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## New voices in the narratives of the city

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## New voices in the narratives of the city

### Introduction

Malmö is not today, and has never been, a homogenous city. During recent decades this has become a central part of the city's identity. Although housing segregation is just as important as in other cities, people seem to feel that the segregation of public space is less obvious in Malmö. This contributes to a sense of "us" that includes differences on many levels, a complex and heterogeneous identity that this project seeks to contribute to.

*The Institute for studies in the History of Malmö* is currently conducting a research project to investigate what happens to the city's narratives when there are new narrators and a new audience receive the narrative, in a language that is new to the context.

Guided historical walking tours are part of *The Institute for studies in the History of Malmö* (IMH) operations. A collection of historical city walks about different aspects of the history of Malmö has been translated into Arabic, and 19 native arabic-speaking guides have been trained to show the city to an audience of visitors and residents. In the first part of the project we have interviewed guides about their role in narrating the history of the city, why they chose to be part of the project and what they want to achieve by guiding. A lot of thought and interest has therefore been directed towards the understanding of guided walks. The operation can be problematized in many different ways, for example whose history is told? What and whose history is reproduced in this form of history use?

However, these issues, questions and problematizations are far from new. There is a lot of research that problematize guided tours. By that reason, it is important to do a structured literature review to synthesis this previous research. The aim of this synthesis is to analyze what we can learn from previous research when it comes to guided tours and history use. The questions that has been the guideline for this research overview are:

- From a starting point in history use and culture heritage, what can previous research tell us about guided tours?
- What kind of problems and issues are to be aware of when it comes to guided tours?

When it comes to perspective and delimitations it is important to point out that the perspective used here is historiographic. It specifically want to study how history and cultural heritage is used. It does not explicitly study the guide or the guide's performance.

## The city

Malmö is Sweden's third city with about 320 000 inhabitants (2016). During the late 1800s the city grew quickly and by 1910 Malmö was regarded as one of the nation's three leading industrial cities, responsible for over 10 000 employees in 326 factories. Malmö's early industrial economy was dominated by textile companies and engineering works. Kockums Mekaniska Verkstad, which eventually turned into a world-leading shipyard, was founded in 1840 and was vital to the development of Malmö's early industrial economy.

The years between 1950 and 1970 are often described as the 'record years' of expansion. By 1960, Kockums was the ninth largest shipyard in the world. During this period, the manufacturing sector as a whole sustained near full employment in the city. Malmö experienced rapid population growth, increasing from just over 150 000 in 1940, to nearly 230 000 in 1960. After the 'record years', the city was severely hit by de-industrialization and almost all the large factories were closed. By 1995, the number of people employed in manufacturing and construction were half compared to 1960, and Malmö had the highest unemployment rate in Sweden (Vall 2007).

Malmö today is a very different city from 1850; and also very different from 1995. The urban layout is very different, the economic, social and political structures also different. Increasingly, it has also become evident that there are several competing narratives of the city, the turning-points and processes of change. One example is that Malmö increasingly has become a migrant and multicultural city. Large numbers of migrant workers from countries such as Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey were recruited in the 1960s to work in the industries. Malmö's status as a migrant and multicultural city was established in this period. In the 1970s and 80s political refugees arrived from South America and the Middle East. By 1995 almost 25 % of Malmö's inhabitants had foreign background; in 2015 more than 42 %.

However, it is also possible to go at least a century back, to the late 1800s, and see Malmö at the time as a destination for Eastern Europeans of mostly Jewish descent, escaping pogroms; a stop-over for emigrants from impoverished Småland, Blekinge and rural East Skåne on their way to a new life in North or South America, Germany or Denmark - some stayed in Malmö, others went on; and a bustling industrial city where experts such as engineers from Germany were finding lucrative positions. What is interesting is to investigate and discuss differences and similarities, embracing the complexity of history rather than simplifying - and asking what we can learn from the past. Bringing these approaches and narratives also challenges the question of who has the right to urban history - and in extension - the right to the city. It also challenges the role of historians and historical research (Johansson 2011; Johansson & Larsson 2013).

The Institute for Studies in Malmö's history (IMH) was established in the fall of 2009 as a collaborative initiative between Malmö University and the City of Malmö. The institute initiates research into Malmö's history, and facilitates discussions on different perspectives of urban history. The purpose is to widen and deepen the conversation between researchers and residents, and to make it more inclusive. The Institute's work is based on Malmö University's vision of interdisciplinary research and cross-faculty collaboration, as well as participative activities with the local community. Even though Malmö's history is at the core of activities, these perspectives are also related to

other Swedish as well as international experiences in urban history, through seminars, workshops, conferences and collaborative research projects.

One example is the project MIGRANT MEMORIES, which aimed to collect life stories from migrants who were/are active in popular and labor movements. IMH trained three researchers who have been based at the Labor Movement Archives and Library in Skåne. They have conducted interviews with older immigrants, recorded and transcribed their life stories. The project continued until the spring of 2014. Audio files and transcriptions are archived at the Labor Movement Archives and Library in Skåne.

One experience of the historical walking tours that IMH has been arranging, is that when using interpreters, the narrative was still the master narrative of the Swedish-born residents. It became obvious that narrating the city also meant to hand over the narrative – and that the understanding of artefacts (such as buildings and monuments) is closely related to the participants cultural understanding and frames of reference.

As a consequence of this, IMH In 2014 translated six of the walking tours of *See History. Twelve walking tours for discovering Malmö*, a book with historical city walks, into arabic and trained 19 native arabic-speaking guides to perform historical city walks. *See History* is a book which include walking tours with different themes in time and space, presented in twelve chapters. The historical walks include the medieval city, the remains of the Danish rule, the multi-religious Malmö, the city of immigrants, the women of Malmö and several others. The book is written by sixteen authors who all have specialized knowledge within their respective fields. It is richly illustrated with pictures and drawings. Each walking tour comes with a map. The idea is that the book should encourage the reader (and walker) to experience the City in new ways. The book is intended to appeal to both Malmö residents wanting a new perspective of their city and to visitors coming to Malmö for the first time and wanting to do a different sightseeing.

The Arabic speaking section of Malmö's population constitutes a numerically important and meaningful immigrant group (37 000 residents). Historical consciousness build identity and a sense of belongin to the City, and therefore it is important that all residents of Malmö feel that they are included and involved in the discussion about Malmö and its history. Being actively included in the discussion about the City and telling its history can be an integrating force for residents. Discussions in ones native language about the City's history can also become an important arena and a vantage point in facing the future. In this way, the dialogue between history and the future can constitute an important element for discussions about Malmö.

## Theory

There are (at least) two interesting theoretical perspectives that can be addressed when studying guided tours: Master narrative and spatiality. A master narrative can be seen as a parent ideological key perspective, which forms a lens through which events in history, artefacts and sights shown is interpreted (Bodenstein & Poulot 2012). This master narrative can be seen as the guided tour's parent narrative and this creates meaning and understanding to events in history but also to the places visited. It can thereby be seen as a discourse. The guided tour is kept together by a master narrative, but it should not be confused with the theme of the tour. A tour can have a specific theme,

but how it is done depends on the master narrative it follows. Further, it is the master narrative that decides and limits the tour; what sights to show and what events in history to tell about.

The role of the place may be multifaceted; it has many different roles. It may seem obvious that a guide tour needs place to visit, but the role of the place may differ:

“Place may also provide the imaginative, literal and physical contexts for an engagement with the past that is not historical in any formal scholarly sense but which resonates more with the notions and practices of heritage through the gathering together of residues, memories, local artefacts, traditions and individual pastness in genealogy” (Staiff, Watson & Bushnell, 2013)

Thus, a guided tour on literary characters also needs places to visit, even though this is imaginary. Further, as Staiff et al. points out, a cathedral may be sight that is considered as cultural heritage, but the streets that surround the cathedral is also part of the main attraction and may be prepared to fit the general picture.

However, there are also other perspectives on spatiality when it comes to guided tours, and specifically guided historical walking tours. Spatial mobility change perceptions and perspectives. Distances and accessibility become important and understandable. Further, the participants are sealed in the environment where the guided tour takes place. This gives the participants specific perspectives and understanding of events that took place in history and the sights visited.

These theoretical perspectives will be used for taxonomy to structure previous articles found in the literature review.

## Method

The literature review was conducted by selecting research articles from international research journals. The sample of articles was chosen by using two different data bases: JSTORE and SUMMON. These two data bases have different aims and give, to some extent different results.

In JSTORE the following key words were used together (using AND between the words to include them all): guided tours, history use, memory, culture heritage, history telling, narrative, identity construction.

The time frame was limited to 2000-2016, and the discipline was limited to *history*. Even though quite strict criteria were given, there were 1,117 hits. 12 articles were selected after reading the title of the articles.

In Summon the following key words were used together (using AND between the words to include them all): guided tours, history use, and history telling. In Summon there were 872 hits. After reading the titles 11 article were chosen.

## Results

The taxonomy and division in two theoretical approaches could be further divided. We divide the perspective of master narrative in one group we call *private vs. public memory* and one we call *whose history and why?* In a third category master narrative and change is brought up. Central issues in this category are how the master narrative can change and why.

### *Master narrative: Private vs. public memory*

A lot of research articles deals with memory; private memory (that can be anecdotal) vs. official memory (the common, grand, national narrative). Hazel Tucker (2000) analyzes and problematizes tours and tourism in the article "Tourism and the loss of memory in Zelve, Cappadocia". Tucker discusses the difference between the personal memory and the official memory, where the official memory is constructed within a wider context of global heritage. A narrative concerning a site could be permeated with nostalgic emotions (private memories) as compared to the narrative constructed by the archaeologist (official memory). According to Tucker, this is an important point to remember when considering the use of oral history in the presentation of sites, guided tours and open air museums. These private memories can be held together by a master narrative, however, while the public, official memory more obviously represents a master narrative.

When it comes to construction of official memory Joyce (2015) points out the role and responsibility of archaeologists. "There has been surprisingly little critical examination of the role of tour guides in producing knowledge about archaeological sites, still less of the role of scholars as guides." (Joyce 2015, 297). She also emphasizes the role of commodification of historical heritage and argues that archaeologists are always participants in tourism. They make their way to tourists and tour guides through a wealth of secondary literature. Archaeologists are engaged with the cultural heritage industry and it would be irresponsible to try to step aside, according to Joyce. Narratives are often founded on archaeological narratives.

Gable & Handler (2000) discusses collective and private memories when it comes to national sites as Colonial Williamsburg. Colonial Williamsburg is the reconstructed capital of the colony of Virginia at the dawn of the American Revolution and is one of the largest national heritage sites in the United States. This site, as many others, claims to transform public history into collective memory. That is, they convey an objective documented history to the public who, absorbing that history, acquires an appropriate collective or national memory. According to Gable & Handler, the emphasis on visitor experience collapses the distance between the reconstructed past (the museum's history lesson) and the visitor's touristic or familial experience at the site.

### *Whose history and why?*

A general question that runs through many of the articles is *whose* history is told. White (2015) discusses a walking tour that constructed its history around the story of the liberation of Paris. The analysis explores the interactive construction of historical understanding as the tour's dominant narrative of liberation intermingles with questions about French complicity, resistance, deportation and the Holocaust. What happens when multiple national narratives intersect in and around sites of international travel and tourism? Transnational war tourism may create opportunities for reproducing familiar histories but also exposing them to dissonant "other" histories. Dominant national histories are sustained by narrative practices in the tour context that focus on "good stories"

and the social composition of tours that creates a milieu conducive to the reproduction of those narratives.

Giovannetti (2009) examines public representations of slavery on plantation sites devoted to heritage tourism in the Americas. According to Giovannetti, tour guides and site administrators are very important when it comes to the production of histories of slavery. He advocates for a more proactive role of historians in the production of public histories of slavery and for more productive and instructive discussions. Further, according to Giovannetti, it is often the Master's voice - the hegemonic masters' narrative that is told.

Also Tucker (2000) raises the issue of whose history is told in her article about Zelve. She points out that the site is presented as a Christian site, while the previous Muslim habitation seems to be forgotten. The issue of whose history and why is part of the master narrative because it is the master narrative that limits and simplifies the interpretation of history.

Another issue in relation to whose history and why in guided tours is what to show and not to show. Williams (2008) problematizes tours to the favelas in Rio de Janeiro in terms of adventurism, ghettotourism, voyeurism and voluntourism. Literature and film has increased the interest for Favelas. This has led to favela tours, but also to favela B&B. Is this voyeurism or caring? Common is that it constitutes relationships of power, distancing and knowledge between viewing self and viewed exotic Other. It creates a subject-object structure or an artificial boundary.

Adam & Frances (2003) discuss and problematize how prostitution and the sex industry have been hidden from the established museums. Prostitution has played an important role in the social and labour history, but very little has made its way into the established museums and galleries. This is in contrast to the public interest in 'sex museums' and heritage tours. How can we explain these gaps and silences? This highlights the problem of which history the museums tell and who guards our past? On the other hand it also raises the question if it is possible to tell the history of the sex industry without becoming a part of it? Another interesting perspective that Adam & Frances points out is the relationship between established museums as gate keepers vs. guided tours. Guided tours could be provided by anyone, if there is a demand to know more about this history.

This leads to the possibilities of different forms of tours; walking tours, sightseeing etc. A lot of articles bring forward these possibilities. White (2015) brings forward the possibilities when familiar histories is exposed to dissonant "other" histories. Adams & Frances (2003) point out that if museums are closed to some history, but there is a public interest, guided tour is a cheap way to satisfy this interest.

### *Master narrative and change*

What formulates the master narrative and what may change it? There are numerous amount of research that concerns walking tours or guided tours in one way or another, but the focus is seldom on the tours itself. Often the walking tour becomes a method or a tool to reach other aims, like the history of slavery, community development, cultural heritage, prostitution, ghettotourism, conflict heritage or memory. Seldom the tour *per se* is paid attention or is problematized and analyzed, even though some articles connects to these issues; *whose* history is told and *what* history is told when the history is limited to sites that can be seen. There are some exceptions, however. Nikolas Glover (2008) point out that the tour guides and historians working at internationally attractive heritage

sites today are communicating historical narratives to an increasingly heterogeneous public. He notes that this raises the question: What are the consequences of this for the history presented? Further, he points out that the traditional narratives of the site and "its" history must adapt not just to diversity, but to two mutually constitutive processes integral to tendencies of globalization: an increasing awareness of the global as well as of the local, of the universal as well as of the particular. He means that tourism has undergone a change; from escapism to enrichment and with this follows a growing interest to visit heritage sites abroad. This change of the audience also may change the master narrative.

Glover points out that the commercialization of tourism and of historical sites and increased competition leads to that the sites has to offer something completely unique. These sites may lend themselves to "storyscapes" that is "... commercial environments where narratives are negotiated, shaped, and transformed through the interaction of producers and consumers." (Chronis 2005, 389). In Chronis words, events in the past are not fixed, but can be fluid and "created through performance" (Glover 2008, 113). And in this context different narratives are created for different visitors.

### *Spatiality*

When it comes to guided tours and sightseeing, there has to be sites to see. This may lead to a bias in history. If it is only the history where there are sites that are told, there is a lot of history that is never told. McDowell (2008) writes about conflict heritage is sold and commodified through tourism in peacetime Northern Ireland. According to McDowell physical conflict 'heritage' such as military installations, memorials and street murals is commodified through various tourism initiatives. Further, different interest groups have been eager to arrange walking tours. By this McDowell problematizes the whole concept of walking tours. Who tells the story, which story is told and why.

Markwell, Stevenson & Rowe (2004) point out that local culture heritage projects can provide reference points for the development and expression of local identities and belonging. Some sites become marked as "visual triggers of memory" (Markwell, Stevenson & Rowe 2004, 470). However, the presence of place becomes central. This means that the making of history is reproduced around the site or the place in itself, but also which sites not chosen: "...place-making is as much about forgetting as about noticing and remembering..." (Markwell, Stevenson & Rowe 2004, 459)

### *Other perspectives*

A perspective that fairly seldom brought up is the learning perspective. Morris (2006) tells, however, about a walking tour with third-grade students to explore their community. According to Morris, walking tours can be a good way to learn more about the community, develop citizenship and learn state and local history. Students saw the reciprocity and stability in the area where many of their parents and grandparents grew up. The story of the community surrounds the students and the can make use of it in their daily life experience. Through the walking tours they learned about their relationship to the town.

## Discussion

As previous research show, historical walking tours give a lot of possibilities, but it also has to be problematized; what should be included and what should not, whose history is told and whose is not.



This brings on a more philosophical question: for every site that is selected, another one is deselected. Another interesting issue that Glover (2008) brings up is if the increasing interest to visit heritage sites and the increasing competition among them, change the history of the sites.

Even though there are several interesting problematizations, there are also a lot of possibilities when it comes to historical walking tours. It gives a possibility to tell a history that the established museums do not, it gives a possibility to bring a community together and a learning perspective.

As this literature study shows, there are numerous amount of research that concerns walking tours or guided tours in one way or another, but the focus is seldom on the tours itself. Often the walking tour becomes a method or a tool to reach other aims, like the history of slavery, community development, cultural heritage, prostitution, ghettotourism or conflict heritage. Less attention is paid to problematize walking tours and guided tours *per se*, even though some articles connects to these issues; whose history is told and what history is told when the history is limited to what sites that can be seen. However, Glover (2008) raises an interesting issue on what happens with the history in the tourist age when sites become more commercialized and when tourist guides has to adapt to a more heterogeneous audience. Within this change in the composition of the audience lies also the possibility of change of the master narratives.

This is what we experienced when using interpreters for historical walking tours for Arabic-speaking participants. It is not only a language issue, but mainly a question of cultural references and understanding.

To conclude, master narrative and spatiality are central perspective when analyzing guided tours. The master narrative holds together and gives meaning to historical events, artefacts and sites. It is also the master narrative that decides which sites that are meaningful to visit and whose story that will be told. Place is essential when it comes guided tours. There have to be sites for the tour to be meaningful. However, the sites can be based on imaginative and literal characters. Further, these sites can be important when it comes to local identity and belonging.

## Further research

Conclusively, with this research synthesis, and the vision of IMH as a starting point, there are several areas for further research. Some relevant questions that may be asked are:

- 1) How do the narratives change when new narrators and a new audience take them on?
- 2) How will the guides' and the audience's relation to Malmö, their social and cultural references and relations to various collectives affect the narratives?
- 3) How do the narratives change by being translated from the language involved in the creation of the place to a language with other frames of reference?
- 4) How are the new narratives brought back and allowed to affect the master narratives of the city?
- 5) How do master narratives relate to questions of hegemony and power?

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