MISTRA
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Translocality and Translocal Subjectivities: A Research Overview Across the Fields of Migration, Culture and Urban Studies

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Mistra Urban Futures is an international Centre for sustainable urban development. We believe that the coproduction of knowledge is a winning concept for achieving sustainable urban futures and creating accessible, green and fair cities. The Centre is hosted by Chalmers University of Technology and has five platforms in Cape Town, Kisumu, Gothenburg, Skåne and Sheffield-Manchester as well as a node in Stockholm.

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Förord (SE)

Den här forskningsöversikten har producerats inom ramen för *Mistra Urban Futures* och dess skånska samarbetsplattform, *Skåne Local Interaction Platform* (SKLIP). *Mistra Urban Futures* är ett internationellt forsknings- och kunskapscentrum för hållbar stadsutveckling finansierat av Mistra (Stiftelsen för miljöstrategisk forskning), Sida (Styrelsen för internationellt utvecklingssamarbete), och ett konsortium av andra organisationer och internationella partners. Kunskapscentret omfattar ett antal lokala samverkansplattformar, vars syfte är att främja och utveckla regionala forsknings-initiativ och samarbeten inom området hållbar stadsutveckling. Inom Skåneplattformen har forskare från Malmö universitet, Lunds universitet och Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet mött tjänstepersoner från bland annat Malmö stad. Samarbetet har organiserats i tre tematiska paneler som ansvarat för att insamla, analysera, sprida kunskap, dela erfarenheter och aktivt stärka en fortsatt utveckling i riktning mot urban hållbarhet. Den översikt som presenteras här har arbetats fram inom ramen för temat *Internationell migration och urban utveckling*. Förhoppningen är att översikten kan ligga till grund för en diskussion om förutsättningar och utgångspunkter för framförallt social urban hållbarhet i en situation som i allt högre grad kännetecknas av rörelser och migration.

Utkast av översikten har presenterats vid två tillfällen; i en workshop inom ramen för Mistra Urban Futures Skåneplattform och i ett högre forskningsseminarium vid Malmö universitet och Institutionen för konst, kultur och kommunikation (K3). Ambitionen är att genom översikten ställa frågan vad som händer i skärningspunkten mellan internationell migration och hållbar stadsutveckling, hur denna skärningspunkt kan belysas och förklaras, framförallt ur ett kulturforskningsperspektiv. Historiskt sett har migration och förflyttning över gränser onekligen varit en viktig del av urbanitetens själva existensberättigande. I en diskussion om staden som en hållbar och lokalt förankrad företeelse utgör kulturella rörelser och gränsöverskridanden därför en kontinuerlig utmaning. Även om "kultur" idag allt oftare framhålls som ett medel för urban samanhållning och som en förutsättning för en socialt hållbar stadsutveckling så är det ofta oklart vad begreppet står för i dessa sammanhang. Samtidigt som förhoppningar fästs vid kultur och kulturutövning så kan vi också se att kulturella institutioner, företeelser och utövare är utsatta för press från olika håll och det är oklart hur de förväntningar som ställs på kulturen att verka som en utvecklingskraft ska kunna förverkligas. Genom denna sammansatta och multidisciplinära forskningsöversikt vill vi därför uppmärksamma hur föreställningar och idéer om urbanitet och mobilitet, kulturella rörelser såväl som kulturell förankring idag korsas på nya sätt. Vi har särskilt fokuserat på förändrade uppfattningar om rumslig tillhörighet, identitet och kulturutövning, och vi hoppas att översikten därigenom kan komma att fungera som en utgångspunkt för vidare diskussion i vad som idag är en intensiv men svårnavigerad politisk och kulturell korsväg.

Preface (ENG)

The present research report has been produced as part of the *Mistra Urban Futures* and Skåne Local Interaction Platform (SKLIP). *Mistra Urban Futures* is an international research and knowledge centre for sustainable urban development, and is financed by Mistra, the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research; Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency; and a consortium of other organisations and international partners. The knowledge centre also includes a number of local interaction platforms with the aim of promoting regional participatory research initiatives and collaborations for sustainable urban development. The *Skåne Local Interaction Platform* (SKLIP) includes researchers from Malmö University, Lund University, and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, as well as practitioners from the City of Malmö in three thematic panels. These panels collect, analyse, and disseminate knowledge, and thus actively promote sustainable urban development. This report is the result of research carried out by the panel on *International Migration and Urban Development*. Its purpose is to provide a basis for discussion about urban sustainability, in a context that is increasingly characterized by movement and migration.

Drafts of the report were presented on two occasions, in a workshop and a seminar, the discussions of which provided important input. The overall aim of the report is to explore how the intersection of international migration and urban sustainable development is currently being addressed from a cultural research point of view. While historically, migration across geographical borders might have been the main *raison d'être* for urbanity, it has also continuously destabilized ideas of cities as durable and situated cultural formations. As 'culture' today is increasingly understood as an urban social cohesive and a precondition for sustainable urban development, culturally oriented research gains a new role. Drawing attention to both deep-seated and far-fetched environmental imaginaries, including ideas of mobility as well as locality, the report presents an overview of relevant research across several fields. With a special focus on shifting conceptions of spatial belonging, identity, and cultural agency, the report might serve as an evocative point of departure for further discussion at a politically intense crossroads, the localization of which is not immediately given.

We thank everyone who, at different times, in workshops and seminars, provided comments on the work, especially all the members of the IMUD panel, within which the work has taken shape. Special thanks to Associate Professor Erica Righard, Malmö University and MIM – Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare, who coordinated the platform and supported our work with the overview throughout the process.

Introduction

Cities are intersections. Spatial and political formations historically depending on mobility and migration, cities may be described as amassments of elsewheres. In his seminal work The Culture of Cities (1938), Lewis Mumford drew attention to what he saw as "[p]erhaps the most gigantic fact in the whole urban transition" of the industrial era – "the displacement of population that took place over the whole planet" (Mumford 1938:145). As for a discussion about the continuous life-course of cities, it is a statement that still holds in validity. Cities and city cultures are still, as Mumford stated, complex entangled histories unfolding over time – they "may have sudden beginnings from remote gestations; and they are capable of prolongations as physical organizations through the life-spans of more than one culture" (ibid.1938:294).

A point of departure in this report unfolding in the intersection of migration and urbanity, is therefore the notion of 'culture' and that of the 'cultural subject'. Why is culture relevant in relation to migration? What does the notion of culture bring to the current urban sustainability debate? Where and how is culture localized in relation to urbanity? Who gets to be the 'cultural subject' in passive or active sense, and where is this subject located? Spatially ambiguous and temporally evasive, the concept of 'culture' is today contested and largely suspended between extremes, such as the inclusive and exclusive, the rooted and the uprooted, the homogeneous and the diverse, and perhaps most frequently, the local and the global, hence sharing many of the tensions characterizing urban space; tensions often elusively implied in urban sustainable development debate in terms such as "urban diversity", "parallel society", "arenas for integration", "participation", "tolerance", and "meetings across lines", just to mention a few expressions surfacing in current urban discourse and policy work.[1]

Tendencies as these are to a great extent part of a global flow of ideas around urbanity and culture. Beyond its homogenizing effects it is nevertheless equally important to recognize the heterogeneous ways in which similar ideas are addressed and unfolds differently due to specific preconditions, traditions and outlooks of various local and regional contexts. This report is conducted with the city of Malmö as an immediate background. As the third biggest city and part of the supranational Øresund region, Malmö has undergone profound changes during a 30-year period from an exhausted industrial city in the periphery of Swedish capital city Stockholm to become a forerunner in urban redevelopment and an internationally recognized trailblazer of social regeneration (Ghilardi 2006). This renowned story of Malmö does however withhold some specific condition which makes the city appear as both "standard" and "exceptional" in relation to the processes feeding into contemporary urban development (Holgersen 2014). "Standard" in the sense that development in Malmö to a large extent resembles the characteristic neoliberal urban regeneration that has been seen all across Western Europe during this time period. This includes enforcing policies for economic growth by 'opening up' the city for increased flows of capital and segments of people fitting to the patterns of production and consumption in this economic structure, meanwhile 'closing down' the city's resources and, seemingly, the city as such, in relation to segments of 'the other' (Möller forthcoming 2020, Pries 2017, Mukhtar-Landgren 2012). Malmö might however be said to be an "exceptional" example as well, from the viewpoint that these standard motifs and trajectories have been pursued with and extraordinary emphasis and commitment in comparison with many other cities. Thus, the city that once were the cradle of Swedish social

democracy and the last outpost for its hegemony up until the 1980s over a short period of time became a frontrunner in urban neoliberalization in Sweden in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Gustafsson 2019; Listerborn 2016; Hedin et.al. 2012). The latter calls into question the otherwise long protracted narrative of Sweden as somewhat resistant to the political and social implications of global capitalism due to its history of a strong welfare regime, economic equality and social tolerance (cf. Wacquant 2009, Harvey 2005). Albeit a "mysterious survival of the Swedish Welfare state" may be argued to endure in some areas of social policymaking (Lindbom & Rothstein 2004), not least cultural policy (Möller 2013, Frenander 2007), the drastic changes in Swedish welfare ideology in the wake of capitalism's global restructuring during the past thirty-something years cannot, and should not, be neglected. Even more urgent here is to consider the last decades' nationalistic conservative uprising. This entails both a critique against free-market globalism and a radicalization of the neoliberal penal state policies in its fundamental ideological distinctions between 'us' and 'them'. Such discourse seem now to be less grounded in social-economic expectations and more fundamentally ethnic-cultural, thus addressing *culture* as a primary category for social participation and belonging (cf. Hellström and Nilsson 2010).

The present report is an attempt to provide an overview over intersecting beginnings, emergencies, and prolongations that reinforces a theoretical reflection on contemporary cultural debate and its repercussions on societal development. With the current research overview, we want to draw attention to assumptions about culture(s), as they are played out in the intersection of migration and sustainable urban development. Multi-layered and double-edged, 'culture' often comes with territorial postulates and implicit ideas about belongings and borders, movements and rights of priority. The report approaches these entangled issues from several angles. With the point of departure in current environmental policy, the first section of the report, therefore, approaches ideas of "sustainability" via the notions of "culture" and "locality". A second section briefly discusses the methodological challenges of researching emergent cultural phenomena across both geographical and disciplinary borders. In a third section, we turn to three research reports, a sampling of the report literature, but representative of how global, regional and local perspectives on culture today are 'scaffolded' in relation to mobility and migration. A fourth section introduces emergent transversal, i.e. non-categorical, approaches to cultural research, primarily focusing on how notions such as transnationalism and translocality may inform new modes of research and urban development. A fifth section finally, articulates some recommendations about how to relate to translocal space and translocal subjectivities in practice and how to craft research approaches that not only involve interlocutors but also answers to and actively engage in current spatial and cultural changes.

Culture, Locality and Sustainability

In recent sustainability discourse, culture has entered as an additional 'bottom line', besides the ecological, the social and the economic (WCCD 1995; UNESCO 2001, 2005; UCLG 2004; UCGL 2018). The introduction of culture into this equation is grounded in a critique of the general disregard in sustainability policy work for the role of cultural diversity and vitality. In an influential text, Australian cultural analyst Jon Hawkes introduced the idea of culture as "the fourth pillar of sustainable development (Hawkes 2001), arguing for culture as the "essential" value ground of any society, a foundation not to be conflated with the social dimension. Arguing along the same lines, Throsby (2008) and Soini and Dessain (2016), among others have equally underscored the expressive, creative and differentiating role of culture(s) in relation to sustainability. Hence, cultural diversity, including a diversity in terms of cultural heritage, has been identified as crucial also for the development of an environmental consciousness sustaining biological diversity; an aspect further explored in a number of declarations, reports, and books (Throsby 2008; Pascual 2009; UCLG 2010; James 2015). Yet in the most recent climate debate, culture is again assigned to a more modest, retracted position, in the UN Sustainable Development Goals only implicitly addressed. When touched upon, culture is understood as either part of the educational goals (target 4.7); as important for innovation (target 8.3); as related to sustainable tourism based on local cultures and traditional crafts (targets 8.9 and 12.b); or as pertaining to the safeguarding of natural and cultural heritage (target 11.4) (UCLG 2018; https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org).

Culture

Far from unambiguous, the above-mentioned sources indicates a widespread concern with cultural questions, but also great variety as regards interpretations of basic notions. The complexity of the term 'culture' thus presents an initial challenge, with the general meaning forking into at least two separate yet overlapping registers — the *anthropological* and the *aesthetic* (Miller and Yúdice 2002). Anthropologically speaking, culture refers to ways of living together, to patterns of human organization grounded by broad commonalities of livelihood, such as language, religion, and customs. In aesthetic terms, culture refers to the artistic activities of creative people, or the arts broadly speaking, including arts institutions. According to Miller and Yúdice, these registers – the broader associating culture with life forms, and the narrower relating culture with the arts – have both proven fundamental in the shaping and governing of societies. Besides the principal idea that culture is based on similarity (of styles or of custom) these registers are also to a large extent shaped by ideas on difference. Policies and institutional frameworks continuously produce and reproduce such principles of differentiation in the field of culture, serving as "difference-engines" (Volkering 1996). Not only in the sense of differentiating culture from other areas of policymaking within governmental bodies, but also alluding to the mechanisms of difference within the two registers of culture. In the aesthetic register differences are inserted *within* populations (cultural taste, cultural capital). In the anthropological register *between* populations (Miller and Yúdice 2002).

One of many implications to the complexity of similarity/difference is whether culture is seen as something supposedly stabilizing, sustaining, and grounded or something in constant flux, changing, developing and embryonic. The more conservative idea of culture based on heritage and territory undoubtedly relates the former. Meanwhile the idea of cultural formation as *movement* is also widely established and have an important role in how patterns of mobility and migration are developing. There is, then, an *emergent* dimension to the notion of culture.

Cultures unfold, proliferate, spread. They consist of relationships and are dependent on mediation, which adds a vital force or directionality, an energy that may be further cultivated.

This complexity or even ambiguity – culture as living, changing, and developing – has not only prompted a wide array of distinct definitions of culture but also a plurality of approaches to cultural research. In *Culture* (1981), Raymond Williams pointed to the specific challenges associated with the study of cultures and cultural movement(s). Evolving formations 'in-the-making,' Williams claimed, have a tendency to fall in between the cracks of strictly observational enquiry. It is difficult – and indeed also politically and historically problematic – to imagine cultural research as a matter of strict classification of stable and context-independent specimens. Instead, it should be obvious that any study of culture has to address and find ways to 'capture' also the tension between continuity and change, and between wider social patterns and specific forms of expression. This tension plays out today not only in distinct foundational histories, but also increasingly, as transformative movement. In relation to the contemporary situation – where to an increasing extent dislocation of different kinds and across different kinds of borders presents a culturally formative force – this emphasis on movement could not be more appropriate. There are then, in the manifold of cultural articulations, both temporal and spatial aspects embedded that need be considered.

Locality

In the following, we prioritize an understanding of culture closely related to movement and as such, to space. With this understanding follows a critique of definitions strictly based on *sedentary* imaginaries of culture as a matter of 'rootedness'. Yet this critique is not self-evident and needs clarification. What we are scrutinizing throughout this report is the increasingly frequent tendency to rely on a binary opposition between settlement and movement, and hence, on the idea of a quasi-natural bond between cultures and territories. In the current debate, culture tends to be linked to belonging and local attachment all too easily, irrespective of whether the argument is made in order to promote culture as a social cohesive or its antithesis, cultural separation. Yet while the "spatial turn" in the social sciences and the humanities have resulted in an increased attention to the bond between culture and locality, there is a continuous need for a deepened understanding and a more multifaceted perception of the relationship. In order to broaden the discussion, Withers (2009) identified three lines of thought. Besides the *phenomenological*, inspired by ideas of "dwelling" as a profound "sense of place" (Heidegger 1951/1971; Tuan 1974; Relph 1976; Casey 1999; Malpas 2006) or place-bound culture as an "inalienable gift" (Bennett 2014), Withers discerned the *social* understanding, which is more concerned with the critical relationships between culture, identity and meaning, including the strong normative and moral dimensions of being categorized as either resident or stranger, i.e. of being "in place/out of place" (Ahmed 1999, 2000; Cresswell 2004). The third view is the *constructionist*, regarding the production of locality as a politically significant form of cultural agency; emergent, power dependent or power sensitive (Harvey 1990; Appadurai 1996; Castells 2000; Massey 2004a, 2004b). To these three views, we could add a fourth, a *relational*, emphasizing the local as always already "a product" or "an event" in part of 'global' forces, related to "the geographical beyond, the world beyond the place itself" (Massey 1995, 2005), yet also as a counterforce, showing "itself" as a material and sensory presence impossible to ignore; a "resistance of place" with the power to "interrupt" dominant power structures (Degen 2017).

While entangled, the discourse on place and locality sheds light on the thorny question of how to understand or "ground" not only the idea of culture, but also the idea of cultural sustainability. Is culture 'natural'? Is it possible to 'ground' cultures in natural or eco-systemic

terms, as natural 'habitats' or perhaps as interdependent energy flows? Or are culture and nature incompatible paradigms, presenting irreconcilable ways of relating to 'the beyond'? Given the fact that, as Massey put it, even "mountains move" (Massey 2006), the answers to these questions are not obvious. Lacking stable bedrock, collective identity, according to Massey, has to be understood in terms of a "throwntogetherness of place," which demands negotiation. The place of 'the community' is not pre-given, its potential coherence always already unsettled by "external" forces, and its "place" in need of continuous "invention" (Massey 2005).

This agitated "throwntogetherness" draws attention to the loaded relationship between the settled and the migratory, with consequences not only for cultural formation but also for the formation of 'sustainable' knowledge. To the above lines of thought, therefore, we could add the *ecological*. Exploring the distinction between sedentary and nomadic, philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers is, however, careful to stress the risk of misunderstanding. "We know," she writes, "that sedentary populations have turned their back on nomadic peoples (Stengers 2003/2011). At the same time, when understood as metaphoric, as concerning knowledge, the relationship between sedentary and nomadic is often reversed, the former being regarded as backward. Within a progressivist framework, people who cling to cultural or disciplinary territories are often seen as putting a break on scientific progress and cultural change (*Ibid*.), while the farsighted entrepreneur would defend the nomadic as experimental and ground-breaking. But from a "cosmopolitical" perspective, it is crucial to prevent the nomadic from becoming a norm. The most dangerous figure, Stengers notes, is the one who believes himself to be "purely nomadic," the one whose 'tolerance' is the only thing that prevents him from dislocating the settler, unfastening locations, forcing migration and imposing dispossession.

From a Eurocentric point of view, the nomadic has presented an imaginary of detachment challenging beliefs and searching out problems, "wherever it may lead" (Stengers 2003/2011); yet with migrant bodies as the fuel. Dislocation, including migration, have historically presented an ambiguous cultural driving force. As part of a cultural *avant-garde,* migrants of different kinds – social, economic, political— have acted as more or less risk-taking, more or less voluntary forerunners into the unknown, daringly or by necessity articulating new forms of community and subjectivity. Williams (1981) emphasizes the close link between the idea of the avant-garde and urban development. Artistic avant-gardes are primarily metropolitan and shaped by immigrants "shar[ing] no common language but that of the metropolis," and therefore prone to break with given sign-systems, instead through creative linkages contributing to the pluralism upon which the metropolis supposedly thrives.

Sustainablity
The above discussion of culture and locality is meant to draw attention to the ambiguities of cultural formation and especially to the challenges associated with attempts to conceive of the spatial relation between culture and sustainability. As pointed out in an article by Soini and Birkeland (2017), the concept of cultural sustainability is frequently used both in policy contexts and in research circles, yet rarely defined or contextualized. In their research overview, they identify as much as seven distinct "storylines" in different ways relying on a taken-for-granted or assumed consensus as concerns meanings and implications. While regarding culture either as "the fourth pillar" and hence *complementary* to other forms of sustainability; as a creative tool and hence *instrumental* for the implementation of sustainable forms of development; or as the planetary bottom line and hence *fundamental* to whatever kind of sustainability, the narratives relied on a common and largely unreflected idea of the very

discourse of culture and sustainability, and a subsequent disregard as concerns the tensions inherent to notions such as heritage, economic viability, diversity, locality or resilience. These inherent ambiguities in the culture-sustainability discourse can be found at all the various policy levels where it is being articulated, from the supranational to the local, mirroring the complexity of 'culture' itself (cf. Alwall 2019). Aside the different aspects and meanings ascribed to cultural sustainability in these discourses, they share the mutual premise that culture have a seemingly inherent 'effect' on sustainable development. This is however in itself an assumption about 'culture' that need to be highlighted and problematized. If not, the discursive power of a premise, i.e. the mutual, often unspoken, presupposed agreement of something, may very well come to legitimize further unreflected ideas on culture's presumed values and effects, which the projected relations between culture and sustainability mentioned above also exemplifies.

While culturally stabilizing formations, such as cultural heritage sites, traditional forms of expression, cultural institutions or nature reserves, may be described as 'sustaining' or stabilizing elements, it is not possible to grasp contemporary culture without reference also to their emergent and empowering qualities, or even with reference to such formations in terms of the movements they cause or enable. Hence, again following Raymond Williams, "if we deduce significant cultural relations from the study of institutions alone, we shall be in danger of missing some important cases" (Williams 1981:35). This is perhaps particularly apt today, considering the proliferation of striking formations and relationships that happen 'despite-all,' largely outside but not independent of institutional frameworks and establishments. In a recently published edited volume entitled *Life Adrift – Climate Change, Migration, Critique* (Baldwin and Bettini 2017), a number of researchers from different fields address precisely this complex cultural power dynamics, in different ways emphasizing that the point of departure for studies of culture and society should be a consideration of the dispersed phenomena related to movement. "Migration is one of the defining features of contemporary political life," write the editors, emphasizing on the one hand the fact that migration has been and still is a condition for life on earth and that migrants' lives are not lived *outside* but *within* the field of culture broadly speaking, yet largely figured "in opposition to the citizen, the nation, and the sedentary" (Baldwin and Bettini 2017). This understanding is particularly important in relation to the climate crisis and the tendencies to "climate reductionism" (Hulme 2011; Baldwin and Bettini 2017) – a form of analysis which elevates climate to the dominant predictor variable, leaving little room for discussing "the intricacies of knowledge and power" (Baldwin and Bettini 2017). This, Baldwin and Bettini suggest, has a directly limiting effect for the understanding of migration and what migration has come to mean in the context of climate change, how migration relates not the least to urban life, and what it tells us about "humanness" today (*Ibid*.). In *Life Adrift,* Hurricane Katrina presents a telling example of how climate change is said to bear directly on migration and forced displacement, hence obscuring four decades of structural racism. What the authors point to here are the power asymmetries lurking in the nooks and corners of discourse, asymmetries violently played out in situations of crisis.

This poses methodological questions. Stengers has described her approach as an "ecology of practices" (Stengers, 2005, 2015). Utterly attentive to the transversality of struggle and resistance, she emphasizes that settlement as well as movement only have meaning as practices creating spaces "in which the voice of those who are silent becomes present" (Stengers 2003/2011). "This is," Stengers states, "why nomads' experience of the fact that they too have a territory is the very condition for an answer to the cosmopolitical question" (Stengers 2003/2011). Following this approach, we are working towards developing a non-reductionist

and relational understanding of the intersection between culture, locality and sustainability, which we discuss in the following section.

Method, structure and focus

As suggested above, the study of cultural formation today takes place against a background of unrest, at the intersection of migration, urban, and environmental studies. This complexity presents a range of methodological challenges, including the challenge of delimitation. Given the centrality of migration, this report first of all comprises research exploring culture and mobility and the conceptual frameworks developed in studies of cultural formation. This motivates a brief digression on the relationship between cultural practice and theory. Against the above outlined background, there is a need to discuss the crucial rapport between different forms of representation, different forms of descriptions, different accounts of the world. This is especially clear when it comes to the study of life forms, like that of the civil society, apparently made by humans. While cultural and artistic practices of different kinds are engaged in the continuous articulation of these forms, intellectual practices are engaged in articulating the principles and patterns of the same. Yet in terms of knowledge or knowing, it is crucial to emphasize the complementarity, the necessary affinity between cultural and intellectual practice, between making and thinking, between theory and practice. This mutual correspondence also means that whatever intellectual principles, conceptual frameworks or theories there are for civil society, urban environments, and societal institutions, these theories are also human constructs, and as such are possible to modify. In other words, in the cultural sciences, the objects of study are artifices, and investigating them frequently involves intervening with and participating in them.

Rather than explanatory, the cultural sciences are therefore oriented towards *under-standing* (in Swedish *för-ståelse*), hence, affecting our approach to this report and its possibility to provide a comprehensive 'overview.' In the work with the report, we have found it important to dwell on our specific positionality as researchers, and the spatial configuration of knowing provided. We may want to consider the distinction proposed by German philosopher and sociologist Wilhelm Dilthey, who claimed that "we explain through purely intellectual processes, but we understand through the cooperation of all the powers of the mind activated by apprehension" (Dilthey 1894/2010:147).

As for the present text, rather than an exhaustive overview directly informing decision-making, the intention is to draw attention to the abundant complexities and controversies that characterize current cultural formations, including research activities, at the intersection of migration and urban development. Our emphasis on conceptual development, therefore, is motivated by our understanding of research as apprehension-oriented, contributing to the development of critically constructive vocabularies, potentially facilitating alternative courses of action. Concepts and conceptual frameworks proposed by researchers are in this sense not only descriptive, but also normative, by necessity interventions with a transformative power.

This entanglement of theory and practice is not unproblematic, at times described as contentious, at times as complementary, yet directly linked to questions of applicability. That there is an entangled mutuality between researchers and other stakeholders in the 'cultural field' — in the context of Mistra Urban Futures primarily understood from the perspective of migration and urban development – should be clear. While the report is produced within the context of applied research and co-production across academia and civil society, it primarily

compiles basic academic studies published in academic journals with a focus on culture, migration, and urban development. Apart from journals, the overview also highlights some key monographs and research-based reports.

Tania Ruiz Gutierrez, *Annorstädes / Elsewhere / Ailleurs*, permanent video installation for the City Tunnel, Malmö Central station, 2010. ©Tania Ruiz Gutierrez, 2010

As our method is based on retrieval from different academic and extra-academic digital archives, it is important to account for the current accessibility problem. There is an important difference between academic research, or so called "white" literature, mostly thoroughly scrutinized as regards data, references, and conclusions; and "grey" literature, that is, research-based reports and analyses published outside of academia. The former, while peer-reviewed and discussed academically, is not freely accessible and therefore often not publicly debated. The latter, while based on faster and more limited peer review processes, is often open access and widely recognized in policy circles (see also World Migration Report, p.95).

What we emphasize in the following is therefore also the representational questions pertinent to current cultural research. How do cultural researchers articulate current complexities and mobilities? How do concepts and conceptual frameworks work in relation to cultural practices and policies? To what extent can cultural theories help us recognize, describe, and understand cultural emergence and formation? For the purposes of this report, we turn first to three research reports from scaffolded (global, regional, local) perspectives. This is a small sampling of the report literature, to be sure, but in many ways, it is representative of current thinking on policy and sustainable urban development in the context of migration, and provides a backdrop for our thinking on translocality in theory and practice.

Reporting on Migration, Culture, Locality, and Sustainability

One of the most comprehensive sources on research regarding migration and related issues is the *World Migration Report*, published every three years by the UN Migration Agency.[2] With the ambition to "demystify migration to policymakers, practitioners, researchers, students and the general public" and to "promote a balanced understanding of migration's complexities," the *World Migration Report* presents relevant data and information and offers explanations of complex and emerging issues.

The *WMR* critically discusses migration from an international perspective, but also from the perspective of migrants. While scrutinizing global governance, the increasing role of transnational connectivity, and the impact of media coverage, the report importantly contextualizes research on migrant experience as an important source of knowledge. For our purposes, the discussion of migrants' *self-agency* is the most crucial. To combat the 'narrative of negativity' produced by media, the report calls for the inclusion of migrant narratives in future research, and describes migration as a composite phenomenon that can only be effectively approached and understood by carefully considering a range of factors, such as different kinds of migration and different kinds of policies. Interesting in this context is, however, the implicit recognition of *spatial relations*, understood in terms of scales and levels of governance; and the implied attention to *culture*, highlighted only indirectly through the emphasis on how migrants' stories play into knowledge production.

These themes circulate through regional and local reports as well. The 2018 *State of the Nordic Region 2018: Immigration and Integration Edition* was published by the Nordic Council of Ministers, with the aim of minimizing the costs and maximizing the benefits of migration, both in economic and humanitarian terms (Karlsdottír, *et.al*. 2018). Deploying longitudinal data gathered from across the Nordic region, the report characterizes integration as beneficial both for migrants and Nordic societies, as newcomers 'inject new life into ageing local contexts, fuel economic progress and reinvigorate ailing welfare systems' (10). The report directly links integration to the labour market and state-funded culture. The study notes low representation of migrants on career paths and in cultural institutions: the numbers of foreign-born workers in both sectors do not mirror the relative percentage of foreign-born persons in the general population. The report suggests that further research must be done to determine the causes of this disconnect (Karldottír, et.al. 2018:72) and argues for the importance of proportional representation of foreign-born actors in these two arenas.

In Sweden, the role of culture has likewise been a central issue in sustainability policy. Since 2009, *Boverket* (The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning), has emphasized "sociocultural sustainability," encouraging and supporting special initiatives in the cultural field.[3] Another influential reference in the field of social sustainability, particularly in a local context is the so-called *Malmö Commission* (Stigendal and Östergren 2013), which in its final report stresses the cohesive role of culture and suggests a broad understanding of culture, comprising everyday creativity, artistic practices, nature, and the environment. A vital cultural life, the report states, is the reason why antagonism between different groups in Malmö is not a bigger problem. Here, culture is both anthropological and aesthetic: it is where difference

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registers, and also what mitigates conflict. It is "about participation, involvement, safety and trust" (Stigendal and Östergren 2013:47). Relevant in this respect is also the Mistra Urban Futures report *Platsar kulturen i den nya staden?* (*Does culture 'find place' in the new city?*) (Sörum et.al. 2017), which discusses the relationship between cultural sustainability, place and artistic practices. "Cultural work," the authors state, "is identity-creating and characterized by dedication and connections to the site, history and people" (Sörum et.al. 2017:2). The report draws attention to research identifying a strong affinity between independent cultural activity and local attachment, and between "culture and cultural heritage" (Sörum et.al. 2017:4, 11, 23, 62); an affinity based on a view of cultural practice as primarily identity sensitive and formative. With this as the base line, the report highlights the role of cultural workers and artists as caretakers of local cultural heritage in terms of "memory, narrative, identity, place, buildings, etc." (Sörum et.al. 2017:56). While the report points to the difficulties for culture to "find place" in visions of the sustainable city and the importance of securing a place and long-term support for independent cultural agency, the concluding argument ends up in a self-referential emphasis on culture's place-identifying and securing function.

Within the Mistra Urban Futures context, several recent project similarly focused on the relationship between cultural heritage and "just cities."[4] With a special attention to the implementation of cultural planning methods in the different local environments involved (Gothenburg, Cape Town and Kisumu), these projects resulted in a number of publications on "cultural entanglements" (Perry et.al. 2019), the role of "cultural intermediaries" (Jones et.al. 2019), "cultural ecologies" (Perry and Symons 2019), and "cultural governance" (Perry 2019). While these studies to varying degrees draw attention to the combination of spatial and cultural perspectives in current urban policy oriented research, they neither specifically address the limitations and asymmetries arising due to mobility and migration, nor the different ways in which different forms of migration might play out in local, urban cultural contexts. Somewhat symptomatic for this strand of knowledge production, they do not dwell any further on the politics and controversies of cultural agency as cultural heritage practices, and the potential assimilationist tendencies that such an approach might sustain.

Within the context of Mistra Urban Futures and its collaborative framework *Realising Just Cities*, the conjunction culture–sustainability–urban diversity is, however, not entirely absent. A Mistra Urban Futures Paper published in 2012 focused on "the intersection of daily life with the surrounding material, discursive, and social landscapes," and "the reciprocal relationship of how urban life is shaped by and, in turn, shapes the urban environment" (Gillberg et.al., 2012:4). While the notion of cultural heritage played a central role also in this study, the authors here argued for viewing urban culture as primarily "enabling," and as "an indispensable prerequisite for fostering the sustainable city" (*Ibid*. 2012:5). With a normative, aim, the study presented a bottom-up perspective on culture grounded in activism, citizens' initiatives and different forms of material interventions, hence highlighting the difference between social and cultural dimensions of urban everyday life, the latter necessary as "a force for change in everyday life" (Ibid. 2012:31). In another Mistra Urban Futures project, Stenberg and Fryk (2012), equally focused on cultures of learning, yet with an explicit focus on empowering collaboration between citizens and civil servants, and the inclusion of citizens in so called "capacity-building processes" (Stenberg and Fryk 2012:3285). Yet another report published by Mistra Urban Futures Greater Manchester Local Interaction Platform presented a "mapping of the urban knowledge arena" and called for "greater joined-up thinking between and across policy areas for sustainable urban development, particularly around social

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[4] https://www.mistraurbanfutures.org/en/project/cultural-heritage-and-just-cities

inclusion, diversity and equality" (Perry et.al. 2012:15). Presenting a number of field studies of learning projects, the report referred to 'culture' broadly speaking in terms of distinct

'ethea;' and more narrowly, referring to "sensory, visual and textual understandings" in the co-production of knowledge (*Ibid*. 2012:51), in other words not directly addressing the topics of mobility and migration.

Notwithstanding, the last three decades or so have seen an increased in research collaborations at the the intersection of culture, migration, and urban development. Increasing social and political tension and complexity has not only prompted intensified interdisciplinarity and exchange across fields; the idea that 'culture makes a difference' has eventually found its way into cultural policy and planning. As an example, when the city council of Malmö in 2014 approved of the cultural strategy plan developed by the local department of culture, it was the first cultural policy protocol in the city with the status of a central policy initiative, i.e. making it mandatory for all departments within the municipal organization to consider culture and cultural consequences in their decision-making (City of Malmö 2017). While it is too far-fetched to interpret this and similar initiatives as a sign of a paradigmatic shift, it may indicate a growing awareness of culture as a pervasive dimension beyond projects, events or toolkits for cohesion. Through their vagueness, several of the above-mentioned reports and studies address the need for further and more 'grounded' research, eventually taking as the point of departure also the unpredictabilities, ambiguities, controversies and unsettling disclosures emerging as a result of intensified and diversified mobility.

In the following, we therefore choose to focus on research emphasizing the *transversal* rather than the local, hence suggesting a different point of departure for the full integration of migratory experience into urban sustainability policies. This approach is agency-oriented to a large extent situated in local practices and experiences. Yet it is also aiming beyond place-bound identity, beyond unified or unifying heritage. Proposing four lenses – *mobility cultures*, *translocal spaces*, *translocal subjectivity*, and *translocal articulations* – we explore how new forms of dispersed and distributed connectivity may inform ideas of urban sustainability.

Mobility cultures
The spatial/geographical/cultural discourse on mobility, migration, circulation and spatial interconnectedness is sweeping and difficult to grasp, and is often summarized through concepts such as globalization, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, or hybridization. The latter concept was proposed by cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha, who in his seminal book *The Location of Culture* (1994) emphasized the ambiguous "third space" unfolding as a result of colonial repression of "native cultures;" a space characterized by a new "undecidability," where conditions of dominance (such as contemporary urban conditions) can turn into "grounds of intervention" (Bhabha 1994:112). To the above mentioned terms can be added *transnationalism* (Hannerz 1996, 1998; Smith 2001, 2005) and *translocality* (McKay 2006; Freitag and von Oppen 2010; Brickel and Datta 2011; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013), further challenging essentialist and territorial ideas of culture, but also directly targeting cosmopolitan mindsets and their privileging of certain movements before others. While the discourse on cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan citizenship is huge, with its roots in Enlightenment thinking around a universal subject and equally universal human rights, transnationalism and translocality have emerged out of an explicit need to concretize rather than universalize notions of belonging, citizenship, personhood or identity. In an article from 2013, anthropologist and geographer Greiner and Sakdapolrak provide an overview over what they identify as an increasing engagement, "since the mid-1990s […] with more localised

phenomena of international migration (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). While economic transnationalism, more commonly known as globalization, is a perspective that covers cross-border mobility of resources, goods, people, and know-how, *critical* theories of transnationalism study these processes of de-territorialisation and notions of spatially unbounded communities, including also unequal incentives and effects. As human ecologist Michael Peter Smith expresses it, critical transnationalism and especially studies in *transnational urbanism*, "seek to analyze the social organization and consequences of the complex interconnectivity of cross-border networks in multiple fields of social practice." This is an interconnectivity that ranges from transmigrant networks, religious organizations, corporate commodity chains, the remittance economy, criminal syndicates, "and now, sadly, the machinations of transnational terrorist networks" (Smith 2005:235). What we can retrieve from Smith's broad definition, is that there is no unified discourse on transnationalism, but instead overlapping and sometimes competing approaches, ranging from global network studies to studies focusing on the very actors "beyond global flows" (Smith 2005:236), as embodied subjects, socially and spatially situated in, and moving through physical environments.

Transnationalism thus presents a research perspective which, rather than focusing on 'vertical' local-global relationships, emphasizes cross-border or trans-local connections. These are concrete ties over distances, which increasingly sustain new modes of migrant or migratory being-in-the-world. In this context, cities acquire a central position as connected localities, providing employment that enables transmittals, spaces for the generation of cultural capital, the development of new consumption practices, new forms of political organization, etc. - in short, 'transversalities' sustained by advanced means of migrants' communication and travel. In this sense, following Félix Guattari's psychoanalytical conceptualizing, "the transversal" (Guattari 2015:102-121) is meant to dismantle the dual analytic relation between analyst and analysand and hence, present a different idea of shared space; non-dualistic, non-categorical and non-hierarchical. In a global political context, transversality offers "a new model of dissent" (Genosko 2009:18), including a recognition of more politically articulated localities and subjectivities. Transversality occurs "when communication is maximized between different levels, and above all, in different directions" (Guattari in Genosko 2009:44). In the context of contemporary urban space, the transversal entails a recognition, not only of local idiosyncrasies, but also of 'the unconscious' dimension of the city. In the psychoanalytical terms of Guattari, the transversal challenges the 'superego' of urbanity, emphasizing the fact that cities are not simply grounded places but diagonal events, the result of interfering elsewheres. As Genosko is careful to point out in his interpretation of Guattari, transversality relates to conviviality (Genosko 2009; Illich 1972), to the very basic question of how to conceive of shared space and how to live together. Challenging dominant power-geometries, not the least the idea of stake-holding and positioning, transversality allows for thinking in terms of mobilities, and hence, directly implicates migrants in the sphere of cosmopolitan, transnational ideas.

Before continuing it is, however, important to note that what (re-)appears with the transnational discourse is also the unresolved *cosmopolitan dilemma*, defined by political philosopher Seyla Benhabib as the predicament of how to "mediate moral universalism with ethical particularism" (Benhabib 2007, 451). How is it possible to combine visions of mobility and transnationalism with the justifications of reinforced borders and territorial cuts, currently so prevalent? This is indeed an ethical dilemma, played out as a tension between cosmological and transversal approaches to an era of unprecedented migration. One immediate consequence of the new emphasis on transnationalism rather than cosmopolitanism, however, is that it takes

as its starting point that the concept of place, for so many reasons, indeed matters, thereby contesting the assumed "placelessness" prevalent in so many formative visions of networked globalism (Sassen 1998:387). The idea here is that a deepened conceptualization of place helps to inform a richer, and in many ways better, understanding of the power-geometry of global flows (Massey 1991). Meanwhile, the prefix *trans-* also directs our focus further beyond any circumscribed idea of locality as a 'stake,' instead emphasizing "questions of connectivity" (Hepp 2008:71) in relation to which the local unfolds as the circumstance for effecting change.

While the cosmopolitan dilemma uncomfortably rears its head in current urban decision-making, it is rarely related to the irreversible mobility turn, to irrefutable migratory flows and to the subsequent appearance of mobility cultures of many kinds. The 'dilemma' is one of mediation, and hence, of developing 'tools' for communication, including new concepts and vocabularies allowing for transversal, and hence radically inclusive, ways of thinking and acting.

Translocal Spaces

As a cultural phenomenon, transnational relations take shape amongst many different constellations of places across the globe. In studies of extended Filipino communities, social geographer Deirdre McKay has shown how new, personal, intimate and simultaneously wide-reaching networks facilitate the circulation of values and knowledge, which directly influences "the texture of 'place'" not only in the Philippines (McKay 2006; Conradson and McKay 2007), but also in migrant destination metropoles, such as Hong Kong. Representing one of the largest groups of overseas migrant workers in the global economy, Filipino migrants' cultural practices offer an important example. McKay demonstrated how, as in many other cases, mobile telecommunication has been central to local formations, not only as a medium of social connectedness, but also as a materially place-altering feature. Manifested in this way, technology not only informs new mobility patterns but also new kinds of meeting places. Technological infrastructure is also given a new prominence, with actual wireless towers presenting new and symbolically important artefacts in rural and urban landscapes. Mobility between very different locations, such as villages or suburbs and global megacities, thus creates "a translocal community space" based on a specific sense of locality (McKay 2006:268), the most important aspect of which is its need of constant attention and care. Translocal place-making, as discussed by McKay, is thus distinct from transnational associations, in that it is intimately linked to practices of social and cultural maintenance. In Hong Kong, as an example, this is physically manifested through the Sunday picnic gatherings of Filipina female house workers in Central Park, by now an established and characteristic ritual in the urban life of the city. McKay shows that while Filipina women still live in *places*, their "sense of place" can be described as increasingly "extraverted" (Massey 1994), that is, dependent on a raised awareness as regards the necessity of continuous upkeep of this "sense" through practices like occasional travelling, remittances, or shipping gifts. Many studies of migrant workers in global metropoles point to similar situations of constant attention to settlement as multi-sited, the conditions of which differ significantly depending on the specific context – whether concerning Thai workers in Singapore, skilled Indians in Australia, or Sudanese youth in the US (Smith *et.al.* 2011; Peth et. al. 2018; Webb and Rahiri-Roy 2019).

Besides conflict-related and work-related migration, there is today also the growing *education-migration nexus* (Robertson 2018:539). For young people, studying abroad is one avenue to cross-border mobility, giving rise to what researchers have described as "mutant mobilities" (Allon *et. al.* 2008; Robertson 2018), as the initial incentives for dislocation tend to shift over time. Research on student-migrants in Australia shows "how specific urban localities,

materialities and social practices are involved in the negotiation of the 'translocal' self" (Robertson 2018:540). The same tension appears in a study of young Germans working in England, especially when they visit home (Mueller 2015). Even such a seemingly mundane form of migration, conditioned by a privileged "to-and-fro mobility" (Mueller 2015:626), gives rise to ambiguous, translocal community ties, where "visiting friends and relatives" shifts into a complex and tense negotiation of emplacement and displacement.

There is thus a growing body of research on migrants' place-making, often focusing on the challenge of settlement, or attempts to "recreate 'elsewhere' as part of 'home'" (McKay 2006:275). Forced migration is in this respect especially complex, as it includes highly varied life trajectories with a multitude of consequences. The refugee situation, in which movement and connection to home are both limited in particular ways, is also highly circumscribed by legal frameworks and geopolitical tensions of different kinds, especially as relates to the politics of borders and citizenship. This in turn makes it difficult, if not impossible, to understand translocality other than as a cultural situation marked by heightened spatial and relational awareness; "a type of consciousness" (Vertovec 1999; Myers and Nelson 2019) that emerges and is being sustained 'despite-all', as a form of fundamental, self-assertive attention to symbolic ties and expressions that are intricately tied to power and empowerment. Translocality then, has to do with the question of how to share multiple sensibilities across multiple spatial settings (Myers and Nelson 2019:1205). From a mobility studies perspective, translocal sharing is often referred to in terms of "moorings" (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006; Peth et. al 2018), as a way to emphasize what is often temporal and mutable local anchorage in "archipelagos" of emergent cultural formation (Carillo 2019), localities that, rather than situated or *in-situ* appear as *extra-situ*, as dispersed yet interconnected "elsewheres" (Hellström Reimer 2016).

There is obviously plenty of evidence on an everyday basis that migrant re-settlement, or the re-establishment of lives and careers, is far from smooth and furthermore highly diverse. Many people today live under the pressure of sustaining multiple spatial affiliations, with consequences also for their experience of self-hood and sense of belonging. As a concept, translocality also recognizes local connectedness as fundamental for the development of meaning. Yet the prefix *trans-* also implicates that 'the local' is in itself a relational concept, that there is no 'local' independent of a wider spatial connectedness. When social anthropologists Greiner and Sakdapolrak present and discuss the concept of translocality, its application in different contexts and adjacent research perspectives (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). They note how the term has emerged as a reaction to the idea of *transnationalism* and the attempts through this term "to challenge existing ideas of nationhood and citizenship" (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013:374). Yet while transnationalism mostly refers to spatial unboundedness, studies have pointed to a re-emergence of notions of belonging and rootedness, including ethno-nationalist imaginaries. This has also led to a new focus on the local and especially local-to-local interactions, and consequently, on a more 'grounded' idea of transnationalism "from below" (Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Greiner and Sakdapolrak argue that a translocality approach can overcome "the notion of container spaces and the dichotomy between 'here' and 'there', between 'rural' and 'urban'" (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013:375), but also that it might draw attention to new forms of governmentalities, or what Doreen Massey refers to as the "power geometry of time-space compression" (Massey 1991:25) – to the governing of flow and containment, of who moves and who does not.

Translocal Subjectivities

Hence *trans*-locality is proposed as a means to draw attention to and work with the different forms and articulations of local belonging, depending on the actual translocal relations involved. While a majority of studies in the field focus on international migration related to conflict and livelihood risks, an increasing number of studies include cultural workers, such as musicians, dancers, and athletes, where   researchers point to the importance of taking seriously not only translocality, but also the formation of *translocal subjectivities*, or in other words, how individuals and groups of people subjected to migratory conditions set up their everyday lives, how they develop self-hood and agency according to their sense of belonging, and how they handle the challenge of "how to achieve physical co-presence at important social occasions" (Conradson and McKay 2007:169), often through the development of new, translocal articulations of culture or art.

Consequently, a term like *translocal subjectivity* is far from unproblematic and might seem over-constructed, especially as compared to the widely accepted notion of *cultural identity*. Yet as related to ethnicity, race and nationalism, identity is a highly debated domain. While a thorough reference to this domain would take us too far afield, it is important to note the extent to which contemporary research still struggles with what British culture theorist Stuart Hall described as largely discarded Cartesian, Western ideas of "an integral, originary and unified identity" (Hall 1996:1). In a recent study, intercultural studies scholars Webb and Lahiri-Roy repeat this critique, stressing the fact that, when utilized as a notion disconnected from the 'difference' that motivates it in the first place, 'identity' legitimizes frameworks of "static multiculturalism" (Webb and Lahiri-Roy 2019:192). With reference to Hall's critical approach to identity as a contested notion "under erasure," a notion "which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all" (Hall 1996:2), they draw attention to the need to "acknowledge the inherent movement and hybridity of migrants' experiences and understandings of the self" (Webb and Lahiri-Roy 2019:192. This includes the need to handle the inherent ambiguity of processes of identification and belonging, as a matter of "'becoming' as well as 'being'" and as something linked as much as to the future as to the past (Webb and Lahiri-Roy 2019:191). 'The diasporic self' as proposed by post-colonial theorist Edward Said, amongst others, in his *Out of Place* (1999) is in this sense still an important point of reference, as it attempts to theorize the migrant 'becoming-subject' as a multi-voiced and cross-cultural process of 'acculturation'. Feminist scholars have followed up on these ideas. For example, philosopher Rosi Braidotti promotes "the relocation of identities on new grounds that account for multiple belonging" (Braidotti 2002/2013:7). Others, like independent scholar Sara Ahmed, in considering the historical patterns of estrangement, early on cautioned against what can easily turn into an overstated celebration of transgression and departure, in relation to which the idea of 'identity', also in its general sense of 'living-as-usual', is rendered impossible (Ahmed 1999:332). In her theorizing of migrancy, Ahmed has repeatedly called for a problematizing of the relationship between identity and difference, as well as between "home and away" (Ahmed 1999). "'Homes,'" Ahmed concludes, "always involve encounters between those who stay, those who arrive and those who leave" (Ahmed 1999:340). Consequently, the very cultural practice of forming home "as complex and contingent spaces of inhabitance" (Ahmed 1999:332), is not independent from movement and dislocation.

As exemplified above, conceptualizing migration and migrant experiences inevitably also means contextualizing and spatializing. The notion of translocality focuses this complexity, by on the one hand looking at the fundamental relationality involved in migratory processes and on the other considering the inevitable importance of grounded points of reference, of

feelings of belonging, even though these might come in the plural. This all makes space for new approaches to the question of how to facilitate settlement and localizing processes, while at the same time recognizing the often simultaneous experiences of exile and exclusion.

Translocal Articulations

While most research on translocality and translocal subjectivity is conducted from the point of view of an anthropological understanding of culture, there is also a growing body of research approaching the topic from an aesthetic perspective, in this context referring to research on emergent spaces and forms of expression, where subjectivities and belongings are being renegotiated. Important to note is the fact that there is no distinct border between an anthropological and an aesthetic approach to cultural formation, but a complex and entangled overlap, even a chiasmic relationship, allowing for the habitual and the artistic to intersect. A central assumption is furthermore the one initially articulated, of cultural formation as historically related to mobility and emergence. In this respect forced movement may present indicative borderline situations, requiring or calling forth heightened attention as regards the right to symbolic, representational articulation, a right that conditions what philosopher Jacques Rancière has referred to as the sharing and distribution of sensibilities that define and sustain culture(s) (Rancière 2013).

A growing body of inter-disciplinary and often practice-based research approaches art as a symbolic practice negotiating mobility and connectedness. Theorizing art in this way relates it closely to cross-border experiences of different kinds. On the one hand, migrant artists are increasingly prominent "bridging" or "translating" cultural actors with ties to several places (Ring Pedersen 2013). As 'cosmopolitical radicals' artists have contributed to the sensitizing of the local-global relationship, which in turn has given rise to new institutional challenges, as multiple cultural and geographic references are complicating discussions or provenance and meaning (Ring Pedersen 2013). On the other hand, new forms of collective expression have entered the art scene, diversifying the role and the institutional framing of the artist as a professional. In this context, memory rather than heritage has gained a central importance; memory as *circulating articulations* (Rigney and de Cesari 2014); transcultural expressions unfolding across and beyond predefined forms of cultural practices. An example is in this case the *Women Making History Movement*, launched in Malmö in 2013 and initiated by migrant authors (Ardalan 2016, 2017; Björgvinsson and Høg-Hansen 2018). Embracing a century of migratory experiences, the movement focused on "the voicing of ambivalent identities that wish to maintain a plurality and openness of identifications and directions" (Björgvinsson and Høg-Hansen 2018:265). The long durée framing of migrant voices was a deliberate step away from the usual framing in terms of "'outsiders', 'homogenized others' or 'victimized strangers'", and a way to avoid the voices "being *amended* to a more homogenous national history" (*ibid.* 265).

Translocal articulations are often mediated in circulatory forms; through storytelling, photography or film, why the collecting and archiving gains special importance. In the local Swedish context, this discussion has unfolded in conjunction with the plans to establish a new, national *Museum of Movement*, responsible for not simply commemorating but for shedding light on and discussing "questions related to democracy, migration and also human rights" (Lundgren and Elg 2017). An important aspect highlighted in the pilot study was the central role of *popular movements* (Swe., *folkrörelser*) as cultural agents in the development of the Welfare State, and its continuous interaction with and support of an independent, diverse and inclusive cultural arena (ibid. 2017:29). In the edited volume *Museums in a Time of Migration* (Johansson and Bevelander 2017), published within the framework museum pilot study,

several contributors highlighted the complexity of commemorating migratory experiences, emphasizing the risks of considering memory and history as simply "origin-based" (Povrzanovic-Frykman 2017:84). Recognized as unique historical accounts, migrants' articulations may "turn our attention to experiential, representational, and organizational features of social life as opposed to groupings of people around ethnicity" (*ibid*. 2017:85). Migrants' stories, as other stories, are indeed moving, and in this way, they do more than simply illustrate migrant experience. In the above-mentioned volume, Thomson emphasizes the importance of moving stories as "a new type of living history" that transcends given or institutionalized forms (Thomson 2017:110). Often mediated in theatrical form, within a community theatre context, these are forms of expressions more often referred to as *post-migrant* (Foroutan 2015) in that they claim a central position beyond the 'ethnicized' or 'othered', as in the German-Turkish theatre developed in Kreuzberg Berlin (Sharifi 2019), taking as its starting point an approach to artistic expression independent of integrational or cohesive objectives. Similarly, Smith, DeMeo and Widman discuss how translocal communities through artistic practice engage, renegotiate and challenge both stereotypical imaginaries of who they are, and potentials of becoming rather than belonging (Smith et.al. 2011). One of their examples is *The Lost Boys*, a Sudanese theatre group in the American city of Syracuse; an example showing how theatrical performance may become a means of physically manifesting or moulding a simultaneously rich and painful diasporic experience, as well as a way for the performers to insert this experience into the cultural texture of their new location, on their own terms.

An increasingly widespread format for urban integration is the *Urban Living Lab* (Hellström Reimer et.al. 2012; Hillgren 2013); originally a means for taking also innovation in the field urban development "from an 'in vitro' setting into an 'in vivo' setting in order to allow researchers to observe users and test hypotheses in the real world" (Hellström Reimer et.al. 2012; Dutilleul et al., 2010). Based on experiences from among other initiatives the *Malmö Living Labs,* Björgvinsson *et.al.* point to the Living Lab as a way to approach "the democratic challenge of giving space to multiple emerging, often marginalised publics" (Björgvinsson *et.al.* 2012:127). Inspired by political theories of "agonistic democracy" (Mouffe 2000), and working with among others a grassroots hip-hop organisation whose members were first and second generation immigrants, the Living Lab was seen as facilitating an "agonistic public space" (*Ibid*. 2012:); a democratic arena "that sustains and facilitates debates and struggles while protecting the people involved" (*Ibid*. 2012:143) and that allow heterogenous participants to become "active co-creators, and to make it so that what is being designed enters their real-life context" (*Ibid*. 2012:131). In a recent review of the broad implementation of Living Labs in urban sustainable development contexts, Kronsell and Mukhtar-Landgren point to their municipal implementation as a form of "experimental governance," with the municipality acting as either promoter, enabler, partner (Kronsell and Mukhtar-Landgren 2018). While the role of promoter and, to a lesser extent, enabler can be seen as sustaining an authoritative process, "the municipality as a 'partner' is not associated with formal steering or authority but related to engaging or participating in partnership on fairly equal terms (Ibid. 2018:993). Yet, important to note is that, apart from Living Labs often being temporary, "the role of partner does not necessarily include shared leadership, and it can be very weak" (Ibid. 2018:994).

The potential pitfalls of regarding arts and design practices related to migration and urban sustainable development as a particularly 'experimental' case recall a fundamental line of inquiry in the field of participatory art, which considers art's mediating role between various publics and localities, including shifting constellations of new arrivals, native populations, and

the state (Bishop 2012, Jackson 2011). While Kester (2011) proposes dialogical work that breaks down hierarchies between artists and lay persons, and cultivates new forms of solidarity and social cohesion, Bishop (2006, 2012) argues for a more antagonistic collaborative praxis that allows for a problematizing of situated participation and site-specificity that addresses implicit power dimensions or "vicissitudes of collaborative authorship and spectatorship" (Bishop 2012:8), and their potentially stigmatizing effects. Both camps, however, argue for the retention of communal space, and for long-term projects that avoid co-optation by the state or the market.

More pointedly, recent research (e.g., Clavier and Kauppinen, 2014) has shown how the state has sought to co-opt urban-based cultural organizations in order to manage marginalized groups. State co-optation affects the self-determination of such initiatives, and often has additional material effects, as it leaves organizations vulnerable to changes in government, which often result in funding cuts. This is, then, an issue of sustainability. Even when cultural organizations and activities are not funded by the state, they often operate on short-term contracts. When the initial funding dries up, organizations often must apply for further funding, or monies from other funding bodies than the ones that provided their initial grants. This is an issue not only for the people who use these spaces, but also for the workers who must juggle several roles at smaller organizations: pressed with scrambling for funding, they must also deal with trying to maintain day to day operations.

Further, there is the danger that 'well-intended' cultural initiatives repeat some of the pitfalls noted in the *World Migration Report*, namely that they rely on a victim narrative to characterize the populations they are supposed to serve. While to be sure many migrants have endured trauma, and the rehearsal of this narrative can be wielded to procure funding from development agencies and the state, it is not itself a sustainable narrative. Instead, it tends to obscure individual agency, envisioning a false dichotomy between traumatized migrant populations and autochthonous communities, hence ignoring the *becoming* of identities in new contexts (how both migrants and locals are changed). The published academic research on aesthetics and migration frequently repeats this victimizing narrative. Much of it comes out of fields like social work and psychiatry in which researchers study the connection between arts therapy and trauma (e.g., Fitzpatrick 2002; Rousseau and Heusch 2000; Rousseau et all 2005).

Yet in situations where people are separated from their homelands or their safe spaces, the arts have historically offered ways by which individuals and groups negotiate departures and belongings. The arts – both traditional artistic genres and new, hybrid forms of expression - present crossroads of cultures, languages, imaginaries, and modes of becoming. To a certain extent this is a well-established fact, even largely embraced on a policy level, including far-reaching attempts to instrumentalize this creative vitality as a way of pioneering urban growth (Landry 2006, 2007; Florida 2005).

Recent integration research reports (e.g., Pyrhönen et al, 2017; the *European Network Against Racism* 2016) have called for new research themes that address the formation of sustainable networks beyond racialized migrant groups and how these networks affect migrant well-being, and action research initiatives to combat the frequently xenophobic media accounts of newcomers, which polarize public debate. The most cutting-edge research on arts and migration has also taken up this charge. miriam cooke (she spells her name in lowercase letters) and Maggie O'Neill, for example, argue for sustainable, translocal arts work with refugees and asylum seekers. cooke (2016) examines how activist artists use the Internet as a space to relay messages from the frontlines of the Syrian conflict (among other conflicts), and

to foster networks between Syria and artists who migrated by 'marrying the real to the virtual' (73). O'Neill uses an ethnomimetic approach in her work with refugees and asylum seekers, in which she and her interlocutors collaborate to transform migration narratives into visual and textual instalments in local, urban settings. More recently Cory (2020) has argued for bringing the concept of conviviality (eg, Gilroy 2010) into research methods on art and migration, as a way to not only embrace co-production but also to find the value of conflict in the research setting. *Doing conviviality*, she argues, positions participants (both researchers and interlocutors) on more equitable footing and sets up productive expectations where dissonance and disagreement between participants can lead to more fruitful outcomes and relationships, both within and beyond the research moment.

Tania Ruiz Gutierrez, *Annorstädes / Elsewhere / Ailleurs*, permanent video installation for the City Tunnel, Malmö Central station, 2010. ©Tania Ruiz Gutierrez, 2010

Recommendations for Research and Policy Reform

While our thinking on current research and policy related to translocality has been implicit throughout this report, it is important to use some space on articulating some recommendations for both research on translocality and its various articulations, as well as cultural policy related to urban sustainability. Attempting to re-conceptualize migration and locational imaginaries, the report still leaves us with the question of *how* to include cultural agency in concrete migration and social sustainability related urban planning processes. Approaching urban planning from a translocal point of view might offer one way to take seriously the mechanisms of similarity and difference, of cultural movement and emergence. As suggested already by Arjun Appadurai in his studies of cultures "cascading" globally (Appadurai 1990), imaginaries of attachment or belonging, especially in urban contexts, are conditioned by deterritorialization and disjuncture, as much as by situatedness and cohesion. With intensified migration and urbanization, the discourse on culture has deepened, prompting radical rethinking also of foundational societal principles. From new patterns of mobility and new waves of voluntary as well as forced migration will follow an even further amplified emphasis on spatio-temporal aspects, on relational dimensions, and on plurality, demanding new conceptual frameworks and new 'tools,' not only for the understanding of how co-appearances and community ties are constituted, but also for the continuous reconfiguration and re-creation of fundamental cultural formations and ideas, ample enough to accommodate equality, welfare, and social justice.

Recognizing the democratic challenge, it is, however, not our intention to propose designated tools or general toolkits. As this report, and many others, have noted, there is a danger of reproducing essentializing or victimizing narratives through preconceived representations of migrants, and the fetishization of their stories, which often appear in their most sensational forms. Yet based on the research overview presented, we suggest three transversal vectors for further consideration.

- *Intensifying collaborative knowledge production*

Through this report, we have identified a need for continued knowledge production, sensitive to the challenges we've highlighted. If sustainability is the goal of both research and policy, this means that there needs to be an increased emphasis on migrants' participation, not only in their communities, but in society at large, both in theory and in practice, within the academy and out in the city. If integration – and not assimilation – is a priority, as many reports and public debates suggest it is, this concept needs rethinking. Rather than taking or assuming an assimilationist overtone, research and policy must consider integration as, at a minimum, a two-way process in which both migrants and autochthonous people are implicated. The question becomes, how to nurture research and urban environments where people can come together over the long-term?

In the arena of research, we recommend initiatives on a par with those mentioned above. Rather than studying migrant populations or organizations dedicated to their well-being in their adopted countries, researchers and civil servants must craft research and development plans that involve the participation of the populations concerned – not only in terms of planned activities and the production of cultural artefacts or texts, but in terms of maximized transversality, that is through actual meta-thinking about *how* research and development may take place. Yet, because migrant populations are currently heavily researched, researchers need to take measures to avoid or alleviate, wherever possible, the research fatigue that has set in. Co-production helps with this, but the question remains: how do researchers' interlocutors become co-authors and how do they stand to benefit from the research?

One possible solution is to find ways of connecting cultural organizations to university work. We have seen this bridge-building at work in our own everyday research practice and teaching. Invited speakers from organizations dedicated to migrants' well-being have given guest lectures in some of our classes, and students have subsequently become involved in these organizations, even going so far as to design campaign materials for them. As much as possible, the relationship between cultural organizations and the university should be encouraged, even made a part of the long-term curriculum, so that our classes and students do not become a part of the cycle that fetishizes then abandons migrant communities. This intervention would go a long way to disrupting the monetization of research, which funds faculty projects for a few years, after which faculty are meant to generate research output (which, as previously mentioned, are not always freely available) and then return to the workaday life of the university. Instead, nurturing connections between courses, students, and cultural organizations might provide a fertile future for sustained involvement and ethical inquiry.

- *Explicitly recognizing the historical relationship between urbanity and migration and the vital role of migrants*

Migration is an inevitable aspect of contemporary societal life. Acknowledging this means that migratory issues are of everyone's interest, although they affect certain groups harder than others. In terms of research ethics, we therefore call for researchers to unflinchingly and publicly stand with migrants, and to commit to long-term work dedicated to their rights. As researchers, we occupy spaces of privilege and power which must be used for justice-oriented work. In the current political climate in Scandinavia – which is indeed echoed globally – not standing with migrant communities is tantamount to acquiescing to their continued

marginalization, and to the daily violence – physical, social, and political – that they face. Academics have a good deal of cultural currency and creative autonomy that we can contribute to current debates, and to fighting against the racist and misogynistic nationalism with which our political and cultural landscapes are currently beset. We charge ourselves and our fellow scholars with being educators, researchers, and public voices dedicated to social change and uplift through our pedagogical praxis, publications, and service work.

● *Radically reorienting the notion of culture – from sustaining origins to forming relations*

Acknowledging that culture might have gained importance is not the same as to say that a focus on 'culture' will guarantee more sustainability. Ideas on culture are often vague and, what is worse, increasingly simplified, and even more so as 'culture' is politically coded and turned into an arena for discriminatory and socially segregating measures. Strong cultural policy has a role to play in breaking this cycle as well. A most obvious recommendation is a serious reconsideration of the project-based and compensational logic and a doing away with the discriminatory and charitable perspective upon which it rests, instead securing long-term infrastructurally motivated funding for grassroots projects that are aimed at sustainability and self-sufficiency. While researchers have rightly noted the ways that the state has co-opted artistic expression related to migration, we have seen examples of organizations (with state or private funding, or a mixture of both) that have been funded on a limited basis with the goal of shaping themselves into free-standing, independent entities at the end of that funding. Often, however, this funding lasts just a few years, a timeline which seems impervious to the growing pains and logistics of getting an organization up and moving. Thus, practical cultural policy that either extends these grants, and/or offers support to organizations as they reapply for funding, might be a starting point for building towards sustainability. Additionally, owing to the continued importance of the labour market in helping migrants to integrate and sustain themselves, policymakers might consider implementing apprenticeship and internship programs, and extending these opportunities to migrant populations to whom employment is not readily available.

These suggestions, however, are merely the most actionable at present. In truth, there needs to be a drastic rethinking of sustainable cultural policy regarding migration and migrant groups residing in Sweden. In our estimation, the Swedish state, and especially bureaucrats in charge of cultural policy, must begin by reconsidering, from a spatial and temporal perspective, what 'integration' means, instead of divisive difference seriously acknowledging the diversity that translocal experiences bring. To achieve sustainability, therefore, researchers and civil servants, the university, and the municipality, must all in some way see also themselves as translocal actors, working to connect with the new milieu of their immediate environs, and to cultivate rich environments in which stigma cannot thrive.

Concluding remarks

With the present report, our aim has been to shed light on contemporary research in the intersection of migration studies, urban studies, cultural studies and other related fields that seriously consider what we here have referred to as an irreversible mobility turn affecting ideas of culture, urbanity, and sustainability. Considering current political tendencies and associated demands for stricter borders and cultural distinctions, it is not an exaggeration to say that culture and cultural formation are understudied or misappropriated in the field of urban planning and governance. There are frequent examples of culture being understood as an assimilatory tool or as a project-based instrument for the partial mitigation of social tension rather than as a necessary condition for societal becoming. A recent example was offered by *Wall Street Nacka*, a so-called 'international mural festival' in the Stockholm suburb of Nacka commissioning solely 'optimistic, encouraging, heart-based and magnificent' artwork, supposedly locally affirmative and cohesive, all according to the municipal website (https://en.wallstreetnacka.com). Other examples of more overt cultural policing continue to circulate in Swedish news, including reports about the cultural policy developed in Sölvesborg and Staffanstorp municipalities, both politically governed by a conservative coalition including the nationalist party, and in both cases implementing cultural regulations of different kinds, concerning libraries providing literature in foreign languages, schools providing meat alternatives or the municipal purchasing and exhibiting of other than "timeless and classic art" that is sustaining "the local cultural heritage"[5]

Against this background, it is merely an understatement to say that we find ourselves in an era characterized by cultural unsettlement as well as increasing cultural polarization. Culture is today not only contested, but also increasingly staunchly reclaimed, sometimes as a panacea against all kinds of societal, economic, and environmental erosion. A clear-cut and universal definition of human culture, or, alternatively, a distinct differentiation of *cultures* in the plural, would provide both solid foundation and reliable direction to the ever-more shaky global development curves. But when facing the climate crisis up-front, with its expected increase of migrational flows, it is increasingly important to raise the question of the meaning of culture. Do we need the notion at all and if so, why?

While we do want to challenge the sophisticated forms of governance that are being practiced in the name of culture, we also want to provide a positive answer to the polemical question. Yes, we do need culture(s) and practices of cultural formation, yet as Anne Phillips have proposed, an idea of culture as diversifying and transformative, hence liberated from its supposed interlinkage with identity and ethnicity (Phillips 2007). Several other researchers have since followed up on Phillips' critical reflections, similarly addressing the issue of whether the notion of culture is at all useful, and if so, in what way and under what circumstances. Our attempt to map the tangled relationship between the concepts of culture, mobility, locality and sustainability, among others, have lead us to a similar questioning of what Povrzanovic-Frykman calls the "gravitational force of culture" (Povrzanovic-Frykman 2017:89); culture as a common-sensical ordering, monitoring and aligning regime, especially useful in the management of migrants. Against these and similar explanations, we have tried to draw attention to research in different ways proposing an alternative view on culture as

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[5] https://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=478&artikel=7281177. See also article by political columnist Per Svensson – "Staffanstorps film lika blond som blåögd" ("The Staffanstorp movie as blond as it is starry eyed"), Dagens Nyheter, 12 November 2019.

mobilizing and diversifying practices of exploration and connection – a worldly becoming that is always already diagonal, relational, and translocal.

Changing patterns of mobility and displacement thus precipitate new territorial and cultural challenges, but also foreground questions of a more discursive nature, related to the formation of knowledge. What forms of representation, what vocabularies or concepts are needed in order to describe, understand, discuss, and eventually affect the diverse and specific urban situations that emerge due to migration and displacement? How to investigate and map out issues related to migration and urban change without simplification? And what forms of knowledge formation related to migration could or should guide urban decision-making? These and similar questions are, as indicated throughout this report, of an ontological and epistemological kind, involving issues concerning worldviews as well as investigative and documentative practice, putting special demands on the attempts to realize not only sustainable, but responsible and just urban environments.

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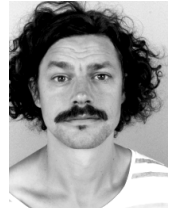
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Mistra Urban Futures strives towards Realising Just Cities which are Accessible, Green and Fair.
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