings, one of which is defined as a tract of land within a forest or other overgrown area from which trees and other obstructions have been removed (Collins dictionary 2012; p. 79). In this chapter, the concept of clearings is used in a similar fashion, but to denote spaces between existing organizations and projects in a social landscape. The reasoning behind the concept of clearings is that the social landscape is not completely covered with organizations or projects. The space between the boundaries of different organizations may be wider or smaller, but there will always be some space. Such spaces, however, may become the site of other organizations, projects, or—as in the case of this chapter—innovations. Analytical opposites of clearings in a social landscape could be processes related to organizations, projects, or innovations being crowded out (Markovits 1988) or organizationally “outflanked” (Mann 1986; p. 7).

It is the existence of these clearings that makes it unnecessary for new innovations to attack and destroy old structures in order to establish themselves, as innovations in these clearings can develop to differing degrees independent of the old structures. In order to illuminate relations between inertia and innovation, a framework of different types of clearings could be distinguished (Ahrne and Papakostas 2002; p. 113). The framework is used in this chapter to analyse the relationships between inertia, types of clearings, and innovations.

Free clearings	Protected clearings
New	Guarded
Old	Regulated
Constructed	Shadowed
Abandoned	

First of all, a difference needs to be made between free and protected clearings. When it comes to clearings that are not protected, that is, free clearings, there are varieties, such as old clearings that have existed for a long time without being occupied by organizations. We can think of old clearings in terms of unemployment or in terms of people having spare time for potentially organized activities such as politics or sports. There are also new clearings that may evolve. The development of technologies could serve as an example where new technical possibilities have opened up clearings in the social landscape. Abandoned clearings emerge when old established organizations move or rationalize their activities, where old castles turned into conference centres could serve as examples. The final variety of a free clearing is constructed clearings. We can think of cities providing infrastructure such as roads or electricity in order to prepare the ground for new enterprises or construction.

In the case of protected clearings, guardians and regulations could keep the existence of a clearing open, but protected. It may be because of ideological, legal frameworks, or moral commitments against such things as organized prostitution or child labour, or political commitments against certain kinds of business activities such as privately run labour exchange. There are also shadowed clearings, when, for example, new innovations or structures grow in the shadow of old organizations by using their resources or by being physically protected. Examples are student organizations that grow in the shadow of universities or even new enterprises.

According to scholars Ahrne and Papakostas (2001, 2002), the different types of clearings interact in various ways with inertia in the form of inability or unwillingness to change. The existence of free and unoccupied clearings could, for example, be considered as a case of inability to even see the possibility of entering such as clearing. Moreover, in protected clearings, established organizations may often be aware of such possibilities but are unwilling to engage in them or preventing others from innovating.

In this chapter, we will analyse the case of social innovations and the local welfare regime in the city of Malmö in relation to inertia, clearings, and innovations. However, it should be mentioned that rather than to argue that the existence of clearings in a social landscape has a causal power in itself, we believe that analysing innovations in relation to existing structures and organizations with the support of the concept is, firstly, a way to illuminate mechanisms of inertia in general and, secondly, a way to understand other and additional mechanisms that somewhat paradoxically proved fertile for developing social innovations in various forms of structures. As such, clearings and inertia enable us to interpret the relationships among social innovations and local welfare regimes differently.

4.2 A City of Many Welfare Projects

In order to situate and understand the welfare regime in Malmö and the role of social innovations in addressing lingering and emerging social problems, the national welfare structure and tradition in Sweden first needs to be briefly introduced, as

there are strong links between the national and the local level with a well-defined division of labour in relation to social welfare.

Sweden has become a textbook example of a welfare state based on a large public sector, high taxes, and universal welfare services (Vamstad 2007). As an illustration, Sweden has spent a larger percentage of national income on welfare services than any other country in the world (Ginsburg 2001). One reason for this could be the shared consensus on the importance of the welfare state in Sweden by both Social Democrats and bourgeois governments, regardless of their ideological differences. Described as “a peculiar fusion of liberalism and socialism” (Esping-Andersen 1990; p. 28), salient dimensions—that taken together could be said to define the welfare state of Sweden—include, for example, the principles of universalism and de-commodification of welfare services. Ensuring same rights for blue-collar and white-collar employees, one universal insurance system works for all in accordance with earnings. In terms of family policy, the welfare state takes preventive measures to render the costs of family life into a social matter and encourages independence from family (Vamstad 2007). Free of charge education from elementary school to university is another important part of the Swedish welfare system.

Similarly to the national level, the city of Malmö has a long history of being ruled by the Social democratic party, and since 1994, the Social democrats have been in majority or have been able to retain their influence by entering into coalitions with the Left and the Green party (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013). The dominant values impregnating the welfare regime could therefore be argued to be traditionally social democratic. For sure, statements found in the political party program for the Social democrats present the local welfare system as an instrument for fighting inequalities and an instrument that is closely connected to values such as social justice, class, equality, and sustainability (Social democratic party program 2012). Moreover, class differences and other inequalities are believed to constrain individuals and the overall society as well as causing society to “drift apart” (2012; p. 8). The local welfare system is also linked discursively to concepts such as democracy and empowerment (Green party program 2010; the Left party program 2012). There is also consensus among the various actors on the importance of local welfare for the citizens and that citizens should have the ability to influence the organization of local welfare.

Clear influences deriving from the national level pertain not only to the political ideologies but also to the actual organization of the welfare regime at the local level (Nordfeldt and Segnestam Larsson 2011). When the development of the Swedish welfare state accelerated after the Second World War, the parliament and the government at the time decided to continue that tradition by placing a great deal of the responsibility for public services with the local authorities (Vamstad 2007). As a consequence, the local authority in Malmö is responsible for a broad range of facilities and services, entitled to levy income taxes on individuals, charge the citizens for various services, and legally obliged to provide certain basic services, such as education, care for the elderly, primary health care, social welfare benefits, local leisure activities, and the city district libraries (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013). Affecting the local welfare system in Malmö is also nationally organized but locally located employment offices, regionally organized hospitals and healthcare

centres, as well as the regionally organized public transportation system (Nordfeldt and Segnestam Larsson 2011). In addition, the local welfare system includes local companies and other service and industrial companies requiring more business-like organizations. The city of Malmö also has a long history of civil society engagement.

4.3 Towards a Welfare Society

However, having introduced the particularities and stability over time in the Swedish welfare state and the welfare regime in Malmö, recent times have witnessed a number of changes with far-reaching consequences. Economic reforms, privatization, and deregulation over the past 30 years have altered the structural foundation of the welfare state in Sweden (Hvinden and Johansson 2007; Vamstad 2007; Nordfeldt and Segnestam Larsson 2012). With strained budgets and unsolved social problems, central and local governments have been struggling to find urban governance arrangements and sustainable solutions to these challenges.

Some of these solutions have included the introduction of management models and principles into the public sector, sometimes dubbed as new public management, in order to make the welfare production more effective and results oriented (Green-Pedersen 2002; Vamstad 2007; Nordfeldt and Segnestam Larsson 2012). Other solutions have pointed to the need to focus on and include the citizen in the production of welfare services by, for example, providing the citizen with more options and the ability to influence the governance and services offered (Hvinden and Johansson 2007; Pestoff et al. 2011). National and local governments have also been looking to the for-profit and the non-profit sectors to participate in the production of welfare services, challenging the previous preferences and ideological considerations for the public sector as the sole service provider (Rothstein 1994).

One outcome of these changes of a more discursive and political character is that the term welfare state is more and more considered as an antiquated leftover from the early phases of the Swedish welfare regime (Vamstad 2007). Many, politicians as well as academics, would like to replace the term with a new concept, focusing more on the welfare society. This phrase would according to its proponents imply a broader view of welfare that would include both public and non-public providers, but also formal and informal welfare activities (Nordfeldt and Carrigan 2013). It is within the context of the changing welfare society that one should interpret the awakening political interest in social innovations and social investments, at both the national and local levels, as a potential tool for addressing social problems and achieving social cohesion.

In addition to move from a welfare state to a welfare society, the local welfare regime in Malmö has also been affected by a number of changes taking place within the local economy (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013). On a more general level, following a period of social and economic stagnation during the 1970s and the 1980s, with more than 35,000 people leaving Malmö, the city has made attempts at transforming itself from an industrial city to a knowledge city (Salonen 2012).

Today Malmö could be considered a demographically dynamic city. Young people move to Malmö to study or to work, and there is both regional and transnational migration to the city. Important factors in the transformation of Malmö are a set of large-scale initiatives, including the establishment of a university college in the middle of the city and the economically important Öresund bridge to Denmark, establishing an economic and social region that transcends national borders (Salonen 2012; Stigendahl and Östergren 2013; Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013).

4.4 Lingered Social Problems

Despite ambitions to simultaneously reinvent the welfare regime and the local economy, lingering social problems remain, however, and new social tensions have arisen in the wake of the social and economic transformations.

Malmö has for several decades struggled with severe social problems, such as high unemployment, high costs of social benefits, and growing segregation (Nordfeldt and Segnestam Larsson 2012). The level of employment is lower in Malmö than on average in Sweden, and there are significant differences between people born in Sweden and outside of Sweden, leading to a higher degree of social exclusion and growing differences in living conditions among social groups (Stigendahl and Östergren 2013). To these recurrent social problems, a list of growing problems could be added. Income inequalities have indeed increased in Sweden overall, but since the year 2000 income inequalities have grown more in Malmö than average in Sweden. The dynamic, demographic character of the city has also resulted in a higher degree of illegal immigrants and inhabitants outside of the workforce and the welfare system than in other Swedish cities (Salonen 2012).

In interviews with politicians and civil servants in the city council, a set of social problems were highlighted, including unemployment and segregation (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013). According to interviewed representatives, poverty is affecting people's health, life expectancy, and could be considered a matter of life and death (e.g. interviews 5 and 6). Child poverty is also part of the discourse on local welfare and the proposed main problems. Another major problem in the city of Malmö is believed to be unemployment, in general, and youth unemployment, in particular (e.g. interviews 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, and 16).

We have had an enormous arrival of people to Malmö from other parts of Sweden and we have not been able to catch up. That is simply the case. We have not been able to catch up with this influx of people and we have not been able to identify job opportunities to the degree that would have been needed (Interview 13).

A third major problem area, as constructed by the policy discourse on local welfare, is segregation. Several of the respondents talked about the so-called million program areas in relation to the perceived problem of segregation (e.g. interviews 1, 2, 6, 9, 12, and 13). One of the respondents talked about a clustering of problems due to segregation:

We have many geographical areas in which the population differs greatly from the average population in the city when it comes to participation on the labour market, results in school and so on. It is the concentration of problems in these areas that is the real challenge to the local welfare system (...) It is the housing situation that creates this kind of segregation. And as problems create more problems, these areas are, in a way, their own problem creator (Interview 12).

The interviewees also argued that a growing number of people have become excluded from the national social security system, for example, due to recent changes in regulations at the national level, among other things.

4.5 The Necessity to Act

An integrated part of the discourse on main problems in local welfare is the perceived necessity to act in relation to the formulated problems (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013). Traditional solutions proposed by politicians, public sector representatives, and civil society actors include to promote education and employment to battle poverty (Nordfeldt and Segnestam Larsson 2012). In accordance with the traditional welfare state ideology, employment is also considered to be important for social reasons and integration, constructing employment as the welfare solution to many, if not all, social problems.

Considering the gravity of the arising and enduring social problems, there is also an increasing awareness in Malmö of the need to find new solutions, outside of the paths already laid out (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013). Sweden in general and the city of Malmö are struggling with various issues related to welfare and all actors agree on the need to reform existing structures and to be open to new ideas, values, and instruments (e.g. Green party program, Social democratic party program, interviews 4, 6, and 11). As put in one of the interviews related to employment: “We have to think differently to get the citizens into the work force, we cannot keep on with the old” (Interview 6). One example of a proposed solution in Malmö is that several actors agree on the need to collaborate among different sectors in society (Interviews 4, 6, 11, and 14). Accordingly, the Green party writes in its party program:

It is essential that the municipality has adequate resources in social services so that each person gets the help they need. At the same time, the non-profit sector carries out fantastic efforts and cooperation between the municipality and civil society is essential for creating a social safety net that works for everyone (Green party program 2010).

Other actors, such as the Swedish Democrats, concur:

With a clever design and marketing, we believe that many kind-hearted people living in Malmö are willing to make an effort in order to raise the quality of life for the old in our municipality and to support the many times hard working personnel in home care (Swedish democratic party program 2010).

Another answer to the increased level of collaboration and need for new solutions is spelled civil society. According to civil society representatives, there is a general

lack of knowledge regarding the role of civil society and what it has to offer (Interviews 3, 8, and 14). At the same time, there is agreement that new opportunities for civil society organizations in the development of local welfare should be created. The Left party argues that “associations and other organizations must be regarded as important review instances on political decisions” (Left party program 2012; p. 3).

One of the most talked-about solutions, however, is social innovation (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013). Innovations have been, and still are, mainly perceived to concern the launching of new products, inventions, and technical development in the minds of most politicians and practitioners in Sweden. Welfare development has, by tradition, not been considered as innovative (Rønning et al. 2013). Innovation within the field of social welfare is nevertheless a recently awoken interest in some parts of the Swedish context (Hansson et al. 2014). The phenomenon of social innovation has consequently been made a key discursive node in the policy arena regarding local welfare in Malmö (e.g. Stigendal 2012). Representatives also argue that social innovation should be considered a cross-political concept in terms of its social and economic values, as it is hoped to attract people and organizations from various ideological backgrounds and positions (Interviews 2, 5, 12, and 16).

4.6 Three Social Innovations in Malmö

A limited set of social innovations could be identified in the local welfare landscape of Malmö during the time of the research project (Evers et al. 2014; Nordfeldt and Carrigan 2013). Three examples of innovative activities will be described below. These innovations are of different size and composition and include a broad neighbourhood program, an incubator that at the same time is considered as a social innovation and a promoter of other social innovations, and an employment and empowerment project.

Starting with the broad neighbourhood program, “Områdesprogrammet” is a program aiming at revitalizing certain districts in Malmö out of socioeconomic stagnation. The program focuses primarily on creating more jobs and enhancing the living conditions first and foremost for the people living in selected districts. The program is organized into five “resource groups”, focusing on city development, culture and recreation, the elderly, youth, and the labour market, and economic growth. The main innovative feature of the Områdesprogrammet, according to the involved actors, is that new solutions are sought through collaboration. In this context, collaboration seems to imply engaging and cooperating with the people living in the selected areas—as partners and co-producers, challenging the municipal administration to work cross-administrational, and encouraging cross-sectoral cooperation among civil society organizations, companies, universities, and landlords, among others. Accordingly, involved participants highlight the importance of collaboration, working with existing means within existing infrastructures, and finding new solutions.

Moving on to the incubator example, Coompanion Incubator serves as a greenhouse for young and unemployed people and is financed by the European Social Fund. The target group is claimed to be challenged, inspired, and educated, and motivated by the Coompanion Incubator to set up their own business, be it private or organized as a cooperative. Only young and unemployed people registered with and directed by the national employment office are eligible for support, however, and it is the officer at the national employment office who decides whether or not a young unemployed person should be offered the support. The incubator could also offer the service of acting as an employer and managing mundane administrative tasks, enabling the individual to focus on the business idea. The combination of two features could be argued to function as the innovation in this example: the greenhouse service and the focus on a particular target group, young and unemployed people.

Finally, the employment and empowerment project, Yalla Trappan, is described as a labour-integrated social enterprise. The idea behind the project derives from an initiative financed by the European Social Fund that focused on women's entrepreneurship, integration, empowerment, education, and equality, and was later made permanent in the shape of Yalla Trappan. Today, the overall aim of the project is to provide work for women who otherwise would have had severe difficulties entering the labour market. In terms of activities, the project provides the local community with a conference centre, a coffee shop, a restaurant, a design and craftsmanship studio, and catering and cleaning services. The target group is offered employment and employment training in the various activities organized by the project in addition to Swedish tuition and education in health care. The project is organized as a cooperative enterprise. In terms of innovative features, the main contribution to the field of social innovations could most likely be linked to the focus on a particular, previously ignored, target group in combination with the project being organized as a cooperative enterprise.

The three highlighted social innovations in Malmö address social problems of political interest: stagnation, unemployment, and segregation. Common features across the three social innovations include training, entrepreneurship, empowering individuals, and collaboration among various actors and organizations. Portrayed in this way, the three social innovations could be argued to represent new ideas and new ways of addressing social problems in the local context of Malmö (Nordfeldt and Carrigan 2013). Using the framework developed by Evers et al. (2014), these innovations could also be seen as focusing on the strengthening of individuals by, for example, investing in capabilities rather than targeting deficits, and by bridging the gaps between professional services and people's life worlds. At the same time, when approached from the perspective proposed in this chapter, it could be argued that these innovations have developed in clearings, rather than being the outcome of certain enterprising individuals or being embedded within and supported by the legal and administrative framework of the overall welfare regime of Malmö.

4.7 Fertile Clearings for Social Innovations

We put forth that the three social innovations emerged in clearings as a consequence of this unwillingness to change in the local welfare regime. Using the framework presented earlier in this chapter (Arhne and Papakostas 2001, 2002), we analyse and identify in this section the different types of clearings that proved fertile for developing the neighbourhood program, the incubator, and the employment and empowerment project.

Starting with the neighbourhood program, Områdesprogrammet, it was said that the main innovative feature was that new solutions were sought through cross-sectoral collaborations. This feature could serve as an indicator of a free and perhaps a new clearing, in which collaboration could have functioned as the technology that enabled the clearing to evolve. However, the fact that involved actors highlighted the importance of cross-administrational collaboration, in addition to the processes taking place within existing structures and with existing resources, instead indicates a protected clearing. Based on these features, we argue that the clearing making the neighbourhood program possible was a shadowed clearing, that is a case of a social innovation growing in the shadow of old and established structures, in an area that will allow the social innovation to grow by using resources from the existing structures.

Moving on the Coompanion Incubator, the existence of funding from the European Social Fund would indicate a free type of clearing in the local welfare landscape, open for this and other social innovations to access and use as a resource for development. However, similar to the complexity of the neighbourhood program, a particular dimension of the Coompanion Incubator suggests that this instead was a protected clearing. The fact that only young and unemployed people registered with and directed by the national employment office were eligible for support, in combination with the officer at the national employment office deciding whether or not a young unemployed person should be offered the support, insinuates that the clearing should be regarded as a guarded clearing. The interpretation is therefore that the national employment office has recognized this clearing, but for various reasons has an interest in keeping it relatively closed by preventing anyone to enter without the consent of the office. Hypothetical reasons for guarding the clearing could be due to ideological or moral commitments or that the national employment office may feel threatened by the Incubator and therefore is trying to protect itself.

Finally, with regard to the employment and the empowerment project, Yalla Trappan, we argue that this is a case of a free clearing due to the existence of funding from the European Social Fund and the reliance on serving the local community. Having interpreted it as a free clearing, the question remains regarding the type of clearing. As the target group is described as previously ignored, we would argue that Yalla Trappan has emerged in a clearing abandoned by the local authorities. When organizations move or rationalize, all kinds of resources may be left behind, including people, and such resources may become the resources of new social innovations and fit better into their form of organizing. In other words, as the local authority in

the traditions of the welfare state has a responsibility to serve this group, but has stopped these activities for various reasons, the clearing could best be described as abandoned rather than new, old, or constructed.

The three highlighted social innovations could be described to have emerged in different types of clearings: shadowed, protected, and abandoned. Having analysed and identified the relationship between clearing and social innovations has allowed a discussion on mechanisms of inertia. It has also enabled a different interpretation of what types of clearings that proved fertile for developing these social innovations in the local welfare regime in Malmö. However, were all clearings the result of the same type of inertia, or were there other forms of inertia in play?

4.8 Ideological Inertia in Malmö

As outlined in this chapter, deregulation within the field of local welfare, a political interest in alternative providers, and a high degree of self-governance at the local level would seem to provide plenty of opportunities for social innovations (Nordfeldt and Carrigan 2013; Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013). The description of the local policy context in Malmö would also indicate a favourable local context for social innovations to flourish. Surely, there is a shared view on the need for new solutions in local welfare, various actors agree on which social problems are most pressing, and there seems to be a political consensus with regard to the centrality of social innovation as a concept and practice. At the same time, given the relative lack of the number of social innovations as well as the negligible social impacts to date, it must be acknowledged that there exist elements in the political and social welfare landscape of Malmö preventing these and other innovations to grow. By adopting the concept of inertia and distinguishing between the inability and the unwillingness to change (Ahrne and Papakostas 2001, 2002), this section argues that these elements in the local welfare regime of Malmö could be interpreted as an unwillingness to change in the form of mainly political and ideological factors.

Even though there is agreement on which social problems are most pressing, one significant element of inertia is disagreements among the different actors and coalitions in Malmö regarding the methods and instruments to be used to address these social problems. As social innovation could be considered a method for addressing social problems, the political and ideological disagreements affect the possibilities for social innovations to take place.

Two points of disagreements related of relevance for social innovations are described here (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013). Starting with the role of the market and social innovations in local welfare, most political parties in Malmö seem to agree on the importance of creating a supportive institutional environment for private actors, entrepreneurs, and innovations in order to promote, for example, more employment opportunities (Social democratic party program 2012; Green party program 2010; Conservative party program 2012; Liberal party program 2010). However, with regard to local welfare in particular, the coalitions disagree

on the role of private actors. The Left party does not recognize private actors at all, including civil society organizations, in local welfare.

These so-called voluntary choices are many times a way to put the responsibility for the structural problems on the individual; if you have chosen incorrectly, you are to blame. Choices that presume that there are winners also presume that there are losers in our society. It often has the consequence that those who are well off are even better off and those who are struggling are worse off—we will get a divided city. A policy of privatization is marketed as choice. Welfare should be conducted without losers, be free from speculation and be distributed according to each and everyone's needs (Left party program 2012; p. 10).

The political parties on the right, on the other hand, would like to encourage more private actors. Here follows an example from the Liberal party program:

More competition. It is the municipality's responsibility to finance its duties. It is also the municipality that should ensure that you, the citizens, will get value for your money. However, it is not a mandatory task for the municipality to produce the welfare services. Private contractors can often do this better and less expensively. The Liberal Party in Malmö wants therefore to procure all municipal operations that do not constitute core municipal activities. (Liberal party program 2010; p. 8)

A related matter to the role of the market in local welfare concerns the role of financial profit as well as for-profit organizations. Both the Social democrats and the Left party have taken a hard stance against financial profit in local welfare in contrast to the opposing right wing political parties, making the funding of social innovations restricted.

Regarding the role of local welfare in the redistribution of resources, it would seem as if the Social democrats and the Left party construct the welfare system as primarily an equalizing tool (Social democratic party program 2012; Left party program 2012), whereas the right-wing parties focus more on using the local welfare system to motivate unemployed to enter the labour market (Conservative party program 2012; Liberal party program 2010). An example of the conflict over the redistribution of resources and the role of local welfare concerns the case of child care fees. When the Social democrats and the Left party decided to cut the fee for child care for the poorest households in Malmö, the opposition argued that lowered fees should not be distributed in such a fashion that they might conflict with motivation to enter the labour market. This example illustrates well the conflict over the role of local welfare in redistribution, as the opposition focused on the consequences for the level of employment in the area, whereas the majority focused child care as a tool for creating more equal living conditions. Moreover, the disagreement regarding redistribution of resources affects the possibilities for social innovations in general to develop, as no or very limited resources from the local welfare regime system were made available for the described three social innovations.

We interpret the disagreements on the role of the market and the redistribution of resources in the local welfare regime as an unwillingness to change rather than an inability to change. As described in section 4.1 of this chapter, inability may be understood in terms of constraints related to and competition over scarce resources, established decision processes, and in the inability to perceive the possibility or

need for change (Ahrne and Papakostas 2001, 2002). Even though the disagreements could be regarded as a competition over scarce resources, we believe that the disagreements also could be interpreted as an unwillingness to change related to primarily ideological factors. Acknowledging and understanding these types of political and ideological disagreements concerning the role of local welfare would enable us to explain the relative lack of a significant number of social innovations and the negligible social impacts to date in Malmö.

Hence, from an analytical point of view, it could be argued that social innovation as an idea, value, and instrument should be regarded as challenging established traditional welfare notions based on social democratic ideals in the city of Malmö, as inherent values are more related to a liberal political perspective on citizens, organizations and society (Segnestam Larsson and Carrigan 2013). Examples of these values include the focus on the individual as a focal point and the positive views on cross-sectoral collaborations and partnerships. Even though actors across the political spectrum seem to agree on the notion of social innovation and its role in reshaping current local welfare regimes, ideological inertia in the form of an unwillingness to change significant rules and regulations surrounding the welfare regime prevented more social innovations to emerge.

4.9 Shifting Scenery

This chapter has described the local welfare regime and a limited set of social innovations in Malmö in the context of an urban governance arrangement that could be categorized as the governance of social challenges (Cattacin and Zimmer 2015). In addition to highlighting common features and ongoing social and economic transformations, the chapter has analysed and identified the clearings (shadowed, guarded, and abandoned clearings) that proved fertile for developing the highlighted three social innovations. The overall ambition, however, has been to contribute to the debate on the origins of social innovations. Rather than arguing that social innovations come to the fore as a result of the quality of certain individuals or being locally and socially embedded, we have put forth that innovations may also emerge in clearings as a consequence of inertia, in the case of Malmö in the shape and form of an unwillingness to change due to political and ideological factors. This ideological inertia resulted somewhat paradoxically in clearings being identified and opened in the social landscape in which the three innovations could develop.

By having analysed how different types of inertia generated different clearings in Malmö, we have also provided a tentative and an alternative answer as to why social innovations emerged rather than established structures having addressed the identified social problems. In this way, we can see how the ideological inertia of the local welfare regime could be considered a precondition for and not an obstacle to the innovations. Hence, social innovations do not have to destroy the old ways of producing social cohesion in order to access resources, and the result may very well be an increased density of projects, organizations, and structures with new combinations

of old and new forms and changing patterns of interconnections (Ahrne and Papakostas 2001, 2002). In other words, Malmö may yet witness a shifting scenery where many old forms and ingredients may be recognized, but in new constellations.

Approaching social innovations from the perspective of inertia and clearings has enabled us to interpret the relationships among the identified social innovations and the local welfare regimes in Malmö differently. It has also initiated a discussion on how ideological inertia related to a shadowed, a guarded, and an abandoned clearing proved to be fertile for developing the three identified social innovations in the city. As such, it would seem as if one of the main recommendations stemming from this chapter would be that politicians and practitioners, wishing to promote social innovations as an instrument for social cohesion, also would have to fuel more ideological inertia in existing structures, as inertia could be considered one of many significant preconditions for change.

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Interview 4, LO Sektionen, interview, 2012-10-04.

Interview 5, Labour market secretary, Jobb Malmö, interview, 2012-11-01.

Interview 6, Department of Integration and Sustainable Development, interview, 2012-09-26.

Interview 7, Makalösa Föräldrar, interview, 2012-10-09.

Interview 8, MIP, interview, 2012-11-09.

Interview 9, Municipal Commissioner, interview, 2012-10-09.

Interview 10, Childcare planner, Municipal Executive Committee, interview, 2012-09-24.

Interview 11, Center för publikt entreprenörskap, interview 2012-10-17.

Interview 12, Municipal Commissioner, interview, 2012-10-16.

Interview 13, Municipal Commissioner, interview, 2012-09-20.

Interview 14, Sektor 3, interview, 2012-09-17.

Interview 15, Mötesplatsen för Social Innovation, Malmö Högskola, interview 2012-09-25.

Interview 16, Commission for a Socially Sustainable Malmö, interview, 2012-10-05.