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Published online: 03 Mar 2021.

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Configuring Objects and Subjects of Care in Built Heritage Management: Experimenting with Storytelling as a Participatory Device in Sweden

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ABSTRACT

As in many other policy areas, there is a rising concern about how to involve the general public in heritage management and preservation. We analyse attempts made by Swedish cultural heritage authorities to initiate new participatory devices. We ask: How is storytelling used as a participatory device? What are the implications of this in terms of how legitimate concerns are reconfigured? Storytelling has a capacity to transform dominant discourses and result in new objects of care. We conclude that even storytelling itself is reconfigured in these practices, resulting in the collection of narratives, with limited transformative effects.

1. Introduction

A participatory turn in planning processes can be seen in several areas, such as urban planning, environmental decision-making, and in the area of emerging technologies. While previous research has focused on the questions of legitimation of knowledge and problematized top-down models of citizen participation, recent critical research of participatory processes has shifted towards a focus on the empirical generative aspects of such processes. Efforts to extend participation are co-productive (Chilvers & Kearnes 2015); they mobilize certain publics and exclude others (Lezaun & Soneryd, 2007); they can be a source of diverse and complex ways of imagining publics (Solbu, 2018); new forms of expertise arise around participation (Bherer et al. 2017); and legitimate concerns are configured through the use of participatory devices (Metzger, 2013; Metzger *et al.*, 2017). 'Configuring' here refers to the active shaping and forming of issues as well as participants through the ways that participants are invited, issues are discussed and results are channeled to future actions and decisions.

Democratization and participation received attention in the field of heritage studies as well, and in particular, critical cultural heritage studies. Smith (2006) introduced the critique of the hegemonic authorized heritage discourse (AHD), 'which is reliant on the power/knowledge claims of technical and aesthetic experts, and institutionalised in state cultural agencies and amenity societies' (Smith, 2006, p. 11). AHD originates from the grand narratives of nation and class, and thus provides the basis for the 'top-down' model of heritage practice. Smith argues that by constituting the ways we think about heritage as

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a set of Western elite cultural values AHD validates a specific set of practices and undermines alternative ideas about heritage (Smith, 2006). Along the same lines, the attempts to engage different community groups into the heritage practices are questioned in relation to the '*process* by which community groups are engaged with' (Smith & Waterson 2012: 15) and its relation to power.

Ashley and Frank (2016) develop the 'outside-in' approach as a part of critical heritage studies and discuss 'heritage-making' as a process of cultural production in relation to the past by which people make sense of their world and their place within it, as well as strategically assert their voices in the public sphere' (p. 501). Schofield (2015) discusses the role and meaning of expertise and experts in relation to the Faro convention promoting inclusive heritage. Summarizing case studies of different scholars, he argues that the role of an expert is constantly transforming from the definitional authority to guide and facilitator of heritage practice. Waterton and Watson (2015) follow the discursive strand of critical heritage studies and frame their discussion theoretically by referring to 'ontological politics' – 'the recognition that in the definition of what constitutes heritage – and, by extension, heritage research – there are various expressions of definitional power' (Waterton & Watson, 2015, p. 21). These expressions can be ideological constructs that are exclusive of other understandings or meanings, or received wisdoms, accepted practices, and habits.

This paper combines and develops this strand of research focussing on the co-productive aspects of participatory planning practices. We critically approach the use of storytelling in participatory planning in a Swedish context as a device to configure legitimate concerns. Our research questions are: How is storytelling used as a participatory device? What are the implications of this in terms of how legitimate concerns are reconfigured? Potentially, storytelling can open up for a broader set of concerns. Jackson (2002) following the works of Hannah Arendt and Walter Benjamin, discusses storytelling as 'a modal form of social critique' (p. 253). Being part of discourses, stories are capable of changing it, and therefore storytelling as heritage practice allows including concerns of broader groups of stakeholders.

> … in telling stories we testify to the very diversity, ambiguity, and interconnectedness of experiences that abstract thought seeks to reduce, tease apart, regulate. (Jackson, 2002, p. 253)

In the following sections, we elaborate in more detail, the theoretical framework of our study, which focus on how participation is organized using participatory devices. We discuss storytelling as caring practices in relation to built heritage. In the sections after that, we analyse three attempts to initiate storytelling as a participatory device in designation practice in Sweden. In a concluding section, we discuss the limitations of these attempts, and tensions in using storytelling as a valuation mechanism and participation technology.

2. Heritage Designation as Practices of Care

A more inclusive practice of building preservation and heritage management can, as stated above, open up to a more diverse group of stakeholders as well as a broader set of sites and objects of cultural and historical interest. We find it relevant to discuss this potential double expansion of both subjects and objects of preservation in terms of care. Care implicates different relationalities, issues, and practices in different settings (Puig De La Bellacasa, 2017). When it comes to building preservation, it is not self-evident which

objects should be preserved, utilized, and/or developed and in which ways. Besides expanding the number of objects of care, their re-evaluation is also needed. Harrison (2013) shows how the explosion of interest to heritage in the late modern society led to the growing number of heritage objects. This raises additional questions about practices of heritage-making as caring practices, including listing, conservation, and heritage management. Remembering, according to Harrison (2013) necessitates forgetting, and therefore de-listing and de-accessioning become important.

Through storytelling, objects of facts; for example, the architecture of buildings, the period they were built, and for what purpose, can transform into objects of care because the very same objects are embedded in stories that attach such objects with values and meaning. According to Maria Puig De La Bellacasa (2011) 'care' carries stronger normative commitments compared to 'concerns'. Moreover, it implies that the political ecology of things cannot be ignored. Thus, when objects are contested and stakeholders express various kinds of concerns around an object, caring for that object means that: 'we need to count all the concerns attached to it, all those who care for it' in order to 'engage properly with the becoming of a thing' (Puig De La Bellacasa, 2011, p. 90). This could be seen as an argument for enhanced participation and inclusion in heritage practice. However, giving voice to a broader set of actors, and listening to a broader set of stakeholders' stories, is not an innocent process, as processes of exclusion and inclusion will always shape these.

3. Configuring Legitimate Concerns through Participatory Devices

The participatory turn in planning means that there are more efforts by planners and decision-makers to involve lay people, residents, citizens, or users in planning processes. The outcomes of such processes depend on expertise, models of engagement, and participatory devices that shape how certain groups are engaged in a particular issue. In the light of this participatory turn and partly professionalization of participatory expertise, the ways in which citizens are invited to engage in these matters can be seen as a technology of elicitation, that is a set of professions and devices involved in eliciting peoples' attitudes, concerns or attachments (Lezaun & Soneryd, 2007). Examples of such devices may be the survey, the focus group, the public hearing, or the like. The use of participatory devices involves mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion when it comes to participants as well as issues of concern. This means that the viewpoints, attitudes, or attachments that are expressed, reported, and recognized, are also always an effect of the specific participatory device in use, i.e. which groups from the public are reached as well as what issues are possible to express. It does not mean, however, that the outcomes of such processes are predictable or controllable. On the contrary, it is a rather messy juxtaposition of participatory devices, the rationales and practices that put them into use, and the already established political culture and regulatory infrastructures, that will result in what is recognized as legitimate concerns in particular cases.

The ambition to open up an expert dominated field and to put greater emphasis on a variety of the sources and locations of knowledge requires a lot of work (Rydin, 2007). To open up an epistemic field of inquiry calls for attention to the relation between discourses, storytelling, and how arguments are embedded in storylines. As Fischer and Gottweis (2012, p. 12) argue, 'discourses contain narratives, which are essentially stories, either in oral or written form'. As they point out, it is through the structured experience revealed in storytelling

the individuals can relate their experiences to one another. To continue their idea, storytelling can help to relate the experiences to the surrounding built environment as well. Storytelling can be used to justify planners' ideals for the landscape or a model for spatial planning, 'which pushes for a normative use of 'storytelling' as a means of encapsulating local knowledge and the views of those who live in, and use, the landscape' (Bulkens *et al.*, 2015, p. 2310). A number of stories told by different individuals comprise a narrative. The authors claim that 'the formal planning practices may be destabilized by more vernacular narratives seeking to subvert dominant discourses and processes' (ibid.). Van Hulst (2012, p. 304) points out that storytelling as a tool 'would normally reveal a commitment to more inclusive, community-focused forms of planning and less to bureaucratic, hierarchical forms that probably still form the bulk of instances of planning'. Moreover, storytelling enables to favour stories 'engaging with the lived experiences of landscape by residents and users' (Bulkens *et al.*, 2015, p. 2311).

In the following sub-sections, we will now turn to our empirical study, to see how commitments to inclusiveness are expressed and practiced in the context of Swedish heritage practice.

4. Participatory Turn in Swedish Heritage Practice

The point of departure in our analysis is the system of assessment of the value of built heritage developed by the Swedish National Heritage Board (SNHB), the so-called 'Unnerbäck model' (Unnerbäck, 2002), which has been widely used by the heritage professionals. This model offers a 'simple method' to define the cultural and historical values of buildings in question, and is reflected in a checklist consisting of the 'most important valuation criteria' (Unnerbäck, 2002, p. 21). The evaluation process is divided into five steps: identification of value motives, processing them and defining extra reasons for preservation, creating the valuation report, choosing the level of preservation (for example, museum preservation), documenting the valuation, and care planning. The most important valuation criteria include the documentary value and the experience value (Unnerbäck, 2002, p. 24). All the steps were implemented by heritage practitioners.

The documentary value according to this model consists of historical qualities, for example, construction, patina, or social value. The experience value can consist of architectonic, environmental, or symbolic values. The highest level of preservation relates to national monuments and can be applied to the whole building or some of its parts. It means a full correspondence to the original and demands thorough documentation; it is legally defined and protected. The next level relates to the cultural value, which is considered to be an asset and should be monitored when changes are done to the building. The lowest level means that there is no clear requirement to preserve, but even in that case the building should be renovated given 'general cautious provision' as formulated in the building code. Though the value of preserving what is already built is a part of the legal framework, on the lower levels of protections they are subjected to interpretations, and a clear preservation policy is only applied to the national monuments. This method represented the traditional top-down approach in cultural heritage preservation in Sweden and served as an instrument of the authorized heritage discourse.

In 2008, the SNHB proposed to redefine cultural heritage as representative to people who live in a given geographical area, and thus aimed to replace the traditional definition of 'heritage as identity building' (RAÄ, 2008). The new models were supposed to be more

inclusive, and heritage practice more democratic, and based on the diversity of narratives. A series of initiated projects aimed at democratization of cultural heritage by taking into account the interests and voices of a broader group of stakeholders. For the initiators of efforts to democratize cultural heritage, storytelling became an important device to (re) address the alternative, parallel histories as well as to re-valuate the already existing stock of objects belonging to the authorized heritage discourse.

The tension between the 'Unnerbäck's model' and the new approaches to the evaluation of built heritage arises from the difference between valuation as accounting in the form of 'checklists' and storytelling, where the latter has a potential of generating new value (Bogdanova, 2013) and thus opens up for new objects and subjects of care.

In Sweden, 'storytelling' was used as an overall approach to design specific participatory initiatives. This was made with the double aim of involving broader groups of citizens (storytellers) and highlighting new sites and objects of cultural interest (in form of different stories), and thus potentially expands both on the objects and subjects of care. For instance, Agnidakis *et al.* (2018) analysed narratives of places in three historical environments belonging to the National Property Board of Sweden (SFV). In their analysis, authors showed that despite the reflexive attitude of the Board to their use of history, in their practice there is a tendency of following the AHD. They point out the lack of balance of definitional power between different actors in heritage-making: consultants and tenants almost solely 'owned' the power to interpret narratives of the place and socio-cultural representations, while the representatives of different volunteer organizations were mostly ignored.

5. Methodological Considerations

Our method is informed theoretically by approaching storytelling as a participatory device, and empirically, by the fact that in the documents about more inclusive heritage practice the terms 'berättelse', 'berättande', and 'berättelsemodellen' are recurrently used. These terms might be translated to English as both 'story' and 'narrative'. We noted the recurrent use of these terms in the context of planners' and decision-makers' discussions and initiatives to enhance participation and inclusiveness while we were doing pilot interviews to the project of built heritage evaluation. We chose to use the term storytelling as an overarching term that includes both the Swedish social and cultural history and memory as well as individual stories and experiences. Informed by the critical methodology approach in psychological and humanistic research (Yanchar *et al.*, 2005), we analyse initiatives to enhance participation through the use of relational storytelling in heritage practice.

The focus of our empirical analysis is tensions between the most traditional, authorized approaches in heritage practice and the participatory turn aiming at more inclusive heritage practice. Therefore, we were intentionally searching for projects related to built heritage designation. It was crucial that these projects explicitly, and independently of us as researchers, used the terms 'storytelling' or 'narratives' when they explained their participatory approach.

We identified a number of projects initiated either by the SNHB or, in connection to it, by the regional authorities and implemented by heritage professionals who received project funding. These projects are different in scale and scope and often are hardly classifiable: they relate to both tangible and intangible heritage, focus on single buildings or whole environments and they can be short-lived or last for several years (Länsstyrelserna, 2012; Weijmer, 2019). Most of the cases were described in reports or policy papers produced by

the heritage professionals and the textual sources where these projects or their results are presented are of different quality and style. We systematically searched online using the keywords 'berättelsemodellen' and 'berättelse'. The reports on most of these projects are often available on the webpages of respective authorities. We used documents describing stories, how they are constructed and by whom, as well as the role of stories in the process of heritage evaluation. The document analysis is based on project proposals and government propositions, project reports, evaluation reports, and follow-up publications by responsible authorities. We chose 'storytelling' as a focus of the analysis and tried to map different types of stories, storytellers, strategies of their use, and their influence on the valuation process.

6. Storytelling as a Participatory Device: Three Examples

In the following, we analyse three examples of projects related to the designation or deaccessioning of historically important buildings. The source of legitimate storytelling is varying from the experts as storytellers to citizens as storytellers in these projects. The first case focuses on the definitional power of experts as an obstacle to a more democratic cultural heritage. In the second case, the experts aimed at increasing the diversity in heritage definition by searching for new stories to more inclusive narratives. In the third case, researchers turned to the local residents in the attempt to collect personal stories about the area in question to strengthen the background for cultural designation.

6.1 Narrating Representative Stories

A storytelling model was developed by the SNHB in the 2000s as an alternative to the Unnerbäck's model (2002) discussed above. The aim was initially to reassess the concept of cultural heritage as such. The Board proposed to consider national heritage as 'the cultural heritage that is important for the people leaving in the geographical area Sweden' (RAÄ 2008, p. 5) and not as national identity building. According to this model, experts give their 'offer' of the interpretation of history, while the public can respond with its own offer or counteroffer (ibid: 8). The focus in this model was on the common problems in the society, and how the history was problematized based on the 'material evidence' (ibid: 10). This redefinition of the meaning of cultural heritage was a part of the audit of the national property by the National Property Board of Sweden. One of the objectives of the project was to decide which objects should be de-accessioned and change the owner, and which should be further included in the heritage portfolio.

The evaluation consisted of three steps: 1) to judge if the access to the cultural object needs to be ensured so that citizens can have an opportunity to physically participate in interpretation or questioning of historiography; 2) adjustment of the storytelling model; 3) consider representativity of the sample: breadth and diversity in relation to geography, gender, class, generation, and ethnicity (ibid: 8–9).

Dominant 'narratives' were compiled by the experts at the second stage; these 'grand' stories were considered to be representative of Swedish history (SFV, 2008). The stories compiled by experts can be seen as 'meta stories' in which the narrator and potential attachments between people and things are made visible. Rather than giving voice to lived experiences, these stories are told through a 'voice over', explaining the plot rather than taking part in it. These stories were: The unity of the nation and the emergence of

the modern state; Science, learning and intellectual culture; Economic life and trade conditions, Faith and religion through time; Power balance – integration and expansion; and The social-medical development in Sweden.

The narratives were based on the facts from scientific literature relevant to the field, academics in the reference group, and single experts in specific areas (SVF 2008, p. 21). Approximately 550 properties were evaluated in relation to these narratives; the majority of them represented historical monuments protected by the state. The objects in question were assessed in relation to dominant stories and criteria of representativeness and the experts had to decide which objects should be kept in the cultural-historical portfolio. An illustrative example covers the choice between the Gävle regional prison north of Stockholm and the prison in Umeå in the Northern Sweden. Both buildings were constructed in the same way and thus have a high cultural and historical value, both relate to the story of social-medical development in Sweden, but according to the requirement for geographical spread, the prison in Umeå was prioritized and included in the cultural-historical portfolio.

This, however, generated some critique against the model as such (SOU 2013, p. 55). First, the model was considered as supporting a circular argumentation about value, because it was limited to, and based on, already protected property, and therefore supported the existing stock and did not address the blind spots and the need to complement the sample. Second, it was creating a national selection basis parallel to the existing legislation on the protection of culturally and historically valuable buildings and properties. As a result, the model was adjusted (ibid: 114): the compiled stories should be applied given a special importance to the history of the state and its development, and not to national cultural-historical perspective. The storytelling model was not anymore a sampling model, it was considered valuable from the pedagogical point of view: to illustrate and explain historical events and processes (ibid: 114).

The first step in the storytelling model was considered to be implemented after 'all other criteria' were applied. Complementary evaluation criteria were also proposed: property as a part of a whole, context, accessibility, prerequisites for management and sustainability, and economic prerequisites (ibid: 118). In the appendix to this investigation, the two prisons in Gävle and in Umeå appeared again. This time the proposition was that the prison in Umeå should not be kept in the state portfolio for cultural heritage (ibid: 236), but the prison in Gävle, on the contrary, was classified as the one that should stay long term on the list of the state stock based on cultural-historical grounds (ibid: 255).

Despite the attempt to produce the narratives which were more representative for the people living in Sweden, and not only dominant 'heritage as identity building', this method still represents a top-down expert-driven approach to the valuation. The results of this project, the six 'stories' are indeed the 'big stories" of Sweden. While in general the idea of a more democratic evaluation process was accepted positively by different experts, the method was based on generating narratives without turning to relational storytelling that could connect personal experiences to places.

6.2 Inclusive Storytelling: Who Gets Place in the Stories and Who Can Tell Them?

In 2010–2012 local county governments implemented the project 'Kalejdoskop – perspectives on cultural heritage' directed to the analysis of exclusion and inclusion in the

cultural environment (Länsstyrelserna, 2012, 2014). The starting problem for the project was formulated as follows: 'as performers of the public heritage work we can consciously or unconsciously use cultural history to include or exclude: who has place in the stories we chose and who is allowed to tell#' (ibid: 11). The main challenge had been seen as the 'navigation between the inclusion of diversity of perspectives and exclusion by giving priority to vested interests' (ibid). Collaboration between different regions in Sweden was built around three main themes: accessible information, parallel stories, and broader knowledge included in the documentation (Holmberg & Weijmer, 2012, p. 53; Länsstyrelserna, 2012).

The existence of the parallel stories is due to processes of globalization, which has transformed the role of places in identity-building and loosened ethnic and national borders (Kamali, 2013). While the places stay intact, people, history, and stories travel and transform, and in particular, the stories that are not advantageous for the current privileged groups are sorted out (ibid: 13).

In 2013 the book 'The Human Stories of the Place' was published as a part of the project Kalejdoskop. Several examples belonging to the Kalejdoskop project covered the stories related to the problems of welfare and inequality, war and migration, as well as the 'inconvenient' stories (ibid). There were also subprojects in which experts tried to trace stories about gender, diversity, and other societal problems that were at the centre of cultural and political debates at different periods in history.

Some projects implemented within the frame of the Kalejdoskop related particular stories to historical buildings. For example, the project 'With New Eyes' analysed *Uddmanska huset* in 2010, a group of houses in municipality Kungälv in the west of Sweden. Officially documented value of these buildings mainly emphasized the fact that they represent traditional urban wooden construction representatives for this part of Sweden. When the project started the investigator discovered a plate on one of the houses which informed shortly about Lise Meitner who used to be a central figure in the ground-breaking research on nuclear fission, who visited Kungälv in 1938 and stayed in one of the houses. It is believed that together with her nephew she made a major discovery during her time in Kungälv (Björkman *et al.*, 2016, p. 113). However, it was concluded that itself the story about Lise Meitner would not be enough for the heritage designation of the building and that an alternative story was not 'welcomed' in the local context (Holmberg & Weijmer, 2012, p. 11). The building was a part of already existing 'cozy wooden town identity', which was conflicting with the newly identified story associated with the development of the nuclear bomb (ibid: 20).

However, in 2016 the local newspaper reported that the house was nominated to a Physical Historic Site by the Swedish Physics Society, and a special plate was attached to the building to commemorate the legacy of Lise Meitner. 'What Lise Meitner did in 1938 affects us all. When we turn on the light and get the electricity from Ringhals [Nuclear power station in Sweden – *authors comment*] this is one of the effects of her discovery' (Kungälvs-Posten, 29 October 2016). Lise Meitner was also portrayed as an outstanding physicist and a female role-model.

In the follow-up discussions among heritage practitioners, the following problems with stories as valuation device were pointed out. First, there was a tension between the value of gathering a diversity of parallel stories and vested interests (Länsstyrelserna, 2014, p. 8), and new parallel stories that were not always compatible with the already existing ones. Second, the

discursive-legal divide, that is, the tension between the stories and the formal grounds for heritage designation, which sometimes meant that the stories could not be used as a basis for decisions (if they conflicted with legal requirements) (ibid: 18). Finally, the locality-temporality debate – the 'best before' date and the global-national relevance of the local heritage, and in general the persuasive power of expert storytelling was questioned:

> The story which felt relevant at the moment of decision-making is probably not relevant in the future. Will the cultural heritage sector continue to preserve previously sanctioned cultural heritage which has no relevance to the present day, and which is not perceived as bearing any cultural historical value of public interest? . . . To be able to transform special interests into public interests the cultural sector needs to become better in explaining why (Länsstyrelserna, 2014, p. 21, authors' translation).

As Weijmer (2019) found out in her research, there was a general feeling of uncertainty among the heritage practitioners involved in the project. This uncertainty has several causes. On the one hand, individuals invited to the dialog did not want to share new stories 'they hold to the established cultural history' (cited in Weijmer, 2019, p. 164, authors' translation). On the other, the practitioners associated their role with the public service assignment, and thus had to 'sort out' the stories of different interests. Weijmer shows that heritage practitioners were still caught up by the idea of representativeness that is limiting the opening up for participation.

Our last example is the most inclusive one when it comes to citizen participation, but with the outcome that no (relevant) stories were found.

6.3 The Architecture of Big Cities and Cultural Heritage

As a part of a Government assignment (prop. 1997/98, p. 165)', a group of researchers from the Gothenburg city museum investigated the possibility of the cultural designation of a building block in Hjällbo, an area of mass construction in the 1960–70ies. The assignment from the government pointed out the necessity to promote built environments as the meeting points for citizens, and the care for the public space equals in this proposition to the care for its inhabitants. The document underlies that the resources were supposed to be used to the concrete projects with the 'present' cultural, historical or architectonic value (ibid: 110).

Hjällbo is one of the areas in the major Swedish cities that already belongs to the 'story' of segregated and rundown areas. The suburbia in Stockholm and Gothenburg that was built in the 1960-ies as a part of mass housing construction received a bad reputation already when the construction was on its way (Ericsson *et al.*, 2002). A big part of the reports produced by the Swedish media in the 1970ies created a negative image of the Million program as 'a society where almost no one would like to live in' (ibid: 17). The idea of the heritage practitioners and property owners to restore the initial details of the buildings in Hjällbo and designate them as culturally important was a part of an attempt to restore the reputation of the area.

The area of Skolspåret in Hjällbo was chosen by the experts because of an earlier underlined architectonic value that could be the reason for a special attention to the buildings in the process of renovation. The plan for renovation was developed by City planning (sv. Stadsbyggnadskontoret) and the preservationist authorities. A 'gentle

renovation with relatively few major internal changes' was proposed (Ohlander, 2002). Parallel to the development of the renovation plan, the city museum of Gothenburg started the investigation of the possible cultural designation of the building.

The matter of concern (cultural designation) was a 'roof ceiling' made of concrete, which connected together different parts of the area. To restore it considering its architectonic value, the managing company received special funds. Along with this element, the original colour of one of the buildings was restored, and the protective glass walls at the entrance, which were demolished years ago. 'With rehabilitation of Skolspåret (and other parts of Hjällbo) the new property owner hoped to restore the trust of residents' as well as to improve the tarnished reputation of this part of the city (ibid: 7). This was, in fact, a project of telling another story.

Besides investigating technical aspects of renovation and residents' attitudes towards it, the researchers were investigating how workers and others involved in the reconstruction understand the attempt to designate ('k-märka') the area and how this understanding could change in the process of reconstruction (Ohlander, 2002, p. 8, Authors' translation)

> At the first stage of the project the researcher created an informational campaign, which was supported by the publications in the media. The purpose of this campaign was to 'explicate' the cultural value of the building in question to the local population. During the meetings with the residents the information about its value collected by the city museum was also distributed among the participants.

The researchers attempted additionally to collect the opinions about the cultural value of this area to support their own judgments, but the residents did not show much involvement in the discussions about the value of this building. One of the explanations provided by investigators related to the diverse cultural background of the residents:

> The fact that Skolspåret– such a young architecture – could be worth preserving, and in principle be comparable with thousands years old archaeological finds, could be hard to accept if you came from a culture with a very old history: 'I, who am not Swedish, find it hard to understand that this roof on the corridor is a cultural heritage', an Iraqi man said. (Ohlander, 2002, p. 44, Authors' translation)

The opinions of the residents showed also the avoidance from participation; their judgements about the value of the elements in question split from 'this is not our cultural heritage, the swedes should decide' to 'in my home country this would never be a cultural heritage'.

> A man from Chile referred to the fact that 90 percentage of the population in Hjällbo were migrants and had another taste than the Swedes. It was therefore important to consult them. [Some residents] who did not want to be involved in any decision, or were hesitant, said that there is no point in even trying to influence since the owner will do as s/he want anyway, and [some residents] had the opinion that those who are educated should decide. (Ohlander, 2002, p. 47, Authors' translation)

For cultural preservation to meet the double aim of opening up both the subjects and objects of concern, and potentially transform these into objects of care our third example certainly goes furthest in its collaborative attempt. However, it is also obvious in this example that the experts still hold the power to evaluate what stories are relevant, and that this is considered as legitimate by citizens. We will discuss the implications of storytelling as a participatory device in the next and final sections of the paper.

7. Discussion: Storytelling as a Participatory Device in Built Heritage Designation Practice

Our analysis shows that there was a mismatch between the ambitions inscribed in storytelling methods, to increase the number of legitimate knowledge contributors and the practices of how such legitimate concerns in heritage designation were configured in our selected cases.

First, *storytelling* was used as a generic term that in practice covers a range of stories and narratives of different levels of generality. Mostly the heritage practitioners involved in the projects were dealing with narratives. This created a discrepancy between the old 'big' narratives of heritage in a historical sense and the relational 'small' stories told by diverse individuals. These stories initially had different weight, importance, and even structures, and therefore it is difficult to account for what is a story and which stories matter. Stakeholders care differently for different stories, thus attaching different importance to the objects of care represented by these stories.

Even more important is the consideration of the course and subjects of storytelling or care. Our three cases varied and included: experts as narrators, who represented their own meta stories, efforts to include stories of the excluded, and efforts to identify some potential stories among residents. Circular arguments about the value created also the circular caring practices: what is already cared for is worth more care. By giving voice to new or additional stories, experts are not creating a new discourse, they are legitimizing the discourses that already exist or they are trying to legitimize new discourses that are emerging from political or institutional agendas by adding new narratives, as in the case with orphanages. In other words, they are reproducing the top-down approach to heritage designation and thus do not create a more democratic process. Caring and narrating in the absence of relational storytelling remains political, and the attempts to make it more ethical and inclusive are not always successful.

In the last case, a group of experts initiated the project with the help of the property owner, and despite them being open to more extensive storytelling from the side of residents, not much of the real stories were found. Through informational campaigns, they tried to construct the subjects of care (residents) but mostly it did not work. Instead of stories that could lay the base for ethical care, they collected opinions and attitudes characterized by their fragmented character (only a part of a story or just a statement was made), displacement (judgments were made in relation to other geographical areas), and avoidance (residents pointed out native Swedes and experts as a legitimate source of knowledge about cultural heritage). Polletta & Lee (2006, p. 716) explain this phenomenon as a norm against the storytelling, this norm 'may have reproduced a view of policy-making as expert problem-solving and as properly insulated from public input, even, paradoxically, as it was opened to public input'.

Another issue could be related to the misbalance between the technical questions (regarding the renovation of the laundry room etc.) and the value issues. As Polletta and Lee (2006, p. 719) also showed in their research, '[p]eople are less likely to tell stories in discussions that are seen as technical or policy-oriented than they are in discussions that are seen as value-oriented'. This partly created scepticism about using storytelling as a method for citizen participation, which is expressed in both policy reports/papers as well as in our interviews with planners and experts working with cultural heritage.

7.1 Storytelling and Caring as an Object of Inquiry

We argue that there are different procedural and methodological challenges to using storytelling as a participation device. First, in many cases, the time range of collecting stories is rather short, and experts experience unfinished and partly unsuccessful attempts to collect those. The procedural condition required – enough time – simply did not exist. Second, storytelling is introduced as a method to create alternative or new narratives, but the need for storytelling among experts is not always supported by citizens willing to tell stories, as they are unaware of the intended matter of care.

> What this means for deliberation is that when disadvantaged groups use narrative to challenge the status quo, they may be especially vulnerable to scepticism about the veracity, authority, or generalizability of the form. When advantaged groups use narrative, they may be less likely even to be heard as telling stories. (Polletta & Lee, 2006, p. 705)

Third, and related to the methodological challenges of eliciting stories from citizens, the ability to tell stories was not discussed in any of the projects. However, theoretically, these issues present an interesting case of how individual and social memories can contradict in the course of storytelling. When a certain area is under planning, we assume that the tenants can tell us the stories about their life in the area, and the planners have a certain version of the 'social history' of the area in question. However, both residents and practitioners stumble upon the 'exclusionary' character of cultural heritage, that is institutionally bound. Those who are temporary or recent residents of the area, and even those who moved long ago do not always have the same version of 'social history' as the planner, and thus it is not revealed in their personal memories.

By posing questions to the residents about the buildings and their value, the experts consciously or unconsciously are directing their responses into a traditional understanding of value as materialized in the building. What can be found in those areas are *elements* of a story, some details, facts, or single experiences or claims (Polletta & Lee 2006). This means that *which objects* to care for, *why*, as well as *how* to care for them will remain in the hands of a small elite of experts. This does not mean that the subjects of care have not expanded and with them the objects of care. What is needed, for heritage management to change, however, is a further elaboration on how such objects and subjects of care are embedded in the stories as well as in heritage practices.

Disclosure Statement

Funding

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