



D1.2. Information gathering report: societal, ethical, cross-cultural

The Heritage-migration-diversity nexus: a literature review of useful conceptualizations

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SO-CLOSE

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Cultural Heritage of Forced Migrations

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1. Executive summary

This report serves as a complement to D.1.1 and provides a theoretically-informed approach to migration and heritage in response to the project's objective to "contribute to social cohesion and fight refugee marginalization or exclusion by facilitating the encounters between similar life stories, through the mediation of innovative digital and artistic tools" (GA, p.3). It reviews academic publications exploring how present-day global migrations resonate with the contemporary interest in the history of cross-border mobility in the receiving European societies. The theoretical school reviewed is Critical Heritage Studies, a field that has accumulated an extensive literature on the nexus of migration, heritage, and diversity. Nevertheless, many propositions coming from the field are either insufficiently concrete or too enclosed in their local contexts. With the aims of SO-CLOSE in mind, this report focuses on several applicable theoretical approaches that are deemed to be sufficiently concrete, contextually relevant, and practice-oriented to inform our thinking about the scope of practical solutions as well as the limitations of using heritage as a path contributing to social cohesion and breaking existing patterns of refugee marginalization.

Five theoretical conceptualisations addressing heritage of the past and present migrations have been found especially useful: a) dissonant heritages, b) institutional logics of approaching diversity and heritage of minorities and migrants, c) Europeanization of heritage, d) seven circles of European memory, and e) the PUDDING model. Working on these complex frameworks presupposes a special optics that decentralises already established expert solutions and thus opens for inclusion of new stakeholders, in particular, various groups of immigrants, to the co-creation and co-design of cultural heritage.

The main lesson of the reviewed literature is absence of ready-made recipes that can be unproblematically extrapolated from other local and temporal contexts. Nevertheless, it is possible to distil several principal points of consensus within the academic literature. Among them is the endorsing of participatory and collaborative methodologies, a keen interest in storytelling, memories and personal (hi)stories as well as insistence on ethical engagement with the objects of research, be it artifacts, stories, individuals, or communities. The importance of a reflective curatorial job, on the one hand, and the engagement of local/source communities, on the other, is yet another leitmotif of the publications and heritage initiatives reviewed here.

Based on this analysis, several recommendations can be concluded, specifically aimed at Cultural Institutions co-creating cultural heritage together with migrant groups:

- Be aware of your national frameworks around heritage-making. Emphasize the humanity of migrants, intelligibility of cultural practices, and central position of human rights.





- Reflect upon how your institutional, political, and historical contexts converge individual stories and distill them to collective presentations that gain traction in the public space.
- Create/promote narratives that awake curiosity, trigger reflection, and foster respect for the storyteller.
- Seek a balance between the three layers of cultural meaning-making and heritage-making: personal accounts, collective presentations and institutionalized narratives generated by the media, politics, and heritage institutions.
- Create an inclusionary and accessible space in which all migrants' stories can be visible (in particular migrant women, the elderly, adolescents, disabled, disadvantaged social groups, etc.), both online and offline.
- Be aware that diverse narratives may lead to dissonant heritage discourses.
- Moderate the project activities in a respectful but firm way to prevent the occurrence of hate speech. Use experienced moderators in focus groups and offer training in moderation of focus groups when needed.
- Involve migrants in dialogue and engage them in a co-creational approach to cultural heritage-making. You can find inspiration in the reviewed literature and listed examples.
- Use digital tools in a responsible and pedagogical way.
- Follow transparent and at the same time practically implementable ethical guidelines.

2. What is heritage? Why focus on heritage and heritage-making?

This report provides one of the two pillars of the general theoretical framework of SO-CLOSE, covering cultural heritage as the main concept (the other pillar being presented in the deliverable 1.1, focusing on the concept of migration). It introduces relevant theoretical perspectives on synergies between the experiences of newly arrived migrants and the historical records of cross-border mobility in the hosting societies. The review eschews the assumption that some special types of inclusion of racial and ethnically different population groups (assimilation, integration, cohesion, accommodation etc.) might work better or should be considered as more desirable in the present-day conditions. Taking as its vantage point the salience and significance of heritage-making for understanding experiences of forced or self-chosen migration in Europe, this text focuses on the nexus of heritage, cultural diversity, and migration as it has been





addressed in the academic literature. It also provides several examples of already implemented heritage initiatives aiming to present Europe as a continent of migration, and to discover connections between present-day and historical experiences of refugees, displaced ethnic groups, political exiles, economic migrants, diasporic populations, and other migrants.

The Grant Agreement says that “[a]ny definition of heritage is a difficult (and some even say vain) enterprise” (p.10). Nevertheless, within Critical Heritage Studies, one can distinguish several productive lines of thinking about cultural heritage that can be utilized for the project’s purposes.

Heritage refers to tangible (objects, landscapes, buildings, pieces of art etc.) or intangible (stories, images, texts, traditions) items from the past transmitted to the next generations. Heritage is perceived as having both symbolic and (potentially) economic value, being important, and raising an emotional response and thus worthy of safeguarding and preservation. Consequently, heritage can be exhibited and visited.

In Critical Heritage Studies, there are two streams of thought about heritage. One often associates heritage with a socially significant discourse focusing on cultural objects.¹ These objects are included in a heritage discourse that makes conscious use of the past and is formulated primarily by experts, and by actors with vested interests.

The other stream in Critical Heritage Studies conceptualizes heritage as a broader kind of social action² and as a “particular cultural practice about cultural practice”³, i.e. presupposes creative reproduction, performance and performativity actualized by a wider range of cultural players.

While in contact with heritage, people tend to do “social memory, personal or family memory work, negotiating regional, class, ethnic, gendered or national identities.”⁴ If cultural memory is about discursive and performative engagements with the past, then heritage is about ‘packaging’ certain cultural products resulting from these engagements. Heritage thus implies a process of

¹ Smith, L. *Uses of Heritage*, Routledge, New York, 2006

² Harrison, R. ‘*What is Heritage?*’, in R. Harrison (ed.) *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*, Manchester/Milton Keynes: Manchester University Press/Open University, 2010, pp. 5–42; Harrison, R. ‘*Heritage as Social Action*’, in S. West (ed.) *Understanding Heritage in Practice*, Manchester/Milton Keynes: Manchester University Press/Open University, pp. 240–276, 2010.

³ Aronsson, P. & Gradén, L. (eds.), *Performing Nordic Heritage: Everyday Practices and Institutional Culture*, Ashgate, Farnham, 2013, p.4.

⁴ Campbell, G. & Smith, L. *Keeping Critical Heritage Studies Critical: Why “Post-Humanism” and the “New Materialism” Are Not So Critical*. Unpublished conference paper. Given at the third Association of Critical Heritage Studies Conference, Montreal, Canada, June 2016.





conscious selection, ‘manufacturing’⁵ an interpretation of the past for the present-day local, national and, increasingly, transnational audiences and users: “Heritage draws upon elements of history, memory, and selective relict artefacts as resources to effect a self-conscious anchoring of the present.”⁶ The process of heritage-making involves a heavy reliance on historical truths but also, and notably, elements of stylization and fantasy: “...heritage is envisaged as having moved along a continuum from the preservation of what remains, to the maintenance, replacement, enhancement and facsimile construction of what might, could or should have been.”⁷ If properly “manufactured”, heritage becomes sustainable⁸, as it attains the ability to bridge elements of the past with present-day demands and prospects of the future.

Yet another often mentioned aspect of heritage is its transforming potential. Heritage is highly instrumental in democratising and opening local communities and even entire societies, especially in the wake of large-scale crises and systemic transformations: “heritage proves... useful every time history is too academic and impersonal, memory too particular and tradition too local.”⁹ Heritage brings to the fore what may be conveyed to the future generations in the shape of curated and curtailed versions of culture and historical past. Without necessarily being intentionally politicized, heritage thus becomes instrumental in struggles over the definition of social classifications (included/excluded, modern/outdated, native/migrant) and attains a political significance as a node structuring symbolic hierarchies.¹⁰

Part of the debated or possibly politicized nature of heritage comes from the fact that it is always someone’s ‘inheritance’ by definition. Therefore, heritage is divisive, as it leaves someone ‘disinherited’. Nevertheless, collaborative approaches that gained increasing popularity over the past two decades, declare the ambition of extending and softening rigid boundaries between “their” and “our” heritage. Involvement of various stakeholders is viewed as a crucial factor of success: “...if we genuinely believe in inclusion, we must give all parties a seat at the table.”¹¹

⁵ Alsayyad, N. (ed.). *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism*. Routledge: London, 2001.

⁶ Ashworth, G. J., Graham, B. J. & Tunbridge, J. E. *Pluralising Pasts: Heritage, Identity and Place in Multicultural Societies*. London: Pluto Press, 2007, p.64.

⁷ Ashworth, Graham & Tunbridge, 2007, p. 26.

⁸ Soini, K., & Dessein, J. (2016). *Culture-sustainability relation: Towards a conceptual framework*. *Sustainability*, 8(2), 1-12.

⁹ Kowalski, K. (2013). *O istocie dziedzictwa europejskiego – rozważana*. Międzynarodowe centrum Kultury: Krakow, p.285

¹⁰ Bernsand, N., & Narvselius, E. “*Cultural Heritage in Sweden in the 2000s. Contexts, Debates, Paradoxes*,” *Politeja*, 1 (52) 2018, pp. 57–94.

¹¹ Levin, Amy K., *Global Mobilities: Refugees, Exiles, and Immigrants in Museums and Archives*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 9.





However, such involvement of the stakeholders can proceed differently. The inclusion immigrants in creation, interpretation and consumption of heritage can resemble two different modes of political participation. One of them is representative democracy in which political spokespersons are in the focus, while the audience remained relatively distant and passive. The second one is participative and direct democracy, which by contrast involves more active, embodied participation on the part of individual people.¹²

In reference to the listed conceptualizations of heritage, SO-CLOSE chose to define it as a changing cultural product and practice that reflects the claims of various actors and is open for cooperation and co-creation. This is the theoretical ground for SO-CLOSE's embracing of a communicative methodology and desire to involve core stakeholders, including migrants, into dialogue with the project partners. Moreover, the concepts reviewed above, through their focus on the link past-present-future, constitute the foundation for SO-CLOSE's over-arching ambition to "put in contact past and present experiences of violence, persecution and mass forced displacement, in order to improve knowledge and to protect both material and immaterial cultural heritage of refugees in Europe" (GA, p.11).

3. Theoretical models relevant for studies of migrant heritage

For the purposes of the project, several consequently elaborated theoretical models of heritage are found to be of special interest.

1. Studies of Dissonant Heritage:

Studies of the so-called **dissonant heritage**¹³ focus on heritage presentations that include a discordance of different stories and a lack of consensus in the way the past is represented and memories used in public spheres.

Oftentimes, dissonant heritage emerges in the wake of drastic changes of political regimes, expulsions, wars, migrations and natural disasters, i.e. catastrophes that result in transformations of socio-demographic patterns. Conflicts and tensions tend to arise around pieces of someone else's heritage that current population groups do not regard as important, valuable and/or emotionally appealing for their own identity constructions. Successful appropriations and re-interpretations of 'dissonant heritages' are not rare, but usually these heritages of the 'others' remain problematic in various contexts. In

¹² Porsché, Y. *Public Representations of Immigrants in Museums: Exhibition and Exposure in France and Germany*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2018, p.335.

¹³ Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, Gregory J. *Dissonant Heritage: the Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, Chichester: Wiley, 1996.





their acclaimed book¹⁴, Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge suggest a useful classification of various types of inclusion of someone else's pasts and heritages into the mainstream heritage discourses. The authors contend that in Western liberal societies "a non-interventionist and often quite superficial multiculturalism remains the norm"¹⁵ which means that neither an uncompromising exclusion of stories and representations of, for example, recent migrants, nor their complete assimilation is the case. Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish several strategies of partial inclusion/marginalization of dissonant heritages as shown in this figure:

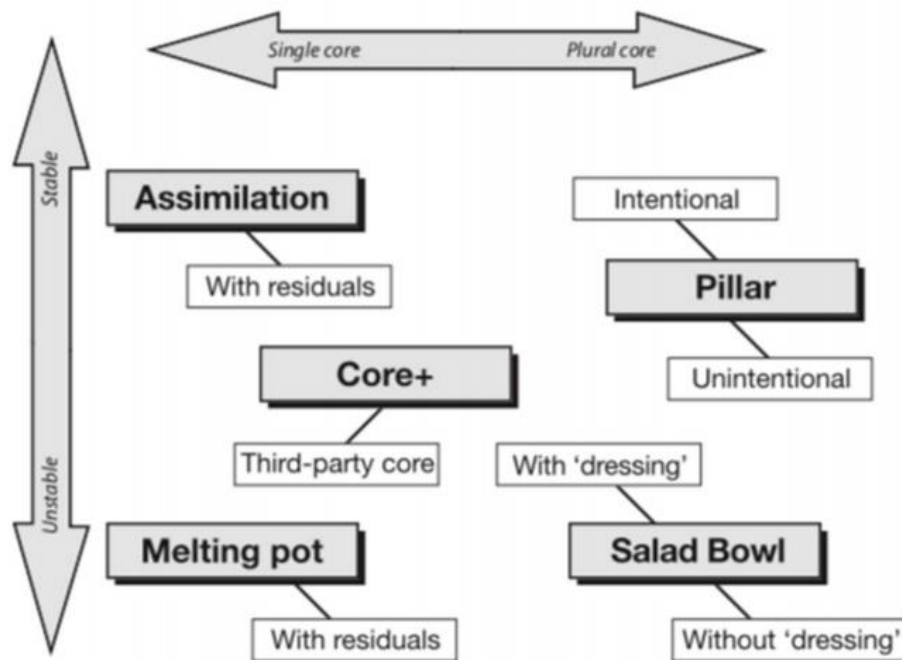


Figure 1. Key strategies of dealing with dissonant heritages.¹⁶

The latter two strategies of dealing with 'dissonant heritages', i.e. pillar and salad bowl, are most typical of the present-day European societies. Both presuppose practical separation of heritages of the 'others' combined with their formal acknowledgement and even celebration. Also, these heritages are often conceived as unchangeable, homogeneous, and even primordial, which often results in their confinement in well-established patterns of explanation (e.g., heritage of migrants tend to be viewed from the perspective of victimization, pity, passivity, trauma, emotional distance, and disconnection). These models are all abstractions and should not be seen more than ideal types. Moreover, the figure does not include a timeframe for how the heritage is constructed longitudinally or how the different models can morph into one another. None of these models perfectly encapsulates the approach embraced by SO-CLOSE. The

¹⁴ Ashworth, Graham & Tunbridge, 2007.

¹⁵ Ashworth, Graham & Tunbridge, 2007. p. 26.

¹⁶ Ashworth, Graham & Tunbridge, 2007. p. 72.





assimilationist and salad bowl models both imply the ambition to produce a single outcome, whereas the melting pot, core+ or pillar models all suggest the coexistence of different heritage discourses, in various relationships with one another. For our project, the ideal outcome would be a coherent but flexible heritage discourse for each specific context, one with multiple layers and levels, which accommodates the diversity of migrant and local discourses about the past.

2. Studies of different institutional logics of approaching diversity and heritage of minorities and migrants:

Historically, several constellations of institutional logics defined cultural politics and the sub-ordinated sector of heritage over different periods. Their combinations have to be problematized and critically approached, as each institutional logic has its own objectives and legitimation strategies that sometimes come to conflict with each other. The cultural-professional logic that stresses importance of high-quality cultural products and gives the upper hand to expert (professional, artistic, and academic) judgement is often on a collision course with a democratic logic that stipulates the equal participation of citizens and encourages the public co-creation of cultural assets. Each of these logics, in their turn, may come into conflict with bureaucratic logic that focuses on implementation of administrative decisions, obedience to rules and maintenance of hierarchies.

Different institutional logics are also employed by the heritage sector in its efforts to approach cultural diversity and multiculturalism. When **cultural-professional logic** is at stake, museums and other heritage institutions focus on creating opportunities to address the past of those who have been classified in broader contexts as diverging, marginalized or excluded. The exposed objects, staged activities and collected stories are expected to trigger reflections on historical relations between 'otherness' and 'ourness', and to open up for diverse interpretations. The promotion of knowledge about the 'others' is thus well in line with the main civic duty of contemporary heritage institutions¹⁷ and, consequently, it may serve as a springboard for political initiatives arousing civic engagement and inclusion. In line with this logic, even though heritage institutions are permeated by mainstream norms, ideologies and attitudes of the society, their unique assignment to expose complex links to the past and provide a qualified expert opinion on value of historical objects still pertains.

When the **democratic logic** takes the upper hand, various heritage actors prioritize the issues of participation, accessibility of heritage sites and representation of experiences of heritage users. This institutional logic usually

¹⁷ Stig Sørensen, M. L. & Carman, J. "Introduction: Making the Means Transparent: Reasons and Reflections," p. 4, in: Stig Sørensen, M. L. & Carman, J. (eds.) *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*. London: Routledge, 2009, pp.3-11.





elevates the argument about systematic marginalization or exclusion of some groups – usually ethnic minorities, migrants, youth, and disabled people – from benefits of heritage consumption. It is presumed that cultural heritage helps reduce racism, xenophobia, structural discrimination, and vestiges of colonial thinking.¹⁸ To address the task, heritage institutions may extend opening hours and drop entrance fees, move their activities to segregated urban areas, and adjust their venues and exhibitions to people with various needs. Most importantly, heritage bodies are expected to engage representatives of disadvantaged groups as consultants, local partners, and voluntary workers. A proclaimed purpose of such co-operation is to present experiences and histories of the dis-advantaged groups in tune with their own interpretations, to inscribe them into a narrative about collective (national, regional, transnational) accomplishments and thereby to ensure popular acceptance of the resulting heritage product. A side-effect of such heritage initiatives is, on the one hand, an edited and curtailed version of experiences of the ‘others’ that does not presuppose a further discussion or criticism¹⁹ and, on the other, often unrealistic expectations that the success of heritage initiatives may have significant spill-over effects such as increasing socio-cultural cohesion. The crux of the matter, however, is that ultra-conservative actors can invert the same argument and argue that the majority population needs to be protected from nondemocratic values and hostility towards national expressions allegedly coming from migrants. In SO-CLOSE, we embrace a combination of the cultural-professional and democratic logics, as it is reflected in our co-creation and co-design approach and our inclusive definition of stakeholders.

In heritage contexts, the bureaucratic logic is distinguishable first and foremost in recommendations on how to regulate and monitor diversity in most effective ways. For example, in Sweden cultural policies have long been underpinned by multiculturalism, with its basic demand of making the common public institutions more inclusive and representative of ethnic diversity.²⁰ When refracted in the bureaucratic logic, these claims may result in several procedures whose outcomes are easy to measure and report, but whose rationale is not that easy to justify. In Sweden, some cultural actors pronounced the ambition to ‘infuse diversity’ into their structures and even employ new staff based on their ethnic

¹⁸ An example of such approach is presented in the party document of the Green Party “*Culture as the Forth Domain of Welfare*”, <http://www.lansteatrarna.se/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/151007-MP-Kulturen-det-fjaerde-vaelfaerdsomr-det.pdf>, accessed 5 June 2018.

¹⁹ Rekdal, P. B. “*No Longer Newly Arrived - Museum Presentations of Immigrant Cultures in Nations with Dominant «Indigenous» Cultures*,” *Nordisk Museologi* 1, 1999, pp.118, 119; see also Johansson, Ch. “*The Museum in a Multicultural Setting. The Case of Malmö Museums*”, in: Gouriévidis. L. (ed.), *Museums and Migration. History, Memory and Politics*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2014, pp.122-137.

²⁰ Borevi, K. “*Understanding Swedish Multiculturalism*” in: Kivisto, P., Wahlbeck Ö. (eds.), *Debating Multiculturalism in the Nordic Welfare States*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2013, pp. 140–169.





origin and “experience of marginalization”.²¹ In tandem with this, heritage organizations began to specially monitor attendance of their events by immigrants and ethnic minorities in an effort to get credits for ‘work with diversity’. Both approaches have their ardent proponents and fierce critics. The latter rightly point out that such politically motivated campaigns clash with the idea of independent and qualitative heritage work.

Another example of bureaucratic rhetoric that builds on the quantitative approach to cultural difference is uncritical presentation of libraries and museums as major arenas or forums of integration. Following this logic, one needs to strive to increase the attendance and physical presence of newcomers within the walls of heritage institutions by any means possible. In this case, the frequency of contacts is taken as an evidence of the successful inclusion of ‘otherness’. Moreover, the heritage sector becomes inappropriately presented as responsible for solving problems that are actually beyond the scope of its organizational capacities, bearing in mind that the integration of the marginalized individuals and groups is a primary task of the labor market and political institutions. As the Norwegian anthropologist, Per B. Rekdal warned almost two decades ago, “When confronted with issues like the inclusion of immigrant cultures in museums, the political function and moral basis of the museum should be both acknowledged and accepted, but also controlled. Controlled in the sense that the museum's programs are the result of a self-critical examination of the role the museum should play, and realistic assumptions about which actions will produce the desired effects”.²²

Finally, the **managerial logic** brings to the fore pragmatic aspects of addressing cultural diversity by the heritage sector. The *raison d'être* of heritage institutions is partially justified by their usefulness and ability to generate economic return. Consequently, cultural diversity may be aptly presented as a resource for heritage institutions in their efforts to make financial ends meet. Moreover, in a broader perspective, cultural difference may be envisaged as directly contributing to the economic wellbeing of the local and national communities. Managerial logic has been broadly accepted in many European countries. This utilitarian thinking has a parallel in defining culture as a pillar of sustainable societal development by the EU.

3. The nexus of heritage, identity, and memory in contemporary Europe

Within this framework, cultural heritage is explored in its relationship with memory, urban culture, and identity. To concretize the fuzzy concept of memory and make it a workable tool, James Wertsch suggests approaching not a

²¹ Lars Anders Johansson, *Att dansa efter maktens pipa: kultur i politikens tjänst*, Stockholm: Timbro, 2017, pp.141-160.

²² Rekdal, 1999, p.122.





collective memory, but rather collective knowledge of the past which manifests itself in knowledge of texts, narratives, visual details, and might give rise to quite inclusive ‘textual communities’ or ‘interpretive communities’. Such collective knowledge of the past may be seen as a common ground for both heritage (elements of the past selected and transmitted to the future generations, even outside one’s own community), and collective memories (the recollected meaningful past addressed in commemorations and rituals of a certain community). He calls for recognizing a distinction between abstract ‘narrative templates’ and ‘specific narratives’, which may help to analyze a wide range of cases where mnemonic communities seem to exist in implacable opposition. Wertsch assumes that debates focusing on factual history may help to overcome this resistance to change, but that such efforts will be limited as long as the forces of deep ‘narrative templates’ are not recognized.²³

Given that historically heritage was used to forge and maintain bounded, homogeneous identities, especially the nation-state, a major issue is “whether heritage is capable of accommodating other kinds of identities, especially those that might be considered... ‘hybrid’, ‘open’, or ‘transcultural’.”²⁴

A core benefit of our project is a novel theoretical perspective on what Macdonald (2013) calls “memory-heritage-identity complex”, i.e. tensions and synergies between various ways of dealing with the past (memory, heritage), present-day and historical migration, and multitude of identity formations. This resonates with the SO-CLOSE’s objectives to enable inclusive and participative access to cultural heritage, foster mutual understanding between refugees and the receiving European societies, and contribute to social cohesion and ultimately to integration (GA, p.3).

Through the co-creation process, we aim to formulate new identity stories focusing on cultural diversity and multi-layered pasts in four countries (Italy, Greece, Poland and Spain). These will emerge from complex local histories, present-day EU co-operation and national accommodation of migrating populations, as well as from the refugee stories themselves. The reception of these stories will be tested in focus groups involving our broadly defined stakeholders (in particular, local communities, politicians, heritage developers etc.). These encounters may reveal tensions between different versions of the past or degrees of visibility. Interviews and focus groups may point out dissonant, heterogeneous, conflictual memories relating to migration, some of which may already be actualized in public discussions about urban heritage. The task of curating the form and content of the digital tools to be created by SO-

²³ Wertsch, J. “*Collective Memory and Narrative Templates*”, *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 75 (1), 2008, pp. 133-156.

²⁴ Macdonald, S. *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 102.





CLOSE involves identifying and attempting to negotiate inclusive representations of heritage.

However, the market forces and the search for broader publics (opinion-makers, politicians, local communities, visitors, migrant populations etc.) may affect the attempts by heritage actors to approach migrants and migration. As not everyone's heritage is prioritized equally under market pressures, the cultural institution partners in the project, who are the main heritage curators, must moderate and counter processes of marginalization at work in a heritage economy, especially in the aftermath of the project, as this will affect the long-term sustainability of SO-CLOSE outcomes.

4. Europeanization of heritage

In most general terms, heritage institutions and cultural actors tend to approach experiences of historical and contemporary migrations, expulsions, and exile in two different, but inter-connected ways:

- as an extraordinary, but nevertheless not unthinkable experience that can happen everyone in times of crisis, hence everyone can potentially identify with migrant experiences, accept them and empathize with them;
- as a unique experience depending on a coincidence of particular – catastrophic and tragic – circumstances, and therefore deserving analysis, discussion, and reflection.

Both approaches are compatible with the 'European' normative framework that brings to the fore human rights and standards of human conduct. In a somewhat schematic manner, an outcome of the recent debates on possibility of Europeanisation of historical memories and heritages can be presented as follows. With the advance of EU integration, and especially with the Declaration on European Identity (1973) and the acknowledgement of "the common cultural heritage" in the text of the Maastricht Treaty (1992, Article 128), certain periods and events of continental history have been defined as those of pan-European significance. The brightest example of such a re-definition and, consequently, the transformation of a cross-border historical event into one which is at the centre of European memory has undoubtedly been the Holocaust.²⁵ The potential of Europeanisation is also vested in "labelling, mapping and narrating" other periods, events, figures, and cultural objects as distinctly European.²⁶ After all, "Europeanization can be found wherever people talk, write, sing about or

²⁵ Assmann, A. "The Holocaust—a Global Memory? Extensions and Limits of a New Memory Community," in: *Memory at Global Age. Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*, Assmann, A. and Conrad, S. (eds.), Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan 2010, pp. 97-117; Leggewie, C. *Der Kampf um die europäische Erinnerung: Ein Schlachtfeld wird besichtigt*. Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck 2011.

²⁶ McNamara, K. *The Politics of Everyday Europe: Constructing Authority in the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015, pp.50-54.





memorialize Europe.”²⁷ Another aspect of the Europeanisation of heritages and collective memories arises from discovering the transnational circulation²⁸ and transcultural entanglements²⁹ of stories, objects, events, periods, and personalities in Europe. Yet another factor that affects both political discourses and intellectual discussions on the Europeanisation of heritage is normative underpinnings of the EU project, i.e., what is prone to be evaluated as European. Present formats of European memory consistently emphasize peace, respect for human rights, diversity, justice, freedom, and democracy and thereby reflect the new normative conditionality developed by the EU and the Council of Europe. It should, however, be kept in mind that, as some researchers point out with good reason, “Europeanization in terms of a core set of values presents more difficulties than solutions.”³⁰

Not only does it have the potential to prioritize selected normative aspects at the expense of the multifariousness of the past; the humanistic position promoted by the European commemorative “politics of regret” often focuses on suffering as an attribute of both victims and perpetrators and, therefore, imposes selective strategies of reconciliation instead of promoting critical assessments and conceptualisations.³¹ Curiously, despite the efforts to define, discover and evaluate the parameters of Europeanization or European dimension, in practice it frequently works as an empty container to be filled with suitable content in every concrete case. Nevertheless, as Sasatelli assumes, “The fact that there is no common agreed content of ...the European dimension does not equate necessarily to irrelevance or to a ‘lack’, as many diagnose, as it can still provide a common symbology that people can relate to and use to gain legitimization: what we share in symbols is ... form rather than content. ... The common European dimension should not be conceptualized as totally controlled and imposed from above by the EU, because ... the EU has very little control and power to impose the content and (...) there are many ‘narrators’ appropriating the European discourse.”³² She continues later: “a European dimension is really

²⁷ von Hirschhausen, U. & Patel, K.K. “*Europeanization in History: An Introduction*,” in: Conway, M. and Patel, K.K. (eds.) *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century. Historical Approaches*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2010, p.8.

²⁸ De Cesari, C. & Rigney, A. (eds.) *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, Berlin: De Gruyter 2014.

²⁹ Falser, M. & Juneja, M. (eds.) *‘Archaeologizing’ Heritage: Transcultural Entanglements between Local Social Practices and Global Virtual Realities*, Springer 2013; Bond, L. & Rapson, J. (eds.) *The Transcultural Turn: Interrogating Memory Between and Beyond Borders*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter 2014; Feindt, G., Krawatzek, F., Mehler, D., Friedemann, P. & Trimcev, R. “*Entangled Memory: Toward a Third Wave in Memory Studies*,” *History and Theory* 53 (2014), pp. 24-44; Flüchter, A. & Schöttli, J. (eds.) *The Dynamics of Transculturality. Concepts and Institutions in Motion*, Springer 2015.

³⁰ Hirschhausen & Patel, 2010, p. 8.

³¹ Kirn, G. “*Transnationalism in Reverse: from Yugoslav to Post-Yugoslav Memorial Sites*,” in: De Cesari, C. and Rigney, A. *Transnational Memory. Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter 2014, pp. 313-338.

³² Sassatelli, M. *Becoming Europeans. Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies*, Basingstoke:





what sociologists ... call a frame ... created and expressed through the narrative of 'unity in diversity'. At the same time, that frame is interpreted, filled with contents that are not necessarily what the official rhetoric might have wanted or expected."³³ These observations about the ambiguous and contingent nature of the European dimension are highly relevant in the context of this chapter.

Another channel of Europeanization has often been eclipsed when only the rhetorical aspects of heritage-making and memory work are attended to. Actually, one may find evidence that the European dimension has often been evoked in practices and strategies that "not always directed to Europe as such ... [but rather] turn on the concept of Europe."³⁴

Accordingly, it seems plausible that the Europeanization of heritage may be addressed as "a category of practice which has been projected and performed, experienced and explored, labelled and legitimized, appropriated and emulated in a range of contexts."³⁵ It may be assumed that not one, but several European heritage discourses have been 'downloaded', 'uploaded' and 'cross-loaded'³⁶ in any concrete case. The Europeanization of heritage proceeds putting into practice several related discourses.³⁷ Among them one can distinguish a traditional expert heritage discourse spliced with 'European' phraseology and normative formulas, as well as a more inclusive expert discourse emphasizing the importance of local participation, accessibility, and the mutual enrichment of academic and non-academic expertise. In So-CLOSE, we need to have our eyes open for heritage practices and representations that resonate with the Europeanization of heritage 'from below', as different forms and qualities of the migration heritage seem to be evolving primarily on intersections of Subaltern Heritage Discourse and responsive European Authorised Heritage Discourse. Awareness of these cross-pollinations may be instrumental in blueprinting directions of future analysis of the interview and focus groups material collected within the project.

Community interests (Subaltern Heritage Discourse)	National focus (Authorised Heritage Discourse)	Focus on engaged activist expertise (European Authorised Heritage Discourse)
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Palgrave Macmillan 2009, p.123.

³³ Ibid, p. 127-128.

³⁴ Kaiser, W., Krankenhagen, S. & Poehls, K. (eds.) *Exhibiting Europe in Museums. Transnational Networks, Collections, Narratives, and Representations*. Translated from the German, Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books 2014, p.4.

³⁵ von Hirschhausen & Patel, 2010, p. 8.

³⁶ Bache, I., Bulmer, G. & Parker, O. (eds.) *Politics in the European Union*, 4th edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011, p. 46-49.

³⁷ Narvselius, E. "Eurovikings. European Heritage Discourses and Transnational Practices in a Viking Site", in: Kowalski, K. and B. Törnquist-Plewa (eds.) *The Europeanization of Heritage and Memories in Poland and Sweden*. Crakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2016: 75-101.



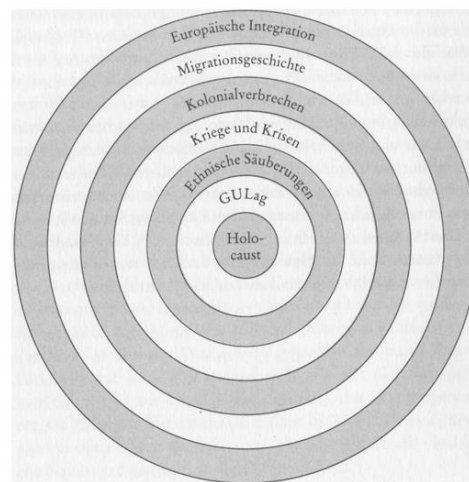


<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass-root • Profane knowledge • Non-elite users • Familiarity • Recognizability • Emotional attachment • Local practices • Local networking • Possibility of transformation and commercial exploitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down • Expert knowledge • Elite custodians • Authenticity • Monumentality • Meticulous evaluation • Aesthetics • Institutional co-operation • Preservation and limited commercial use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Down-up /circular • Expert knowledge • Non-elite users and elite advisers • Authenticity • Familiarity • Emotional attachment • Innovation and limited commercial use • Transnational scope, informal networks, engagement of institutions
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For the SO-CLOSE project, the European Authorised Discourse is strongly relevant, while keeping a strong connection with the local communities without whom none of the co-creation and co-design activities could happen.

5. The seven circles of pan-European memory and Pudding Model

Among the acclaimed and productive approaches to Europeanization of historical narratives and heritages is Claus Leggewie’s ‘seven circles of pan-European memory’.³⁸ His framework brings to the fore violence and (in)voluntary migration as a quintessential part of shared modern European experiences. This model assigns crucial significance to the events of the twentieth century’s history that



destroyed pre-existing patterns of ethno-cultural diversity, such as the Holocaust, GULAG, ethnic cleansings, wars, and colonial misdeeds.

Figure 2. The seven circles of European memory (European Integration; History of Migrations; Crimes of Colonialism; Wars and Crises; Ethnic expulsions; GULAG; The Holocaust)

Nevertheless, the processes with more ambiguous effect on diversity patterns such as migration and the European integration are also a part of the model. Thus, it makes sense to look at the urban histories of ‘failed diversity’ through the prism of seven circles of pan-European memory, as since 1989 the themes distinguished by Leggewie have structured public debates and affect-ed commemorative practices all over Europe. Especially

³⁸ Leggewie, C. Der Kampf um die europäische Erinnerung: Ein Schlachtfeld wird besichtigt, Verlag C.H. Beck: Munich, 2011





interesting for SO-CLOSE are museum exhibitions and other heritage projects when the Holocaust is taken by migrant artists and domestic actors as a vantage point for reflections on the traumatic experiences of racialized migrants and (negative) reception of migrants in the hosting countries (see below).

Another more pragmatic model, or rather a checklist of Europeanization of heritage brings to the fore not periods of shared European history, but European values.³⁹ The model carries the abbreviation PUDDING, which refers to Progress, Utility, Dignity, Diversity, Inclusion, Narrativity and Governance. When analyzing PROGRESS in museums, the storytelling should be focused on one general storyline. This is not to say that only linear stories can be considered European. Yet in museums' narratives, progress could be found in a most general relation of the present to the past and especially in the abilities to grasp social change, like the one arising in the wake of contemporary mass migration.

In terms of UTILITY, visions, missions, and activities of heritage institutions come to the fore, with special attention paid to what they teach (e.g., competences and skills), and also to their public mission (e.g., in promoting tolerance and appreciating differences).

DIGNITY comprises such concepts as individual, human rights and free will in the center. A closer look is given to the ways individuals are presented in museum, and also how a sensitive heritage is dealt with. Dealing with the sensitive heritage is more complex than “paying homage to ancestors”, as private and individual approaches of the present-day audiences should also be treated with respect. Dignity is most evidently at stake when remains of human bodies are musealized and when specific objects associated with trauma and human loss, e.g. in connection to traumatic stories of migration, are exhibited.

The value of DIVERSITY is clearly indicated in the EU's motto “Unity in Diversity”. It can be operationalized by cultural institutions in reference to objects and exhibits; narrative strategies and storytelling; audiences and other stakeholders – especially in terms of their participation in activities of heritage institutions. When addressing this issue in museums, the focus should be on complexity of the presentations of the past in terms of class, gender, generation, disability, ethnicity, origins etc. This is also an indicator of INCLUSION, the next element of the PUDDING model. Inclusion refers to unique value of an individual and her abilities to comprehend the heritage on display. At the same time, an inclusive exhibition would be the one where unofficial and marginalized heritages are present and audiences are encouraged to participate in interpreting museums' messages. This leads in turn to NARRATIVITY and storytelling as the most obvious strategies of heritage presentation. Narrativity, as a potential to interpret objects

³⁹ Piekarska-Duraj, L. and Törnquist-Plewa, B. (2018). „Europeanization in Regional Museums? Examples from Sweden and Poland”, *Politeja* 52(1): 26-56.





by telling stories, compliments the value of progress and the general time model structured for representation purposes in museums, but it also indicates that the visitors are actually able to create their own stories identifying with some aspects of heritage on display. Another way of discussing narrativity can be found in mission statements, where museums often aim to present themselves as either interpreters or neutral transmitters of the past.

The cherry on top of the PUDDING model is the question of democratic GOVERNANCE, understood both as a way of influencing contemporary political scene and reflecting museums' way of narrating power relations of the past exhibited. This element of analysis is directly connected to the issue of utility, as it shows how museums respond to the need of providing their visitors, especially migrants, with opportunities to develop civil and citizenship competencies. Another aspect of governance which can be analyzed is museums' involvement in local affairs, be it by creating unique outreach programs for local communities or catalyzing local initiatives. This is also an effective way of interpreting museums' political programs and ideologies both performed publicly and on the backstage. The question of democracy is essential in this case, finalizing the whole set of research issues by examining in ideological perspective the problems of inclusion of audiences and minority narratives, opportunities for participation, equality in representation and the integrity of a person as a key concept to the logic of democracy.

4. Instrumentalising academic approaches to heritage within the framework of SO-CLOSE: What's in it for us?

Considering that SO-CLOSE is on its early stage of implementation, it makes sense to outline, at least to some extent, the ways in which the project is connected to the existing theoretical research on European cultural heritage. The team has already formulated a concrete research procedure as use of memories/historical knowledge about a selected episode of tragic past for crafting inclusive heritage. The project application states that "social identity theory of intergroup behaviour argues that conflict between groups diminishes if they discover they have things in common, and that they can build a new hybrid identity together. Thus, SO-CLOSE proposes to use the memory of forced migration that both local communities in Europe and refugees coming from afar share, as a ground upon which to meet and discover commonalities..." (GA, p.10). Also, a range of digital tools boosting heritage consumption among migrants and facilitating collaborative co-creation of heritage will be designed as an outcome. Conceptually, such research outline points to three potentially very productive directions topical in heritage studies.

National vs transnational and cosmopolitan configurations of heritage. Heritage has traditionally been established as a part of national institutional frameworks.





SO-CLOSE has both a local and transnational dimension (dealing with cross-border migration in the specific context of the four locations). Thus, it is well-placed to explore, in the co-creation and co-design process, how ‘the national’ can be modified/enriched/diversified in meeting with ‘the transnational’.⁴⁰

Personal vs institutional crafting of heritage. The existing research literature focuses mostly on museums as the main heritage institutions. Their collaboration with migrants usually involves contacts with (self-appointed) representatives of (visible, approachable, and distinguishable) selected communities of migrants and their descendants. SO-CLOSE is not about museums and traditional curatorial practices, and it views heritage-making as something that happens also beyond museum walls. Moreover, it aims to encourage such heritage initiatives and acts of heritage-making by providing recently migrated individuals with special digital tools. In doing so, researchers involved in the project are given the opportunity to observe the effect of partly moving heritage-making outside traditional institutional contexts (museums and other public spaces where regulated heritage-making activities take place) with the inclusion of refugee-driven heritage collection.

Digital tools as facilitators of knowledge of the past vs *historytainment*. SO-CLOSE will deliver a set of digital tools that will be the growing ground of an inclusive storytelling by refugees and by the local communities. Since this is one of the innovations of the project, researchers will be able to use the data that emerges during the creation and implementation of these tools to learn more about the preconditions and necessary recourses for turning digital tools into instruments of learning lessons of history. In designing the tools, the project is aware of the dangers of *historytainment*, or mediatized history, marked by superficiality and lack of historical context. Our tools aim to make digital heritage emotionally and esthetically powerful, while minimizing the danger of opening old wounds and revoking traumatic experiences (for example by including historical facts and by providing guidelines for how to design these experiences at the intersection of the digital and analogue worlds).

In general terms, it makes sense to consider already well-described and thoroughly analyzed conceptualizations of heritage as a point of departure for searching new – and, possibly, more ethically justifiable, and innovative – ways of producing ‘*migration-sensitive*’ and even ‘*post-migrant*’⁴¹ forms of cultural

⁴⁰ Macdonald, S. 2013. *Memorylands. Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*. London, New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 162.

⁴¹ The emerging cross-European debate and research on the ‘postmigrant’ condition acknowledges antagonistic positions towards migration, and struggles about participation and representation, but also highlights new alliances that are not reduced to origin or heritage. See, for example, Schramm, M., S. Pultz Moslund, A. Ring Petersen,





heritage.

The same question about synergies between academic conceptualizations of heritage and research framework of SO-CLOSE can be also formulated another way round. The Grant Agreement states namely that “Based on theories of cultural heritage-making, ...SO-CLOSE will improve social cohesion and promote mutual understanding between refugees and their local communities” (p.3). This means that the team has to continuously deliberate on instrumentality of academic knowledge about cultural heritage for the purpose of the project. In other words, the question is how social cohesion and mutual understanding between refugees and their local communities may be advanced with the help of heritage-making and by exposing commonalities of past and present experiences.

Heritage-making has been for several decades a primary field for experiments with and testing limits of collaborative approach. Volumes and volumes have been written about ways of engaging local communities into heritage work, and how social cohesion can be created by means of activating people’s reflection on their past, identity and present-day realities of living together. The core lesson of these studies may be summarized as the **necessity of tailored approach to different cases, sensitivity to local concerns and sustainable thought-through solutions.**

Underpinned by claims on truthfulness, value and links to the past, heritage work provides a unique opportunity to employ, interpret and transform narratives of various actors meeting in a common space. **Narratives are all-human cognitive instruments** that set out causal relations between actions and events.⁴² A core feature of narratives is activation of general logical frameworks for including difference of opinions, reactions, and moral points into one’s stories. To put it bluntly, focus on heritage and valorized links to the past gives our team an opportunity to come to the core of the research task by virtue of dealing with narratives formulated by migrants and local communities.

As a cultural product circulated in the national, transnational and global domains, **heritage is charged with a potential to foster cosmopolitan sociability**, i.e. “an ability to find aspects of the shared human experience including aspirations for a better world within or despite what would seem to be divides of culture and belief.”⁴³ It has to be emphasized that heritage can be created, interpreted,

M. Gebnauer, H.C. Post, S. Vitting-Seerup, F. Wiegand (2019). *Reframing Migration, Diversity, and the Arts: The Postmigrant Condition*. London: Routledge.

⁴² Ricoeur, P. *Time and Narrative*. Volume I. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984.

⁴³ Glick Schiller, N., Darieva, T. & Gruner-Domic, S. (2011) Defining Cosmopolitan Sociability in a Transnational Age. An Introduction, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2011, 34:3, pp. 402-403.





visited and transformed not only by elites conscious of their cosmopolitan outlooks, but also by a much broader range of actors with different experience of openness to the world and thus with different experiences of cosmopolitan sociability. Moreover, heritage makes cosmopolitan experiences and connections tangible and comprehensible, as heritage work takes place in concrete localities and with participation of concrete actors driven by certain ideas about the past, the place, and the collectivity. Thus, heritage work facilitates thinking about ‘cosmopolitanism’ as not about an abstract ‘high-brow’ category, but about plurality of loyalties and ways of openness to the world which does not exclude social cohesion and human solidarity with collectivities, traditions, and outlooks. Accessible languages and tools of digital media may create additional opportunities for rooting cosmopolitan reflexivity in the locality.

Last but not least, as it has been stipulated in the Grant Agreement, “[w]ithout necessarily being intentionally politicized, heritage ...becomes instrumental in struggles over the definition of social classifications (included/excluded, modern/outdated, native/migrant) and attains a political significance as a node structuring symbolic hierarchies. Heritage thereby functions as an instrument of (dis)empowering groups and organizations with various ideological outlooks” (GA, p.11). In the context of SO-CLOSE, we should be ready to **distinguish possible political effects (both on the local level and in a broader context) of our efforts to expose commonalities of historical experience and boost reflection on heritage, memory and community with a help of digital tools.** In the process of curatorial co-creation, cultural institutions will need to be aware of ideological biases and implications of empowering or disempowering some outlooks but not others. They will also need to be aware of the deep-rooted inequalities in the public political domain that might set limits to our effort to empower immigrants by means of heritage-making and digital toolkits. In dealing with the creation of comparative heritage activities, the cultural institutions will be pushed to evaluate whether they need to address these inequalities at the individual or whether wider, societal level actions are needed.

5. Barriers to empowering migrant heritages

Early on, SO-CLOSE declared its ambition to use communicative methodologies to get hands-on knowledge about barriers precluding migrants from participation in cultural initiatives and consumption of heritage in the host societies. Defining and analyzing these obstacles is necessary for getting a clue about activities and tools that might improve the situation: “The relevance of the communicative methodology lies on two core foci. On the one hand, the communicative methodology focuses on two main dimensions of analysis, the exclusionary and the transformative ones. The former seeks to identify and describe the obstacles and barriers in the situation that is being studied. The latter focuses on the possibilities that are enabling improvements in the situation studied (GA, pp.17-18). Therefore, knowledge about and thoughtful representations of similarities





and differences between the migratory experiences of the host societies and the present-day global mobilities are the main access in crafting inclusive ‘migrating heritage.’⁴⁴ However, various actors should be aware of tensions and stumbling blocks affecting formulation/presentation of empowering migration histories, and complicating access to them in the public space.

Based on the reviewed research literature and with the project objectives in mind, several barriers to formulation/presentation of empowering migrating heritages can be outlined. **Various ‘banal’ strategies of silencing controversial, traumatic, “unpleasant” and unconventional historical topics and memories persist in the hosting societies** in different daily and institutional contexts.⁴⁵ They may hamper creation of “migrating heritages” even in absence of obvious discriminatory intentions and exclusive rhetoric. As Amy Levin writes, “Representation in a museum becomes symbolic of [the new migrants’] arrival and acceptance; a lack of representation signals denial and rejection.”⁴⁶

Another barrier results from an **imbalance between ‘praxis’ and ‘proxies’**: in the institutional contexts (museums, libraries, art centers etc.) public ‘praxis’ of engagement into critical and experimental debate may be overshadowed by various ‘proxies’ portraying and acknowledging more or less fixed mainstream representations of migration and migrants.⁴⁷

Although **focus on individual narratives and experiences** is an established part of contemporary curatorial practices, there are reasons to problematize this taken-for-granted approach. Typical of public presentations of global migration (especially in museums), this one-sided strategy may preclude deeper understanding of broader historical and contemporary contexts of migration. Losing the “bigger picture” creates an obvious barrier to discussing collective experiences that may be compared and analyzed. In many cases people become refugees, expellees, and exiles because of real or perceived group characteristics. In particular, genocidal practices are inseparable from collective categorizations. Identifying the shared experiences in individual cases and inscribing individual destinies into a bigger explanatory context are key preconditions of successful heritage-making.⁴⁸

Celebratory and **nostalgic accounts about migrants’ contributions** (especially contributions of marginalized and persecuted groups) can also raise barriers

⁴⁴ Innocenti, P. (ed.). *Migrating Heritage: Experiences of Cultural Networks and Cultural Dialogue in Europe*, Ashgate, Farnham, 2014.

⁴⁵ Connerton, P. *How Modernity Forgets*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

⁴⁶ Levin, 2017: 12.

⁴⁷ Porsché, Y. *Public Representations of Immigrants in Museums: Exhibition and Exposure in France and Germany*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2018, p.333

⁴⁸ Levin, 2017.





to formulation of empowering migrating heritages. Nostalgia often functions as a kind of epistemology, prioritizing particular cultural narratives to the exclusion of competing stories. Focus on food, aesthetic items and handicrafts have a tendency to eclipse presentation of traumatic experiences and systematic oppression of some groups at home or/and in the host societies. This is especially obvious when experiences of migrating women are addressed.

Empowering migrants sometimes comes for the price of historicity and truthful presentations. Heritage-making in collaboration with migrants is beneficial but may also imply censorship and gatekeeping from both sides. Also, the demand of co-creation, recognition and visibility often imply the use of well-worn metaphors, strategies, and activities. Repetitive metaphors of migration (suitcases, maps, boats, even picture of Alan Kurdi...) may still serve well in many contexts and are already an established part of the migrating heritage. However, one needs to be sensitive to more reflective ways of approaching migratory experiences that activate not only pity, shame, anxiety, or nostalgia, but also respect, curiosity and empathy.

Finally, we need to be aware of **inherent limitations of digital solutions in the sphere of heritage work** and, in particular, in forging migrating heritages. Selective processes of cyber cultures and digital space where 'going viral' does not necessarily correspond with educating, artistic and moral aspects of the content, is one side of the coin. Another aspect that deserves further discussion is how digital content created/shared by users can be incorporated, or made compatible, with institutional frameworks of cultural and heritage institutions. The task to open the domain of heritage and attract to it as many categories of users as possible, especially via cultural institutions' websites, needs to be combined with robust curatorship that is able to adjust and balance the messy content coming from the net.

6. Barriers to accessing migrant heritage

The economic, political and the social mismatch between the interests of migrants and the curatorial choices made by museums and heritage initiatives is one of the most mentioned barriers to accessing migrant heritage. Migrants coming from poor, mostly agricultural regions do not feel a need or urge to visit heritage institutions whose narratives are usually created for urbanized and economically stable population groups.⁴⁹

Lack of unconventional interactive strategies and safe spaces where exchange of experiences, opinions and knowledge between migrants and the local communities may appear spontaneously and naturally. Some difficulties have

⁴⁹ Levin, 2017.





much to do with **issues of generation and gender**: e.g., younger female migrants and families with children are most often targeted by heritage projects, while older generations and young males (especially unaccompanied minors) are more difficult to engage for the lack of economic resources, pedagogical skills and/or relevant content. Related to this is the general problem arising from **the excessive focus on participatory culture spearheaded by contemporary heritage institutions**. As Susanna Bautista⁵⁰ points out, “The digital age is responsible for a participatory culture, particularly among the youth... The term participatory culture, however, covers only a segment of society today that does not affect older, more traditional museum visitors that may be distracted by devices or upset by docents requesting their participation by asking too many questions. The condition of museum myopia is triggered by a desire to serve one group at the expense of another, one place at the expense of another, and by a desire to pursue trends at the expense of remaining dependable and familiar.”

Another sort of concerns relates to **‘projectization’ of collaborative work with migrants**, which means that they are not provided with permanent facilities, spaces or tools to present histories, experiences, artist expressions etc. triggered by migration. Materials and tools tend to disappear, physically and digitally, because they cannot be sustained after funding ceased.⁵¹

“One of the greatest barriers to true participation is the way it so often yields **struggles for power between professionals and community members**, or lower-level museum staff and their superiors.”⁵² This tension has to be recognized and viewed not only as a source of conflict, but also as a trigger of necessary discussions and disputes over inclusive cultural heritage. Professionals should retain final authority over curation, installation, didactics, acquisition of works, but simultaneously facilitate empowering spaces for users/co-creators of heritage. Digital experiments may help common voices to be heard in the same space as curators.⁵³

Last but not least, another serious issue putting obstacles to inclusive heritages is the **lack of recognition of the humanity** of not only contemporary global migrants, but also of those who are worried and uncomfortable with seeing the world around them change.⁵⁴ Inclusion of local sceptics and non-violent anti-migrant actors (quite often descendants of previous migrating groups and expellees) into discussions about migrations and migrating heritages is quite desirable and may even be rewarding.

⁵⁰ Bautista, S. *Museums in the Digital Age*. AltaMira Press, 2013, p.222.

⁵¹ Levin, 2017, p. 13.

⁵² Levin, 2017, p. 13.

⁵³ Bautista, 2013, p.228.

⁵⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/project-result-content/6d5fdb95-53a0-4fe4-9107-19487dbb39c1/Access-Culture-migrants-refugees_low.pdf, p.13.





7. Supplementary material on the nexus of heritage, migration, and diversity

This final chapter delivers a list of supplementary reading material and examples of past projects that have addressed contemporary and historical experiences of migration similarly to SO-CLOSE. These lists are specifically meant as inspiration for the SO-CLOSE project participants, especially representatives of cultural institutions, who may take these into consideration when **designing how their own curatorial practices might be improved with the help of digital tools** or, alternatively, what new cultural activities and heritage initiatives can be suggested in digital format. The main lesson of the reviewed literatures in this respect is **the absence of ready-made recipes that can easily be extrapolated from other local and temporal contexts**. Importance of a reflective curatorial job with the collections, on the one hand, and communities, on the other hand, is the leitmotif of the reviewed literature. Another important finding of the reviewed academic literature is that despite seeming diversity of ethically viable and inclusive solutions a list of “digitalizable” activities is actually limited. From the vantage point of the project, **it is indispensable to further discuss with the developers of digital solutions how already existing digital tools such as, for example, digital exhibitions, participatory video, and digital story-telling can be applied in order to create discussion forums, digital meeting places and other types of cultural interactions** in order to trigger cultural participation and heritage-making among migrant populations in Spain, Italy, Greece, and Poland.

Considering that there are several cultural institutions, including one museum (MUME), it makes sense to pay special attention to findings and recommendations of several research publications originating from previous successful international projects. Their special focus was on the role of contemporary museums in forging migrant heritages as well as promoting inclusive attitudes towards migrants in the host societies. The MeLa Project investigated the role of museums in 21st century Europe, their ongoing evolution triggered by accelerated mobility, and the consequent increase of cultural encounters and cross-fertilization of societies and identities. By analyzing the challenges and opportunities emerging from globalization, mobility, and migration, MeLa identified innovative practices that can support contemporary museums in fostering mutual understanding, social cohesion, and a sharper awareness of an inclusive European identity.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ The booklet presenting a synthetic overview on the main findings of the MeLa may be downloaded from: <http://www.mela-project.polimi.it/publications/1266.htm>





Among the books that summarize the findings of MeLa and another EU-funded project focusing on heritage in changing societal conditions, Enamus, the following texts are especially recommendable for SO-CLOSE partners.

RECOMMENDED READING MATERIAL:

- **Levin, Amy K. (ed.) *Global Mobilities: Refugees, Exiles, and Immigrants in Museums and Archives*. Oxon: Routledge, 2017.**

The volume discusses a range of heritage-making cases with focus on concepts of participation, identity, community, and migration. From the perspective of SO-CLOSE, the introductory chapter by Amy Levin is of special importance, as it takes up the issue of barriers to mi-grants' participation in heritage initiatives.

- **Whitehead, Christopher, Eckersley, Susannah & Mason, Rhiannon (eds.) *Placing Migration in European Museums. Theoretical, Contextual and Methodological Foundations*. MeLa Books. Politecnico di Milano, Dipartimento di Progettazione dell'Architettura, 2012.**

Studies in this edited volume present finding of MeLa project. They derive from a complex understanding of the nexus of place-people-culture through which migration and related issues of belonging, disadvantage and prejudice can be presented as historicized phenomena involving present-day antagonisms. The repositioning of place means that the inevitable political agency of heritage institutions can be problematized and reflexively engaged with socio-political debates, tensions, and possibilities. The key conceptual foci of the book presented in separate chapters are nation, borders, and European cities as arenas of meeting otherness.

- **Peressut, Luca Basso & Clelia Pozzi, eds. *Museums in an Age of Migrations Questions, Challenges, Perspectives*. MELA books. Politecnico di Milano, Dipartimento di Progettazione dell'Architettura: Milano, 2012.**

Along with several thought-provoking texts, the book contains a chapter on digital interaction design (ID) that enhances aesthetical appeal, stimulate curiosity, and have a great potential to attract various groups of visitors. This chapter is of special interest for SO-CLOSE (Jamie Allen, David Gauthier, Kirsti Reitan Andersen What Kind of Technology is the Museum? pp.161-173).

- **Gouriévidis, Laurence.(ed.) *Museums and Migration: History, Memory and Politics*. London: Routledge, 2014.**

Several chapters in this edited volume showcase museums' response to calls for increased visibility and participation of migrant and indigenous communities in artistic and educational spaces. The book takes up the issue of connection between the past of the local/national communities, and the past of migrants. It





recognizes and supports migrant contributions to community-building across the globe.

- **Innocenti, Perla (red.), *Migrating Heritage: Experiences of Cultural Networks and Cultural Dialogue in Europe***. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014.

Europeanization of heritage and memory is the focal conceptual point here. The volume brings further the discussion on ‘migrating heritage’ and contains several useful chapters on practices of creating cultural dialogue with reference to heritage issues. Cross-border networking, visualization and storytelling are among the topics discussed by the collective of authors.

OTHER IMPORTANT VOLUMES ARE:

- **Passerini, Luisa. *Conversations on Visual Memory***. European University Institute Florence, 2018. Available from Cadmus, European University Institute Research Repository, at: <http://hdl.handle.net/1814/60164>

The book provides an invaluable glimpse into methodologies and conceptual approaches of “Bodies across Borders: Oral and Visual Memory in Europe and Beyond” (BABE), a big international project that has important synergies with SO-CLOSE. Project received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013)/ERC Grant Agreement no. 29585. In the years 2013–2018, the Project was based at the EUI’s Department of History. Passerini’s study is very useful for our project as it provides detailed and profound analysis of interviews and especially visual itineraries of migration drawn by the migrant respondents. As similar material is to be collected by SO-CLOSE, Passerini’s analysis should be taken as a starting point and inspiration for our team working on interviews and mapping of migrant routs.

- **Bautista, Susana Smith, *Museums in the Digital Age: Changing Meanings of Place, Community, and Culture***, AltaMira Press, a division of Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Maryland, 2014.

The book builds of detailed five case studies of how digitality and offline strategies work in several museums in New York. A research finding especially interesting for SO-CLOSE regards a thoughtful application of digital products and tools in heritage practice “As technology enables museums to better understand and serve their visitors, it is important to remember that those visitors are not merely static categories to be fed selected information. The societal value of art museums is to constantly surprise, educate, inspire, provoke, and invoke wonder based on unfamiliar activities and affinities. In the commercial world, it’s called spontaneous purchasing, impulse buying, or browsing, and museums are no less familiar with the critical act of discovery, both online and onsite” (p.221). The book is also valuable for its detailed account of research methodology building on triangulation of digital ethnography, focus groups, media analysis and





traditional ethnography.

- **Fiona Cameron and Sarah Kenderdine (eds.). *Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage: A Critical Discourse*.** Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Cambridge, Mass., 2007.

The book is primarily interesting from a theoretical point of view, as it develops ideas about UNESCO's conceptualization of digital heritage as a novel and increasingly important faction of the heritage domain.

- **Porsché, Yannik, *Public Representations of Immigrants in Museums: Exhibition and Exposure in France and Germany*,** Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2018.

The main argument of this monography is that by presenting immigrants French and German museums simultaneously create representations of the perceiving publics. Immigrants in France and Germany have throughout history been discriminated against or used as scapegoats. However, this study's findings oppose the ideas that there was one single speaker or message of the analysed exhibitions. Instead, meaning and knowledge were negotiated between present and absent people, exhibits and institutional structures. Depending on changing circumstances and audiences, the same exhibits or the entire exhibitions either referred to historical facts and national collectives, or at other times as represented the individual perspectives. An important finding of the study relevant in the context of SO-CLOSE is that "when something is presented as concerning a collective history, this suggests that it is something highly important, something that we should know about. ...Museums in which participants and texts make claims about collectives and history tend to be better known, more prestigious, and receive more media attention. ... historical, factual exhibits were often seen to be referring to the collective public, in contrast to which contemporary, intangible art merely [my emphasis - EN] illustrated individuals' perspectives" (p.326-27). The book also illustrates how migrant communities challenge the label of "migrants" by presenting themselves as residents of their neighborhoods and collaborating with the local museums (p.335).

- **Skartveit, Hanne-Lovise & Goodnow, Katherine J. (eds.), *Changes in Museum Practice: New Media, refugees, and participation*.** New York: Berghahn Books, 2010.

The book is of great use for the project, as leading artists, curators, and academics come together to outline different levels collaboration by audiences and communities and explore a range of topics from video games to role-play and theatre; and from photography to participatory video and digital storytelling. Case studies are used throughout to highlight the various ways that different participatory approaches can be used successfully.

- **Goodnow, Katherine J., Lohman, Jack & Marfleet, Philip, *Museums*,**





the Media, and Refugees: Stories of Crisis, Control and Compassion.
New York: Berghahn Books, 2008.

Based on case studies from Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, the overall findings are illustrative of narratives and images common to museums and the media throughout the world. They aim to challenge political rhetoric and populist media imagery and consider what forms of dissent are likely to be sustained and what narratives ultimately break through and can lead to empathy and positive political change.

- **Sergi, Domenico. *Museums, Refugees and Communities.*** London-New York: Routledge, 2021.

The book proceeds from the general argument that cultural institutions and museums can be especially effective in countering prejudice by reframing, informing, and enabling society's conversations about marginalized groups. They compete with other main-stream media in the articulation of public perceptions of certain subjects, such as contemporary migrants and refugees, and their narratives are influential in shaping public debates. As cultural institutions have an inherent responsibility to represent particular topics of societal interest, museums have their advantage in generating mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion for the public consciousness. Thus, the book proceeds with mapping strategies of inclusion of migrant heritages based on engagement of museums into work with communities, with particular emphasis on issues of democratic access, collaboration, and participation.

PROJECT EXAMPLES ADDRESSING CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES OF MIGRATION

This section is structured in line with Leggewie's 'seven circles of European memory' and provides five examples of already-existing projects that combine present-day and historical experiences of forced migration. The purpose of this chapter is to serve as an additional inspiration for the partner cultural institutions when they design their activities that bring together the refugees and the local stakeholders.

EXAMPLE 1. *Converging historical experiences of the Shoah and anti-Semitism. The Holocaust as a historical experience, global imagery, and expressive toolkit (the first circle of European memory, according to Leggewie).*

Efforts to address the Holocaust as a heritage, collective memory, and artistic reference for both the host society and non-Jewish migrants have been especially pronounced in Germany. Whereas many assume that Turks in Germany cannot share the Jewish past, and that for them the genocide of the Jews is merely a borrowed memory, the history of Turkey and Germany, Turkish and German anti-Semitism, and Turks and Jews are intertwined. Bringing together the histories of individual Turkish citizens who were Jewish or Dönme





(descendants of Jews) in Nazi Berlin with the history of Jews in Turkey, and, further on, comparing discriminating strategies and discourses targeting in different periods Jews and Turkish migrants in Germany, proved to strike a chord and result in artistic exhibition, theatre performances and films.⁵⁶

The same line of thinking that juxtaposes and exposes common points between the Holocaust and traumas of the global migration has been evident in the parallel exhibitions about women saved from the concentration camp of Ravensbrück and the acceptance of refugees in 2015 (*Malmö Hus*, Sweden and *Kulturen*, Sweden). Digital projection was limited in both cases.

An interesting example of practical convergence of a Holocaust site and the newly arrived migrants can be found in Milano. The Shoah Memorial (*Binario 21*) is an underground platform where Jews have been transported from and to concentrations camps during WWII. The site's managers enacted their commitment to oppose indifference by turning the coatroom area into a shelter for immigrants from Ethiopia and Eritrea each night. The site became not only a physical shelter, but also an experiment in cultural inclusion, as kosher meals was served by a local Jewish organization, while a nearby Catholic parish sent volunteers. A similar action, but as an art performance, was presented by Christof Büchel in Ghent's City Museum for Contemporary Art (SMAK).⁵⁷

This example demonstrates how local heritages of forced migration or other traumas can be effectively contextualized with contemporary migrant experiences.

EXAMPLE 2. *Exhibitions and events devoted to intra-European resettlements and expulsions, which bring to the fore (geo)political transformations of the postwar*

⁵⁶ More about this: Rothberg, M. & Yildiz, Y. "Memory Citizenship: Migrant Archives of Holocaust Remembrance in Contemporary Germany," *Parallax* 17, 4 (2011), pp. 35–36. Further examples in Chin, R. & Fehrenbach, H. "German Democracy and the Question of Difference, 1945–1995," in Rita Chin et al., eds., *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe*. Baer, Marc David Turk and Jew in Berlin: The First Turkish Migration to Germany and the Shoah, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55(2), 2013, pp. 330–355; Margalit, G. "On Being Other in Post-Holocaust Germany: German-Turkish Intellectuals and the German Past," in Brunner, J. & Levi, S. (eds.). *Juden und Muslime in Deutschland: Recht, Religion, Identität*, Tel Aviver. *Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 37, Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009, 209–32; Chin, R. & Fehrenbach, H. "Introduction: What's Race Got to Do With It? Postwar German History in Context," in Chin, R., Fehrenbach, H., Eley, G., & Grossman, A. (eds.) *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009.

⁵⁷ See more: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/milans-holocaust-memorial-now-a-shelter-for-african-refugees/>
<https://www.hauserwirth.com/stories/2299-museum-shelter-refugees-christoph-buchel-smak-ghent>





notions of place, national identity, and memory community (“the third circle of European memory”)

Exhibitions of this kind problematize postwar experiences of Europeans triggered by inter-ethnic conflicts and voluntary geopolitical decisions of the 20th century. As the Europeans themselves have been refugees in Europe, their own tragic past became the “dangerous other”. *Silesia After 1945*, exhibition at the Silesian Museum in Goerlitz, 2012 shows a map of Silesia surrounded by people’s personal stories of belonging to this contested place spanning Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic (see Figure 3). The exhibition raises the question of how museums represent territories and places of migration, border shifts and talk about changing populations. Conceptually, such exhibitions open for creative use of interactive technologies and digital tools for layering complex visual itineraries of migration, personal stories, and documentary footage.

This example shows how heritage-making activities can be successfully designed by integrating both online and offline elements, which is going to be especially useful inspiration for later stages of the SO-CLOSE project.



FIGURE 3. SILESIA AFTER 1945” EXHIBITION AT THE SILESIAN MUSEUM IN GOERLITZ (2012) ⁵⁸

EXAMPLE 3. *History of long-distance migrations in the wake of wars (the fourth circle of European memory, according to Leggewie).*

Origin countries of present-day global migrants sheltered European refugees during their times of trouble. Such historical introspection can be a useful

⁵⁸ Peressut, Luca Basso, and Clelia Pozzi (eds.). *“Museums in an Age of Migrations.”* Milan: Politecnico di Milano, Dipartimento di Progettazione dell'Architettura (2012), p.155





reminder in the Polish case, where acceptance of the global migrants, especially Muslims, is very limited.

The exhibition *Poles, the Children of Isfahan Back in Iran after 75 Years* (2017) has been organized by Adam Mickiewicz Institute and Poland's Ministry for Culture and National Heritage as well as the Municipality of Iran's Isfahan, to mark the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Polish refugees in Iran. The collection comprises photos depicting the daily life of Polish refugees. During World War II, up to two million Polish civilians were arrested by the Soviet secret police and deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan. Many did not survive the long journey (lasting many weeks) by cattle train; many more died during their imprisonment. Others simply failed to get out after finally being freed from the Soviet gulags. About 116, 000 Polish people, 3,000 of whom were orphans, escaped from the Soviet Union to Iran, starting a new life in Isfahan.⁵⁹

The experiences of Polish wartime refugees in India have been captured in a documentary film. The film, which had a special screening in New York with the support of the Indian consulate general and the American Jewish Committee, looks back at the dark chapter of history during World War II. Orphaned Polish children — Jews and Catholics alike — faced an uncertain future, but in the midst of the gloom a ray of hope appeared when Maharaja Digvijay-sinhji Ranjitsinhji Jadeja, also known as 'Jam Sahib,' took in the Polish children and looked after them. "Little Poland in India" is the product of a joint Indo-Polish collaboration and is the first documentary film based on the lives of WWII survivors who were given protection in India by Jam Sahib. The film was jointly produced by Doordashan (India's state TV channel), the Government of Gujarat, the Polish National Audio-Visual Institute and Polish TV.⁶⁰

Cultural institutions may want to look for examples in their context that highlight the bi-directional nature of global forced migration. If these local examples exist, this example demonstrates that it is advisable to approach them in a cross-cultural collaboration.

EXAMPLE 4. *Combinations of fifth and sixth circles of European memory, e.g., those addressing legacies of colonialism and (resulting) global migration have been approached in many temporary and permanent exhibitions in Europe. Use of digital tools has been their permanent feature.*

There is a trend across Europe to create migration museums. Some examples are:

⁵⁹ See more:

<https://ifpnews.com/iran-mark-75th-anniversary-hosting-polish-wwii-refugees>
<https://culture.pl/en/event/polish-refugees-on-forgotten-negatives-in-esfahan>

⁶⁰ See more: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/how-the-indian-oskar-schindler-took-in-1000-polishchildren-during-wwii/>





- EPIC, The Irish Immigration Museum, Dublin
- Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (Mucem; French: Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée), Marseille
- Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris
- DOMID: Museum über die Migration in Deutschland with Virtual Migration Museum (<https://virtuelles-migrationsmuseum.org>)
- Altre Italie, Turin
- Muzeum Emigracji, Gdynia, Poland
- Världskulturmuseer, Gothenburg, Sweden
- MhiC — Museo de Historia de la Inmigración de Cataluña

There are also exhibitions devoted to recent global migrations where digital tools play a central role. Some examples of best practices are given below:

I telefonen finns hela människan (The whole man is in telephone), an exhibition by the Swedish artist Henrik Teleman that builds on stories and around 500 smartphone photos from 90 migrants, of them 1/3 Kurds, 1/3 Palestinians, 1/3 Syrians. This has been a kind of 'feel-good project' for Teleman whose ambition was to present the migrants coming to Sweden in 2015 and evoke empathy to their daily stories.⁶¹

Since 2015, Josepha Wessels developed virtual reality work combining stereoscopic 360 video with game engines such as Unity 3D. She directed the first stereoscopic 360-degree film in Skåne called *Flykten från Sverige* (Escape from Scania) with support from Boost Hbg, Malmö Stad and Film-i-Skåne. The film opens for an immersive experience of dangers and uncertainties of escape from a war zone, which in this case is inverted. With help of VR technology, people living in southern Sweden (region Scania) are suggested to put themselves in the refugees' shoes and find a route of escape from war-torn Scania to safe Denmark, on the other side of the Öresund bridge connecting nowadays Malmö and Copenhagen. This innovative Virtual Reality experience won the prize for Best Virtual Reality at the 2018 Skåne Pixel Film Festival in Malmö.

The Encyclopedia of Migrants is an international project (2014-2017) supported by the Erasmus+ programme.⁶² It is based on a network of partner cities on the Atlantic coast (Brest, Rennes, Nantes, Gijón, Porto, Lisbon, Cadiz and Gibraltar), involving eight partners with different profiles (associations, universities, museums, etc.) in France, Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar. The project is coordinated by the French organization L'âge de la Tortue, which works in the visual arts field. The initiative has an artistic and experimental dimension and

⁶¹ See more: <http://itelefonenfinnshelamänniskan.com/bilder-berattelser/>

⁶² https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/project-result-content/6d5fdb95-53a0-4fe4-9107-19487dbb39c1/Access-Culture-migrants-refugees_low.pdf





was originally designed with the aim to create an encyclopedia in paper version and in digital version with approximately 400 testimonies made by migrants. The Encyclopedia format (a monumental, multi-volume, leather-bound artist book) was chosen to disseminate non-scientific knowledge, resulting from life experiences, with all the subjectivity that this involves. The main idea was to gather diverse migrant testimonies providing new knowledge, based on the intimate and the individual. In 2017, publishing sensitive content in the form of an encyclopedia by means of a popular initiative, is an artistic and a political act. In the *Encyclopedia of Migrants*, each participant wrote an intimate and personal letter addressed to someone they left behind in their country of origin.

These examples highlight how migration heritages can be narrated with the help of digital technologies and in creative visual manners.

EXAMPLE 5. *Local initiatives of academics and heritage institutions where societal inclusion and European integration of the newcomers was in focus (“seventh circle of European memory”)*



Cover page: *Go to History. Twelve walks for those who want to discover Malmö*, ed.

This quality guide presenting history and heritage sites of Malmö City has been published in 2011 under the title *Gå till historien. Tolv vandringar för dig som vill upptäcka Malmö* (Go to History. Twelve Walks for Those Who Want to Discover Malmö⁶³). Due to its popularity, it was soon translated to Arabic. Presently the book combines two versions, one in Swedish and one in Arabic and is on sale at Malmö museum *Malmöhus*. The guide has been issued by volunteers (some are academics at Malmö University) and has been given to the new arrivals during special tours through the city.⁶⁴ This heritage-making initiative that focuses on Malmö’s multicultural heritage (e.g., medieval Danish and German presence,

Jewish community, legacy of the postwar migrants coming from all over the world) has been acclaimed for being a successful integration project. Although it was not accompanied by a digital tool, the well-developed content of this guide has a great potential to be replicated in a digitalized form.

Not far from Malmö, in Lund, the city’s key community museum, *Kulturen*, has

⁶³ Andersson, A., Aronsson, P., Björk, F., Berggren, L., and Greiff, M. (2011). *Gå till historien. Tolv vandringar för dig som vill upptäcka Malmö*. Malmö: Mezzo Förlag.

⁶⁴ Another interesting example of a similar, but more conceptually elaborated approach has been discussed on British material in O’Neil, P. and Hubbard, P. (2010). Walking, Sensing, Belonging: Ethno-mimesis as performative Practice. *Visual Studies* 25 (1): 48-58.





been involved into informing newly arrived migrants about the local and national history. As the museum hosts rich collection of artifacts from all over the world, it organized a series of workshops with broader comparative perspective in mind. Migrants with different cultural ancestry could find some points of interest in the museum, and in the following workshops they presented their ideas on heritage by producing their own postcards with motifs of heritage sites from their home countries. Undoubtedly, also this ‘brainstorming’ on meaning of heritage could become much more exciting and pedagogical with help of a suitable digital tool.

These two examples illustrate the benefit of engaging newly arrived migrants in relevant aspects of local history by both creating an accessible way to information and at the same time offering platforms for own contributions and exchange. This is additionally furthered by including local community volunteers and institutions in the process.

8. Conclusion: Key insights from the reviewed academic literature and the heritage project examples

With the aims of SO-CLOSE in mind, the report has identified several seminal lines of thinking that have a great potential to boost the participation of immigrants in heritage-making and, consequently, to link the lived experiences and voices of refugees and migrants to the processes of heritage co-creation with the help of digital tools. Although none of these academic narratives contains ready-made recipes, they supply applicable knowledge based on rich empirical evidence, creative experiments, and critical analysis.

One of the most consensual points emerging from the academic literature is the necessity of **seeking a balance between** three layers of cultural meaning-making and heritage-making: **personal accounts, collective presentations and institutionalized narratives generated by the media, politics, and the heritage institutions themselves**. Tagging difference by means of catchy images and triggering empathy with the help of allusions to universal sensory expressions and human experiences has indeed been an endemic feature of the recent heritage events focusing on migration and refugees. Heritage initiatives of this kind can be undoubtedly instrumental for integration work due to their potential to provoke strong feelings of sympathy and acceptance of ‘otherness’.

Nevertheless, this simplified approach that elevates nostalgia, victimization and expressions of innocence and pity, is far from being constructive or emancipatory. At the end of the day, heritage actors may contribute to the public good by allowing the audience to meet not only the oppressed,





marginalized, dangerous or, on the contrary, romanticized and exotic ‘other’ — but the ‘unknown Other’ who awakes curiosity, fosters reflection and respect. As SO-CLOSE engages individual testimonies and simultaneously aspires to compare, bridge, and interrogate experiences of the historical and present-day migration, it is recommendable to reflect upon how various institutional, political, and historical contexts converge individual stories and distill them to collective presentations that gain traction in various public spaces.

The co-creation of migrant heritage is embedded in national frameworks of heritage-making. **Cultural institutions should be aware of these frameworks and attempt to include cosmopolitan configurations of heritage.** These have been well-anchored within the creation of shared European histories and memory cultures. Cosmopolitan frameworks that emerge both within, beyond, and across national borders, lay emphasis on the humanity of migrants, intelligibility of cultural practices and central position of human rights.

Heritage professionals and heritage stakeholders have to be aware that the migrant voices and stories in public circulation may belong to only a fraction of the migrant population. Practices of inclusion and dialogue linking to cultural heritage usually focus on approachable, vocal, or visible groups of migrants. Cultural Institutions must make an effort to **include even those who are less visible and/or have limited access to the public space** (in particular women, elderly people, adolescents, disabled, disadvantaged social groups etc.). Digital heritage forums and virtual access to cultural heritage sites can be highly instrumental in solving this problem. Nevertheless, curatorial work is indispensable in setting frameworks for the discussion and monitoring their contents to prevent hate speech and other condemnable practices.

As the encounters between migrants and cultural institutions tend to be limited, it is crucial to make these as meaningful and mutually enriching as possible. The academic literature lists several effective methodologies for **involving migrants into dialogue and engaging them into co-creation of cultural heritage.** Among them are storytelling, often combined with excursions to certain significant historical sites, walking-and-talking sessions, language cafés, workshops combining discussions with creative writing or artistic handiwork, either individually or in group, and so on.

In the traditional context, face-to-face contact and activities in physical spaces, were essential, especially for new arrivals who most often experience lack of everyday human contact with the locals. The Covid-19 pandemic has moved all these contacts into the digital realm. Thankfully, digital tools make it possible to transfer storytelling and discussions into virtual rooms. Although the academic literature is by and large positive to using digital solutions, critical voices point out that digital tools are just tools and not miraculous boosters of heritage. The dialogue of the main stakeholders and curators is crucial for **employing the**





digital tools in a responsible way and for creating a pedagogical and user-friendly content. In this respect, the combination of cultural-professional and democratic institutional logics should be given priority.

As dialogue – especially agonistic dialogue – presupposes dissonances of opinion, it is extremely important to foster mutual respect among the participants and provide a space for conflicting opinions. Hence, probably a crucial lesson formulated in the academic domain addressing migrant heritage concerns the **value of transparent and at the same time practically implementable ethical guidelines** (as developed in WP7, mainly D7.2). Their significance in both protecting the integrity of research persons and enabling humanistic research and curatorial practices cannot be overestimated. To sum up these conclusions, our recommendations for a reflective curatorial role are:

- Be aware of your national frameworks around heritage-making. Emphasize the humanity of migrants, intelligibility of cultural practices, and central position of human rights.
- Reflect upon how your institutional, political, and historical contexts converge individual stories and distill them to collective presentations that gain traction in the public space.
- Create/promote narratives that awake curiosity, trigger reflection, and foster respect for the storyteller.
- Seek a balance between the three layers of cultural meaning-making and heritage-making: personal accounts, collective presentations and institutionalized narratives generated by the media, politics, and heritage institutions.
- Create an inclusionary and accessible space in which all migrants' stories can be visible (in particular migrant women, the elderly, adolescents, disabled, disadvantaged social groups, etc.), both online and offline.
- Be aware that diverse narratives may lead to dissonant heritage discourses.
- Moderate the project activities in a respectful but firm way to prevent the occurrence of hate speech. Use experienced moderators in focus groups and offer training in moderation of focus groups when needed.
- Involve migrants in dialogue and engage them in a co-creational approach to cultural heritage-making. You can find inspiration in the reviewed literature and listed examples.
- Use digital tools in a responsible and pedagogical way.
- Follow transparent and practically implementable ethical guidelines.

