Chapter 9
Co-creating and Co-producing Multicultural Cemeteries in Norway and Sweden: A Comparative Study with Insights from Drammen, Eskilstuna and Umeå

Helena Nordh, Marianne Knapskog, Tanu Priya Uteng, and Carola Wingren

The new mobilities paradigm (Sheller & Urry, 2006) insists on understanding the varied nature of mobilities (social, political, economic, digital and physical), their mutual overlaps and assemblages of different factors to shed light on how and why mobilities continue to differ and how mobilities are being negotiated over time and space. The meta-dimension of mobility is put forth for further examination through the new mobilities paradigm. The frame of reference guiding these inquiries are rooted in appreciating the uneven distribution of power as production of mobilities often occur in a context of social and cultural difference within a systematically asymmetrical field of power (e.g., Cresswell, 2006). A parallel discussion on 'place attachment and exclusion' (Saar & Palang, 2009) and the 'politics of belonging' (Malone, 1999) digs into questions on who belongs and who does not belong to a place and ways in which 'belongingness' is under a continuous flux. People's sense of rootedness and belonging is sometimes achieved by excluding others (Maddrell et al., 2021; Manzo, 2003) and conflicts related to questions on whose memories and history is preserved and why abound. A focused attention to mobilities and places and their mutual interlocking allows for understanding how intersectional identities are being formed, negotiated and contested across time and scale. As Marotta (2017) outlines, the articulation of ideas such as religiosity, difference, place, indigeneity,

H. Nordh (✉) · C. Wingren
Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden
e-mail: helena.nordh@slu.se; Carola.Wingren@slu.se

M. Knapskog
Department of Mobility and Organisation, Institute of Transport Economics, Oslo, Norway
e-mail: Marianne.Knapskog@toi.no

T. Priya Uteng
Regional Planning, Tourism and Culture Studies, Department of Mobility and Organisation, Institute of Transport Economics (TØI), Oslo, Norway
e-mail: tpu@toi.no

A. Maddrell et al. (eds.), *Mobilities in Life and Death*, IMISCOE Research Series, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-28284-3_9

digitalisation and the ways in which they are played out in a neo-liberal and global age deserves further attention. Passi's (2001) discussion on migration politics and refugee problem in the light of place identity is of special relevance here. Management of death-related practices, when migrants vie for symbolic capital in an already established regime, provides an opportunity for sharpening public policies which need to bring together (material, digital and symbolic) mobilities-migration-multiculturalism and inclusive place-making exercises.

Scandinavian societies are often referred to as secular societies in which religion, though not spirituality, is losing ground (Bäckström, 2017; Høeg & Pajari, 2013; Kjærsgaard, 2013). However, when death occurs, the caretaking of bodily remains is mainly processed and performed in cemeteries and crematoria owned by religious organisations (the Church of Sweden or the Church of Norway, both Evangelical Lutheran; see Nordh et al., 2021). This means that both private performers of funeral services as well as citizens using them need to cope with a situation where cultural and religious needs are met by an organisation based on Christian foundations. In both countries, immigration is on the rise resulting in an increasingly higher number of non-Christian burials. This necessitates studies of cultural and religious diversity at the cemeteries, in the crematoria and in funeral practices. In Scandinavia, so far little attention has been paid to diversity in 'death practices.' In other parts of Europe, such as the UK, focus has been put on issues and challenges around burial provision in multicultural societies, highlighting a lack of knowledge among stakeholders about minorities needs, and ways in which 'diversity within diversity' can be found within religious communities (Maddrell et al., 2018). Furthermore, a study by Maddrell et al. (2021) addresses the consequences for individual mourners when their religious or cultural needs cannot be fulfilled.

In this chapter, we analyse the level of preparedness of the cemeteries in a sample of Norwegian and Swedish case towns from the perspective of cultural and religious diversity (see Fig. 9.1 and Table 9.1). The cases have been selected as examples of how medium-size towns, outside the metropolitan areas in Scandinavia, are dealing with issues around multicultural cemeteries. Building knowledge on how to meet the needs of burial provision, and death practices at large, within a multicultural urban society is an urgent task considering the fast changing demographics caused by unprecedented international mobility of recent decades. Such knowledge is valuable to practice, not least since burial practices outside a nation's context is usually scarce (Walters, 2005) which might imply difficulties when planning for inclusive, multicultural cemeteries.

In this chapter, we not only focus on minorities (spatial) needs at cemeteries and crematoria, but also explore if, how and when minorities are involved in the planning and management of cemeteries and crematoria. Among spatial planning practitioners, ways to actively involve citizens in providing public welfare services and in solving problems and challenges has been a major interest, evolving from positive notions regarding participatory planning to more nuanced theories of co-creation, co-production and consensus building at all levels of planning (Forester, 1999; Innes & Booher, 2018; Sandercock, 2000; Torfing et al., 2016). In this study,

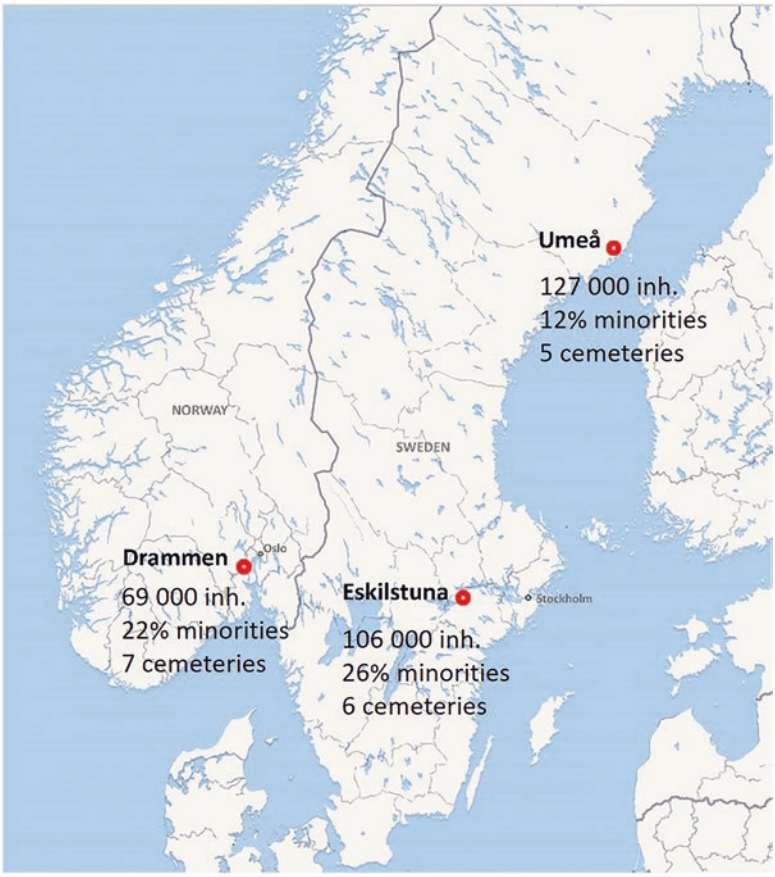

Fig. 9.1 An overview of the cases based on census data from 2019

we build on the topic of spatial planning, management and design of cemeteries and crematoria considering increasingly multicultural societies in Norway and Sweden. Our aim is to broaden the understanding on the spatial and processual situations which need further attention in cemetery practice, to actualise inclusive approaches within multicultural societies.

9.1 Theoretical Framework

The 'new mobilities paradigm' (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007) provides the much-needed intellectual vigour, vocabulary and approaches to study the emerging and evolving relationships between migrants, places vis-à-vis spaces and the unfolding of multicultural societies. Situated within the broad framework of

Table 9.1 Presentation of the case studies. In 2020, Drammen municipality merged with two neighbouring municipalities; however, we report on the number of inhabitants from 2019, at the time when the interviews for this study were conducted

Drammen
Drammen is a Norwegian municipality with 69,000 inhabitants, of which 22% have a minority background (foreign-born). The Polish (12.4%) and Turkish (7.7%) communities constitute the biggest groups (Statistics Norway, 2019). Drammen, located in the metropolitan area of Oslo, is an important and vital part of Oslo's functional region. As in most Norwegian municipalities, the funeral services (cremation, burial, management of cemeteries etc.) are operated by the Norwegian Church. Drammen has one crematorium, located at one of the central cemeteries. In 2019, cremation rate in Drammen was 78%, which is one of the highest in the country (Norsk Forening for Gravplasskultur, 2020). There are seven cemeteries in the town, of which four are located around a churches, one of these are located approximately fifteen minutes' drive outside the center in a rural area; note this is the only cemetery that facilitates for Muslim burial in Drammen.
Eskilstuna
Eskilstuna is a Swedish municipality, with 106,000 inhabitants (Statistics Sweden, 2020b). In 2019, 26% of the inhabitants had minority background, of these people from Iraq (20.8%) and Finland (14.5%) formed the biggest groups. Eskilstuna is located in the central part of Sweden, about an hour drive from Stockholm. The funeral services are operated by the Church of Sweden. Cremation statistics from 2018 shows a cremation rate of 92% (Sveriges Kyrkogårds och Krematorieförbund, 2019). The parish of Eskilstuna has six cemeteries, of which two are the main town cemeteries and four are remote cemeteries located around rural churches. There is one crematorium in Eskilstuna, and it is located at one of the town cemeteries.
Umeå
In the end of 2019, Umeå municipality had 128,901 inhabitants (Statistics Sweden, 2020b). About 12% of its inhabitants has a minority background (Statistics Sweden, 2020a). People from Finland (13.5%) and Iraq (6%) constitute the main minority groups. The funeral services are operated by the Church of Sweden. In 2018, cremation rate was 83% (Sveriges Kyrkogårds och Krematorieförbund, 2019). There are five cemeteries in the Umeå parish, out of which one is located in a nearby town and another is located about ten minutes' drive outside the town center. There is one crematorium in Umeå, located at one of the main cemeteries.

mobilities is the theme of 'material mobilities' (Jensen et al., 2019) which further insists on merging the materiality and mobility foci to develop a nuanced and better understanding of the role of place, matter, architecture and politics of sentiments as not simply given, but also designed with more or less hidden agendas and human consequences (Bille, 2019, p. xv). 'The turn to the material further problematises the modern binary distinctions between humans and non-humans, subjects and objects, and culture and nature' (Jensen, et al., 2019, p. 2). The cemetery infrastructures and associated materiality are increasingly becoming important sites for people's everyday lives as performed through social and cultural encounters, emotions, atmospheres and resistance. Through these performative iterations, the materiality of cemeteries can provide knowledge on the interrelationship between embodied practices and physical infrastructure. Unpacking these interrelationships can sensitise a host of actors working with cemeteries at various scales and levels.

Further on, studying cemeteries provides an opportunity to explore their emerging roles in addressing diversity and possibly challenge the traditional landscape designs which are usually associated with this category of public space. Positioned within this framework, we begin by reviewing the cemetery studies literature with a particular focus on the Scandinavian context. This is followed by a section on co-creation and co-production, which are the theoretical concepts of collaborative governance which we use to frame the discussion.

9.1.1 Design, Management and Use of Cemeteries in Scandinavia

Norway and Sweden share many similarities both within and beyond the governance and organisation of funeral service practices. In the year 2000 in Sweden and 2012 in Norway, the Churches of Sweden and Norway respectively receded their governance powers as 'national churches.' Funeral services in these two countries, however, is still principally operated by the Christian churches, which effectively means that both cemeteries and crematoria belong to the churches. Even if members of the Swedish and Norwegian Churches are decreasing, most funerals (in Sweden 75%, in Norway 85.5%) are still performed in accordance with Christian traditions (Statistics Norway, 2020; Sveriges Aukoriserade Begravningsbyråer, 2020).

Previous research presents the Scandinavian model for cemeteries and crematoria as an institutional religious model (Walter, 2005), organised initially around the individual church parish (Kjøller, 2012). Since the twentieth century, there has been a change from the conceptual framing of a graveyard to a cemetery. The old logic – one church, one churchyard – has been expanded with the logic of a cemetery as something set aside from the church itself. Another change is that in later years, the Norwegian and Swedish Churches, the governments and especially the citizens, have progressively redefined the urban cemeteries as green, recreational spaces with unique qualities (for example, tranquillity), compared to other urban green spaces such as parks (Cerwén et al., 2017; Grabalov & Nordh, 2020; Nordh et al., 2017; Nordh & Evensen, 2018; Peterson et al., 2018; Skår et al., 2018). On a detailed level, several Scandinavian researchers (Grabalov & Nordh, 2020; Petersson et al., 2018; Skår et al., 2018; Wingren, 2013) as well as scholars from the UK (McClymont, 2016; Woodthorpe, 2011) describe the variety of functions urban cemeteries can have. But as Skår et al. (2018) state, even if there is a secondary function as public space for reflection, recreation, and cultural encounters, the primary purpose of the cemetery is to be a burial ground and a place for mourning.

Francis, Kellaher and Neophytou (2000, p. 34) observed that 'cemetery behaviour – notably that of people who visit graves – has been overlooked by most Western scholars seeking to examine and understand their own society.' Even if we have seen an increased number of studies focusing on cemetery use and practices in

both Scandinavia and Europe, there is still a gap to fill specifically from a multicultural perspective. In a Norwegian case study of various religious and non-religious communities' needs, Swensen and Skår (2018) point to a number of differences between communities, but they also show that what bridges the communities are human compassion and understanding of differences. Agrawal and Baratt (2014) contend that the importance of mundane, everyday encounters simply cannot be overlooked for strengthening communication and understanding between people. To this end, there is a need to explore ways to strengthen religious and cultural diversity from the bottom-up. It is here that taking a macroscopic approach in understanding the variations in practices and usage across cultures and religions becomes essential, as it allows for creating public spaces to become sites for everyday encounters which could potentially lead to strengthened communication and understanding between people.

9.1.2 Co-creation and Co-production in Cemetery Management

We frame this chapter around the concepts of co-creation and co-production, which here refer to the various ways citizens engage in and are involved in the planning, design and management of cemeteries. The terms are often used interchangeably; however, in an attempt to scrutinise the difference Brandsen and Honingh (2018, p. 13) explain that 'when citizens are involved in the general planning of a service – perhaps even initiating it – then this is co-creation, whereas if they shape the service during later phases of the cycle it is co-production.' Co-creation and co-production can be understood as forms of collaborative governance, mediating the production of public value, innovation and experiments in governance (Torfing et al., 2016; Weber & Khademian, 2008). They can work as a means to attain social goals more efficiently, while they also bear the potential to strengthen democracy by including a broader set of stakeholders. Jedan et al. (2020, p. 452) refer to co-creation when describing the different parties (e.g., users, religious communities, funeral industry) involved in shaping the cemetery as a ritual space. The authors stress the importance of balance between the parties involved in the process and describe how cemeteries are not only ritual spaces but spaces that 'evoke, produce and maintain communities,' hence are important spaces in multicultural societies.

The domain of both research and practice of co-creation and co-production offers a grounded perspective to look upon the ongoing changing processes of cemetery practices in Sweden and Norway. By solving specific issues in successive iterations, bereaved citizens, religious communities, funeral service providers, and church employees in towns are co-producing new practices 'on the move', and one can observe these different types of experimentations taking place.

9.2 Method

The study employs a combined methodology, merging analyses from reviewing the national burial acts, and interviewing stakeholders involved in funeral or cemetery services in the three towns.

The national burial acts from both countries (Ministry of Children and Families, 1996; Ministry of Culture, 1990) were carefully scanned for topics related to minority groups or religious or cultural diversity. Relevant sections were marked and pasted in a table to conduct cross-comparisons among the two countries and colour coded manually.

Interviews were conducted between November 2019 and February 2020 and lasted for approximately sixty minutes each. All interviews were recorded and transcribed after permission from the informant (the study is approved by national ethical committees in both countries). A total of 28 stakeholders were interviewed. We initially targeted similar kinds of informants across the three cases, however some variations were subsequently accommodated owing to the contextual and structural differences between the cases. The set of stakeholders comprises cemetery or crematorium managers/workers (N = 9), funeral service providers (N = 4), national or local burial advisors (N = 3) and planners/landscape architects (N = 2). Finding representatives of minority communities who were willing to participate proved to be a challenge, but representatives from the following communities were interviewed: Bahá'í, Catholic, Christian, Hindu and Muslim (N = 10). We also included representatives from the Humanist organisation, a significant secular organisation which has a relatively high number of members, particularly in Norway, and which has had an impact on the overall secularisation of funeral services.

The analysis of interviews builds on a qualitative content analysis (Barbour, 2014) using the software Atlas.ti in which all coding was done manually (list coding). During the analysis, new codes emerged and were subsequently added. Here, we focus on the analysis of the codes that were relevant for this book chapter: *communities* (information on communities (religious or cultural) and their wishes/needs); *inclusion/exclusion* (information on how people's needs are included or excluded in the planning or management of cemeteries or funerals); *cooperation* (this code partly overlaps with inclusion/exclusion, but focuses on partnerships or cooperation with other parties, such as funeral directors, community groups, the municipality), and *cemetery sections* (special graves for religious or cultural communities). We began broadly (using Atlas.ti) by selecting all quotations from cemetery or crematoria managers, funeral service providers, local/national burial advisors and landscape architects/planners involving the code *communities*. We added another layer and explored what the same group of stakeholders said about *inclusion/exclusion* or *cooperation* with communities across the two countries. Thereafter we explored if the community leaders/representatives brought up anything about inclusion/exclusion or cooperation in the interviews.

9.3 Results

9.3.1 National Legal Frameworks and Agencies

In both countries, there are principally three types of acts that impact the coalescing of policies guiding development of cemeteries and multicultural societies: the burial acts (Ministry of Children and Families, 1996; Ministry of Culture, 1990), the planning and building acts (Ministry of Finance, 2010; Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2008) and the acts for faith communities (Ministry of Children and Families, 1996; Ministry of Culture, 1998). Furthermore, in both countries, the cultural heritage act (Ministry of Climate and Environments, 1978; Ministry of Culture, 1988) also has a major influence on cemeteries, specifically in relation to protection and limiting changes that can be allowed in cemeteries.

On assessing the Swedish and Norwegian burial acts, we notice that they share many similarities, but there are important differences as well. The Norwegian act already acknowledges in the first sentence that 'burial must be made with respect for the religion or life philosophy of the dead' (Ministry of Children and Families, 1996). Such a precise goal related to religion and philosophy is not found in the Swedish burial act where there is only a general writing about the need to follow the burial wishes of the deceased. However, both acts make allowances for registered religious communities to apply for running 'private' cemeteries, but it is not a common practice. Additionally, both acts acknowledge that the organisation responsible for burial services must offer special graves for those who do not belong to the Christian church. In practice, this means that several municipalities offer special sections for religious communities. The Norwegian burial act states that if the parish cannot offer special graves, they must cover costs for burial in other parishes/municipalities. The Norwegian act also states that 'religious or faith communities that have a presence in the area must be given the opportunity to conduct a ceremony when a new cemetery is about to open' (Ministry of Children and Families, 1996, §5). The statement above includes faith communities as well and is not restricted to only religious communities. In the Swedish burial act, we do not find similar statements. Pertaining to cooperation or inclusion of religious communities, the burial acts differ which has resulted in different approaches being adopted in the two countries. In Sweden, the act states that

> when a congregation [the Swedish Church] is the head of the funeral service, the county administration must appoint a funeral advisor obliged to review how the congregation includes the interests of the people who do not belong to the Swedish Church. (Ministry of Culture, 1990, ch.10.2)

In Norway, the act does not set similar requirements so there is no reviewing authority and no requirement for coordination or inclusion of other than Christian beliefs at the national level. Instead, the municipality is given the task to coordinate local needs:

> The municipal representative responsible for management of burial activities in the municipality should, on an annual basis, invite religious and belief communities active in the municipality, to a meeting to discuss how to safeguard the needs of the religious and belief communities in the burial services. (Ministry of Children and Families, 1996, §23)

Since burial and cremation is usually operated by the church, the municipal representative comes from the church. Criticism has been directed towards the Norwegian Church for not running these meetings regularly (Gran, 2019). There has also been a pressure in Norway to change the burial act so that municipalities, instead of the Church, can be assigned the responsibility of organising the burial services (Ministry of Children and Families, 2020). Such changes would herald a major step towards the processes and aims of secularisation in Norway. This essentially means that the Norwegian Church would lose its monopoly over administrative and decision-making practices in conducting the funeral services.

In both countries, securing enough space for graves and deciding the location of new burial grounds is undertaken at a local municipal level through mutual cooperation between the municipality and the church. Further, the planning and building acts regulate all planning processes, in which participation is an important component, in both countries. Additionally, in Norway, participation is influenced by the anti-discrimination act securing the possibility for everyone, including minority groups, to participate in the planning process (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2014). The Norwegian planning and building act requires the municipality to have a plan to secure public commitments including space for graves in long-term spatial planning. In Drammen, the Norwegian Church, together with key representatives from various active faith communities in the municipality, developed such a plan in 2015 (Norwegian Church, 2015).

Interest groups for cemeteries and crematoria which operate in the public sphere, though not formalised through the burial acts, can be found in both Norway and Sweden. For example, the *Nordic Network for Cemeteries and Crematoria* is one such interest group.[1] They regularly organise activities and share experiences across all five Nordic countries. In Sweden, there is a governmental agency called the *Swedish Agency for Support for Faith Communities* under the Swedish Ministry of Culture, and according to its webpage 'its mission is to promote dialogue between the government and faith communities in Sweden as well as to contribute to knowledge about religion.' The Agency is also responsible for allocating grants to faith communities. In Norway, no such governmental supporting body is currently in place. However, there is a national burial advisor responsible for questions governing cemeteries including minorities needs. Further, similar to the Swedish policy, registered faith communities can apply for economic support from the state (Ministry of Children and Families, 2020).

[1] See https://gravplasskultur.no/nordisk/

9.3.2 Key Themes from the Analyses of Stakeholder Interviews

Analysis of selected quotations from the stakeholder interviews resulted in the following four main categories: (i) presence of diversity, (ii) accommodation of needs, (iii) cooperation with minorities, and (iv) reflections over special graves or cemetery sections for minorities; these are presented in the subheadings below.

Presence of Diversity

The interviews revealed that, despite relatively high number of immigrants across the Scandinavian case towns, there was little evidence of religious or cultural diversity at the cemeteries, in the crematoria or funeral practices. According to funeral service providers in the Swedish cases, Christian funerals cover around 80–90% of workload, another 10% was non-religious ceremonies and only a small share represented other beliefs. As one of the cemetery managers from Umeå described:

> When one receives the funeral confirmations or meetings, one has [with relatives] to choose the burial plot, then there is almost never anyone from another country, with only a few exceptions. (Laila, cemetery manager from Umeå)[2]

Despite some typical burial traditions within certain religious communities, the funeral service providers highlighted that variations were mainly about the details. Klas and Per, two Swedish funeral service providers in Eskilstuna, discussed their experiences with diversity in funeral ceremonies:

> It refers to the details in the cermony. For example, there is incense, that we never use in a Swedish Christian cermony. And the priests [Christian orthodox] use their native language, so to say. So we do not really understand what they say. But there are mostly details in the cermony that differ, I think. (Klas, funeral service provider)

> So it does not affect us that much, we do not have any specific employee for those funerals, we are so small that everyone has to do everything. So we learn the small differences there are, and we adapt to it. (Per, funeral servce provider)

Funeral service providers are the key actors, and they are the ones who must find solutions catering to individual needs. Cemetery managers or workers are much less in contact with the bereaved family, hence are not always aware of communities' specific needs. A cemetery worker from Drammen described that they, as cemetery workers, were rarely in contact with the families, but there could be practical issues related to ceremonies, such as covering the coffin with soil, that could affect how they have to prepare for a funeral.

In all the cases, the crematorium were in the same building as a chapel or ceremony room for funerals. This means that in those places, crematorium workers were

[2] For reasons of confidentiality, interviewees and other research participants have been given pseudonyms, unless there is a specific agreed reason to name a participant.

also responsible for preparing the chapels for funeral ceremonies. In these instances, the crematorium managers had more contact with the bereaved family. Additionally, crematorium managers contacted the family when cremation was done, and ashes ready to be buried. There were sometimes also a few family members, primarily from the Hindu community, who wanted to be at the crematorium when the coffin was inserted into the oven. Hence, crematorium managers had some experiences with managing diversity. However, as mentioned before, diversity was not necessarily connected to a particular religion or ethnicity, it could be individual needs or wishes as well. To facilitate participation, some measures had been made at the crematorium such as seating near the oven where families could gather. In some crematoria, families could follow the cremation behind a window, while in other crematoria, they could interact and even 'push the button' to insert the coffin into the oven. In Eskilstuna, they provided a metal box/tray that Hindus or Sikhs could use to do a symbolic ceremony like burning clothes or memory objects in the outdoors during cremation.

Despite some cemetery sections being reserved for certain religious communities, there was relatively little diversity at cemeteries with regards to headstones, planting and decorations. However, St. Eskil cemetery in Eskilstuna stands out a bit; for example, here a significant proportion of graves have Finish names, mirroring the high percentage of Finns in the municipality. Even if there was no special section for the Finns, most of them had chosen to be buried next to each other creating a kind of 'Finish section.' A similar unplanned 'Asian section' and 'Orthodox section' was also found at the cemetery.

Accommodation of Needs

Throughout the transcripts, we find examples of quotations describing how the stakeholders try to accommodate individual's or community's needs. The funeral service providers stress the importance of meeting the needs of their customers, and even among the cemetery managers, there are several examples of how they are trying to meet the needs of everyone. The following quotation from Gudrun (fictive name) a cemetery manager in Umeå describes how they try to incorporate the needs of the Muslim community while developing a new section for Muslim burial at one of the cemeteries:

> It is their wish. They do not want to mix. And for the Muslims, it was very important to have a separate entrance, not having to pass through other cemetery sections. And we have taken that into account […]. And they wished that we should not use signs, nothing that shows the direction of their section. They do not want us to show it on a map, because they have had bad experiences with it. And then of course, we will listen to it. (Gudrun, cemetery manager)

One of the landscape architects we interviewed had been involved in developing cemetery sections for religious communities in Eskilstuna as well as in other places in Sweden. She affirmed the inclusive approach she had experienced among cemetery managers. She also raised a concern about cemetery managers being 'too'

inclusive or accommodating in meeting minorities needs, as it could conflict with overarching goals, for example, issues of sustainable use of grave space. Even if a general agreement and consensus was noticed among the stakeholders about the importance of facilitating religious or cultural needs, there was usually a 'but' or 'if' attached to the statements. Such hesitations often relate to restrictions imposed by national or local rules, security for cemetery workers or availability of burial spaces. The following quotation from a cemetery manager from Umeå illustrates this point:

> We really try to meet everyone's needs, but sometimes we cannot accommodate everything because of soil conditions or other aspects.(Gudrun, cemetery manager)

Interviews also provided examples of innovative solutions or practices provided by the cemetery managers or funeral service providers locally in cooperation with the communities. These could be rebuilding crematoria for making them more accessible to visitors, marking the direction of Mecca on the floor in the chapel, or accommodating Muslim burial wishes to bury without a coffin (which is against Norwegian burial practice) through placing the coffin upside down, on top of the dead, as a kind of cover.

In both countries, some communities raised concerns about the time consuming bureaucracy that hindered the communities to perform their rituals as soon as possible after death. Muhammed (fictive name), a Swedish Muslim community representative describes how members from his community have adapted their needs and that they now, after many years in Sweden, understand the bureaucratic details of the country.

> I think that most who are born and raised here, … they have adapted a bit to the Swedish model. They realise the hopelessness once they understand the number of forms that has to be filled in. Paperwork, well well, it is important, they understand so to speak. (Muhammed, Muslim community representative)

Cooperation with Minorities

As described in the Norwegian burial act, the cemetery management should invite active religious and belief communities within the municipalities to yearly meetings to discuss their needs and wishes. In Drammen, this seemed to work relatively well, only one of the community representatives brought up that they have not heard about these meetings. However, the cemetery managers and burial service advisor did report difficulties associated with finding representatives from various communities. In Drammen, as well as in Umeå, we noticed as well that some communities were more engaged than others in discussions around burial services. These were mainly the Humanist and Muslim communities. In addition to inviting communities, the cemetery management in Drammen also invited funeral service providers to these regular meetings. In Sweden, the approach was different, and cooperation with communities, rather than being a routine, was established if needed such as when establishing specific (religious) cemetery sections.

The Swedish Church's representative from Eskilstuna mentioned that they conducted regular meetings, and not surprisingly, the Christian community was more involved. Some of the community representatives we talked to had been in direct contact with the cemetery management when developing special sections for religious communities at the cemeteries. Most of them had a positive experience and did not report any kind of exclusion, rather the contrary. However, one of the community representatives, Alem (fictive name), from Drammen expressed concerns as Muslims are currently not allowed raised grave beds. When the researcher asked if the concern had been discussed with the cemetery management, the response of the Muslim representative was as following:

> Yes, this concern has been raised but when it comes to this issue, they do not want to listen. Because everything is about money, it is all about the budget. But we do not have to go very far, for example in our neighbouring country Sweden, in Malmö, there Muslim sections are allowed, and in other small towns as well in Sweden. There one has been allowed to make a raised grave bed and have flowers and all that. Simply because of respect. And I think the cemetery management in Norway should understand this. In this situation, in a way, everything cannot be measured in money. (Alem, Muslim representative)

Some of the community representatives we talked to did not have a special grave or section at the cemeteries. When we asked about this, it had not been an issue or even discussed within the community. However, it seemed that our question raised some thoughts about potential possibilities.

Reflections on Special Graves or Cemetery Sections for Minorities

Four of the cemeteries in the case towns offered special graves for religious communities (see Figs. 9.2, 9.3, and 9.4): in Drammen: Muslim burial; in Eskilstuna: Muslim, Bahá'í, and Mandee sections; in Umeå: Bahá'í Catholic, and Muslim sections. In all the cases, the special graves (sections) were located at the outskirts of the cemetery (see Fig. 9.5).

We asked both cemetery managers and representatives of religious communities about benefits of having special sections at the cemetery. Here are some reflections from Anna (fictive name), a cemetery manager/worker:

> Anna: The benefits, I assume, are the benefits for the relatives. Because, since we have various beliefs, and Muslims have, contrary to Christians or others, another way of decorating their graves. That I have experienced. And they can mark the grave space with a frame, so that one should not step on the grave. So, they put stones around the whole burial plot. It is a benefit to them, but it can be unfavourable for us when maintaining the site.
>
> Researcher: Are they allowed to do so?
>
> Anna: Strictly speaking, no. They must follow the rules for the cemetery. So, when I notice that they have started to make frames, walls you know, making such things, then I confront my boss and he passes it forward to his boss who approaches the relatives by letter. It is not always they do anything about it or respect it. So, it is in a way a separate section where more is allowed as compared to the other parts of the cemetery.

Fig. 9.2 The Muslim section at St Eskil's cemetery in Eskilstuna. (Photograph by authors)

Fig. 9.3 The Bahá'í section at Röbäck cemetery in Umeå. (Photograph by authors)

Fig. 9.4 The section at Skoger cemetery in Drammen that provides Muslim burial. (Photograph by authors)

The frames around the Muslim graves was a recurrent topic in the interviews. We noticed varying approaches across the municipalities and cemeteries we studied. Some were more lenient and allowed frames around the graves, while others were stricter. As we see in the quote above, dilemmas around resources for management of Muslim cemetery sections arose since frames around graves demand more manual work when mowing the lawn at the cemetery. Some of our interviewees brought up challenges related to the variations across the country in understanding of minorities burial practices.

It is evident in the collected material that meeting the needs of different communities remains a key priority. However, in Drammen, providing a cemetery section for a religious community is related to a 'critical mass' of members from the community (The Norwegian Church, 2015). While in Sweden, the cemetery managers allow sections/special graves even with only a few burials. For example, the Bahá'í sections in Eskilstuna and Umeå house two and one grave respectively. At some places, we got the impression that understanding of varied traditions in burial practices had changed towards a more inclusive approach. For example, in Skoger cemetery in Drammen, there is an old Muslim section where the graves are not directed towards Mecca. Nowadays, it is unlikely that such an important detail, as the direction of graves, would not be facilitated for (Fig. 9.5).

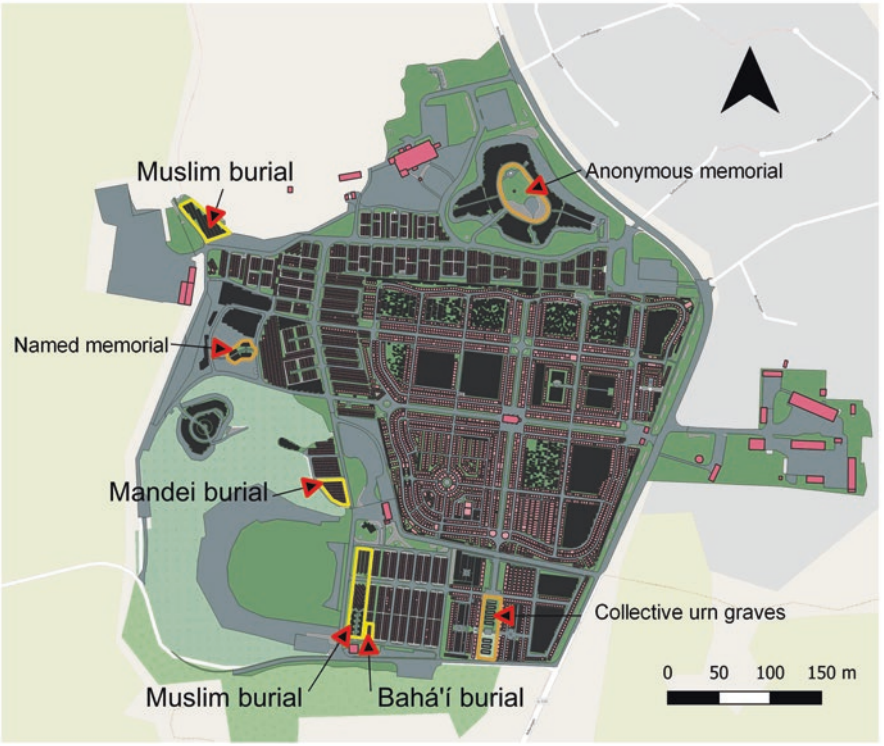

Fig. 9.5 A map of St Eskil cemetery in Eskilstuna. As can be seen there are special sections dedicated for some beliefs located in the outskirts of the cemetery. The graves in the other parts are mainly Christian but there is also a mix of other beliefs or non-beliefs representing the mix of people in the society as well as co-creation taking place locally

9.4 Discussion and Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, we have presented how the Swedish and Norwegian society, through cemetery and crematoria managerial practices and national legislation, address diversity. We have also touched upon cemetery use, design and planning in these countries. It is important to emphasise that the empirical data from the case towns is not representative at national levels, especially not for the bigger cities, and cannot be used for generalising but can be utilised to develop the complex and diverse picture that multicultural cemetery and crematoria practices entail. The discussion is framed by the terms co-creation and co-production within the following perspectives: (i) development of multicultural cemetery practices, (ii) interpretation and development in a post-secular society, and (iii) collaboration and co-operation with minority groups to develop new practices.

9.4.1 Development of Multicultural Cemetery Practices

As evidenced in this paper, and addressed elsewhere (Maddrell et al., 2018), there is limited knowledge about minorities needs in relation to burial practices. Instead, cemetery practices are based on country's burial acts, but just as much influenced by the local reactions to upcoming problems and possibilities within these situations. Solutions seem to be principally based either on interaction between individual users through their representatives and the managerial staff, or in relation to the managerial staff's interpretation of how economic limitations can meet legal requirements and their assumptions of which needs should be the most important to take care of. As a result, decisions can be very different from town to town and especially from town to bigger city, which consequently means that the possibilities for citizens to fulfil their burial needs may differ quite a lot within the countries (c.f., Nordh et al., 2021). Therefore, there is an urgent need for an informed strategic development (on national or on Scandinavian level) for dealing with religious and cultural diversity within cemetery and crematoria practices. In the case towns, we found examples of co-creation, where community groups or engaged citizens and mourners initiate cooperation with local authorities and request their religious or cultural needs to be met through cemetery management practices. An example is the specific cemetery sections that were established across the cases due to active local community groups. We also find examples of co-production where communities in cooperation with cemetery management find solutions to accommodate religious and cultural needs without violating existing laws and regulations for example, making available a metal box/tray that Hindus or Sikhs can use to perform a symbolic ceremony outdoors during cremation. We also found examples when citizens themselves take actions without cooperating with the managers, such as putting up benches next to graves or installing sun-driven spot lights in trees at dark places in the cemetery. These examples point towards the resultant ethical concerns for cemetery managers as and when they decide on the future of such installations.

9.4.2 Interpretation and Development in a Post-secular Society

Norway and Sweden have emerged as secularised and individualised countries (Kjærsgaard, 2013). To cite Pettersson (2011, p. 131) 'the state [Sweden] is ideologically secular although in many ways religion is integrated in social practice.' This means that there exist many different approaches to what could be described as the sacral in life. Especially the Humanist organisation is a strong voice and driving force (especially in Norway, where it has 98,000 members and is one of the largest communities apart from the Norwegian Church) to push towards a more secular or neutral cemetery practice through provision of facilities like symbol free chapels or ceremony rooms. Still, burial practices are to a high extent based within the purview

of the Christian traditions, even if actual members formally registered with the Swedish and Norwegian Churches are lower (it is to be noted that there is a slight discrepancy between Sweden and Norway here; in Sweden, 56% are members of the Swedish Church, whereas in Norway 69% are members of the Norwegian Church; see Statistics Norway, 2020; Swedish Church, 2019). This shows a hegemonic order, where the dominant practice is accepted and sometimes even used without questioning it by newcomers or minorities. This can also be seen in the material presented in this study where it has been difficult to recruit informants from minorities and where relatively little multicultural imprints can be seen in the case town cemeteries compared to the number of migrants in the municipality.

Both the Norwegian and the Swedish burial acts (Ministry of Children and Families, 1996; Ministry of Culture, 1990) clearly specify the need for the Churches of Sweden and Norway to respond to specific religious or cultural needs that are not covered by the Churches' original practices or traditions. However, the results from the case studies, as well as from another Scandinavian study (e.g., Hadders, 2021), show a difference in interpretation of how and to what extent these needs should or can be met, resulting in an unequal situation. There is clearly an urgent need for developing interpretations of the current laws to stress on the quotient of equality the laws originally allow for. At the same time, it is important to generate discussions on how a seemingly diminishing Christian influence on burial and ritual practices and a growing need for other sacral traditions can be integrated and developed side by side to avoid marginalisation, fear or stigmatisation in future practices at cemeteries and crematoria.

9.4.3 Collaboration and Co-operation with Minority Groups to Develop New Practices

The results highlight a need for discussions between the burial providers (the churches) and people who use the cemeteries and crematoria for burial, rituals, mourning and memorialisation. There is a need for co-creation and co-production at different levels, at the local level with mourners and communities, and at the national level with representatives of communities. There is of course an economic side of offering different services, but if funding is scarce as is the reality in many municipalities, it is even more important to adjust services to specific and most urgent needs, such as the issues raised around providing frames and raised Muslim graves. Today the services provided are on one side based on needs developed through Christian practices and traditions, and on the other, on assumptions on the death practices of different minorities and their needs as collective communities. This means that there is a tendency that even if one understands the diversity within Christian cultural practices, diversity within other cultures is not explored or asked for in the same manner. Research indicates the importance of diversity within communities (c.f., Maddrell et al., 2018). For example, Beebeejaun (2012, p. 546) asks

for a more open debate about what diversity could be, which involves nuances more than 'rose-tinted spectacles of participatory theorists, and without signing up to implicitly racist suspicion of 'other' cultures.' This implies that co-creation and co-production processes and discussions with different minorities must include not only religious community leaders but different people or groups within the communities and people with different ethnicities as burial practices may be equally dependent on culture. And not least as Brandsen, Steen and Vershuere (2018, p. 5) point out when referring to participation that 'citizens without the necessary cultural capital are still likely to be excluded,' pinpointing the necessity for finding appropriate methods for co-creation and co-production.

The case of Norway and Sweden highlights that death-related practices are mobile and prone to changes both due to external and internal forces. There is a cluster of factors affecting the changing landscape of practices at cemeteries and crematoria ranging from social, political, economic, to the physical availability, provision and management of space. The concept of time-space, meaning-making and material mobilities borrowed from the domain of mobilities studies and 'place attachment and exclusion' is relevant for discussing the future of cemeteries in emerging multicultural societies. There is an imbalance in influence exerted by different groups, authorities and stakeholders involved in dealing with prevalent practices at cemeteries, which necessitates further discussion on how to build 'belongingness' for groups of people subscribing to different faith, religion and culture. The issue of scale, from national to local, in interpreting laws and guidelines deserves further attention for streamlining and implementing one policy set applicable throughout the country, and not left to be decided at local levels. Finally, we would like to emphasise that the results clearly point towards a need for co-creation and co-production, both to find good solutions for stand-alone and complicated situations, and to develop a knowledge base for proposing a strategic framework for practices at different levels of governance.

References

Agrawal, S., & Baratt, C. (2014). Does proximity matter in promoting interfaith dialogue? *International Migration & Integration, 15*, 567–587.

Bäckström, A. (2017). Religion and ritual markers between the public and the private: Funerary rites in Sweden. In M. Guests & M. Middlemiss Lé Mon (Eds.), *Death, life and laughter: Essays on religion in honour of Douglas Davies* (pp. 87–100). Routledge.

Barbour, R. (2014). *Introducing qualitative research: A student's guide*. Sage.

Beebeejaun, Y. (2012). Including the excluded? Changing the understandings of ethnicity in contemporary English planning. *Planning Theory & Practice, 13*(4), 529–548.

Bille, M. (2019). Foreword. In O. B. Jensen, C. Lassen, & I. S. G. Lange (Eds.), *Material Mobilities* (pp. i–iv). Routledge.

Brandsen, T., & Honingh, M. (2018). Definitions of co-production and co-creation. In T. Brandsen, T. Steen, & B. Verschuere (Eds.), *Co-production and co-creation: Engaging citizens in public services* (pp. 9–17). Routledge.

Brandsen, T., Steen, T., & Verschuere, B. (2018). Co-creation and co-productionin public services: Urgent issues in practice and research. In T. Brandsen, T. Steen, & B. Verschuere (Eds.), *Co-production and co-creation: Engaging citizens in public services* (pp. 3–8). Routledge.

Cerwén, G., Wingren, C., & Qviström, M. (2017). Evaluating soundscape intentions in landscape architecture: A study of competition entries for a new cemetery in Järva, Stockholm. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management, 60*(7), 1253–1275.

Cresswell, T. (2006). *On the move: Mobility in the modern Western world*. Routledge.

Forester, J. (1999). *The deliberative practitioner: Encouraging participatory planning processes*. MIT Press.

Francis, D., Kellaher, L., & Neophytou, G. (2000). Sustaining cemeteries: The user perspective. *Mortality, 5*(1), 34–52.

Grabalov, P., & Nordh, H. (2020). 'Philosophical park': Cemeteries in the Scandinavian urban context. *Sociální studia / Social Studies, 1*, 33–54.

Gran, E. (2019). Stort flertall av de kirkelige fellesrådene bryter gravferdsloven: Kaller ikke inn til lovpålagt dialogmøte. *FriTanke*. https://fritanke.no/stort-flertall-av-de-kirkelige-fellesradene-bryter-gravferdsloven/19.11367

Hadders, H. (2021). Hindu urn burial in Norway: An option for the future? *Mortality, 28*, 1–16.

Høeg, I. M., & Pajari, I. (2013). Introduction to the Nordic issue of mortality. *Mortality, 18*(2), 109–115.

Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (2018). *Planning with complexity: An introduction to collaborative rationality for public policy*. Routledge.

Jedan, C., Kmec, S., Kolnberger, T., Venbrux, E., & Westendorp, M. (2020). Co-creating ritual spaces and communities: An analysis of municipal cemetery Tongerseweg, Maastricht, 1812–2020. *Religions, 11*(9), 435–456.

Jensen, O. B., Lassen, C., & Lange, I. S. G. (Eds.). (2019). *Material Mobilities*. Routledge.

Kjærsgaard, A. (2013). Death and the state of religion in Denmark. In E. Venbrux, T. Quartier, C. Venhorst, & B. Mathijssen (Eds.), *Changing European death ways* (pp. 165–188). Lit Verlag.

Kjøller, C. P. (2012). Managing green spaces of the deceased: Characteristics and dynamics of Danish cemetery administrations. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, 11*(3), 339–348.

Maddrell, A., Beebeejaun, Y., McClymont, K., McNally, D., Mathijssen, B., & Abid, S. (2018). *Diversity-ready cemeteries and crematoria in England and Wales: Project report*. University of Reading.

Maddrell, A., McNally, D., Beebeejaun, Y., McClymont, K., & Mathijssen, B. (2021). Intersections of (infra)structural violence and cultural inclusion: The geopolitics of minority cemeteries and crematoria provision. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 46*(3), 675–688.

Malone, K. (1999). Growing up in cities as a model of participatory planning and 'place-making' with young people. *Youth Studies Australia, 18*(2), 17–23.

Manzo, L. C. (2003). Beyond house and haven: Toward a revisioning of emotional relationships with places. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 23*(1), 47–61.

Marotta, V. P. (2017). *Theories of the stranger: Debates on cosmopolitanism, identity and cross-cultural encounters*. Routledge.

McClymont, K. (2016). 'That eccentric use of land at the top of the hill': Cemeteries and stories of the city. *Mortality, 21*(4), 378–396.

Ministry of Children and Families. (1996). *Lov om gravplasser, kremasjon og gravferd [gravferdsloven]*.

Ministry of Children and Families. (2020). *Endringer i gravferdsloven mv. (urnevegg mv.). Prop. 86 L.*

Ministry of Climate and Environments. (1978). *Lov om kulturminner [kulturminneloven]*.

Ministry of Culture. (1988) *Kulturmiljölag 1988, 950*.

Ministry of Culture. (1990). *Begravningslag 1990: 1144*.

Ministry of Culture. (1998) *Lag (1998:1593) om trossamfund.*

Ministry of Finance. (2010). *Plan – och bygglagen.*

Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation. (2008). *Lov om planlegging og byggesaksbehandling (Plan og bygningsloven)*.
Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation. (2014). *Medvirkning i planlegging*.
Nordh, H., & Evensen, K. H. (2018). Qualities and functions ascribed to urban cemeteries across the capital cities of Scandinavia. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, 33*, 80–91.
Nordh, H., Evensen, K. H., & Skår, M. (2017). A peaceful place in the city: A qualitative study of restorative components of the cemetery. *Landscape and Urban Planning, 167*, 108–117.
Nordh, H., House, D., Westendorp, M., Maddrell, A., Wingren, C., Kmec, S., McClymont, K., Jedan, C., Priya Uteng, T., Beebeejaun, Y., & Venbrux, E. (2021). Rules, norms and practices: A comparative study exploring disposal practices and facilities in Northern Europe. *OMEGA – Journal of Death and Dying*.
Norsk forening for gravplasskultur. (2020). *Kremasjonsstatistikk for Norge 2019*.
Norwegian Church. (2015). *Plan for utvikling av gravplasser i Drammen 2016–2019*.
Paasi, A. (2001). Bounded spaces in the mobile world: Deconstructing 'regional identity'. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie, 93*(2), 137–148.
Petersson, A., Cerwén, G., Liljas, M., & Wingren, C. (2018). Urban cemetery animals: An exploration of animal's place in the human cemetery. *Mortality, 23*(1), 1–18.
Pettersson, P. (2011). State and religion in Sweden: Ambiguity between disestablishment and religious control. *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society, 24*(2), 119–135.
Saar, M., & Palang, H. (2009). The dimensions of place meanings. *Living Reviews in Landscape Research, 3*.
Sandercock, L. (2000). When strangers become neighbours: Managing cities of difference. *Planning Theroy & Practice, 1*, 13–30.
Sheller, M., & Urry, J. (2006). The new mobilities paradigm. *Environment and Planning A, 38*, 207–226.
Skår, M., Nordh, H., & Swensen, G. (2018). Green urban cemeteries: More than just parks. *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability, 11*(3), 362–382.
Statistics Norway. (2019). *09817: Innvandrere og norskfødte med innvandrerforeldre, etter region, innvandringskategori, landbakgrunn, statistikkvariabel og år*.
Statistics Norway. (2020). *Den norske kirke*.
Statistics Sweden. (2020a). *Utrikes födda efter län, kommun och födelseland 31 december 2019*.
Statistics Sweden. (2020b). *Folkmängd efter födelseland 1900–2019*.
Sveriges auktoriserade begravningsbyråer. (2020). *Svenska kyrkan – kristen begravning*. https://www.begravningar.se/att-ordna-begravning/olika-begravningsformer/svenska-kyrkan-kristen-begravning
Sveriges kyrkogårds och krematorieförbund. (2019). *Kremationsstatistik 2018*.
Swedish Church. (2019). *Medlemsutveckling 2018–2019, per församling, kommun och län samt riket*.
Swensen, G., & Skår, M. (2018). Urban cemeteries' potential as sites for cultural encounters. *Mortality, 3*, 1–24.
Torfing, J., Sørensen, E., & Røiseland, A. (2016). Transforming the public sector into an arena for co-creation: Barriers, drivers, benefits, and ways forward. *Administration & Society, 51*(5), 795–825.
Urry, J. (2007). *Mobilities*. Polity Press.
Walter, T. (2005). Three ways to arrange a funeral: Mortuary variation in the modern west. *Mortality, 10*(3), 173–192.
Weber, E. P., & Khademian, A. M. (2008). Wicked problems, knowledge challenges, and collaborative capacity builders in network wettings. *Public Adminstration Review, 68*(2), 334–349.
Wingren, C. (2013). Place-making strategies in multicultural Swedish cemeteries: The cases of 'Östra kyrkogården' in Malmö and Järva common. *Mortality, 18*(2), 151–172.
Woodthorpe, K. (2011). Sustaining the contemporary cemetery: Implementing policy alongside conflicting perspectives and purpose. *Mortality, 16*(3), 259–276.