Urban Cultures
as a field of knowledge and learning

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MISTRA
**URBAN
FUTURES**

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Mistra Urban Futures is an international center for sustainable urban development.
The headquarters is located in Gothenburg, Sweden and the center operates in five cities around the world including Cape Town, Gothenburg, Greater Manchester, Kisumu and Shanghai. Co-production of knowledge as well as creating Fair, Green and Dense cities is a winning concept for a successful sustainable urban future. A global Arena provides for interaction with external actors and between the five cities. It is funded by the Mistra Foundation for Strategic Development, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and seven consortium members.

Mistra Urban Futures' publication series "Papers" presents the results of research and knowledge production projects carried out by people connected to Mistra Urban Futures or its partners. "Papers" are approximately 30 pages and intended for both practitioners and researchers. An editorial committee, with Jaan-Henrik Kain and Merritt Polk, has reviewed and edited the papers with the authors. Mistra Urban Futures also publishes "Reports" (30-70 pages) and "Policy Briefs" (3-5 pages). See also www.mistraurbanfutures.org.
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During the start up phase of the Mistra Urban Futures Center, six mixed groups with both practitioners and researchers were asked to explore and develop a number of urban development themes:
- Urban Qualities
- Urban Resilience
- Urban Access
- Urban Commons
- Urban Cultures
- Urban Transformation

The texts resulting from this assignment served as a critical input to the Center's Strategic Plan for 2012-2015. This publication presents the work of one of the six groups.

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Summary

During the last ten years, urban culture studies have evolved as an interdisciplinary research field within urban research. This focuses on the intersection of daily life with the surrounding material, discursive, and social landscapes – the reciprocal relationship of how urban life is shaped by and, in turn, shapes the urban environment. This includes cultural practices but also spatial embodiment, i.e., the shaping of the material landscape, structures, and physical space in which urban life unfolds. Do-it-yourself (DIY) urban design and urban sports are examples of common themes. Culture is here understood in terms of *possibilities*. Topological approaches provide a set of tools to analyze how different kinds of change can be stimulated with network-building, spontaneity, and self-organization being considered primary engines for change. Humans are conceived of as constant "becomings," with the potential for lifelong growth and development. Society is seen as rhizomatic, organic, and constantly unfolding. Theoretical points of departure include works by Bruno Latour (1993), Manuel DeLanda (1997), and Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari (1988).

Prominent applications within the Urban Cultures field include Monica Degen's *Sensing Cities* (2008), Lars Frers & Lars Meier's *Encountering Urban Places* (2007), and Patrick Laviolette's *Extreme Landscapes of Leisure* (2011). The development of Mistra Urban Futures' Urban Cultures theme takes human creativity and inventiveness at the grass-roots level as its starting point. It argues for a bottom-up approach and in particular pursues the goal of involving inhabitants as stakeholders and co-researchers in a process of fostering an enabling, people- -friendly, and culturally sustainable city. However, the theme also involves public officials, cultural workers, and politicians in the quest to determine what an enabling city would look like and how it can be created. More specifically – Urban Cultures can be studied in the form of cultural expressions, such as identities, lifestyles, and networks. It can also be studied as artistic and everyday representations that emerge from situated encounters between people, artefacts, and the material, social and discursive structures of the city. Culture has been theorized as the processes and forces that generate or constrain the emergence of cultural expressions in such encounters. This puts the focus on everyday doings in networks of people and objects, a view of culture that gives prominence to the possibilities for change and creativity, rather than conceptualizing culture in terms of innate structures and barriers that are difficult to disrupt. Dynamic and vibrant Urban Cultures are as essential to a healthy and sustainable society as social equity, environmental responsibility, and economic vitality. It is of great importance that culture – both as a concept and as a phenomenon – is regarded as having value in itself, in addition to its potential habitat and market values. Moreover, there is a significant distinction between the social and the cultural; while the social often focuses on problems, the cultural may instead focus on possibilities. For example, in the field of urban studies, the cultural may be conceptualized in terms of an open city that facilitates spontaneity – an Enabling City.

The Enabling City, *Collaborative Consumption*, and *Social Innovation* are all topics of intense interest among practitioners and policy-makers. They all stem from the above-mentioned focus on network-building, change, and creativity, and can be considered practical applications rooted in the same cultural spirit of the times. Influential books, such as Rachel Botsman & Roo Rogers's *What's Mine is Yours* (2011), Chiara Camponeschi's *The Enabling City* (2010), and Jon Hawkes' *Fourth Pillar of Sustainability* (2005), are basically

handbooks that describe the results of activism and entrepreneurship. Books with a stronger scientific basis include Jégou & Manzini's *Collaborative Services* (2008) and Charles Leadbetter's *The Rise of the Social Entrepreneur* (1997). An interesting Swedish example is Karl Palmås's *Prometheus eller Narcissus? Entreprenören som samhällsomvälvare* 2011).

Urban Cultures can thus be highlighted as an indispensable prerequisite for fostering the sustainable city – as an infrastructure for urban change – and can be divided into three integrated "niches" to be filled by the Center: *culture as a force for change in everyday life*, *enabling city planning,* and *Collaborative consumption and social innovations.* In this report we further explore these ideas but give the enabling city a major role. Instead of being one "niche" it is here viewed as the context required for the other two to occur at its full potential.

The Enabling City is hence the platform for Urban Cultures. Culture is here seen as a force for change in everyday life. The focus is on creativity from below and the importance of network-building and of trusting relationships among people; often referred to as social capital. It requires studies of the how, the when, and the why of human activity in everyday encounters in the city, with a special interest in innovative practices with the potential to change city life in a sustainable direction. The Enabling City is very much related to a different kind of city planning; to an Enabling City Planning. This involves planning for openness, spontaneity, and creativity; Planning for the unplanned. It entails understanding the ecology of the city, highlighting its soft structures, and studying its enabling cultural infrastructures.

Collaborative Consumption and Social Innovation are in this report, described as examples of Urban Cultures that may occur within the Enabling City. Here the emphasis is on new ways of sharing, lending, and swapping. This can be done in a local and face-to-face context, or may involve using the Internet to connect, combine, and form groups, and find something or someone to create "many-to-many" peer-to-peer interactions. One of the underlying assumptions of Collaborative Consumption is that social capital can be used to support sustainable urban development, including the development of low-carbon cultures. The related concept of Social Innovation refers to the emergence of ideas and strategies that meet social needs.

1. Introduction

BACKGROUND

Nowadays most of us live in cities. Therefore, the question about how to make this living sustainable in a people-friendly way is crucial. There are many answers to this question, and one of them may just lie in us, the citizens. Our doings and lives in the city are what we call Urban Cultures. It is about everyday inventiveness and may transform into creative, innovative and fun happenings, things and activities that work together to sustain city life and the city itself socially and culturally. This report is about all those things and doings and about how we, as citizens, researchers and officials, may enable the force of Urban Cultures.

AIMS

The main purpose of this report is to answer the question *What is Urban Cultures?* and subsequently outline what a research field called "Urban Cultures" should consist of. By focusing on Urban Cultures, both as a theoretical concept and as a more practical standpoint, this report aims to uncover tools and knowledge that might be used both within urban planning/development and scientific work aiming to influence urban life.

   The report builds upon the work conducted in the spring and summer of 2011 by Ylva Berglund, Helene Brembeck (project leaders) and Bert-Ola Bergstrand, Daniel Gillberg, Jonas Nässén and Olle Stenbäck. The task given was to examine what a research field called "Urban Cultures" would look like and to propose different "niches" within the field that could be valuable for Mistra Urban Futures to focus its future research on. This resulted in a contribution to the strategic plan of Mistra Urban Futures.

   In this report we further explore the concept Urban Cultures and present a fuller understanding of last year's exploration. It discusses how Mistra Urban Futures could contribute to a sustainable city and elaborates on and presents in more detail both scientific and "practical" arguments for choosing Urban Cultures as a research theme within Mistra Urban Futures, as well as for the proposed niches.

AUTHORS AND REPORT STRUCTURE

This short introduction is followed by a Chapter two that presents a research overview of the interesting and expanding international research field Urban Cultures. Olle Stenbäck is the author of this section. He has also contributed with the list of relevant literature. Ylva Berglund and Daniel Gillberg have conducted the practice-oriented hearing, interviews and questionnaire presented and discussed by Daniel Gillberg in Chapter three. In the following chapter we dig deeper into concepts and phenomena that have emerged as particularly interesting from both a practical and a scientific perspective; the notion of an Enabling City hosting collaborative consumption and social innovations. Helene Brembeck is the author of the sections on collaborative consumption and social innovations and Daniel Gillberg of the section on the Enabling City. This is followed by some conclusions where a vision for future research is outlined. The draft report was first edited by Helene Brembeck and Ylva Berglund in August 2011, with final editing by Daniel Gillberg in February 2012.

METHODOLOGY

Since the working group consisted of people with both a practical and a more theoretical pre-knowledge and experience of culture, this was also the first methodological tool: a collaboration between the "practical" and "theoretical" point of departure. This resulted in a report based on extensive literature studies, interviews, questionnaires and a hearing.

The research started with the literature study resulting in an overview on how the concept Urban Cultures has been used in the past. This provided a rich theoretical understanding of the concept. The literature studies were followed by a number of interviews and questionnaires with people that could offer a more practical point of view. The interviews carried out have been of semi-structured character. With the research overview as main input we also presented a first draft of our ideas to a reference panel consisting of cultural-workers, politicians, researchers and other people with varied pre-knowledge of the concept.

The overall result from these activities has worked primarily as guidance in the effort to find a proper niche for Urban Cultures within Mistra Urban Futures.

Enough material was developed to outline both an overreaching philosophy ("the Enabling City") and two specific themes ("social innovations" and "collaborative consumption"). Together they become our vision of what Urban Cultures is as a concept and what such a field of knowledge and learning would consist of.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2. Urban cultures: a research overview

The field of Urban Cultures research is constantly evolving, attracting sciences such as ethnology, anthropology, cultural studies, visual culture, art history, human geography and architectural history, focusing on a variety of aspects of cultural practice and embodiment within the urban environment. This chapter presents both common and less common themes within the field, plus a brief overview of interdisciplinary theories tied to it.

Urban Cultures is commonly described as an interdisciplinary tool aiming to deepen the knowledge of how cultural life is transformed both visually and materially, thus creating the foundation for urban life in general. This includes both cultural practice and spatial embodiment, i.e. the shaping of the material landscape, which is the framework or platform, on which urban life prevails (Miles 2007, Stevenson 2003).

Urban space is a well-represented theme within the field both through aspects of consumer culture and through studies of more regularly articulated recreational activities. Focal perspectives on consumer culture often connote the overlaps between *the private* and *the commercial*, a form of commercialization of the everyday urban life (Rappaport 2009, Kärrholm 2009, Henderson-Smith 2003). Recreational activities often refer, to name a few, to physical activities such as skateboarding and "parkour". Australian architecture-historian Iain Borden defines both skateboarding and parkour as *transcending activities* in terms of how they emphasize the impermanence of urban cities, challenge spatial frameworks and, not least, create a performative space in motion. Borden describes the urban city as an "amorphous space in constant transition, a space for the flow of ideas, events and activities" (Borden 2000:10). The city as a concept is no demographical constant, says Borden, which such phenomena actively stress.

Research topicality within the field highlight spatial and temporal dimensions of city life is constantly being proven in an increasingly globalized environment (Peterson 2003, UN-HABITAT 2010/2011). The spatial and temporal position of cultural expressions, or lack of the same, is a central theme among such disciplines as visual culture, cultural studies and art history (Schwartz & Przyblyski 2004, Stevenson 2003, Miles, Hall & Borden 2000). Questions regarding spatiality and temporality illustrate both rational and contradictive perspectives among urban citizens; the intersection between the "lived city" versus the cognitively founded images of the same (Stevenson 2003).

The master's program *Master of European Urban Cultures* at Vrije Universiteit Brussel underlines that cities are in need of constant re-invention as a direct effect of globalization. On the one hand, Urban Cultures have never been more diversified. On the other hand, the field has – due to expanding communicative networks – never been more centralized. The focal aim of the program is to create a "new kind of urban professional", combining arts and design, culture and leisure theory, urban and spatial planning, marketing and management (http://www.vub.ac.be/english/infoabout/education/bama/of-mnm-urbancultures. html) and thereby reach a more immersed, theoretical perspective on urban cultures in general. This can be described as the dialectics between urban cultures/urban life and its framework in a constantly changing environment.

Urban Cultures also connotes processes of reformation within cities' *logic of progression*. A common outlook towards the contemporary city is the one of a shared city. Sociolo-

gist Anthony D. King's concept "Worlds in the city" though, is one of many that accentuates the very opposite. Development of urban cities, King says, slowly but surely goes from social communities to segregation through various widespread urban phenomena such as gentrification and gated communities (King 2004, see also Gough et al. 2005, Setha 2006, Polanska 2010).

Yet another central theme within Urban Cultures is the extensive question of *sustainability*. The UN-financed event World Urban Forum is a good example of a platform with such focus. The event reveals rather contradictory topics, such as the possibilities of cities to evolve in a sustainable manner while they are subjects of intense, global marketing discourses. Sustainability requires a great deal of awareness towards resources and the continuity of a city's progression. Simultaneously, a majority of cities around the world aim to assemble and retain a form of *global openness*. The concept of "Urban Ecology" does not only apply to the contrasts between consumer spaces and recreational arenas. It also applies to the struggle for disposable space in a much broader perspective (Hough 2000).

In summary, a shared notion of globalization is that it derives from the constantly unfolding, extensive focus on networking within Urban Cultures. Numerous nodes in several aspects of everyday life, researchers claim, connect globally thus affecting people's rendition and demarcation of urban life (Frers & Mayer 2007, Krätke 2003, Graham & Marvin 1996).

URBAN MOVEMENTS: FROM AUTONOMOUS TO COMMERCIAL AND BACK AGAIN

Urban movements such as *Do it yourself* (DIY) and *Urban Design* are well-represented within the field and are often described as movements of autonomic activism, where slogans like – to mention just two – public involvement and integration, are of great significance. DIY and Urban Design are frequently interpreted as public, direct reactions on politicized discourses such as insufficient funding for the progression of common arenas or a collective belief of an all too narrow cityscape planning in general. This often serves as an efficient catalysis for creativity. Both can also be understood as reactions towards what researchers call *themed environments*, where commercial interests transform the cityscape with rigorous thematic representations of their own brands, in order to further promote mass consumption (Hannigan 1998).

The focal point of DIY and Urban Design is to make people aware of the often delicate balance between self-proclaimed "public spaces" and official organization principles of urban space; a form of urban self-ruling that has been proven to quickly dissolve when subsumed in an official agenda.

Image 1. City Repair (Portland, USA)
Non-profit organization mostly driven by volunteers that aims for a better neighbourhood communication by reclaiming urban space. In the project **Intersection Repair** citizens converted a typical intersection to a people friendly square. From their point of view a localization of culture, economy and decision-making is crucial for sustainability. The image shows "Depave", an initiative to remove unneccessary asphalt and concrete from urban areas. The depaved land can then be used for community gardens and wildlife habitats.

Photo: Eric Rosewall, http://cityrepair.org, http://depave.org

Of course, neither DIY nor Urban Design must connote activism, but are often perceived as such due to very contrastive forms. A typical example is the global Guerrilla Gardening group, which is often understood as highly provocative and where even the name – from a purely etymological point of view - also indicates activism. Several researchers though, carefully point out that "resistance" comes from a variety of social quarters: not only "anarchists, environmentalists, punks and urban social movements, but also citizens' groups, local communities, individual and, in some cases, even radical local states" (Chatterton & Holland 2003:233).

The project "*Just space(s)*" aims to illustrate how urban space is perceived and how people really make use of it. The project consists of a mix of researchers and artists with a common interest in highlighting how city spaces really work – or for that matter *don't work* – for people in everyday situations. The project derives from questions regarding public space in relation to *social justice*: a kind of manifesto that stresses that public space is never to be taken for granted and has to be actively maintained.

Urban sport is yet another common theme within the field. Examples of such activities are skateboarding, parkour and street golf. The practice of physical activities in the public city space is often seen as an unwelcome element and still seems to challenge various both legal and cultural sets of regulations. Even though the intention of the performers may vary exceedingly, the general opinion is that the act itself is transgressing. Here, researchers expose both articulated and subtle discourses within the urban space (Laviolette 2011, Nolan 2003, Stratford 2002).

In contrast to autonomous urban movements, a presumably larger amount of research-ers put emphasis on the more commercial and materialistic dimensions of Urban Cultures. Focus is aimed towards branding and marketing of urban entertainment economies and the processes and spaces they create. Discussion is often centered around the dichotomy *to consume* versus *to create* in a strong market economy, i.e. the level of individual inter-action among citizens. Sociologists Paul Chatterton and Robert Holland say: "grass-roots independent culture signals a desire to be involved and to practice, not just to consume" (2003:233). On the other hand, they claim, commercial cultures signal a strong, direct desire to consume and to be led.

Chatterton and Holland (2003) exemplify this through the concept *corporate nightlife machine*, where nightly urban activities, such as clubbing and club life, are portrayed as an extension and an integral part of the consumer life and where agency of the market never halts. Contemporary urban governments, sociologist Monica Degen says, put emphasis on culture as an *economic motor*. In extension, this means that there is a vast interest in "developing urban lifestyles and in conceiving of strategies that promote an explicit visual consumption of public space" (2008:30).

INNOVATIONS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

As already acknowledged, questions regarding environment and sustainability issues often act as catalysis for social involvement. But aside from DIY-movements, connoting forms of grass-roots activism, researchers within the field also focus on how such topics nurture entrepreneurship and innovations in commercial businesses.

The term *corporate hacktivism* (von Busch 2010 & 2008, Åhlvik & von Busch 2009) serves as a good example. Corporate hacktivism can be described as a tool for *re-inventing* or *reworking* already well-known, marketed commodities, concepts or innovations – all within the borders of already established business structures. This often corresponds with societal topics such as sustainability and alternative solutions. The phenomenon can be described as a form of *activism within* – where for example a fashion commodity gets modified and transformed into the mediator of a message. Clearly, this stands in consider-able contrast to autonomous forms of activism.

Innovations, reworks and re-invents are also being made in relation to the ever-present field of *gender*. Researchers focus on how cultural attitudes towards gender manifest them-selves in the realms of design, where creativity and fantasy often become limited due to narrow and normative frameworks. One practical example can be seen in Swedish designer/innovator Marcus Jahnke's "Workwear Kilt" for men, challenging obvious cultural taboos tied to garments and gender (Jahnke 2006). Innovations and entrepreneurship related to societal topics also manifest themselves in municipal arenas, i.e. within governmental branches. A current – and evidently expanding – example of such is the British-American concept of *Cultural Planning* whose aim is to systematically include cultural strategies within city councils' basic priorities and objectives. In other words, the focal point of Cultural Planning is to integrate a larger sum of cultural perspectives in a city's develop-ment work, not setting it aside as a small, rather studious branch of its own. Cultural Plan-ning advisor John Hawkes calls "culture" the fourth pillar of sustainability, alongside social, environmental and economic frameworks, which further explains a growing interest in the field (Hawkes 2005). "Cultural vitality is as essential to a healthy and sustainable

society as social equity, environmental responsibility and economic vitality", Hawkes argues (2005:vii).

The *Cultural Planning Laboratory* (http://culturalplanninglaboratory.se) could be seen as a realization of the above ideas, focusing on the importance in grooming local cultural resources. This project articulates a need for change within core city planning – and admits a precedent failure in involving cultural elements in the official agendas. The project aims to accentuate cultural uniqueness by involving a greater amount of cultural institutions, forming solid partnerships with the cultural sector in general and thereby achieve sustainable, long-term strategies for cultural progression.

Eco-craft (see for example https://secure.eco-craft.co.uk), a concept spread in everything from companies to museums raises the questions of how "local" urban citizens can live in a more and more globalized world. Eco-craft can be seen as split in two: on the one hand, it refers to businesses aiming to create low-impact products that position themselves one step ahead, i.e. by being environmental friendly. On the other hand, it refers to more independent businesses, focusing on handcrafted commodities, almost like the DIY-movements, but with a commercial signature. The prefix *eco* is of course very popular in a vast amount of arenas, thus somewhat tricky to deal with, but far from irrelevant in the Urban Cultures panorama.

URBAN CULTURES: ENCOUNTERING MATERIALITY

Researchers within the field of Urban Cultures also stress questions regarding the cityscape and its impact on people's emotional experience, affecting the overall perception of the urban atmosphere. It is argued that the body and the surrounding material environment are in a "permanent flux, constantly folding and unfolding; and, that the body digests, adapts and transforms in relation to the potentialities by its surrounding environment" (Degen, Rose & Basdas 2010:66). This does not only include structural foundations, but also smaller entities and commodities around us, which all dictate the possibilities and limitations to human interaction and thereby the fundamentals for Urban Cultures in general.

Senses define our direct experience in public life and they also greatly affect our social patterns, Degen claims (2008). The concept *sensuous mappings* is, in several variations a well-acknowledged perspective of how senses create mappings of our surroundings which could be positively corresponding as well as in direct conflict with numerous urban contexts. Degen points out though, that these mappings are not fixed but dynamic.

Sociologist and ethnographer Lars Frers put emphasis on the plausible limitations of multi-sensuous encounters with materiality: how one urban space can make us feel utterly uncomfortable – filled with unease – while others make us feel safe and comfortable (Frers 2007). He highlights the standpoint that it has less to do with aesthetic perception, and more to do with tactility, cultural senses, orientation, etc..

A common theme within the field is the matter of *material agency* (Kärrholm 2009, Cochoy 2009, Degen 2008, Dant 2004). Researchers put emphasis on the agency of materiality itself – the non-human yet socially organised. They point out that the meaning of objects and commodities cannot be understood exclusively through an *extended self*, i.e. reduced to the way people think about them or what they do with them; they also have an agency themselves (Cochoy 2009). Sociologist Franck Cochoy sees a necessity in accor-

ding "commercial artefacts the same scrutiny and attention that consumer research successfully applied to buyers and shoppers" (Cochoy 2009:33), for the social catalysis is shared in-between.

In the article "The Driver-car", sociologist Tim Dant (2004) depicts a lucid example of an object with agency: the car as a social element – an object that "actually shapes the form and content of social action" (2004:61). Dant refers to the assemblage of the car as a social being, able to produce a range of actions associated with it: from driving to consuming to polluting and so forth. The car, Dant says is "neither a thing nor a person", but a social being that carries properties of both and "cannot exist without both" (2004:74). Materialities can be understood as extensions of the human body, but also the other way round: technology and society extended into the human. Dant describes it as a symbiotic relationship where material and social environments constantly transform each other and cannot be easily separated.

Architect historian Mattias Kärrholm (2009), among others, puts emphasis on what researchers refer to as cultural rhythms or rhythmic flows, where deep analysis of temporal organization principles of materialities and their effect on everyday life are central. Here, the question of material agency takes yet a step further. Not only does it refer to physical units, but also to the synchronization between them that creates different sets of *flows* – temporally stabilized but evolving and dissolving – that affect our activities overall. One example is the interaction between time tables and buses in relation to working hours, schedules of schools, opening times of stores, etc. They all dictate patterns/repertoires of everyday life (Kärrholm 2009). In relation to consumer culture, Kärrholm argues that the field of *retail/business* constantly tries to find ways of utilizing these cultural rhythms and resynchronize them in directions towards consumption. As Monica Degen (2008) among several other researchers, points out, numerous aspects of rhythm analysis originate from the notion of *regenerating worlds,* where activity in certain areas of cities rise and fall within hours but is reborn in the very next.

ON PRACTICE THEORY

The relationship between people and materiality is highly complex, but is of greatest importance to the understanding of people's performance in everyday practices. Several researchers within the field focus on the now popular *practice theory*, through which linkages between sets of resources that accomplish everyday practices are revealed. The elements, management engineer Inge Røpke says, are provided by the "practitioners, who integrate them in their performance of the practices" (Røpke 2009:2492). Cultural sociologist Andreas Reckwitz defines such a practice as:

> *"...routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge"*
>
> (Reckwitz 2002:249).

Practice theory reveals the inter-connectedness of sets of elements: the "nexus of 'doings' and 'sayings'" (Schatzki 2002:80). This includes both discursive and non-discursive patterns, know-how, conventionalized ways of understanding and so on.

The primary focus of practice theory is – in contrast to the spectacular and obvious – the often subtle and "trivial" performances of everyday life. A hands-on example is portrayed in sociologists Martin Hand, Elizabeth Shove and Dale Southerton's article "Explaining Showering" (2005) in which the authors analyze the act of showering in relation to material configurations and cultural understandings of the body/the self. *Time* is also of big concern; the authors observe a temporal order in the post-modern society which aliments a kind of "automation" of the order of things. The act of showering is also subordinated *time* and time as a *precious commodity* in terms of efficiency, where a "time-squeeze" is of great importance (Hand, Shove & Dale 2005). Inge Røpke ties practice theory to environmental implications and sustainability, which – considering consumption as a routinized behaviour – reveals a presumably immense challenge for everyone. As implicitly accentuated in the above example, factors such as water consumption and its impact on the environment might never be considered. "Most valued practices are performed with little or marginal consideration for the environment" (Røpke 2009:2496).

The above perspective can also be translated into for example the act of *shopping*. Several researchers, among them sociologists Jonathan Everts and Peter Jackson, point out that shopping is best described as a "social accomplishment rather than as the exercise of sovereign choices made by isolated individuals" (2009:922). Shopping thus consists of a variety of single, highly routinized actions.

The value of the practices themselves is of course hard to define. There are most likely as many values as practitioners. A widely shared approach, though, is that people seem to "take a strong interest in being competent practitioners" (Everts & Jackson 2009) and that the practices – their characteristics set aside – are *core concerns* of everyday life.

AFFECT AND BEYOND

Human geographers Ben Anderson and Adam Holden's concept *affective urbanism* (2008) directly corresponds to the field of urban material encounters. Affective urbanism is "attentive to how various modalities of the more than/less than rational, including affects, emotions and feelings, compose urban life" (2008:144). In other words, the concept describes the sum of our bodily experience in an urban environment; the often highly complex assemblages of both micro and macro responses, which all outline the frame for our approaches, performances and understandings of the context.

"Cities may be seen as roiling with maelstroms of affect", says human geographer Nigel Thrift (2004). Affects includes expressions such as anger, fear, happiness and joy, which can take place either on a "grand scale or simply as a part of continuing everyday life" (2004:57). The term itself, though, is somewhat problematic since there is no obvious agreement over its denotation. A common perspective is, however, that affect has the capability to *change* with – going back to philosopher Gilles Deleuze's line of thought – a significant emphasis on affect as an *empowerment* of people (Thrift 2004).

HAPPINESS AND MATERIALITY

In resonance with people's encounters with materiality and, in extension, sustainability issues, the field of *happiness studies* provides further perspectives on Urban Cultures. Within the cultural sciences, focus of happiness studies orbits around rethinking and revising concepts of urban life, where questions regarding the pursuit of happiness, consumer thresholds, overflow theories and spill-over effects are central. All in all, happiness studies provide a complementary analysis to the widespread pro-growth ideologies that have been dominating urban societies for a long period of time (Hylland Eriksen 2008).

People's understanding of *wants*, *needs* and *haves* are focal perspectives (Norris & Larsen 2010), partly in relation to personal well-being – i.e. absolute levels of material gain and consumption –, and partly in relation to environmental sustainability and global thresholds (Eid & Larsen 2007). In extension, this also includes people's insight and understanding of their own limits and possibilities within the Urban Culture framework.

Happiness studies also include the realm of social sciences, where, for example, marketing theories outline a rather contrasting definition. One example is the making of indexes – such as consumer indexes – where micro and macro aspects of consumer satisfaction in relation to certain sets of products or services are evaluated and analyzed (Ganglmair-Wooliscroft & Lawson 2011).

A parallel, and inevitable, question within the field is the core meaning of the word "happiness". Here, philosopher Bengt Brülde (2010) sees a tug-of-war of meaning: a pendulum between happiness synonymous with the rather ambiguous concept *quality of life*, a generally positive outlook on life, and subjective material satisfaction (well-being and material standards) versus happiness as synonymous with a bodily attached state of well-being that could be described as *medically healthy* (see also Griffin 2007). Even so, happiness studies are not only to be seen as a philosophical conundrum but rather as a tool for discovering discursive sets of policies towards consumer culture.

3. Hearing and interviews: conversations about urban cultures

In this chapter the material gained from the hearing and the interviews is presented and discussed. The chapter can be read as a summary and reflects how the term "Urban Cultures" was understood and elaborated upon. All participants were given a small text based on the research overview presented above that worked as a first draft of what Urban Cultures as a field of knowledge and learning within Mistra Urban Futures could look like.

Together, the knowledge carriers embody a multitude of experiences and knowledge from a field where much research is still left undone. They represent a wide range of occupations and roles; from the chairman of the cultural board of the City of Gothenburg Thomas Martinsson to its director of Cultural Affairs Björn Sandmark. From municipal officers like Malin Häggdal and Daniel Andersson to the regional equivalence, Tomas Olsson. From Swedish artists Olle Bjerkås and Jörgen Svensson to foreign architects like Vincente Castillo from Spain and Matthew Butcher from UK. From researchers Henric Benesch and Karl Palmås to professors Tor Lindstrand and Ana Betancour. We have also interviewed editor-in-chief Olav Fumarola Unsgaard, cultural project leader Henrik Sputnes and the director of ISU in Malmö Maja Manner. Last but not least we managed to make contact with a German activist called Chris B.

The interviews and the hearing suggest that Mistra Urban Futures' activities in the field of Urban Cultures should focus upon the use of public space and ways to make such space available for the citizen. The citizens themselves are of great importance; they are the Urban Cultures, as Vincente de Castillo expressed it.

CONCEPTS FRAMING URBAN CULTURES

As a part of our analysis we arranged the material from the hearing and the interviews into different subjects or concepts. Below is a list of the concepts most frequently used throughout the hearing and the interviews. This list reflects a particular description and definition of Urban Cultures, highlighting what has been mentioned as important for Urban Cultures to exist and contribute to a sustainable city:

- Cultural infrastructure
- Meeting point/ public space
- Citizen
- Collaborative consumption/networking
- Allowance/permissive city
- Identity
- Negotiation
- Creativity
- Dialog
- Lifestyle
- Policy
- History
- Participation
- Social capital
- Agency
- Availability
- City as culture
- Commercial culture
- Democracy
- Happiness
- Innovation

Although all of the participants welcomed the idea of a field of knowledge within Mistras Urban Futures focusing on Urban Cultures, there was some critique in relation to some of the specific concepts that were brought forward from the research overview. Participants expressed a negative attitude towards the following concepts:

- Entrepreneurship
- Consumption
- Promote sustainability

An interesting aspect derived from the hearing was that the concept "consumption" was regarded as something negative when used on its own but at the same time regarded as something positive when used together with "collaborative", as in "collaborative consumption". This can be linked to a general discussion about public space. Public space was something that the participants found to be an important part of Urban Cultures. However, while the largest threat to public spaces was thought to be privatization turning these spaces from to "public" to "commercial". Therefore, some participants found it hard to include "consumption" as a part of sustainable studies.

The participants have expressed conflicting attitudes towards the following concept:

- Culture as a fourth dimension within sustainability

This perspective was highly recommended by Maja Manner but not everyone agreed on the need for culture as a fourth dimension within sustainability. Such a perspective is based on a critique of the three dimensions normally used within discussion on sustainability, the social, the environmental and the economic:

> *"… the three-dimensional perspective on sustainability has done more bad than good, resulting in stigmatization. We need to add culture as an aspect of sustainability, especially in relation to the citizen. The social perspective is too often problem-related – with culture we may focus on possibilities instead…"*
>
> (Manner 2011).

In the sustainable development debate, "culture" is often forced to exist within the social dimension but while doing so fails to take advantage of its full potential. The reason for this was thought to be that the social dimension mostly focused on "problems" such as unemployment and so forth, while culture opens up opportunities. With culture as its own dimension it would be impossible for officials and researchers conducting work related to sustainable development to neglect culture as a force and as a field of knowledge.

A part of the group disagreed over this matter and thought it would be better if culture became an integral part of the traditional dimensions instead. This was thought to be a better way of preventing culture from being neglected in work for sustainable development. One objection was that culture and the social aspect are interlinked as "two components of the same flow" (Daniel Andersson 2011). Therefore, a separation of the two would cause a lack of understanding. Accordingly, culture could instead, be seen as something existing within and flowing in-between all three traditional dimensions.

SUGGESTED PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN CULTURES

At the end of the hearing the participants were asked to describe what they thought to be the best route for the Urban Cultures knowledge field to focus upon. The same policy was applied during the interviews. *Collaborative consumption* and *social innovations* were suggested as preferable themes along with the need for different cultural perspectives, examples of future research and interesting experimental projects:

> *"Urban culture should not be about planning culture, it should be about having a cultural perspective…"*
>
> (Manner 2011).

> *"Turn an area in the center of town into an 'open source' field where no rules or laws exist. Then study what happens within that area… What happens are 'Urban Cultures'*
>
> (Bjerkås, 2011).

> *"it is important to ask the citizen: what creates 'the good city'? then you need to find scientific models that can document the process…"*
>
> (Unsgaard 2011).

> *"It is important to detect and nurse different types of culture and at the same time to prevent the commercial forces to overtake the city… People must find their place within the city…"*
>
> (Häggdahl 2011).

> *"Research is needed to explore the city as an aspect of culture… We need to create a new kind of urban culture where the citizen and the municipality can relate to each other in a new way…"*
>
> (Manner 2011).

> *"We need vital meeting points and open conversations in order to find and take care of the energies of the citizen…"*
>
> (Olsson 2011)

4. Urban cultures as a field of knowledge: Towards an enabling city

Using the research overview, the hearing, interviews and the questionnaires as the point of departure, this chapter presents our view of what Urban Cultures is about and what a field of knowledge and learning within Mistra Urban Futures could look like. This is the outcome of the time spent on studying texts, conducting interviews and having numerous conversations around the concept Urban Cultures. We argue that this should be seen as a general philosophy for urban planning and urban research – the Enabling City – that is very important for Mistra Urban Futures to acknowledge and to be a part of. This philosophy can be seen both as a theoretical vision and as a practical inspiration in relation to city planning and urban sustainability. Complementary to the notion of the Enabling City, we have chosen two additional fields of knowledge as examples of Urban Cultures: Collaborative Consumption and Social Innovations.

Collaborative Consumption, Social Innovations and the Enabling City are three concepts/phenomena that are interrelated and all point in the same direction: networking, problem solving at the grass root level and a belief in human's capacities to be innovators and problem solvers. However, they also emphasize the potential of cities, of city officials and of cultural workers to act as enablers. Interestingly, we ended up with these concepts/phenomena both from the theoretical and the practice/policy point of departures. They can be said to have emerged at the intersection of philosophy, science, practice and politics as ways of grasping the current state of society and culture. Consequently, they emerge as being of particular importance for Mistra Urban Futures in the attempt to build a strong Urban Cultures agenda, and we recommend projects along the lines developed in more detail below.

CREATIVITY, PUBLIC SPACE AND DEMOCRACY

Within Mistra Urban Cultures, and in society as a whole, it is of great importance that "culture" – as a concept and as a phenomenon – is regarded as something that has a *value in itself*, aside from *a market value* and *a habitat value*. *Culture* takes part in all three of the dimensions generally used within research on sustainable development; "the economic", "the environmental" and "the social". We would like to stress that there is a significant distinction between the social and the cultural; whereas the social is often focused on "problems", culture may instead focus on possibilities. In relation to urban studies this may be conceptualized as *the Enabling City*, an open city enabling spontaneity. In many ways the focus on possibilities can also be related to and become an important part of the Collaborative Consumption and Social Innovations perspectives.

The term "Enabling City" has it roots in Chiara Componeschi's toolkit *The Enabling City – Place-Based Creative Problem-Solving and the Power of the Everyday* (2010), a text very much in line with the general philosophy of Urban Cultures developed in this text. Componeschi stresses the need to include culture and creativity in the definition of sustainable development and the importance of open-mindedness, innovation and public space. In

her view we need to celebrate the places and spaces that are at the core of our everyday life. Enabling environments are seen as important elements used to enhance participation at both public and institutional level.

In Componeschi's words we need to use public space as sites of experimentation as this will teach us how to interact with and to respect diverse actors (2010). This way of thinking not only sustains ways of taking care of our contemporary cities but is also crucial to societies that claim to be democracies. Without public space interaction is limited, and without interaction (meetings, talks, dialogues, etc) the understanding of one another is lost. Urban Cultures become important because they have the ability to open up the eyes of the citizen and, by doing so, to raise the awareness of other people and other cultures. This awareness can create fruitful and critical minds that can elaborate on themselves, with their city, and with their society. In doing so they help keeping democracy safe and sound since "creative individuals not only challenge our ordinary ideas about expertise, but they actively redefine our understanding of citizenship itself" (Champoneschi 2010:8).

Image 2. DiverCity (Gothenburg, Sweden)
DiverCity is an international project that aims to contribute to the public debate regarding the role of art, architecture and culture within contemporary cities. Through public events, seminars and artistic interventions, it explores tools, strategies and modes of working for an ecologically sustainable urban development. "The public", "community" and "participation" are concepts lying at the core of the project that searches for a way to use cultural practises, art and architecture as a "catalyst in urban social change for a sustainable city". The project hosts different activities such as workshops exhibitions and, as depicted here, seminars.

Photo: Mateusz Pozar

THE IN-BETWEEN AS ENABLING SPACES:
MATERIAL CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Culture provides an open and direct space for discussion and critique that is crucial for §sustaining any city. When aiming for a sustainable city, the city must first be as open and nourishing as possible in relation to Urban Cultures. There is not one but several Urban Cultures and as in an ecological system, diversity is critical. Therefore "corridors" need to be created within the city in order to sustain this diversity. In the same way that parks are often tied together by green corridors, Urban Cultures need a cultural infrastructure. The

City of Gothenburg contains several cultural institutions, such as libraries and museums, all needed for a fitted cultural infrastructure. *Urbanum*, initiated by Gothenburg City museum is one example. However, these more traditional institutions need to be tied together using public space. This space should not be defined by the municipality nor by the officials within the cultural sector but by the citizens themselves. In order to create these spaces there is a need to *plan for the unplanned.* Urban Cultures cannot be created intentionally, parts of the city must be left open for Urban Cultures to occur.

By leaving areas undefined, Urban Culture may occur spontaneously and self-organized, like the *Picknick festival* or the gardens at Komettorget in Gothenburg. Another example is *City Repair (see Image 1)*, a project that turned an anonymous intersection into a safe square. Other interesting projects that highlight the value of public space and meeting points are *Gängeviertel*, *Nomadisch Grun* and *House of Win-Win*.

Image 3. The gardens of Komettorget Gothenburg,
The gardens of Komettorget came about when an area in the suburb of Gothenburg was "left behind" by the municipality. Local initiatives turned the land from an empty field into a flourishing garden.

Photo: Jan Riise

Image 4. Nomadisch Grün (Berlin, Germany)
The Prinzessinnegarten in Berlin is a mobile garden, open and usable for the public. Here the local inhabitants can find a place to grow their crops, learn about bio-diversity and different gardening techniques. There is also a social dimension included. The garden has a café and is, apart from being a functioning garden, also a place where you can relax and meet other people.

Photo: Assenmacher / Wikimedia Commons

THE MUNICIPALITY AS AN ENABLING HAND:
IMMATERIAL CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Although undefined spaces are a big step towards the Enabling City, they are not enough. There is also a need for the citizen and the official to meet. The aim of such meetings is not to govern the ideas and doings of the citizen but to provide an exchange service. City officials need to work *with the city*, not in closed offices, but *within the city* and *with the citizens* more directly; not with fixed aims but with open minds that are genuinely interested in the city and its inhabitants. Again, the existence of public space is crucial. In order to create this interaction between the citizen and the official it is important to elaborate on the concept of *soft structure*. This concept is often used by the non-government organisation *City Mine(d)* as a way to start processes of dialogue with the local inhabitants. This model can be described as a one-step-at-a-time-method aiming for an open discussion about shaping the city.

However, the municipality as an enabling hand is not only about dialogue processes but also has a more practical side. The official workers active within the cultural infrastructure also need to co-ordinate both the materials and the knowledge (from computers, books and words to paint and scissors) that the citizens require to create their ideas and visions.

Image 5. Urbanum (Gothenburg, Sweden)
Urbanum is a platform for urban research that was initiated by the Göteborg City Museum in 2009. Since then, it has been an arena for projects and exhibitions related to urban sustainability. It is also an arena for collaboration between the museum and other institutions such as the universities and different departments of the municipality. In 2011 the platform hosted students from Gothenburg University who conducted research that focused on gentrification processes in contemporary Gothenburg. Urbanum also launches its own projects, such as this outdoor exhibition called **Medborgarrum** ("Citizen Room"), (Gillberg 2012).
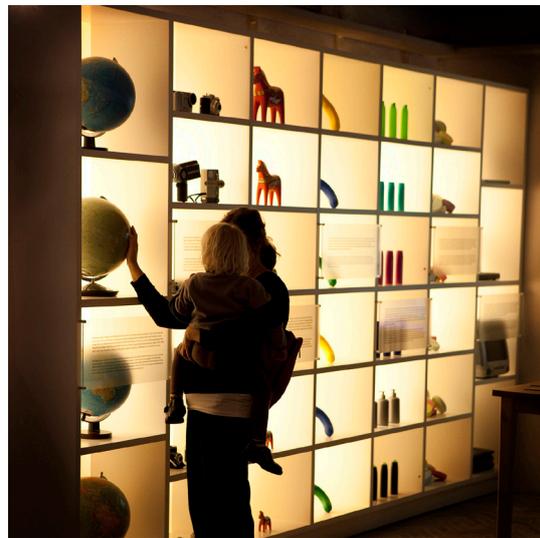
Photo: Daniel Gillberg

Image 6. Malmö Museums (Malmö, Sweden)
Both the City of Malmö and the Malmö Museums are changing rapidly. In this process the museum has been given the role as coordinator for the city's involvement in the program, Learning for a Sustainable Development. In relation to this program, the Malmö Museums started to collaborate with different departments of the municipality, among them the office for city planning. Together they have started to conduct research on how the museum may become an arena for sustainable development, citizen dialogue and sustainable city planning. This is an interesting and promising project that may have a big impact on Urban Cultures, both in Malmö and in cities in general.

Photo: Malmö Museer

COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Collaborative Consumption is about new ways of sharing, lending and swapping. These new forms of collaboration and community may be local and face-to-face, or may use the Internet to connect, combine, form groups, and find something or someone to create 'many to many' peer-to-peer interactions.

Basically, Collaborative Consumption is about reclaiming old virtues. Sharing and collaborating is as old as mankind and formed the basis for communal life in the peasant society as well as in industrial communities and working class neighbourhoods in the beginning of the 20th century. Today Collaborative Consumption is happening in ways and at a scale never before possible, and is a growing movement with millions of people participating from all corners of the world. Activists and spokespersons Botsman and Rogers (2010) argue that Collaborative Consumption is rooted in the technologies and behaviours of online social networks and that we have now started to apply the same collaborative principles and sharing behaviours to other domains of our everyday life. They claim that Collaborative Consumption is about:

> " Traditional sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting and swapping, redefined through technology and peer communities. These systems provide significant environmental benefits by increasing use efficiency, reducing waste, encouraging the use of better products, and mopping up the surplus created by over-production and –consumption"
>
> (Botsman & Rogers 2010:XV).

Today, Botsman and Rogers argue, the relationship between physical ownership and self-identity is undergoing a profound revolution. We do not want the CD; we want the music it plays. This shift is fuelling a world where usage trumps possessions and where access is better than ownership (2010). The authors describe how Collaborative Consumption is about how to create value out of shared and open resources, e.g. through swap trading, time banks, local exchange trading systems (LETS), bartering, social lending, peer-to-peer currencies, tool exchanges, land share, clothing swaps, toy sharing, shared workspaces, co-housing, co-working, car sharing, crowd funding, bike sharing, food co-ops and walking school buses.

Botsman and Rogers argue that the rise of Collaborative Consumption is linked to the financial crisis in the beginning of the 00s. An early theoretical forerunner is Professor and Nobel Prize laureate Elinor Ostrom and her theories about commonly managed resources and self-organized commons. In cultural sciences the same ideas are reflected in a whole range of network theories, most prominent may be Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000) and Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), reflecting the same spirit of the times.

There are of course a number of studies of phenomena such as car pools or eco-villages discussed in relation to concepts such as downshifting, voluntary simplicity etc. (see Jonson 2006 for an overview, and Mårtensson & Pettersson 2002, Svane & Wijkmark 2002, Polk 2000 for some Swedish examples). What the concept of Collaborative Consumption does is to form an umbrella over these diverse movements or lifestyles that make it possible to see them in terms of network building and thus open up for a new theoretical scrutiny. As an example, Botsman and Rogers (2010) divide them into three systems:

- Product Service Systems: people of different backgrounds and across all ages pay for the benefit of a product – what is does for them – without needing to own the product outright. Car sharing is a common example. The obvious environmental advantage is that an individually owned product with often limited usage is replaced with a shared service that maximizes its utility. When our relationship with things moves from ownership to use, options to satisfy our needs change and increase.
- Redistribution Markets enable used or pre-owned goods to be redistributed from where they are not needed to somewhere or someone where they are. Sometimes the marketplace is based on entirely free exchanges such as Freecycle. In other situations the goods are sold for cash (eBay). Goods such as clothes, books, toys, baby clothes and DVDs can be swapped for similar goods or goods of similar value. Redistribution is increasingly considered a sustainable form of commerce and challenges the traditional relationship between producer, retailer and consumer, and disrupts the doctrines of 'buy more' and 'buy new'.
- Collaborative Lifestyles implies that not only physical goods such as cars, or used goods can be shared, swapped and bartered. People with similar interests are coming together to share and exchange less tangible assets such as time, space, skills and money. These exchanges are happening at local level and include shared systems for workspaces, goods, gardens and food. Collaborative lifestyles are also happening worldwide as the Internet enables people to coordinate, scale and transcend physical boundaries in activities such as travelling.

These three forms share four vital underlying principles – critical mass, idling capacity, belief in the commons, and trust between strangers. Critical mass is a sociological term used to describe the existence of enough momentum in a system to make it become self-sustaining (Ball 2006) and obviously this momentum is reached now. Idling capacity refers to the potential of unused stuff, the stuff we own but barely use (Botsman & Rogers 2010:83). This idling capacity can be redistributed and used elsewhere. Commons are things set aside for public use, such as parks, roads and public buildings and things common to all such as air, water, wildlife, as well as culture, language and public knowledge (Ostrom 1990). Peer-to-peer platforms enable decentralized and transparent communities to form and build 'trust between strangers' (Botsman & Rogers 2010:92).

SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

In the concept Collaborative Consumption Botsman and Rogers (2010) include Collaborative Design. Their main reference is Enzio Manzini and his work to find solutions that work for consumers and can achieve widespread levels of use. This brings us to our next concept, Social Innovation, where Manzini is one of the most important contributors.

The terms social and cultural innovation are commonly used as synonyms, although the term 'social' is used much more frequently.

Social innovation refers to ideas and strategies that meet social needs (for example Camponeschi, 2010). While cultural innovation focuses on everyday inventiveness and human-materiality interactions, the social in social innovations is focusing on trusting relations between people. We see them as two sides of the same coin: networks of humans and

things, ranging from the simple human-thing or human-human interactions, to more complicated humans-things-humans interactions, which all social and cultural interactions turn out to be. We would however encourage a more widespread use of the term cultural in this context, and thus emphasize the impact this has on both research and practice. This would, in an interesting way tap into the current debate about culture radicalism, the view of culture, be it in terms of creativity, lifestyles or change, as the main political battlefield (Palmås 2011). However, in this text we will primarily deal with innovations defined as "social". Design researchers Fracois Jégou and Enzio Manzini describe their vision of Social Innovations like this:

> *"The term social innovation refers to changes in the way individuals or communities act to solve a problem or to generate new opportunities. These innovations are driven more by changes in behaviour than by changes in technology or the market and they typically emerge from bottom-up rather than top-down processes"*
>
> (Jégou & Manzini, 2008: 29).

Geoff Mulgan describes what he considers to be key aspects of social innovations:

> *"They are usually new combinations or hybrids of existing elements, rather than being wholly new in themselves, putting them into practice involves cutting across organizational, sectional or disciplinary boundaries They leave behind compelling new social relationships between previously separate individuals and groups which matter greatly to the people involved, contribute to the diffusion and embedding of the innovation, and fuel a dynamic whereby each innovation opens up the possibility of further innovations"*
>
> (Mulgan 2006:49)

Closely related to the concept of Social Innovation is the concept social entrepreneur. In his overview of social innovations, Anders Emilson (2010) shows that social entrepreneur was first used by Bill Dayton, the starter of Ashoka, the first organization for social entrepreneurship in India in 1980. Ashoka argues that we are in the middle of a fundamental structural change of society where citizens and groups of people start to act with the same entrepreneurship and competence as in businesses. The social entrepreneur's task is to make everybody "a change maker":

> *"To help create a world where everyone has the freedom, confidence, and skills to turn challenges into solutions. This allows each person the fullest, richest life. And a society so constituted will evolve and adapt faster and more surely than any other: Each person, rather better than the body's white blood "attacks" cells, courses though society spotting challenges and the conceiving and putting in place the next, better step"*
>
> (http://www.ashoka.org/knowinghistory

Sometimes market-orientation is part of the definition of social entrepreneurship. For example the SKOLL Centre for Social Entrepreneurship in Britain highlights market-orientation as one of three criteria of social entrepreneurship "A social entrepreneur adopts a performance driven, out warded looking and competitive approach to solving social and environmental problems" (http://www.sbs.px.ac.uk/centres/skoll/about).

Fingers are however also raised not to rely too much on individuals as entrepreneurs. It is rather collaboration at the grass-roots level that is the answer. To argue against Richard Florida's notion of a creative class of architects, artists, designers etc., Eivind Stø and Pål Strandbakken claim that:

> *"It is rather a matter of creative individuals or groups of individuals outside of the professional and educational ranks of the creative class. It is more likely taping the resources of common man. Ordinary people take creative initiatives to solve problems in the neighbourhood or to follow some vision of their own. This is why they belong to the creative community. Creative communities are believed to support some clusters of values and to be able to meet new challenges with fresh ideas and solutions"*

(Stø & Strandbakken 2008:142).

Also Camponeschi (2010) calls for "a place-based creative problem-solving, an approach to participation that leverages the imagination and inventiveness of citizens, experts, and activists in collaborative efforts that make cities more inclusive, innovative and interactive" (2010:6).

Image 7. Picknickfestivalen (Gothenburg, Sweden)
A festival focusing on youth and arranged by **Vi på filten,** a non-political, non-profit organization aiming for diversity and solidarity. The festival is an example of the meeting-points that are most needed in a sustainable city. A fine example where young people get organized and engaged in strategies to improve their own neighbourhood.
Photo: Nadim Elazzeh

Jégou and Manzini (2008) argue for a similar perspective in their book Collaborative Services. They define collaborative services as social services where the user is actively involved and takes on the role as co-designer and co-producer. Users are:

"Actively and collaboratively involved in the production of commonly recognized value and in doing so, operate as a kind of social enterprise: a diffused enterprise geared to solve, in a collaborative way, 'daily problems' such as: dropping children off at school , obtaining quality products at a more affordable price, mutually benefitting from one another's skills and goods, improving their surroundings…."
(Jégou & Manzini, 2008:32).

Examples they provide of such collaborative services include car pools, tool pools, shared sewing studios, a "home restaurant" and a more developed house where people of all ages live together, share resources and help each other. This brings us close to what, from the other perspectives presented earlier, has been labelled Collaborative Consumption. In his overview Emilson argues for four essential components of Social Innovations:

- Participation in design and problem solving
- Co-creation of solutions
- Sharing of information and resources
- Social media as tools and platforms

A somewhat different definition of social entrepreneurship is presented by Karl Palmås (2011). The most potent social innovation, he argues, is a model that is so attractive that it, through distribution, "changes everything", and he suggests that social entrepreneurs should be evaluated based on their infectivity. Palmås argues that the impact of a company such as Grameen Bank can be understood both by the emergence of contagious behaviour (engaging in micro-credit) and through the spread of contagious claims such as: it is possible to lend money to people without security (2011). Similarly, all the phenomena we deal with in this chapter can be seen in terms of spreading infection. Forms of Collaborative Consumption spread like wildfire - or contagion - across the world. The importance of social entrepreneurs, such as Muhammad Yunus, should not be underestimated, Palmås (2011) states. They are people with a special ability to act as infection envoys. The outside world believes in them, it becomes a fashion as they go along and they are able to mobilize the rest of the world for global improvement. Presumably this applies to both the global scale and small local initiatives.

POLICY AND POLITICS: DISABLE OR ENABLE THE ENABLING CITY?

At this stage it is hard to point out specific laws and policies that may hinder or promote the vision of an Enabling City and of Urban Cultures, since this is one of the most important topics for future research within this field of research. However, some policy and law related issues were identified during our exploration. In England there exists the "Criminal Justice Bill" which is sometimes used to stop public space gatherings of social and cultural character. The S.O.C.P.A. border is another policy arising from a discourse hindering urban cultures. This is a mile wide zone around the Houses of Parliament in London where all protests have to be approved and permits issued by the government (Butcher 2011).

Although we live in an individualized society we need to be careful with how this affects our policies. If they tend to promote individuality on too high a level this may reduce social interaction and isolate cultures from one another (Castillo 2011). This stands in sharp contrast to the diversity aspect of Urban Cultures (see the chapter above on material cultural infrastructure). Another aspect that might hinder cultural initiatives within city planning is the culture within the municipality. It is sometimes hard for cultural workers outside the walls of the town hall to enter the official world and to achieve fruitful collaboration with the municipality itself (Manner 2011). Moreover, it is important to remember that cultural entrepreneurs or free-thinkers do not work within the same framework as do the traditional cultural workers within the municipal system. This difference should however, not be allowed to hinder new ideas or emerging Urban Cultures.

Many laws and policies disable rather than enable creativity. Is there a need for new laws that actually work in the opposite direction? Here, we would like to make a suggestion for future legislation regarding Urban Cultures in general and public space in particular. Our understanding is that Urban Cultures require public space to exist. One of the most apparent threats to Urban Cultures is the privatization of public space. One idea, and one attempt to find a solution to this situation, is to view public space as an ozonosphere surrounding urban cultures. Just like the ozonosphere surrounding the planet Earth is thinning out, so is the "urban ozonosphere". One solution to the problem of global warming has been the concept and usage of Cap and Trade. In order to save the public spaces in our cities and thereby sustain existing and future Urban Cultures, we must search for similar solutions ensuring that *for every public space privatized a new one must be set up.*

Image 8. Gängeviertel (Hamburg, Germany)
An initiative criticizing the current development in urban Hamburg, where more and more of public space becomes privatized. Their solution to the "disappearing" public spaces is to create space on their own using the concepts of "openness" and "availability". Their vision is to give the local citizen more influence in the processes of city planning. Solidarity and sustainability are important concepts used along with the vision to "live life without economic growth". In their view a city needs to have space and place for art, culture and social matters, as well as possibilities to live and work within the local area. They offer workshops and courses in relation to urban living.

Photo: Franziska Holtz

CRITIQUE: GENTRIFICATION PROCESSES AND THE INDIVIDUALIZED SOCIETY

In this text, Collaborative Consumption and Social Innovations combined with the ideas of an Enabling City have been pointed out as key concepts in attaining a sustainable city. This led us to the notion of a cultural infrastructure using public urban space. Our standpoint is that this would have a good chance of leading to a more sustainable city. It could, however, also lead to the opposite if one is not careful enough. Creating these sort of cultural or creative blocks and passages in the city may change the economic status of the area in question and gentrification processes may occur. Art and culture have a very clear connection to gentrification and this is not to be neglected. Gentrification does not sustain our cities, on the contrary, it fuels processes leading to segregation and dislocation. This emphasizes the importance of our definition of Urban Cultures as enabling forces for change and creativity in everyday life. Culture is about everyday creativity and problem-solving in the mundane meetings of people and things in whichwe all engage and which make life go around. It is not just something related to fine arts or unique subcultures.

Another risk in pushing the Urban Cultures perspective too hard or in adverse ways is that, in a more and more individualized society, it may create pressure on the individual citizen to participate and to be a "creative person". While most cities of our time are struggling with segregation it is important to acknowledge that not all citizens have the same possibilities and therefore some may find themselves without the required tools (e.g. Gillberg 2010). There is a risk of the possibilities brought about by an Enabling City turning into social demands that exert psychological pressure on a large part of the city's population. Therefore, we want to highlight the importance of network-building, social capital and collaboration on an everyday level as the foundation for sustainable Urban Cultures.

While trying to attain the Enabling City, it is important to be aware of the critique above. Everything we do in and with the city will change it, sometimes for better sometimes for worse. It is therefore important to handle the city with gentle and loving hands. To prevent gentrification and segregation processes we must move forward slowly, stopping once in a while to see how things evolve. With this said, the notion of an Enabling City is a desirable vision to strive for.

5.   Conclusions

From our study we can conclude that there lies a great potential in Urban Cultures but also a need for more theoretical, methodological and empirical knowledge. We need to have a better understanding of Urban Cultures as everyday happenings involving people and things, and of the potential for change and creativity that this imbues in everyday life. We also need more insights into Collaborative Consumption and Social Innovations in particular.

From a theoretical and basic research perspective, we need more research on:

- The workings of Urban Cultures; their circumstances, contexts and affordances. What is happening? How does it happen? Where does it happen?
- How to develop inclusive research tools where citizens and practitioners are part of the research team, to engage in bottom-up approaches, inventive ethnography and co-research/co-design
- How to ensure equal opportunities and equal access to creative potentials and spaces

We also need more knowledge about the Enabling City and Enabling City planning. The usage of urban public space has changed during the last decades, with an increasing rate of public events taking place on city streets, parks and squares worldwide. The things that happen, from flash mobs to protests and to the small events of everyday life, are all examples of Urban Culture. What connects them is they all need public urban space to exist. Public space therefore needs to be highlighted and used as the foundation of the Enabling City.

To conclude, we argue that Urban Cultures are an indispensable prerequisite for fostering the sustainable city, as an infrastructure for positive urban change. This can be divided into three integrated themes:

Culture as a force for change in everyday life entails focusing on creativity from below and the importance of network-building and of trusting relationships among people, often referred to as social capital. It requires studies of the how, the when, and the why of human activity in everyday encounters in the city, with a special interest in innovative practices with the potential to change city life in a sustainable direction. Moreover, public art may become the visible and creative component of an inclusive social development strategy integrating middle-class sensibilities and urban-poor priorities.

Enabling City planning means bringing in the dimension of culture as a vital instrument for supporting essential social infrastructure, thereby providing a new direction for public art policy as it relates to social development, spatial planning and urban management. This involves planning for openness, spontaneity, and creativity; planning for the unplanned. It entails understanding the ecology of the city, highlighting its soft structures, and studying its enabling cultural infrastructures.

Collaborative Consumption and Social Innovation puts the emphasis on new ways of sharing, lending, and swapping. This can be done in a local and face-to-face context, or may involve using the Internet to connect, combine, and form groups, and find something or someone to create "many-to-many" peer-to-peer interactions. One of the underlying assumptions of Collaborative Consumption is that social capital can be used to support sustainable urban development, including the development of low-carbon cultures. The related concept of Social Innovations refers to the emergence of ideas and strategies that meet social needs and aspirations.

If linked together, these three themes could form the cultural infrastructure of a city. This infrastructure is not for moving cars and buses from one point to another but to create a flow of people and ideas. This flow will hopefully lead to a better understanding of one another and could be crucial to sustaining our cities.

Our conclusion from this study is that there is a possibility of attaining the Enabling City by means of the following:

- Investigate the concept of "the good city" by questioning the local citizens.
- Gather world-wide examples of successful enabling urban projects and examine whether they can be used in different contexts/cities. If so, how can this be achieved?
- Explore the need for culture as a fourth dimension within the science of sustainable development.
- Investigate what existing laws and policies would hinder/support the enabling city and develop new and supportive legislation.
- Turn Mistra Urban Futures into an arena and motor for cultural projects that elaborate on the definition and use of public space.

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HEARING, INTERVIEWS & SURVEYS

Hearing

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Surveys

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Thomas Martinsson, kulturnämndens ordförande (MP).

Vincente Castillo, arkitekt

Mistra Urban Futures is an international center for sustainable urban development. The headquarters is located in Gothenburg, Sweden and the center operates in five cities around the world including Cape Town, Gothenburg, Greater Manchester, Kisumu and Shanghai. Co-production of knowledge as well as creating Fair, Green and Dense cities is a winning concept for a successful sustainable urban future. A global Arena provides for interaction with external actors and between the five cities. It is funded by the Mistra Foundation for Strategic Development, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and seven consortium members.

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