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About the journal

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Focus and Scope

Nordic Journal of Library and Information Studies, NJLIS, is a scholarly peer reviewed open access journal, covering scientific issues and current trends in Library and Information Studies. Nordic Journal of Library and Information Studies publishes Nordic and international peer reviewed LIS articles and reviews of significant LIS literature. The editorial committee consists of representatives from LIS departments in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The role of editor rotates annually between the members of the editorial committee. The journal is published on University of Copenhagen's online platform tidsskrift.dk.

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Editorial

We live in the time of flesh. Of bodies and materiality. Everyday life in a world coloured – or darkened – by a pandemic outbreak challenges dichotomies of body and mind, individual and technology (see also Haraway 1991, Mol & Law 2004).

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, our bodies are regulated in new ways. We are not allowed to come near other bodies and we are not supposed to touch other bodies, except close family and the like. In many countries, we must cover parts of our bodies (mouth and nose) in certain situations, for example on public transport. In addition, we should not leave our homes if our bodies have certain characteristics, such as high temperature or symptoms of a cold.

We receive information with recommendations and regulations on how to act from different sources to whom we attribute more or less cognitive authority, such as national health agencies and self-appointed experts. At the same time, our bodies and the information we receive from our senses are given a key role. One of the main recommendations from the Public health agency of Sweden is to avoid contact with others and not go to work or school if you “feel unwell”. Thus, we are urged to turn ourselves into subjects, to turn our gaze onto ourselves and adjust our conduct according to the truth of our own wellbeing (Foucault 2016 [1980]). In this process, we use technologies to get more information on our bodily conditions. Thermometers confirm, or refute, feelings of fever. Different forms of tests diagnose persons with Covid-19, but the testing is often preceded by sensory information indicating disease. Thereby bodily information, from senses and technologies, defines and reveals the enemy that is embedded in bodies and spreading between bodies.

When writing this editorial, I sit in a slightly uncomfortable chair in my bedroom. My laptop is located on the desk next to my husband’s guitars and our bed. This has been my workplace the last couple of months. Obviously, this is far from remarkable. Thousands and thousands of people in the Nordic and other countries are working from home due to the pandemic. It took some weeks, but by now I am used to interacting with students and colleagues on the screen instead of face-to-face. However, the consequences of not encountering others in the flesh appear in more detail as my experience of the situation gets richer, since infrastructures become visible during a breakdown (Star & Bowker 2010). For example, the infrastructure of bumping into colleagues at the coffee machine or in the corridor at work is out of play, and the everyday small talk has slowly evaporated. Through this, information is lost. When I do interact with colleagues or students, but at a distance via videoconferencing, the experience as well as the mediation and influence on human activity is different (Huvila 2018). Bodily

information is limited when everything we see are small frames of faces on the screen. At the same time, the question of space and power is in flux when all participants appears on the screen in equally designed squares in a random order. I very much look forward to reading about research on how online settings for human interaction, meetings and conferences have changed the informational landscape of work, and I am convinced such research will be conducted. Maybe an article on the subject will be published in the next issue of NJLIS – a special issue on research on pandemic and crises information. Submissions with a broad variety of perspectives are welcome to this special issue, so do not hesitate to submit your contribution! (See tidsskrift.dk/njlis for more information and a Call for Papers.)

This issue of the Nordic Journal of Library and Information Studies contains three very different, yet all equally inspiring, research articles. The first article, *“This is really interesting. I never even thought about this”*, is authored by Pamela J. McKenzie and Nicole K. Dalmer. The article relates to issues of materiality and practice in library and information studies and McKenzie and Dalmer introduce and discuss four methodological strategies that can be used to analyse unnoticed information work: “(1) consider the local and the translocal; (2) attend to the material and the textual; (3) consider visual methods; and (4) (re)consider the participant’s role and expertise”.

The article’s starting point, to make unnoticed or neglected information practices visible, is highly relevant and interesting in itself, but also timely in relation to the prevalent situation. In the literature review, McKenzie and Dalmer state that many informational activities are “essential to the success of paid work but are invisible to its evaluation system” (p. 2). The authors mention secretaries’ chatting as an example, which makes me reflect upon the situation of working from home once again. Even if I did know, to some extent, that the everyday small talk between colleagues is important, I had not experienced and truly felt it until the infrastructure broke down and it became clear how important small talk is for the success of other tasks. The four methodological strategies McKenzie and Dalmer outline and discuss appear to be constructive tools to analyse such informational activities and the authors’ reflections contributes to deepen and strengthen the methodological discussion within LIS.

The second article, *Den digitale offentligheten i kultur- og bibliotekpolitikken*, is authored by Håkon Larsen and Per Aleksander Solheim. The digital information society and its transformation of the public sphere is the backdrop to this text, and the current situation of forced online interaction therefore relates to the article’s point of departure. As mentioned above, human experiences and activities are affected when human interaction, and consequently the public sphere, is practiced online instead of face-to-face. Larsen and Solheim state that Norwegian cultural policies traditionally promote public libraries as key institutions to support democracy. In relation to the development of digital technology, there is a discourse that problematizes the state of democracy and discuss filter bubbles, echo chambers, lack of digital literacy, etcetera. Therefore, Larsen and Solheim analyse Norwegian cultural policies’ description of how digital information technologies challenge democracy, as well as the solutions ascribed to these outlined threats.

Mia Høj Mathiasson has authored the third and final research article in this issue of NJLIS; *From means to an end to ends in themselves*. Mathiasson maps and analyses programming activities between 1960 and 2020 based on a rich empirical material from two Danish public libraries. All activities referred to in the article take place in the physical library, but Mathiasson uses Facebook events reporting on programmes between 2018 and 2020 as one of many sources. This exemplifies the blurred line between online and offline. In the analysis, Mathiasson creates six temporal units describing the development of public library programmes: 1) 1960-1968: Programmes as a means to disseminate literature and increase book loans; 2) 1969-1976: Programmes as a means to promote the library as something more than books; 3) 1977-1982: Programmes as a means to community building; 4) 1983-

1994: Programmes as a means to shaping the library profile as a meeting place; 5) 1995-2008: Programmes as community building; and 6) 2009-2020: Programmes as ends in themselves. Thus, Mathiasson shows how the programming has changed over the years and she analyses the reasoning behind offering these activities. Maybe the current situation, in which many libraries have been forced to try out online alternatives (some successful, some not so much), will leave a mark on how programming is practiced in the future.

From the very beginning, the editorial board of the Nordic Journal of Library and Information Studies has emphasised the importance of using the journal to disseminate research by junior scholars in library and information studies. Therefore, it is a pleasure to announce that this issue of NJLIS, just like the previous one, includes a review of a fresh doctoral thesis. Wiebke Keim reviews Nora Schmidt's thesis *The privilege to select. Global research system, European academic library collections, and decolonisation*. Nora Schmidt was a doctoral student in Information Studies at Lund University and she successfully defended her thesis in October. Schmidt's research on how academic knowledge is circulated, or not circulated, due to inequalities in the global research system provides thought-provoking insights, and Keim's review of the thesis takes the discussion even further.

After these reflections on bodily matters and introductory notes, it is time to conclude this editorial. The texts in the journal will certainly speak for themselves.

Read and enjoy!

Lisa Engström
Editor-in-chief

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“This is really interesting. I never even thought about this.”ⁱ

Methodological strategies for studying invisible information work

Abstract

Significant information work (Corbin & Strauss, 1985; 1988) is often required to grapple with increasing quantities, types, and sources of information. Much of this work is invisible both to researchers and to the people undertaking it. As there are many axes along which informational work can be made invisible, researchers require flexible and creative methods in order to bring hidden information work to light. Each drawing on our own information practices research study, we introduce and reflect on four methodological strategies that have been effective in recognizing and revealing hidden aspects of informational work: (1) consider the local and the translocal; (2) attend to the material and the textual; (3) consider visual methods; and (4) (re)consider the participant’s role and expertise. We conclude by reflecting on the benefits and pitfalls of bringing visibility to invisible information work and conclude with a call for further research focused on the invisible.

Keywords: work, invisible work, information work, information practices, methodology, visual methods, institutional ethnography

Introduction

Many activities associated with information needs, seeking, creation, and use are “relatively obvious and codable into discrete units of work practice to be carried out on specific occasions” (Bowker &

Star, 1999, p. 233). Online searches, visits to the reference desk or online chat, filled-out forms, and citations of academic literature in a new article are all examples of informational activities that are visible and therefore straightforwardly counted, described, and analysed by researchers. However, many activities that are central to the enactment of information practices are less visible, to researchers and sometimes even to the people undertaking them. Attending to and making visible these otherwise invisible activities can reveal the aspects of information practices that become “black boxed” (Pilerot, 2014).

One strategy for making hidden informational activities visible is to recognise them as *work*: “Knowing how things work . . . is invaluable for those who often have to struggle in the dark” (Smith, 2005, p. 32). Feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith (Griffith & Smith, 2005, p. 124) employs a broad definition of *work* to include activities that are “done intentionally under definite material conditions and taking definite amounts of time,” regardless of whether these activities take place in workplace, domestic, or other settings. Defining work generously in this way brings into view *as work* activities that are otherwise invisible as work, even to those doing the activities (Smith, 2005). As there are many axes along which informational work can be made invisible (e.g., where the work is conducted, who is doing the work, or for whom), Library and Information Studies (LIS) researchers require methods with a certain degree of flexibility and ingenuity to bring invisible work to light. In this article, we describe methods that have revealed for us the invisible practices of information work in everyday life. We draw on two studies to show how methods that attend to the invisible can allow researchers to reveal and examine the full complement of work that comprises individuals’ information practices that might be intentionally or inadvertently hidden, erased, or neglected.

Literature Review

A number of scholars have sought to understand the invisible work associated with informational activities. Nardi and Engström (1999), Star and Strauss (1999), and Bowker and Star (1999) caution that workplace initiatives to describe, map, flowchart, quantify, measure, and rationalise work focus only on the work that is visible. In addition to work that is physically out of sight, Hatton (2017) notes that work may be invisible because it is ignored or overlooked, socially marginalised, economically or culturally devalued, or legally unprotected and unregulated. Empirical evidence shows that many aspects of informational work are essential to the success of paid work but are invisible to its evaluation systems. For example, secretaries’ chatting may be flagged as a non-work activity, despite the fact that the information exchanged through chit-chat may “smooth communication between bosses, speed up unusual requests by building a network of mutual cooperation and favor exchange, or screen out unnecessary interruptions by delaying a troublesome client at the door” (Star & Strauss, 1999, p. 14). Huvila (2009) and Pilerot (2014) argue that information plays a crucial role in all work practices, that all work “presumes some degree of information processing whether the work is manual labor or highly abstract decision making” (Huvila, 2009, p. 697).

As Suchman (1995) notes, “In the case of many forms of service work, we recognise that the better the work is done, the less visible it is to those who benefit from it” (p. 58). This is certainly the case for much information work. Ehrlich and Cash (1999) showed that many aspects of librarians’ work are invisible to their users, including question negotiation, searching skills, and the evaluation of information sources. They revealed how the invisibility of the work of information mediators such as journalists, editors, librarians, and customer support representatives may lead to their positions being targeted for elimination.

Corbin and Strauss (1985; 1988) identified *information work* as one of the many forms of work required to manage chronic illnesses in the home. A small number of LIS scholars have taken up the concept of *information work* in everyday life, particularly within the context of individuals and family

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care partners living with illnesses, including: HIV/AIDS (Hogan & Palmer, 2005), diabetes, hypertension, and kidney disease (Kaziunas, Ackerman, & Veinot, 2013), dementia (Dalmer, 2018), and multiple chronic conditions (Ancker *et al.*, 2015; Souden, 2008). Scholars have also studied related forms of work that may impact or inform individuals' information work, including: adherence work (Senteio & Veinot, 2014), knowledge work (Newell, 2015), document work (Trace, 2007), literacy work, and caring work (Stooke & McKenzie, 2009). An important type of work that can comprise information work is *articulation work*: "work that gets things back 'on track' in the face of the unexpected, and modifies action to accommodate unanticipated contingencies" (Star, 1991, p. 275). Importantly, this work that keeps workplaces "on track" may be undertaken in the workplace (Bowker & Star, 1999) *and* in the workers' homes (e.g., Griffith & Smith, 2005). For example, the care of a chronically ill relative may be invisible to the workplace and calculated and publicly defined as time *away from* paid work. It may also be invisible to friends and family. This work, however, entails significant and often hard physical and emotional labour that can stretch across time and place and affect both the home and the workplace (Star & Strauss, 1999; Hochschild, 1983).

Dalmer and Huvila (2020) suggest that emphasizing "work" in the study of informational endeavours can be helpful in highlighting aspects that are "otherwise at risk of remaining or becoming invisible" (p. 103). Highlighting what is potentially invisible requires LIS scholars to reflect carefully on "their focus of what is being studied, how they understand the analysed and observed actions, and where (and how) they are finding evidence and indications of, for instance, the investment of time and effort, conditions, tools and resources related to the information phenomena under study" (p. 103). Muller (1999) argued that work is not *inherently* visible or invisible, but is invisible *to an observer*, depending on the observer's perspective or point of view. As a result, LIS researchers who seek to understand invisible work need research methods that will allow them to adopt a point of view that brings that work into view. In this article, we take up Dalmer and Huvila's call by reflecting on methodological strategies that have been effective for us in recognizing and revealing informational work that was sometimes even invisible to the people who did it.

Analytic Approach

We each draw on one of our own studies to discuss and reflect on our use of different methods to make visible and analyse invisible information-related work.

In the *first* study, Pam analysed the work participants did in their workplaces, households, and other contexts to "keep track": coordinate people and resources in time and across physical and organisational settings and monitor and document the coordination processes. Like other forms of articulation work, keeping track is complex and is often overlooked, both by analysts and by those who do it. It transcends dichotomies of work and home; it involves people, physical and digital artefacts, and physical arrangements; includes both individual and collaborative activities; and operates across individual bureaucratic organisations and their associated physical spaces and temporal constraints.

Between 2010 and 2015, Pam and a team of research assistantsⁱⁱ conducted semi-structured interviews with 47 participants (31 identified as women and 16 as men) in two Canadian provinces. Participants represented a variety of household arrangements (living alone, with a partner and/or children, with roommates), work characteristics (home-based businesses, mobile work, shiftwork, full- and part-time work, multiple jobs, retired, unemployed), and of social roles they occupied in other domains (e.g., person with a chronic illness or disability, hobbyist, student). We interviewed participants in locations of their choosing: their homes (41, 7 of which contained work-from-home spaces), workplaces (2), and other locations such as coffee shops (4). We did not ask participants'

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ages, but one was a student in her first year of university, and several were retired; one volunteered that she was 84.

Interviews ranged from 41 to 131 minutes in length, with an average of 73 minutes. We asked two central questions: 1. What do you have to keep track of in your life? 2. How do you do it? We did not define “keeping track” but allowed participants to interpret as appropriate for them. We used probes as appropriate for each interview, for example asking about failures and breakdowns (Star & Strauss, 1999), about how they learned to keep track, and asking their thoughts about what success in keeping track meant (Trace, 2007). We asked participants to show us the items they used to support them in keeping track. Interviews away from home and work were limited to the items participants had brought with them. At home or at work, participants moved around to show us things in different rooms or different parts of the room. Where possible, we photographed significant documents, objects, and spaces. The data set consists of over 56 hours of interviews (2200 transcribed pages) and 1175 photographs.

In the *second* study (Dalmer, 2018), Nicole responded to the finding that, despite many supportive interventions, dementia caregivers continue to be frustrated and overwhelmed when seeking, finding, and making sense of information in support of their care of their loved ones. This institutional ethnographic study included: in-person interviews; a scoping review to unpack how academic research and writing frame family caregivers’ information work; and an analysis of the degree to which policies acknowledge the work families do to support an older adult to age at home. The studies collectively reveal a fundamental disjuncture in the ways that different stakeholders construct, understand, and experience the role of information in family caregivers’ everyday lives.

For the interview study, I conducted in-person interviews in mid- to late-2017. First, I interviewed 13 family caregivers (ranging in age from 67 to 88 years of age) about their information work. I recruited the majority of these participants from a dementia care facility that hosts both adult day programs and weekly caregiver support meetings and education sessions. I interviewed participants in the location of their choosing, with the majority (eight) in their homes, two in coffee shops, one in a public library meeting room, and one in a meeting room on the university campus. Interviews were between 95 to 185 minutes in length. As one structuring device in the interviews, I asked caregivers to run through a typical day to construct and extract descriptions of the work they do in relation to caring for their aging family member. As another structuring device, I asked caregivers to think about when they first noticed changes in their family member, and where (and why) they decided to go to learn more about these changes. Following these 13 interviews, I interviewed five paid dementia care staff whom family caregivers had named, to identify their work processes that impact families’ information work. Four interviews took place at the care staff’s place of work and one at a teashop. Interviews were between 45 to 75 minutes in length.

Following these two interview studies, I undertook two text-based studies to further explicate the experiences brought to light in the interviews. First, I conducted a scoping review of 72 articles to document how scholarly research conceptualised informational components of family caregivers’ work and the degree to which these components were acknowledged as work. Second, I applied Carol Bacchi’s (1999) “What’s the Problem Represented to Be?” analytical tool to examine the degree to which aging-in-place policies acknowledge the work families do to support an older adult to age at home.

Data collection and analyses in both studies conformed to Canadian guidelines on ethical research on human subjects (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research

Council of Canada & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2018). To maintain confidentiality, we identify participants by pseudonym.

Prompted by participant comments such as the one that serves as this article's title, we reflected on our research approaches, both individually and together (Barry, Britten, Barber, Bradley, & Stevenson, 1999). We shared reflections and curiosities regarding the data from our two studies and our presence and positioning as researchers (Gergen & Gergen, 1991). As we discussed emergent connections and linkages (Saldaña, 2016), we each identified and shared significant instances when our own study had revealed information work that had previously been invisible to us, to the participant, or both. We compared and reflected on these instances and grounded them in prior research. As a result of this iterative process, we identified and here offer four methodological strategies for recognising invisible information work and bringing it to light.

Methodological Strategies for Studying the Invisible

1. Consider the local *and* the translocal

Davenport and Cronin (1998) challenged LIS scholars to attend to “the interaction and intersection of the diverse texts that constitute work in a given domain” (p. 266). Frohmann (2004) similarly urged LIS scholars to focus on “the intertwined, institutionally disciplined, documentary and non-documentary practices from which ‘information’ emerges as an effect” (p. 198). Doing so involves considering both the local setting and its connections to its broader context.

Ethnomethodologically-informed modes of inquiry such as Dorothy Smith's Institutional Ethnography (Smith, 2005) are helpful for following these suggestions for making information-in-action visible in particular settings and broader contexts. Smith's way of studying the everyday world includes considering both the local and the translocal to reveal “how people's everyday lives may be organized without their explicit awareness but still with their active involvement” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 43). Institutional ethnography starts with people's everyday, local information practices and then analyses these relationally to explore how the work done in households and family life (the local) “hooks in” to the organisational requirements and contingencies of workplaces, schools, hospitals, and other institutions (the translocal). It is this lens that constructively problematises LIS's persistent dichotomisation of “everyday” and “workplace” information or contexts (Dalmer & McKenzie, 2019). This consideration of both the local *and* the translocal in research supports information needs, seeking, and use scholars' turn toward taking up information practices in context (Courtright, 2007). The complex assemblage of individuals, organisations, policies, and texts (among others) that operate translocally but that coordinate and influence individuals' everyday, local information practices are crucial and rich contexts that require attention. This movement from the local to the translocal not only enables researchers to actively unearth “the socially and historically embedded nature of their research object” (Talja, Keso, & Pietiläinen, 1999, p. 751-752) but it contributes to an evolving understanding of context in LIS, supporting Dervin's (1997) assertion that “context is not usefully conceptualized as [an] independent entity” (p. 116).

As an example of the insights that arise in considering both the local and the translocal, Nicole's study started with the local, using interviews with family caregivers to understand the many activities that comprise their everyday (and every night) information work. For example, a number of family caregivers mentioned the information resources they received at an eight-week caregiver education series. For a number of caregivers, these sessions were a crucial source of information, not only from the social worker course facilitators but from the other caregivers in attendance. A number of caregivers noted, though, that the information they received would have been especially helpful earlier in their caregiving journey but that institutional barriers had prevented them from registering

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for the education series until recently. This study then branched out to the translocal, to more fully understand how and why “what actually happens” to family caregivers happens. Nicole spoke with dementia care staff, including the social worker facilitators mentioned by family caregivers. As these paid staff members were located outside of family caregivers’ local networks, they had access to information beyond what family caregivers could know. Staff members offered insights about the components of their work that either fostered or restricted their time with family caregivers, such as assessment scores, waiting lists, and room bookings. These interviews provided additional context and insights to understand why families experience information as scattered and fractured. For example, the social worker facilitators mentioned the many external mechanisms and decisions that precluded family caregivers from participating in earlier caregiver education series. The older adult receiving care had to have an official diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia before they could be placed on a lengthy waiting list for admission in an adult day program. With a provincial shortage of psychogeriatricians, this diagnosis could take several months. Only once that older adult had received a diagnosis, had made it to the ‘top’ of the waiting list and was in the adult day program, could the family caregiver register to participate in the caregiver education series. By this point, a number of information needs covered in the education series were less applicable to caregivers’ contexts.

One of the findings of Pam’s study was that document genres such as lists and calendars that individuals created and used in everyday-life settings were socially, organisationally, and intertextually connected in larger genre systems of documents in institutions and organisations beyond the home (McKenzie & Davies, 2010). For example, a work shift written on a kitchen calendar is linked to the staff schedule in the workplace. A student’s lecture notes are connected to the professor’s course outline, which is in turn connected to academic policy documents such as those related to grade appeals, faculty workload, and promotion and tenure, and to the scholarly literature of the discipline. In both studies, these kinds of connections between the local and the translocal might be invisible to a thematic or content analysis, but attending to the relational makes them visible.

2. Attend to the material and the textual

Pilerot (2014) showed that attending to the sociomaterial dimensions of information-related activities brought to light activities that were otherwise invisible. Because participants who have not yet thought about the role of information in their everyday lives may have difficulty seeing and articulating activities such as these, it may be necessary for the researcher to observe the physical environment to identify relevant documents and artefacts in addition to interviewing. Conversely, because people may use multiple, physically and spatially distributed informational tools, and may use interpersonal sources in addition to material and digital artefacts, researchers must be prepared to go beyond what is immediately visible and ask questions to elicit accounts from participants.

In her study, Pam found that the most effective strategy was to begin the interview with general “what” and “how” questions and to follow up with probes about failures and breakdowns (Star, 1999), and questions about how participants learned what kinds of informational and documentary practices are and are not acceptable (Trace, 2007). Attending to visual triggers and spoken references was crucial, as several participants used non-textual artefacts that we would not otherwise have recognised as informational objects. For example, a medication package set incongruously on a kitchen counter served as a reminder to renew a prescription.

My husband was leaving and he wanted me to refill a prescription for him. So instead of writing a sticky [note], because I couldn't find a sticky or where it was, I just put the box on my day timer— [laughing]—so that it would jog my memory.

McKenzie and Dalmer: *“This is really interesting. I never even thought about this.”*

At the same time, observation was not sufficient on its own to reveal all aspects of informational work. It was important to both look and to ask and listen. For example, a participant revealed that an unremarkable book sitting on the edge of a table

has all my credit card numbers, professional, auto, passport numbers, everything. Here, I mean, if somebody broke in and saw this, they would have all my information.

Had Pam simply been observing without interviewing, the significance of this object would have been missed. Interviews also allowed participants to reflect on their practices. The participant quoted in the title of this article responded to the question: “How do you keep track?” by describing how acquiring an iPhone had occasioned a move away from paper records:

It’s really really good because I used to have a bunch of assorted books, like random notebooks where I’d write down grocery lists and this and that and different things and then a schedule, and all these different pieces of paper to organise, and then client lists and blah blah blah. And now I can do everything on the phone.

As we looked around the participant’s kitchen and talked, she reflected on her own work and was able to describe more than she had initially thought about, for example preserving concert tickets and wedding invitations and incorporating the memory of the event into the day-to-day ambiance of her kitchen:

I put magnets on them and they become my fridge magnets. Just as fun reminders. But yeah, any events, like invitations – we have a wedding invitation up there right now – that kind of gets up [on the refrigerator].

Discussing the textual and material objects in her kitchen prompted the participant to think about the physical means of keeping track that had been invisible in her response to the opening question: “I never really thought about how much weird storage we have for different organisational things. We’ve got a whole bunch of different ways of doing things.” Through this strategy, Pam was able to see how material objects, including documents, that participants created and used in their homes are embedded in deeply meaningful interpersonal relationships as well as in the structures of the organisations, such as concert promotion companies, with which individuals interact.

To push further into the translocal relations shaping caregivers’ work, Nicole examined two different types of texts: academic articles and policy documents. Smith (1998) argues that “text-mediated relations are the forms in which power is generated and held in contemporary societies” (p. 79). Texts are replicable and can be read or heard in identical form across time and place. They therefore acquire the capacity to coordinate the actions and experiences of family caregivers, even if those individuals have no direct contact with them. To “look behind policy and procedure” (DeVault, 2014, p. 784), Nicole’s scoping review (Dalmer, 2020) and critical policy analysis (Dalmer, 2019) analysed researchers’ and policy makers’ interpretations of families’ information-based care work. They made visible the assumptions and the silences surrounding that work that are embedded within and travel between research and policy texts over time and across locations. Nicole’s study revealed that research and policy texts ultimately created distinct knowable and governable categories and frameworks that, over time, legitimise what is or is not construed as “information.” For example, 29 of 72 articles in the scoping review sample sought, through an experimental intervention devised by the article’s author(s), to change information delivery systems to mitigate caregiver burden. This technological, interventionist lens understands caregivers’ interactions with information only in terms of information technology, and pathologises caregivers, positioning them as needing more

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information interventions in order to be more proficient and less burdened care providers. Scholarly researchers' construction of information solely as a technologically-delivered intervention overlooked the sense making, context, judgement, and interpretation that caregivers applied to the information they retrieved via the intervention. This construction also omitted the work needed to learn about, manipulate, or tend to the intervention itself. In this sample of articles, caregivers (and their many lines of work) were largely treated as secondary to the primacy of information or the information intervention itself. This relationship is in keeping with Barnes and Henwood's (2015) articulation of the *inform to care* approach, in which competent and "good" care is positioned as a result of the availability of "good" information, with no consideration to the work required to search, find, manage, understand, mediate, or communicate the information.

3. Consider visual methods

Work that is invisible to the people who do it poses particular challenges for data collection. Greyson and Johnson (2016) outline a number of activities that might comprise families' information work, such as accessing, assessing, avoiding, blunting, encountering, monitoring, recalling, processing, seeking, sense-making, and sharing. Both studies integrated visual methods; although the approaches were different, the combination of interviews and visual methods brought to light elements that we as researchers, and in many cases our participants, had not anticipated.

A variety of participatory and non-participatory visual methods have come into common use in the social sciences, and many are being taken up in LIS (see, for example, Pollak, 2017). Participatory visual methods allow research participants to make visible aspects of information work that are significant to them (e.g., Barriage & Hicks, 2020; Hicks, 2018; Hicks & Lloyd, 2018; Hultgren, 2007; Julien, Given, & Opryshko, 2013; Polkinghorne, 2018; Rivano Eckerdal, 2013). Nicole used participatory visual methods, embedding an information world mapping exercise within each interview. In this exercise, based on Sonnenwald's information horizons (1999; Hultgren, 2007; Rivano Eckerdal, 2013) and on Greyson, O'Brien, and Shoveller's (2017) information world mapping interview technique, family caregivers mapped out, by writing, doodling, and drawing, the information activities they had already described during the interview along with any other information-work-related resources or tasks that came to mind as they drew out their map. Caregivers were given the choice to draw out their information world from a blank sheet of paper or from a template that blocked out: a) where caregivers went for information, b) from or with whom caregivers sought or shared information, and, c) what resources families used. Participants therefore maintained a large degree of control over the design and interpretation of their information worlds. Maps considerably varied between caregivers, particularly in degree of detail. Alice's information world map (Figure 1) demonstrates how maps depicted differing constellations of items, places, mantras ("knowledge is strength", "fear is the unknown"), and formal and informal relationships that shaped and guided participants' information work. As these information world maps were not constrained to depicting one place or one particular point in time, a fuller complement of families' information work emerged. Alice's detailed map makes visible the many networks of places (including non-profit organisations and internet sites), social relationships (including friends and family and a myriad of health care professionals), and resources that jointly provide support for both her and her husband, who was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease. Each of these relationships require work; to navigate the information received, to assemble that information into existing knowledge, and, in Alice's case, to determine how to translate this information to different family members, including her grandchildren. As a number of informational activities are often invisible even to those who perform them, such visual elicitation techniques allow for the mapping of individuals' work on many planes – in terms of the actual type or content of work and its spatial and temporal aspects. The act of filling out one of the circles, squares or diamonds would trigger Alice to draw in the next sequence in her care work, leading her to fill in another shape. This process made visible, for

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example, the effort needed to travel physically between different information resources (from a doctor's office to the local Alzheimer's Society). In completing her map, Alice was able to identify certain lines of information-related care work that were previously invisible to her. In the middle of her map, Alice noted both verbally and in writing that "you become an info source [therefore] must learn." In this way, these information world maps reveal instances of work transfer (Glazer, 1984), where tasks (such as equipping oneself to become an information intermediary [Abrahamson & Fisher, 2007] for family members, friends, and other caregivers) are shifted from paid workers to unpaid family members and are no longer counted as work and thus become invisible.

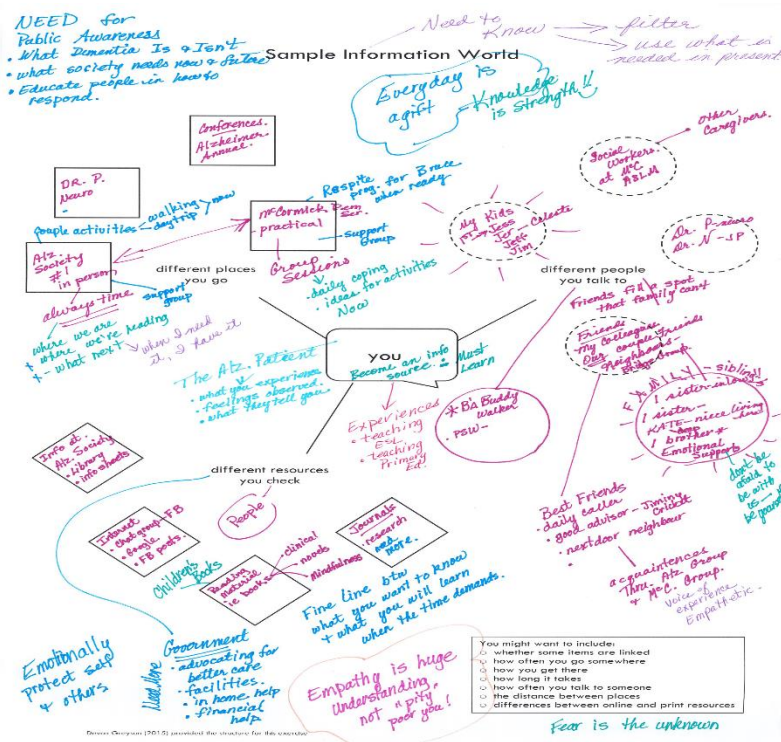


Figure 1. Alice's Information World
(Note: Identifying elements have been removed)

Non-participatory researcher-led visual methods can also make visible the elements of local information-rich settings such as offices or homes (Hartel & Thomson, 2011), particularly when photography is combined with interviewing (e.g., Thomson, 2018). In Pam's study, the photographs of the documents, objects, and places associated with keeping track provided a reminder to the researcher of the participant's context. More importantly, having high-resolution photographs afforded ongoing analysis, and the photographs revealed details that we did not discuss and were not able to observe during the interviews, such as the specific appointments on a calendar. Apart from attending to the material and textual during the interviews, taking and analysing photographs afforded new insights.

4. (Re)consider the participant's role and expertise

Certain aspects of people's work have a tendency to fade into invisibility. This may occur when the work is so routine as to be unremarkable or may be the result of the low social status of those conducting it (Star & Strauss, 1999). Star and Strauss (1999) point out that analyses of invisible work bring otherwise hidden expertise into view. Attending to participants' invisible information activities

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can expose previously-unknown or taken-for-granted lines of expertise about those activities. The integration of visual with interview methods, for example, can disembed that invisible, background work and prompt a reconsideration of the participant's role as an expert in the research interaction. Visual methods turned both studies into bidirectional experiences, with interviews becoming instances of data co-creation. As participants guided the interviewer through their homes (Pam's study) or chose the direction, the content, or the placement and distribution of their information mapping exercise (Nicole's study), power dynamics were more evenly distributed between participant and interviewer.

In Pam's study, the researchers asked participants' permission before taking photographs, so participants directed what the photographic data the researchers might and might not collect. In the creation of their information world maps, Nicole's participants dictated how the map would be made (detail, information, shape, colour, size, etc.) and consequently how the map would come to depict their experiences. The mapping exercise process and resulting map acknowledged and privileged caregivers' expertise about their information activities and made visible the sequencing of actions and activities along the caregiving trajectory that are often difficult to bring to focus when studying information practices. Perhaps as a result of this acknowledgement of their experiential ways of knowing, most caregivers were eager to participate in the mapping exercise, spending time and care in crafting the map and asking for a copy of their map at the conclusion of the interview. Furthermore, in making their information work visible (literally), family caregivers articulated their surprise and sense of validation when they saw for themselves the enormity their often-invisible care work drawn out and on display in front of them.

Discussion

In this article, we have shared some of our methodological strategies for making visible information work that may otherwise be hidden. Our studies have shown that even "everyday life" information practices fit Smith's definition of work because they entail complex orchestrations of a number of actors' unnoticed time and effort to carry out leisure, domestic, and other everyday activities. Marjorie DeVault (1991) found that the vocabulary of work brought to light the "workful" character of providing sustenance, including cooking and feeding, which "is often unrecognized even by those who do it" (p. 228). As researchers, the language we use can impact the visibility of the activities we study, and thus our findings and their implications. So too, we argue, can the methods that we elect to use or not to use.

Using methodological strategies to bring visibility to invisible work can be a fraught process for researchers. Bowker and Star (1999) caution that making some aspects of work visible necessarily makes others invisible: "a light shining in the dark illuminates certain areas of ... work but may cast shadows elsewhere: the whole picture is a very complex one" (p. 254). In addition, making work visible may create undesirable opportunities for surveillance or may create even more work to document the work, as Suchman (1995) highlights. Scott (1987) has conceptualised invisibility as a potential "weapon of the weak", in that keeping certain lines of work invisible can provide opportunities for resistance or defiance.

Given that LIS scholars are attentive to work of librarians, archivists, and other information managers, we tend to make visible the kinds of informational activities overlooked by scholars from other disciplines (e.g., Muller, 1999; Ehrlich & Cash, 1999). For example, discussions of "serendipity" in the library or the archive ignore the work of cataloguers and appraisal and description archivists who place individual items into a broader collection context. A question for further discussion as a community is: What informational activities are invisible to us as LIS scholars and what methods might

we use to bring them into full view? What are the risks and potential consequences (both positive and unfavourable) of bringing those activities into view?

Both Nardi and Engeström (1999) and DeVault (2014) have offered their own strategies for the study of invisible work. Editors Nardi and Engeström outlined four categories in the articles comprising their *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)* special issue on the structure of invisible work. Institutional ethnographer DeVault, in her investigation of the challenges deaf people grapple with in healthcare interactions, proposed four analytic strategies for studying invisible work. Though these authors take different approaches, we argue that their frameworks can be understood as relating to four common themes that we have labelled: invisible location, invisible activity, invisible worker, and structural invisibility. In Table 1, we bring these two frameworks together under the common themes and have added our reflections on how they might support LIS scholars seeking to make information work visible. We propose that our four methodological strategies can be helpful for information practices scholars in making information work visible across the four themes.

Theme	Categories of invisible work (Nardi & Engeström, 1999)	Analytic strategies for studying invisible work DeVault (2014)	Questions and reflections related to information work
Invisible location	Work done in invisible places		For example, informational work done in places outside of GLAMS (galleries, libraries, archives, museums) or white-collar workplaces, such as the home.
Invisible activity	Work defined as routine or manual that actually requires considerable problem solving and knowledge	Look at work that facilitates access Look at work that's done "under the radar"	The turn to embodiment is helpful in both workplace (e.g., Veinot, 2007) and everyday contexts (Lloyd & Olsson, 2019)
Invisible worker	Work done by invisible people	Look at everyone's work (and how it's divided)	What kinds of people have we not studied, or have studied but failed to count or acknowledge their work, and what might we learn from them?
Structural invisibility	Informal work processes that are not part of any job description but which are crucial to the functioning of the workplace	Look behind policy and procedure	With our focus on GLAMS, on published information sources and information systems, what aspects of articulation work are we missing? What work is required to get things done? For example, Stooke and McKenzie (2009) showed how participating in public library storytime programs required a great deal of work including getting small children out of the house and to the library. Such relational and care work is often overlooked by LIS scholars.

Table 1. Approaches for identifying and revealing invisible information work

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In closing, it is important to note that making different lines of invisible work visible is a necessary but insufficient part of the research process. DeVault (2014) notes that “as we see more of people’s invisible labors, we find more work that needs to be done—projects in which we can apply the tools of our discipline and our craft” (p. 788). Indeed, this paper is a starting point in reflecting how “the tools of our discipline”, including the methods researchers select and apply can impact which and what types informational activities (and the people doing those activities) are brought to the fore.

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Den digitale offentligheten i kultur- og bibliotekpolitikken

Abstract

Echo chambers, fake news, filter bubbles and algorithms have been framed as great threats to our contemporary democracies and public spheres. In the Nordic countries, the state plays an active role in sustaining democracy and the public sphere through culture and knowledge policies. The Norwegian Government have over the last years presented a white paper on overall cultural policy and a library strategy document. Both documents address the effects of digital technology on democracy, and how culture institutions in general and libraries in particular can help sustain our democracies in changing times. In this article, we study these and preceding documents on culture and library policies. We analyze how they address digital technology and how they see culture and library policies as providing solutions to digital threats to democracy and the public sphere. Furthermore, we study what notion of democracy and the public sphere are prevalent in Norwegian cultural policies. The results show that the Government view culture as a remedy against a fragmented public sphere, and that libraries play a key role as providers of digital guidance and teaching.

Keywords: public sphere, Habermas, cultural policy, library policy, Norway, digital technology

Innledning

Den digitale teknologien medfører store endringer i offentligheten og vi har under 2000-tallet fått en rekke begreper for å forstå og teoretisere disse endringene: Cass Sunstein (2001, 2009, 2018) har skrevet tre bøker om frykten for en fragmentert offentlighet og dannelsen av ekkokamre, og Eli Pariser (2011) bygget videre på denne tenkningen med sin bok om *filterbobler*. Evgeny Morozov

(2012) har kommet med sterk kritikk av den naive vestlige holdningen om at så lenge nasjoners befolkning har tilgang til internett og fri informasjon, vil demokratiet trenge seg frem naturlig, og Shoshana Zuboff (2019) har beskrevet hvordan de store nettgigantene støvsuger nettet for personlige data, og selger disse til tredjeparter som benytter de til å produsere adferdsmodeller for markedsføring eller politisk kommunikasjon.

I de nordiske landene har vi sterke, aktive og liberale stater som indirekte har sterk påvirkning på sivile institusjoner innen kultur-, medie-, utdannings- og forskningssektoren. Staten er i de nordiske landene en sterk bidragsyter til å opprettholde en kritisk og uavhengig offentlighet, basert på prinsippet om armlengdes avstand (Engelstad, Larsen og Rogstad, 2017). I Norge har vi også grunnlovsfestet at "det påligger statens myndigheter å legge forholdene til rette for en åpen og opplyst offentlig samtale" (Grunnloven, 2004, § 100). Under 2000-tallet har bibliotekene fått et tydelig oppdrag overfor demokratiet og offentligheten, i kombinasjon med deres tradisjonelle oppdrag om å fremme folkeopplysning og dannelse. Dette samfunnsoppdraget blir tydelig kommunisert gjennom tittelen på Norges siste bibliotekstrategien – *Rom for demokrati og dannelse* (Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019).

Med tanke på den digitale teknologiens transformasjon av offentligheten og bibliotekenes samtidige samfunnsoppdrag synes vi det er interessant å undersøke hvilke strategier og visjoner norske myndigheter har for bibliotekene i det digitale informasjonssamfunnet, med alle dets muligheter, utfordringer og problemer. Gjennom denne artikkelen vil vi derfor søke å svare på spørsmålet: *På hvilken måte beskriver Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet i de siste dokumentene om kultur- og bibliotekpolitikk de utfordringer som digital informasjonsteknologi gir for demokratiet og offentligheten, og hvordan beskriver de eventuelle politiske løsninger på disse utfordringene?*

I arbeidet med å svare på dette spørsmålet, vil vi i dokumentene se nærmere på hvordan bibliotekenes rolle som aktør i møte med det digitale informasjonssamfunnets utfordringer beskrives. Videre vil vi undersøke hvilken grunnleggende demokrati- og offentlighetsforståelse som kan utledes av Kulturdepartementets dokumenter om generell kulturpolitikk og Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementets dokumenter om bibliotekpolitikk produsert under 2000-tallet.ⁱ Et teoretisk perspektiv på demokrati- og offentlighet som har hatt spesielt stor innflytelse på norsk samfunnsforskning er utviklet av Jürgen Habermas. På grunn av den nordiske tradisjonen for at forskere sitter som medlemmer i ekspertutvalg som leverer uavhengige og kunnskapsbaserte forslag til politikkkutforming (Holst, 2019; Engelstad, Larsen og Rogstad, 2017, s. 53), har denne tenkningen også hatt innflytelse på politikkkutforming i Norge, spesielt når det kommer til spørsmål om yttringsfrihet (Kalleberg, 2015). Som det vil gå frem av denne artikkelen, har denne tenkningen også hatt innflytelse på 2000-tallets kultur- og bibliotekpolitikk. Før vi foretar en nærmere presentasjon og analyse av datamaterialet vil vi derfor gi en kort presentasjon av Habermas' tanker om demokrati og offentlighet.ⁱⁱ

Habermas, offentligheten og demokratiet

Den borgerlige offentlighet er et begrep Habermas (2005[1962]) brukte for å beskrive den fremvoksende offentligheten blant europeiske borgere og intellektuelle fra 1700-tallet og utover mot 1950-tallet. På denne tiden fant borgere, som regel fra et høyere samfunnslag, sammen i kaffehus i London, parisiske salonger eller tyske *Tischgesellschaften* (middagsselskaper) for å diskutere kunst, litteratur, økonomi og politikk, uten myndighetenes eller geistlighetens innsyn og innflytelse. Her kunne de fritt og usensurert diskutere samtidsproblematikk og danne det vi etter hvert kom til å kjenne som en offentlig opinion. Opinionsdannelsen utviklet seg parallelt med en fremvoksende fri presse, der tidsskrifter og tidlige utgaver av aviser ga borgerne en kommunikasjonskanal for videre

samfunnsdebatt og kritikk. Dette er den spede begynnelsen på en kritisk offentlighet som kan utøve innflytelse på politiske beslutninger.

Den borgerlige offentlighet er sfæren for privatfolk samlet til publikum – et kritisk diskuterende publikum. [...] [I] den borgerlige offentlighet er det den kritiske diskursen som er offentlig, ikke personene; offentligheten er sfæren for diskursiv omgang med argumenter som er likt for alle, uten personens anseelse – og ikke for fremvisning av de deltakendes sosiale status (Høibraaten, 2005, s. XXVI).

En effektiv og fri offentlig samtale er en viktig faktor for vellykkede demokratiske systemer, siden politiske og lovgivende institusjoner som er åpne for innspill fra sivilsamfunnet og opinionen, fører til sterkere demokratiske systemer, samtidig som det også styrker deres legitimitet overfor velgerne (Finlayson, 2005, s. 108). Denne demokratimodellen, der saker av offentlig interesse diskuteres åpent for alle parter, er et kjennetegn ved det deliberative demokratiet. Habermas (2006) har selv utviklet en deliberativ demokratiteori om diskursdemokratiet hvor idealet om en borgerlig offentlighet er sentralt. For Habermas (1984) er en ideell handling i en borgerlig offentlighet en kommunikativ handling, en "sosial samhandling der to eller flere tale- og handlingskompetente aktører samordner sine individuelle handlingsplaner gjennom en språklig formidlet enighet" (Kalleberg, 2019, s. 145). Rendyrket kommunikativ handling oppstår hvis denne handlingsplanen er fri for vikarierende motiver, trusler om sanksjoner eller personlige maktinteresser som kan tvinge motparten til handling. Ifølge Habermas kan "... språklig formidlet enighet ... virke handlingsmotiverende på samme måte som sanksjoner ... Habermas hevde[r] at språklig etablert enighet hviler på det han kaller *kraften i det bedre argument*" (Kalleberg, 2019, s. 145).

En borgerlig offentlighet er et bindeledd eller et rom mellom sivilsamfunnet og myndighetene. I dette rommet der opinion oppstår, fortrinnsvis basert på kommunikativ handling og kraften i det bedre argument, vil utvikling i kommunikasjonsteknologi ha stor innflytelse. Den lange røde tråden i utviklingen av en offentlighet kan sees fra oppfinnelsen og utbredelsen av trykkpressen, via en etablert fri presse, gjennom massemedia som radio og TV. Til sist har sosiale medier hatt en sterk innflytelse på offentlig samtale og opinionsdannelse. I sin opprinnelige teori om den borgerlige offentlighet var Habermas (2005[1962]) meget pessimistisk med tanke på massemediens passivisering av befolkningen. Senere har han endret syn på massemediens rolle for det deliberative demokratiet, og han har uttrykt et ambivalent syn på internett og de sosiale mediens bidrag til en felles offentlighet (Habermas, 2006; Gentikow, 2009). I denne studien vil vi undersøke hvordan ideene om det deliberative diskursdemokratiet gjør seg gjeldende i kultur- og bibliotekpolitikken, og vi vil se hvordan de norske myndighetene gjennom politikkdokumentene forholder seg til den digitale teknologiens innvirkning på demokratiet og offentligheten.

Data

Studien er basert på en analyse av de to stortingsmeldingene om allmenn kulturpolitikk produsert under 2000-tallet (Kultur- og kirke departementet, 2003; Kulturdepartementet, 2018), Norges eneste rene stortingsmelding om biblioteker (Kulturdepartementet, 2009) og Norges to nasjonale bibliotekstrategier (Kulturdepartementet, 2015; Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Av disse dokumentene underkastes den siste generelle stortingsmeldingen om kulturpolitikk (Kulturdepartementet, 2018) og den sist utgitte nasjonale bibliotekstrategien (Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019) en grundig analyse, siden disse er sentrale dokumenter som legger føringer for bibliotekenes samfunnsoppdrag i de kommende årene.ⁱⁱⁱ Vi har analysert dokumentene ved hjelp av et sett med koder, som presenteres i siste avsnitt av denne delen. Hva slags type dokumenter er det så vi har analysert?

Generelle stortingsmeldinger om kulturpolitikk har siden 1970-tallet blitt presentert ca. hvert tiende år. Kulturmeldingene inneholder oppsummeringer av foregående politikk for kultursektoren og perspektiver på hvor man vil med kulturpolitikken de neste årene. At vi i 2009 fikk en egen stortingsmelding om bibliotek kan blant annet ses i sammenheng med et pågående arbeid for å revidere loven om folkebiblioteker (en revidert versjon av loven tredje i kraft i 2014). Bibliotekstrategier er en ny type politisk dokument. Den første bibliotekstrategien for 2015-2018 var tett knyttet til bibliotekmeldingen fra 2009, og behandler Nasjonalbibliotekets nye rolle som sentral utvikler av biblioteksektoren i Norge.^{iv} Den siste bibliotekstrategien er utledet av den siste generelle kulturmeldingen, og fokuserer blant annet på bibliotekenes demokratiske oppdrag og dets rolle i møte med den digitale teknologien.

Våre resultater fra analysene vil bli presentert dokumentvis. Vi vil starte med den siste kulturmeldingen (Kulturdepartementet, 2018) etterfulgt av den siste bibliotekstrategien (Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Deretter kommer en diskusjonsdel, sentrert rundt fire kategorier: Problemforståelse; Løsningsforslag; Bibliotekets rolle; Demokrati og offentlighet. Problemforståelse er en kategori der vi gjennomgår hvilke utviklingstrekk og utfordringer knyttet til det digitale informasjonssamfunnet som beskrives i dokumentene. Løsningsforslag inkluderer hvilke løsninger kulturmyndighetene har iverksatt, eller planlegger å iverksette over tid, i møte med de nevnte utviklingstrekene og utfordringene. Bibliotekets rolle omhandler de deler av dokumentene som beskriver hvilken rolle myndighetene ser for seg at bibliotekene kan spille i møte med det digitale informasjonssamfunnet. Demokrati og offentlighet dreier seg om de tekstpartier hvor myndighetene presenterer overordnede idéer angående en opplyst offentlighet og samtale, og hvilken rolle de spiller i det norske demokratiet. Vi har kommet frem til kodene gjennom en dokumentanalyse, basert på en kvalitativ innholdsanalyse. Vi foretok først en induktiv sortering av tekstutdrag fra dokumentene etter hvordan de besvarte forskningsspørsmålet. Utdragene ble deretter sortert i fire preliminnære kategorier, før en ny deduktiv lesning av kildene basert på disse kategoriene ble gjennomført. Den vekselvis induktive og deduktive analysen meislet gradvis ut de fire avgrensede kategoriene.

Resultater og analyse

Det første dokumentet vi ser på i denne delen er kulturmeldingen presentert i november 2018 av kulturminister Trine Skei Grande (Venstre) fra Erna Solbergs (Høyre) regjering. Meldingen speiler tydeligere enn de tidligere dokumentene vi har analysert (Kultur- og kirke departementet, 2003; Kulturdepartementet, 2009, 2015, 2018) de digitale utfordringene for informasjonssamfunnet og offentligheten, samtidig som bibliotekene blir behandlet som en sterkere aktør i møte med disse. Det andre dokumentet vi ser på er bibliotekstrategien utgitt i november 2019, som både er utledet av kulturmeldingen og bygger videre på bibliotekstrategien fra 2015 (Kulturdepartementet, 2015). Tre statsråder står som ansvarlige for den siste bibliotekstrategien: Kulturminister Trine Skei Grande (Venstre), forsknings- og høyere utdanningsminister Iselin Nybø (Venstre) og kunnskaps- og integreringsminister Jan Tore Sanner (Høyre), de to sistnevnte fra Kunnskapsdepartementet. Strategien tar for seg både folkebiblioteker, skolebiblioteker og fag- og forskningsbiblioteker.

Kulturens kraft

Innledningen til den siste kulturmeldingen, *Kulturens kraft*, inneholder en tydelig og alvorlig problemforståelse knyttet til demokratiutfordringer, både internasjonalt og i Norge:

Demokratiet blir utfordret, og internasjonalt ser vi at ytringsfridommen [...] og den fagleg frie stillinga til kulturinstitusjonane er under press. Tilliten til og trua på demokratiet er på vikande front fleire stader. Fleire land ser ut til å vere i ferd med å bli "seg sjølv nok" og orienterer seg innover. Samtidig ser vi at det veks fram digitale ekkokammer, og at store globale aktørar i stadig

større grad legg premissane for dei vala vi gjer som forbrukarar og kultur- og mediebrukarar. Dette er utviklingstrekk som legg press på mangfaldet av ytringar og kulturuttrykk. Folkestyret står sterkt i Noreg, men også hos oss blir demokratiet meir sårbart. Vi må jobbe aktivt med å vise fram verdien av dei grunnleggjande elementa i eit demokrati, som ytringsfridom, tolerante fellesskap og respekt for individet (Kulturdepartementet, 2018, s. 7).^v

Sitatet gir en tidsriktig vurdering av hvilke utfordringer man ser i informasjonssamfunnet. Digitale ekkokamre, og det at store globale aktører legger premissene for en fungerende offentlighet blir eksplisitt nevnt. Det nevnes også at store globale aktører i økende grad legger premissene for våre kultur- og medievaner, og våre valg som forbrukere. Dette har klare paralleller med temaet i Zuboffs (2019) bok, der store teknologiselskaper høster personlige data for å utvikle effektive algoritmer. Ifølge Zuboff er målet å produsere algoritmer som kan forutsi brukeradferd, for på den måten å markedsføre produkter med langt større effektivitet enn ved ordinær annonsering eller reklame. Hun beskriver hvordan høsting og salg av store datamengder har blitt et stort globalt marked, og foreslår løsninger på disse utfordringene ved for eksempel ny lovgivning for å ta vare på personvern og personlige data. Senere i kulturmeldingen kan vi lese:

Den teknologiske utviklinga går i dag raskare enn før. Dette gir nye moglegheiter, men skaper òg nye etiske dilemma. Eit nøkkelord for teknologiutviklinga er omvelting, som inneber at vi må vente det uventa. Vi er omgitt av ein stadig meir omfattande og kompleks teknologisk infrastruktur som ingen eigentleg er i stand til å føreseie korleis vil utvikle seg. Det einaste som er sikkert, er at den teknologiske utviklinga vil gå svært raskt, og at vi også i framtida vil sjå store endringar i både teknologiske moglegheiter og brukarvanar (s. 22).

I alle dokumentene vi har analysert (Kultur- og kirke departementet, 2003; Kulturdepartementet 2009, 2015, 2018; Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019) er man opptatt av hastigheten på og omfanget av den teknologiske utviklingen, og hvordan denne kan føre til omveltninger i samfunnet. Når man i tillegg fremhever at det nær sagt er umulig å spå en fremtid på grunn av den teknologiske utviklingen, setter politikerne seg i prinsippet i baksetet og lar de store teknologiselskapene styre utviklingen, akkurat slik Zuboff (2019) og Morozov (2012) har advart mot.

I et eget delkapittel om media og den offentlige samtalen omtales flere digitale utfordringer. Det innledes med en beretning om hvordan mye av samhandlingen mellom mennesker, den offentlige samtalen og den kulturelle deltakelsen, flytter seg fra fysiske til digitale rom, og at vi hele tiden har tilgang til et verdensrepertoar av informasjon og kulturuttrykk (s. 23). Videre påpekes det at selv om mennesker tilbringer mindre tid med hverandre i fysiske omgivelser fører det til økt behov for offentlige steder der vi kan møtes ansikt-til-ansikt.

I samme kapittel blir ekkokamre og bekreftelsestendenser beskrevet som problematisk for det offentlige ordskiftet:

I større eller mindre grad har vi alle ein tendens til å oppsøkje og tru på informasjon vi allereie er einige i. Slike stadfestingstendensar blir forsterka av digitaliseringa. Søkjemotorar og medieinnhald blir i aukande grad styrte av algoritmar som er laga slik at dei kan forsterke denne tendensen. Innhald blir filtrert og styrt av preferansar og tidlegare bruk, og vi blir i mindre grad eksponerte for andre perspektiv og meiningar (s. 23).

Dette er første gang disse problemene nevnes i klartekst i de analyserte dokumentene, og gir en tydelig problemforståelse angående dette temaet. Sitatet gir i tillegg implisitt uttrykk for at filterboblene (Pariser, 2011) har blitt et potensielt problem for det offentlige ordskiftet. Filterboblene har den effekten at nettlere, søkemotorer eller sosiale medier kan filtrere bort informasjon som

den tror du ikke vil ha interesse av, basert på ens tidligere historikk og aktivitet på internett. Herunder ligger også problemet med at når vi ikke blir eksponert for meningsmangfold eller alternative perspektiver, er det ren reell svekkelse av ytringsrommet, og i ytterste konsekvens også det deliberative demokratiet. Der ekkokamre for Sunstein (2001, 2009) var noe vi selv skapte gjennom vår online-aktivitet, er filterbobler for Pariser (2011) noe teknologiselskapene skaper for oss gjennom sine algoritmer.

I samme delkapittel blir også andre digitale utfordringer nevnt som potensielle trusler for demokratiet og en velfungerende offentlighet:

Tilgangen til informasjon har aldri vore større, men ikkje all informasjon er rett eller troverdig. Det kan handle om faktafeil, ryktespreiing, svindel eller politisk motivert desinformasjon. Det blir mottakaren sitt ansvar å vurdere kvalitet, relevans og sanning i informasjonen (s. 23).

Her blir falske nyheter og desinformasjon tydelig fremstilt som samfunnsproblemer. I samme avsnitt nevnes resultatet av en undersøkelse utført av Medietilsynet, der en stor andel av befolkningen mener de hver uke eller oftere opplever å se nyheter de ikke opplever som sanne. Det vektlegges at det er svært viktig at: "så mange som råd kan kommunisere og ta del i den offentlige samtalen på ein måte som fremjar forståing mellom menneske. Dette inneber at befolkninga må ha evne og vilje til å forstå ulike ytringar og korleis ulike mottakarar vil forstå og oppleve ytringar" (s. 23).

Den sterke veksten i ytringskanaler som digitale medier har medført, erkjennes å ha store implikasjoner for den offentlige samtalen. Dette setter tydeligere krav til befolkningens kildekritikk, informasjons- og mediekompetanse. Sosiale medier nevnes også som en faktor som ytterligere påvirker dette ytringslandskapet:

digitale informasjons- og ytringsmoglegheiter, blant anna gjennom sosiale medium, endrar både kvardagslivet og den offentlege samtalen på mange og djuptgåande måtar. Eit godt utvikla og levande demokrati er avhengig av ein opplyst opinion og open og fri meningsutveksling. Oppfatningar må brynast mot kvarandre (s. 23).

Her er nok en henvisning til idéen om at et sterkt demokrati fordrer en opplyst befolkning med gode ytringsmuligheter, og implisitt hvordan omveltninger og endringer i kommunikasjonsteknologi kan utfordre dette idealet. "Dagens informasjonssamfunn stiller store krav til at menneska utviklar kritisk sans og utvidar forståingshorisonten, for å kunne vurdere kjelder, undersøkje kva som er sant og usant, og gjere sjølvstendige val" (s. 38).

I denne stortingsmeldingen fremmes kultursektoren som en del av løsningen på splittede offentligheter, og som en motvekt mot teknologiens mulig negative innflytelse på demokratiet. Det skrives at "kulturlivet må vere med på å rettleie folk, fremje kritisk tenking og læring, og streve etter kvalitet og kunnskap i tilfanget av informasjon og kulturelt innhald" (s. 38). Det nevnes derimot ingen konkrete eksempler på hvordan dette kan omsettes til praksis. I forbindelse med at kulturlivet skal kunne delta som et bolverk mot digitale utfordringer i det offentlige rommet, vises det til at kulturinstitusjoner har høy tillitt i befolkningen. I kraft av denne tilliten kan: "kulturverksemder som arkiv, bibliotek og museum fremje tillit, autentisitet og relevans. Aktørar i kulturlivet kan utgjere ei positiv kraft, vere ei motvekt mot fragmentering av den offentlege samtalen og medverke til å utløyse teknologiens potensial for å gjere kulturtilbod tilgjengelege for fleire" (s. 38). Kultursektoren ses som en sentral aktør for å sikre

ei felles offentlegheit, der meiningar står mot kvarandre og blir delte på tvers av interesse motsetningar. Kulturlivet skal vekkje engasjement blant folk og leggje til rette for

meningsbryting og eit mangfald av ytringar. Leseevne og leselyst er ein nøkkel til danning og refleksjon (s. 39).

En annen målsetning som skal kunne styrke det offentlige ordskiftet mot fragmentering og ekkokammerdannelse (Sunstein, 2001, 2009, 2018) er at kultur- og kunnskapssektoren skal forene krefter og interesser for å motvirke disse utfordringene. Dette blir påpekt i kapitlet om danning og demokratibygging: "Både kultursektoren og kunnskapssektoren medverkar [...] til danning og demokratibygging. Samarbeid på tvers kan være ein styrke for å byggje sterkare medvit om kunst og kultur som ytringar og kor mykje kulturen betyr for danning, tilhøyrslse og kunnskapsutvikling" (s. 80). Samarbeid på tvers mellom for eksempel grunnskolen og kultursektoren skal medvirke til en sterkere dannelsesprosess hos barn og unge.

I et eget kapittel om danning og demokratibygging finnes overordnede beskrivelser av hvilke demokrati- og offentlighetssyn som preger denne kulturmeldingen. Her blir flere gjengangere om demokratiets bånd til en opplyst og dannet befolkning repetert. Vi får blant annet høre at: "Eit demokratisk samfunn føreset at menneska har kunnskap om og forstår samfunnet dei er ein del av, og at dei har høve og evne til å uttrykkje seg og ta aktivt del i samfunnet" (s. 79).

Litt senere presenteres viktigheten av menneskers dannelse for demokratiet: "Danning handlar om å setje enkeltmenneske i stand til å vere aktive borgarar i samfunnet, uttrykkje seg og ta sjølvstendige val som byggjer på forståing og respekt for andre. Dette er med på å byggje demokrati" (s. 79). At befolkningens evne til kritisk tenkning og beslutningstaking er et premiss for demokratisk levedyktighet er noe som går igjen i alle de analyserte stortingsmeldingene (Kultur- og kirke departementet, 2003; Kulturdepartementet, 2009, 2018).

I norsk kulturpolitikk er det grunnleggende at kulturbruk skal sette oss i stand til å fungere som borgere, noe som også gjenspeiles i meldingens tittel, *Kulturens kraft*. Tittelen kan fortolkes som at kultur har kraft til å myndiggjøre, danne og hjelpe mennesker i å oppnå kritisk og selvstendig tenkning. I meldingen skrives det også om mediekompetanse som en viktig komponent i dannelse og demokratiutvikling:

Mediekompetanse og digital dømmekraft er viktig for danning og demokratibygging. Mediekompetanse handlar om kunnskap om korleis media fungerer, og evne til å vurdere kvalitet, relevans og sanning i den informasjonen ein finn. Digital dømmekraft dreier seg om evne til kritisk refleksjon, blant anna knytt til personvern, nettvett og opphavsrett (s. 79).

Vi får i dette utdraget en klar og tydelig henvisning til at mediekompetanse, og underforstått også at informasjonskompetanse og kildekritikk, er viktige faktorer for demokratisk utvikling. Begreper som digital dømmekraft, kritisk refleksjon og nettvett blir beskrevet som ferdigheter av betydning, både for individuell dannelse og demokratisk deltakelse. Disse ferdighetene beskrives som viktige for et opplyst og rasjonelt ordskifte, og en kritisk borgerlig offentlighet.

I et annet kapittel, som omhandler kulturlivets samfunnsbyggende kraft, henvises det til den reviderte ytringsfrihetsparagrafen og de tre grunnprinsippene ytringsfriheten baseres på.^{vi}

Sanningsprinsippet inneber at ein best kjem fram til sanning gjennom meningsutveksling der påstandar blir korrigerate i møte med andre meiningar. I autonomiprinsippet ligg det at det krevst ein viss kompetanse for å kunne fungere som sjølvstendig individ i eit ope samfunn. Denne kompetansen oppnår kvar enkelt innbyggjar ved å møte andre, høyre argumenta deira og bli utfordra av alternative perspektiv. Demokratiprinsippet føreset ei open og kritisk

meningsutveksling som kan vere med på å gi betre innsikt og dermed betre avgjerder, jf. sanningsprinsippet (s. 15).

Dette tekstutdraget inneholder flere av de sentrale forutsetningene for en rasjonell og kritisk offentlighet etter Habermas' ideal. Å delta i det deliberative demokratiet forutsetter et uenighetsfellesskap der meningsmangfold er en forutsetning for et samfunns utvikling og fremdrift. For å gjøre dette uenighetsfellesskapet levedyktig behøves en kompetent befolkning som er i stand til å fatte rasjonelle beslutninger, og kulturmeldingen hevder at kultursektoren kan spille en rolle i dette arbeidet.

Å delta i kulturlivet inneber at ein blir vand til å møte eit mangfald av meiningar og ytringsformer, også meiningar ein er usamd i eller misliker. Slik kan kulturlivet setje oss betre i stand til å handtere spenningar i samfunnet som utfordrar openheit og toleranse, og medverke til å styrkje det fellesskapet vi treng for å byggje demokrati (s. 16).

Her fremmes tanken om at kulturlivet kan være en sentral bidragsyter for å underbygge demokratiske prosesser. Kulturens demokratiske innvirkning blir sett på som en "arena for den openheita og kritikken eit demokratisk samfunn er avhengig av" (s. 16).

I forbindelse med den reviderte ytringsfrihetsparagrafen nevnes infrastrukturkravet som

inneber at staten pliktar å medverke aktivt til etablering og drift av kanalar ut i det offentlege rommet, slik at det verkeleg blir mogleg for individ og grupper å ytre seg. Statens oppgåve er med dette utvida frå passivt å avstå frå inngrep i ytringsfridommen til aktivt å leggje forholda til rette for ytringsfridom (s. 17).^{vii}

I et kapittel om digitale muligheter for samfunnet beskrives den digitale omveltningen som at den kan ha positive ringvirkninger for offentligheten. Ved at kulturuttrykk blir digitalisert gis de større spredningspotensiale, noe som "er med på å åpne ei ny verd for mange, og det ligg ei demokratisk kraft i dette dersom teknologien blir brukt rett. Då kan den digitale teknologien vere inkluderande og moderniserande" (s. 49). Den nye teknologien gir også befolkningen større medvirkning og endrer dynamikken for kommunikasjon i den kulturelle offentligheten.

I vår tid blir terskelen for ytring, deltaking og interaksjon lågare. Dette er demokrati i praksis. Nordmenn ligg i forkant når det gjeld bruk av ny teknologi, og vi bruker stadig meir tid på digitale plattformer. Digitale plattformer fungerer som virtuelle møteplassar der vi uttrykkjer oss, utvekslar idear og erfaringar, og les, høyrer og engasjerer oss i ulike typar innhald (s. 49).

Etter de kritiske tekstene om ekkokamre og en stadig mer fragmentert offentlighet viser Kulturdepartementet, som vi ser over, også optimisme over den digitaliserte offentligheten. Lavere terskel for ytringer i en digital offentlighet fører formodentlig også til økende demokratisk deltakelse. I likhet med litteraturen om den digitale offentligheten (se Valtysson 2020), vises det her både til dystopiske og utopiske visjoner for den digital teknologiens endring av den offentlige samtalen.

I meldingen nevnes folkebiblioteksektoren som et satsingsområde, og da i forbindelse med å øke bibliotekenes rolle som en offentlig møteplass og kunnskapsarena i lokalmiljøet. Teksten henviser til at dette emnet vil bli mer detaljert og utførlig forklart i bibliotekstrategien for 2020-2023, som vi nå skal se nærmere på.

Rom for demokrati og dannelselse

I bibliotekstrategien er det fylldig beskrevet hvilke samfunnsutfordringer man forsøker å imøtekomme med bibliotekenes nye roller. Allerede i forordet uttrykkes det bekymring for hvordan utfordringer ved digital informasjonsteknologi og mengden informasjon vi omgås kan ha konsekvenser for vår informasjonstilleggelse:

Vi har tilgang til mer kunnskap og kultur enn noensinne. Men det at vi har tilgang til en nesten uendelig mengde kunnskap betyr ikke at vi oppsøker eller benytter oss av den. Tvert om ser vi faktisk at kunnskap og opplysning på nettet konkurrerer og tidvis taper for falske nyheter, rykter og propaganda. Regjeringen vil at bibliotekene skal være en motkraft til dette (Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet 2019, s. 5).

De ansvarlige departementene erkjenner at informasjonsmengden er en utfordring for menneskers kritiske sans og informasjonskompetanse, og de ser for seg biblioteket som en potensiell motvekt mot dette. Strategidokumentet bygger i stor grad videre på problemforståelsen fra den foregående kulturmeldingen (Kulturdepartementet, 2018), noe som kommer frem i dette sitatet fra det første kapittelet om regjeringens bibliotekpolitikk: "Dagens informasjonssamfunn stiller store krav til at menneska utviklar kritisk sans og utvidar forståingshorisonten, for å kunne vurdere kjelder, undersøkje kva som er sant og usant, og gjere sjølvstendige val" (s. 7). Lignende formuleringer finnes også i de foregående stortingsmeldingene om kultur- og bibliotekpolitikk (Kultur- og kirke departementet, 2003, Kulturdepartementet, 2009, 2018), noe som befester den gjentakende forestillingen om at informasjonsmengden og den varierende informasjonskvaliteten stiller sterke krav til samtidens borgere.

I bibliotekstrategien henvises det til regjeringens politiske plattform og utsagn om at regjeringen vil satse på folke- og skolebibliotekene "blant annet gjennom å styrke arbeidet med digitale plattformer og nye modeller for drift av bibliotek" (s. 7). Bedre samarbeid mellom folkebiblioteksektoren og skole- og fagbibliotekene foreslås som en løsning for å styrke bibliotekene som en kunnskapsinstitusjon for framtiden. Vi ser også forslag til kompetanseheving innen digitale medier og kildekritikk hos bibliotekfaglige ansatte. I et kapittel om kompetanseheving blir vi, etter en innledende tekst om hvilke utfordringer digital informasjonsteknologi kan ha for biblioteksektoren, fortalt at bibliotekansatte skal være:

veiledere i kilder på nettet. Biblioteket skal være et naturlig sted å henvende seg for den som ønsker å skille mellom ekte og falske nyheter, mellom gode og dårlige kunnskapskilder. Personale med bred og oppdatert kompetanse er avgjørende for at bibliotekene skal kunne utføre sine samfunnsoppgaver og levere et godt bibliotektilbud. Oppbygging av ny kompetanse hos bibliotekarene er avgjørende for å utvikle nye tjenester og et fremtidsrettet bibliotektilbud (s. 43).

Det er en konkret målsetning at biblioteket skal være et naturlig sted å oppsøke for kompetanse innen kildekritikk og nettvett. I praksis er det likevel grunn til å anta at bibliotekarere i liten grad får denne typen henvendelser i sitt daglige referansearbeid.

En annen og mer spesifikk målsetning som nevnes i strategien angår kompetanseheving blant skolebibliotekarene. I forbindelse med økningen i digital kompetanse blant bibliotekarere skrives det at når man lokalt vurderer kompetanseheving "bør man også vurdere om det er behov for kompetanseutvikling for skolebibliotekansvarlige for å styrke medielesningskompetansen i skolen. Slik kompetanse kan blant annet bidra til at barn og unge rustes til å skille mellom falske og ekte nyheter" (s. 43). Dette kan tolkes som et konkret tiltak under det ofte gjentatte argumentet om bibliotekfaglig samarbeid på tvers av sektorer for å styrke informasjonskompetanse og

dannelsesprosesser for brukerne. Skolebibliotekene blir dermed tillagt en tydelig rolle for utvikling av medie- og informasjonskompetanse.^{viii}

Strategien inneholder fylldige beskrivelser av hvilken ny og modernisert rolle man ønsker at biblioteket skal spille i det digitale samfunnet. I forordet blir forbindelsen mellom demokrati og kunnskapstilgang nevnt, og det fortelles hvordan biblioteket skal forsterke dette samspillet: "Demokratiet er ikke gitt, derfor må strategien legge til rette for at bibliotekene kan fungere som kunnskapsarenaer som gir brukerne tilgang til kvalitetssikret informasjon og forskning" (s. 4).

Det vises til at besøket til bibliotekene har økt med flere prosent siden den første bibliotekstrategien. Mye av æren for dette tilfaller at man med forrige strategi arbeidet for å styrke bibliotekenes rolle som møteplasser og debattarenaer (Kulturdepartementet, 2015). I et senere avsnitt får vi også et historisk sveip over bibliotekets rolle som kunnskapsinstitusjon, folkeopplyser og dannelsesagent, og hvordan denne rollen skal befestes for fremtiden:

Folkeopplysning handler om biblioteket som kunnskapsarena, der befolkningen skal ha tilgang til forskningen og kildene, og biblioteket skal bidra til utvikling av kritisk tenkning og digital dømmekraft i befolkningen. Helt fra de norske folkeboksamlingene ble etablert for nesten 200 år siden har biblioteket hatt rollen som dannelsesinstitusjon. Bibliotekansatte har jobbet for at folk skal lese og ha tilgang til kunnskap og kultur. Rollen som formidler og en som åpner opp samlinger og forskning, er fremdeles like aktuell. Den kan styrkes gjennom mer samarbeid mellom folkebibliotek og universitet- og høyskolebibliotek (s. 4).

Mer samarbeid mellom folke- og fagbibliotekene blir sentralt i møtet med sterkere behov for informasjonskompetanse og kildekritikk i befolkningen, et poeng som repeteres også under kapittelet om regjeringens bibliotekpolitikk (s. 7). Der heter det seg at målet med å koordinere utviklingsoppgavene mellom folke-, skole-, fag- og forskningsbibliotek er å "videreutvikle bibliotekene som relevante og viktige institusjoner i fremtiden, som skal bidra til folkeopplysning og dannelse for befolkningen"(s. 7).

I strategidokumentet konstateres det fra start at "bibliotekene er demokratihus. Fra Nasjonalbiblioteket til folkebibliotek, skolebibliotek og fag- og forskningsbibliotek. Sammen utgjør disse viktig demokratisk infrastruktur og er en grunnstamme i demokratiet" (s. 4). I tillegg til å være folkeopplyser og dannelsesagent kan bibliotekene være integreringsaktør, da de kan bringe borgere av forskjellige etnisiteter og kulturer, sosiale lag og bakgrunner sammen. "[K]ommuner som utvikler sine bibliotek til å bli gode og tilgjengelige er demokratifremmende og skaper felleskap" (s. 4), slår strategien fast. Videre fremheves det at lik tilgang til informasjon, kunnskap og kultur, uansett bakgrunn, er sosialt utjevne fordi "tilgang til kunnskap er en forutsetning for å delta i samfunnslivet, og det motvirker ulikheter i befolkningen" (s. 4).

Diskusjon

I denne delen vil vi se på funnene fra analysen i lys av de fire kategoriene vi viste til i seksjonen om datamaterialet: problemforståelse, løsningsforslag, bibliotekets rolle, demokrati og offentlighet.

Problemforståelse

I den siste stortingsmeldingen om allmenn kulturpolitikk blir det tydelig beskrevet hvordan ytringsfriheten og demokratiet er under press fra fremveksten av ekkokamre (Sunstein 2001, 2009, 2018), de store teknologiselskaperens innflytelse på den digitale infrastrukturen (Zuboff, 2019), og effekten av algoritmisk skapte filterbobler (Pariser, 2011). Falske nyheter og desinformasjon blir også nevnt som trusler for samfunnet, og det vises til at et betydelig antall nordmenn har problemer med

å skille sant og usant i informasjonskilder på internett. Medie- og informasjonskompetanse, samt kildekritikk, blir beskrevet som forebyggende tiltak og som et løsningsforslag til problemene.

Utfordringene som nevnes i denne kulturmeldingen har det til felles at de kan være hindre for reell kommunikativ handling (Habermas, 1984) i det offentlige ordskiftet. Desinformasjon og falske nyheter er skapt for å villed, mens ekkokamre og filterbobler hindrer kommunikativ handling i en felles offentlighet ved at motstemmer eller alternative verdisyn blir usynlige for borgerne. Kraften i de bedre argumenter vil ha dårlige levevilkår i et slikt miljø, og det vil kunne lede til at en felles offentlighet forvitrer til fordel for en rekke deloffentligheter som snakker forbi hverandre.

Samtidig er det viktig å fremheve at disse kritiske perspektivene på demokratiets forvitring med den digitale teknologien også har blitt kritisert. Axel Bruns (2019) har kritisert begrepene ekkokamre og filterbobler for å være utydelig definerte, og derfor vanskelige å benytte i studier. Han har videre sagt at ekkokamre hverken er et nytt fenomen eller et stort problem, da de har eksistert i ulike former til alle tider, siden mennesker har en iboende tendens til å foretrekke sosial omgang med et enighetsfellesskap. Et annet argument Bruns bruker er at et absolutt ekkokammer kun kan eksistere i teorien. Selv mennesker som er del av et sterkt ekkokammer, slik vi oppfatter uttrykket i ordinær forstand, vil ha andre informasjonskilder de eksponeres for, enten aktivt eller passivt. Lignende argumenter for at effekten av ekkokammere overdrives finnes i *Informerte Borgere* (Moe et al., 2019): Etter å ha redegjort for den offentlige frykten for den potensielt ødeleggende kraften i falske nyheter, filterbobler og ekkokamre, konkluderer forfatterne med at "verken vår eller tidligere forskning finner bevis på denne typen ekstreme effekter" (s. 81). Det kan med andre ord være grunn til å tro at frykten for disse utfordringene kan ha et anslag av moralsk panikk i en verden som kan oppfattes som urolig og i endring.

I bibliotekstrategien fra 2019 er det fylldig beskrevet hvilke utfordringer man ser for seg at det digitale informasjonssamfunnet kan by på. Siden denne strategien er direkte utledet av den generelle kulturmeldingen fra 2018 overlapper problemforståelsene i disse dokumentene hverandre. Blant problembeskrivelser som går igjen er at veksten i den digitale informasjonsmengden utfordrer befolkningens informasjonskompetanse og evne til kildekritikk. De deler også en bekymring for ekkokammerdannelser og faren for at fremmede makter skal manipulere opinionsdannelsen.

Løsningsforslag

I *Kulturens kraft* fremstilles kultursektoren som en sentral del av løsningen på de utfordringer den digitale teknologien gir for demokratiet og offentligheten. Dette er fordi kulturuttrykk fremmer kritisk tenkning og læringsvilje. Kulturlivet skal rettlegge og etterstrebe kvalitet i en offentlighet som blir stadig mer fragmentert. Man har en idé om at menneskers dannelse og utvikling via kulturelle uttrykk skal forebygge splittede offentligheter. Dette skjer ved at kulturen evner å samle mennesker med forskjellige bakgrunner og meninger i en inkluderende offentlighet med rom for meningsbrytning og et mangfold av ytringer. Veien til dette målet går blant annet gjennom å fremme leseevne og leselyst. En del av dette er tanker som Habermas (2005[1962]) formulerte i sin teori om den borgerlige offentlighet. Den første borgerlige offentligheten Habermas beskrev var en litterær offentlighet, et rom for kritisk tenkning og meningsutveksling blant et lesende publikum. Idéen om tilegnelse av kulturelle uttrykk som utgangspunkt for en felles offentlighet er altså ingen ny tanke. Tanken om at kulturlivet er en uerstattelig premissleverandør for en fungerende og levedyktig offentlighet er et grunnleggende perspektiv i den siste kulturmeldingen (Kulturdepartementet, 2018), og er også til stede i den foregående kulturmeldingen (Kultur- og kirke departementet, 2003).

Norsk akademia, og spesielt samfunnsvitenskapene, var raskt ute med å ta til seg Habermas' teorier; *Den borgerlige offentlighet* ble oversatt til norsk allerede i 1971, 18 år før den forelå på engelsk. Som

nevnt i innledningen består norske offentlige utredningers utnevnte arbeidsgrupper ofte av en betydelig andel akademikere. Fordi mange norske samfunnsforskere er influert av Habermas' teorier, har teoriene også hatt sterk innflytelse på NOU'ene. Kalleberg (2015) har vist hvordan Habermas' teorier på flere måter hadde innflytelse på arbeidet til gruppen som leverte den offentlige utredningen om behovet for en revidering av Grunnlovens ytringsfrihetsparagraf (NOU 1999: 27), noe som ble vedtatt i Stortinget i 2004. Som vi skal se i neste del, har også den siste revideringen av den norske folkebibliotekloven fra 2014 et islett av habermasianske tanker om offentlighet. I loven spesifiseres det nå i et eget ledd i formålsparagrafen at "Folkebibliotekene skal være en uavhengig møteplass og arena for offentlig samtale og debatt" (Folkebibliotekloven, 2014, § 1).

I de kulturpolitiske dokumentene hevdes det at arkiver, biblioteker og museer i kraft av sin troverdighet og autoritet skal bidra som en positiv kraft og en motvekt til en fragmentert offentlighet. En annen løsning som gjentas i flere av dokumentene er et tettere samarbeid mellom kultursektoren og kunnskapssektoren. Dette skal hovedsakelig skje gjennom at kultur skal være en naturlig del av skole og utdanning. På den måten skal kulturen bidra til refleksjon, utvikling og dannelse, som ifølge argumentasjonen i kulturmeldingen indirekte fører til en styrket offentlighet.

Den siste bibliotekstrategien (Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019) har flere beskrivelser av hvordan biblioteket skal være en sterk bidragsyter til opparbeidelse av digital medie- og informasjonskompetanse for befolkningen, men i likhet med den forrige bibliotekstrategien (Kulturdepartementet, 2015) er det ingen konkrete eksempler på hvordan bibliotekene skal gjennomføre dette, utenom generelle målbeskrivelser.

Bibliotekets rolle

I det digitale informasjonssamfunnet ser man i kultur- og kunnskapspolitikken på bibliotekets rolle som en tilbyder av kvalitetssikret informasjon og kunnskap. Ved å heve bibliotekpersonalets digitale kompetanse skal bibliotekene være delaktige i å veilede og heve befolkningens kompetanse. Bibliotekene skal tilby veiledning i digitale tjenester, et mål som viser seg å være delvis oppfylt, da det i mange folkebiblioteker har blitt populært med arrangementer eller veiledning innen bruk av nettbrett eller grunnleggende internettjenester for eldre.

I lys av den reviderte folkebibliotekloven (Folkebibliotekloven, 2014), ser vi klare paralleller mellom bibliotekene som møteplass og konseptet den borgerlige offentlighet, ved at folkebibliotekene nå har fått lovfestet at de skal være et fysisk rom for samtale og debatt borgerne imellom. Men også før denne lovendringen hadde folkebibliotekene noen grunnfunksjoner som samsvarte med sentrale egenskaper ved en borgerlig offentlighet, spesielt den litterære borgerlige offentlighet.

I de dokumentene vi har studert blir bibliotekene beskrevet som sentrale for kunnskapservelse, dannelse og myndiggjøring, og som en hjørnestein i den demokratiske infrastrukturen. Det er samtidig grunn til å ha et kritisk blikk på myndighetenes opphøyelse av bibliotekene som demokratiske kjerneinstitusjoner, da offentlige dokumenter av typen vi har analysert er normative i sin argumentasjon, og i liten grad viser til empiri som understøtter at bibliotekvesenet faktisk lever opp til de beskrivelsene som blir brukt om dets virke.

Over tid ser vi at bibliotekenes rolleforståelse har endret seg. Det er mye som taler for at nåtidens sterke fokus på digitale utfordringer ved informasjonssamfunnet også har innhentet biblioteksektoren. Tekster angående ekkokamre, informasjonskompetanse, offentlighet og demokrati fikk en langt tydeligere tilstedeværelse i bibliotekstrategien utgitt i 2019, enn i tidligere dokumenter.

Demokrati og offentlighet

Flerfoldige utdrag fra *Kulturens kraft* (Kulturdepartementet, 2018) konsoliderer den habermasianske ideen om en rasjonell, åpen og kritisk offentlighet som et avgjørende bindeledd mellom en opplyst og kritisk tenkende befolkning og et levedyktig demokrati. I tillegg fremheves medie- og informasjonskompetanse som sentralt. Det settes et sterkt fokus på digitale ferdigheter og digital dømmekraft som nye fundamentale egenskaper for borgerne i dagens demokratier.

En rød tråd i alle de dokumentene vi har studert (Kultur- og kirke departementet, 2003; Kulturdepartementet, 2009, 2015, 2018; Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019) er det sterke båndet mellom demokratiet og informerte og kritisk tenkende borgere, og viktigheten av en uavhengig offentlighet som et rom hvor borgerne kan møtes i samtale. Staten har i Norge lang tradisjon for å understøtte offentligheten på armlengdes avstand (Engelstad, Larsen & Rogstad, 2017), og de dokumentene vi har studert kan sies å representere en kultur- og kunnskapspolitisk eksplisering av slike relasjoner.

Konklusjon

I *Kulturens kraft* (Kulturdepartementet, 2018) og *Rom for demokrati og dannelse* (Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019) er det en tydelig erkjennelse av at digital informasjonsteknologi kan ha negative konsekvenser for demokratiet. Begge dokumentene har detaljerte beskrivelser av konkrete utfordringer for offentligheten og demokratiet. Ekkokammerdannelse, digitalt skapte filterbobler, falske nyheter og desinformasjon anses som problemer med potensiale til å skade det offentlige ordskiftet, befolkningens tillit til tradisjonelle medier og demokratiske prosesser. Det virker dermed åpenbart at norske myndigheter vier oppmerksomhet til disse emnene, og at de ser et behov for å agere tilstrekkelig på utfordringene.

Det er flere virkemidler Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet anser som viktige for å løse de digitale utfordringene. På et teoretisk plan er løsningen at kultur (i den smale forstanden av begrepet [Larsen, 2019, s. 21-29]), skal virke forebyggende og forsterkende for befolkningens evne til medborgerskap. Den bakenforliggende ideen er at borgere som tilbys og benytter seg av kulturuttrykk av høy kvalitet vil utvikle evnen til å tenke kritisk. Kultur skal også virke stimulerende på leselyst og -ferdigheter, kunnskapssøken og dannelse. I tillegg har kulturen en samlende funksjon ved at den muliggjør at mennesker med forskjellige bakgrunner og verdisyn kan møtes i en åpen og inkluderende offentlighet. Alle disse egenskapene skal motvirke en stadig mer fragmentert offentlighet. Denne forestillingen om kultur som et botemiddel er spesielt tydelig i den siste kulturmeldingen og den siste bibliotekstrategien. På et mer praktisk nivå nevnes arkiv, bibliotek og museum som institusjoner som skal formidle de kulturelle tilbudene. Begreper som folkeopplysning, dannelse, kunnskapstilegnelse og sosial utjevning er uttrykk som over lengre tid har vært tett forbundet med disse institusjonene. Beskrivelsene av institusjonenes virke og formål preges av tydelig normative idealer.

Bibliotekets rolle har endret seg markant i løpet av 2000-tallet. Mye av endringen har å gjøre med den reviderte folkebibliotekloven. Den gir folkebibliotekene en tydelig rolle som møteplass og arena for offentlig samtale og debatt, i tillegg til den tradisjonelle kulturformidlingsfunksjonen. I de analyserte dokumentene trer bildet av bibliotekene som kultur- og kunnskapstilbydere, og som demokratisk infrastruktur tydelig frem. I den siste bibliotekstrategien (Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019) blir biblioteker beskrevet som "demokratihus" og som en "grunnstamme i demokratiet". Dette er uttrykk som godt representerer hvordan bibliotekene blir fremstilt også i de tidligere utgitte dokumentene. I en tid preget av ekkokamre, filterbobler og algoritmisk makt skal bibliotekene fungere som veiledere i digitale ferdigheter.

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ⁱ Den siste bibliotekstrategien er samforfattet av Kulturdepartementet og Kunnskapsdepartementet, siden den omfatter både folke- og fylkesbiblioteker, som ligger under Kulturdepartementet, og skole-, universitets- og høyskolebiblioteker, som ligger under Kunnskapsdepartementet.

ⁱⁱ Habermas' teorier om demokrati og offentlighet er ikke de eneste perspektivene på dette temaet som har influert kultur- og bibliotekpolitikken. Vi velger likevel å begrense vår diskusjon til Habermas' perspektiver, siden disse har hatt spesielt stor innflytelse, og vi i tillegg ser at de demokratiske utfordringer forbundet med den digitale teknologien og de sosiale mediene i stor grad settes i sammenheng med et Habermas-inspirert perspektiv på demokrati og offentlighet.

ⁱⁱⁱ De andre dokumentene er grundigere analysert i Solheim (2020).

^{iv} Etter oppløsningen av det statlige forvaltningsorganet ABM-utvikling i 2010, ble statlige oppgaver knyttet til folke- og fylkesbibliotekene flyttet til Nasjonalbiblioteket, mens oppgaver knyttet til museum og arkiv ble flyttet til Norsk kulturråd.

^v Denne stortingsmeldingen er skrevet på nynorsk. Vi har valgt å gjengi sitatene i sitt originale språk.

^{vi} Grunnlovens paragraf 100 ble revidert av Stortinget i 2004, etter forslag fra et offentlig utvalg (NOU 1999: 27).

^{vii} Den reviderte paragrafen inneholder et ledd hvor det spesifiseres at «[D]et påligger statens myndigheter å legge forholdene til rette for en åpen og opplyst offentlig samtale» (Grunnloven, 2004). Dette leddet omtales gjerne som infrastrukturkravet i Grunnlovens ytringsfrihetsparagraf, siden den viser til statens ansvar for å sikre ytringsfrihetens infrastruktur, gjennom en aktiv kultur-, medie-, utdannings- og forskningspolitikk.

^{viii} Flere har imidlertid i det siste ytret bekymring for skolebibliotekenes fremtidige rolle (Fredwall et al., 2020), siden den norske opplæringsloven er foreslått endret slik at det ikke lenger er spesifisert at alle elever skal ha tilgang til et skolebibliotek, men kun tilgang til et bibliotek (NOU 2019: 23). Ifølge kritikerne kan dette lede til at de allerede eksisterende folkebibliotekene også skal fungere som skolebibliotek uten nærmere tilrettelegging for elevene.

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From means to an end to ends in themselves

An empirical study of the development of
public library programmes in Denmark
between 1960 and 2020¹

Abstract

Offering a variety of activities and events is considered a central part of many public libraries today. Under the term public library programmes, this article presents the findings from an empirical study of the development of publicly available and publicly announced activities and events offered within or in relation to Danish public libraries over a sixty-year period. The aim of the study was to enrich our understanding of these library services from a historical perspective focussing on describing development. Inspired by Historical Case Study (HCS), the study was designed as a diachronic analysis of a broad variety of empirical source materials collected from two case libraries, documenting programmes offered between 1960 and 2020, including interviews with programming librarians. From analysing the source materials, a development is described which shows that while the different types of programmes offered throughout the period have been somewhat consistent, their format and content have expanded in parallel with the expansion of the public library, its collections and services. At the same time, the reasoning behind offering programmes can be described as a development from programmes considered as a means to an end (e.g. education, publicity or community building) to

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programmes also considered as ends in themselves. By supporting and enriching the knowledge on programmes as services, this study provides an empirical foundation for discussions and debates about the role and function of public library programmes as part of the public library in the future as well as rich empirical examples for further research.

Keywords: public libraries, public library programs, historical case study, document study, empirical study, diachronic study, library history

Introduction

(...) it is those activities and the general education, which takes place every day in our library space that creates a library (Schaltz, 2020).

Programmes such as story hours, exhibitions, lectures, workshops, cafés, play groups and writers' meetings are considered central elements of modern public libraries. As the head of Herning Bibliotekerne, Pernille Schaltz, recently stated in an interview on Danish national radio, such activities are part of what creates a library (Schaltz, 2020) and are thus likely to play an even bigger role in public libraries of the future. If this is the case today, intriguing questions about the past and present of such activities arise. In order to understand why programmes are considered such a central part of modern public libraries and to discuss their future relevance and potential, qualitative insights into the history and development of these services are needed. This article presents findings from an empirical study of public library programmes in Denmark from the 1960s to the present as a foundation for understanding and reflecting on this central feature of the modern public library.

In Denmark, programmes are generally referred to as 'cultural activities' or 'events' (*kulturelle arrangementer*). In this study, a broad definition of public library programmes as "publicly announced and publicly available activities and events, taking place within or in relation to a public library" (Mathiasson & Jochumsen, 2020, p. 365) allows for an investigation of many and markedly different examples of programmes as a whole, encompassing the social, educational, cultural and informational aspects of these services. The study focuses on two case libraries, differing in terms of their geographical location, size and role in the library system. The first library is *Bibliotekshuset*, a small branch library in the Copenhagen library system. The second is *Herning Centralbibliotek*, the main library of the municipality of Herning located in central Jutland. Both libraries have been offering programmes since the 1960s and are in possession of source materials documenting this practice. Approaching the collection of empirical source materials from the case libraries, this study poses two research questions:

RQ1: Which types of programmes have been offered at the two libraries between 1960 and 2020 and how have they developed in terms of format and content?

RQ2: What are the roles and functions ascribed to the programmes during this period and how has the reasoning behind offering programmes developed?

This study derives from the claim that public library programmes are complex phenomena, which cannot be understood by addressing different types of programmes alone (Mathiasson & Jochumsen, 2020, p. 373). In a recent study, Danish library researcher Mia Mathiasson and Henrik Jochumsen provide an analytical model for analysing public library programs in relation to "three levels of abstraction" (2020, p. 375): format, content, and role and function. In this model, *format* refers to the basic elements underlying public library programmes as events in terms of duration and location, information about the organiser(s) and participant(s) and details about access and availability of the

programmes. *Content* refers to a complex of topics, media and materials. *Role* is related to the assumed purpose of a public library programme on an ideological level, whereas *function* refers to the purpose or outcome on a more practical level (see Mathiasson & Jochumsen, 2020, p. 366). This model has been a useful tool for the analysis presented in this article and provided the categories used in the research questions. Focussing on describing development in terms of *continuity* and *change*, answering RQ1 provides descriptive insights into the types of programmes offered as well as the format and content of these programmes. Building on these descriptive insights, RQ2 is answered through an interpretative reading of the data in order to provide insights into the changing reasoning underlying having programmes, focussing on their ascribed roles and functions (implicitly or explicitly mentioned in the source materials). To provide perspectives for the findings presented in this article they are related to existing studies, which are presented below.

Existing studies

Although public libraries have been offering programmes for many years and for many different incentives in many different countries, research on the history and development of public library programmes is scarce. Programmes in public libraries has been an area of study before, however under terms such as “adult education activities” (Johnson, 1938; Smith, 1954), “extension work” (McColvin, 1927; Jolliffe 1968) and “cultural activities” (Wirla, 1958). Across these different terms, programmes have been related to general education, public relation and outreach as well as to the general stimulation of an interest in books and literature as well as cultural activity more broadly. The more neutral terms “programs” and “programming” have been used in North America since at least the 1950s (Smith, 1954) and have become more widely used in recent years. Most empirical studies have been survey studies applying a somewhat restricted perspective on programmes and only a few studies that treat programmes and programming activity as a unified whole exist. One example is the recent American research project, the National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA), conducted in collaboration with the American Library Association (ALA) and the Public Programs Office (PPO) between 2015 and 2020. One of the aims of the NILPPA research project is to develop a conceptualisation of what they call “library public programs” in order to provide “sufficient data on whether, and how, these efforts are working” (NILPPA, 2020). No empirical studies with a historical perspective and broad conception of public library programmes have been identified.

In Denmark, studies on public library programmes are extremely limited. Besides a few research-based studies, programmes and programming activity have been the subject of quantitative survey studies conducted nationally. One example is a survey on “cultural activities” conducted by the State Inspection of Public Libraries in 1972/73. Similar surveys have been conducted annually since 2009 by the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces under the title Library Barometer (*Biblioteksbarometer*). In the following, three historical studies are introduced, which all provide useful insights into programmes and programming activity from a Danish perspective. None of these studies focus on programmes or programming activity as a unified whole, but rather on programmes and programming activity as a part of larger studies on the role and function of the public library. The first of these studies was conducted by the Danish librarian Ingerlise Koefoed in 1965. As part of her larger study termed Cultural Centres (Koefoed, 1967), Koefoed also reports on what might be the very first investigation of programming activity at Danish public libraries. This investigation took form as an informal inquiry that was sent to 35 libraries, primarily main libraries, out of which 32 responded (Koefoed, 1967, p. 38). The second identified study was conducted in 1989 by the Danish library researchers Bruno Kjær and Anders Ørom (1992a, 1992b) under the title Transformation images and library-cultural identities. Part of this study comprised a survey study focussing on library-cultural identity in relation to 1) library buildings and interiors; 2) public relations (PR) and external dissemination activities; and 3) exhibitions and programmes (differentiating between the two). The survey was sent to 227 public libraries of which 119 responded, reporting on a total of 2,353

exhibitions and 5,467 programmes (of which 4,503 were for children). The third identified study is an extensive research project conducted by sociologist Marianne Andersson, cultural sociologist and library researcher Dorte Skot-Hansen and a team of assistants between 1992 and 1993. Building on case studies, surveys and extensive interviews, the study aimed at providing a snapshot of local public libraries, including the extent of programmes offered (Andersson & Skot-Hansen, 1994, p. 222–236).

In all of these studies, the development of programmes is explicitly linked to the revision of the Library Act in 1964 and the ensuing debates about the role and function of public libraries as cultural centres (Koefoed, 1967; Kjær & Ørom, 1992a, 1992b; Andersson & Skot-Hansen, 1994), thus emphasising the cultural role and function of the public library. This role is supported by a link between public library programmes and the democratisation of culture in the 1960s and cultural democracy in the 1970s (cf. Kjær and Ørom, 1992a, 1992b). This is also characteristic of the way programming activity has been described and defined in Danish library history (see Thorsen, 1992). In the 1964 Library Act, public libraries are described as places “promoting information, education and *cultural activity* through the free accessibility of books and other relevant materials” (Danish Library Bureau, 1965, section 1[1] of the Act, emphasis added).¹ With the inclusion of the phrase “cultural activity”, public libraries received “yet another aim” (Thorhauge & the Library Agency, 2002, p. 5). This new aim and the cultural political debates about cultural centres following the 1964 revision are often emphasised as having had a significant influence on the development of programming activity (*arrangementsvirksomhed*) as a more substantial part of public libraries (see Thorsen, 1992, p. 140 and Andersson & Skot-Hansen, 1994, p. 222). According to the State Inspection of Public Libraries, the very term *kulturelle arrangementer* was coined during the 1960s cultural political debates (1976, p. 18). The link to the 1964 revision and the following debates is most explicit in Koefoed’s (1967) study on cultural centres. Andersson and Skot-Hansen’s study of the public library is more nuanced, contributing to a theoretical understanding of the role and function of public libraries as *knowledge centres*, *informational centres*, *social centres* and *cultural centres* in the community (1994, p. 18). Programmes and programming activity is, however, only directly linked to the library’s role as a cultural centre (Andersson & Skot-Hansen, 1994, p. 222–236). By including both programmes for adults and for children, using the phrase “activities” instead of “cultural activities”, Kjær and Ørom (1992a, 1992b) were first movers in the Danish research context.

Focussing on a single year period, these studies are all synchronic snapshots of the extent of programmes offered within the year surveyed (respectively, 1965, 1989 and 1992/93). However, what makes them different from the national surveys is that they also provide qualitative insights into the content of the programmes as well as the attitudes towards offering programmes. In her study, Koefoed concluded that the librarians’ attitudes towards programming activity were generally positive. However, lack of space, staff and money (what Koefoed terms “the usual things”) was mentioned as an obstacle to further development (Koefoed, 1967, p. 39). In the first part of their study of *library-cultural identities*, Kjær and Ørom reflect on what they call the “indirect dissemination practices”, which includes programming activity. Elaborating on the “image problem” as one of the symptoms of the transformations of the library-cultural identity, marked by ideas about “the market” and “the living room”, which break with the image of the library as a shrine for knowledge and culture, Kjær and Ørom reflect on the search for alternative library-cultural identities as “a response to the obliterate image of the “traditional library” (Kjær & Ørom, 1992a, 33-34). This is an interesting finding, since it explicitly breaks with the narrow focus on culture when looking at programmes and programming activity. Moreover, it ascribes to these phenomena a key role in transforming “the library image”. The Andersson and Skot-Hansen study provides rich insights into the understanding of and reasoning underlying programming activity in the early 1990s. Of central importance is their finding that programmes are clearly considered as having “a value in themselves” and that programming activity is considered as “something in itself” and not just as PR for the library or as

extensions of the collections (Andersson & Skot-Hansen, 1994, p. 236). As such, these three studies all provide useful perspectives and background for the results presented in this article.

Research design and methods

Aiming for an understanding of how this phenomenon has developed over time, a diachronic approach was well suited to this study. As opposed to the existing synchronic studies presented above, a diachronic study draws the long line of development and provides empirical descriptions for an understanding of the background of these services. Thus, a research strategy was needed that allowed for a diachronic reading of the varied source materials and provided methods for how to conduct the study in a systematic manner. Such a strategy was found in Historical Case Study (HCS) as described by library researcher Michael Widdersheim (2017, 2018). HCS is a hybrid research strategy combining features from history and case study using “a mixture of new and existing sources” (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 147) to track changes over a longer period of time into the present. This makes HCS a useful research strategy for “addressing research questions related to change, continuity, development, and process” (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 151). According to Widdersheim, HCS research must fulfil three criteria: it “must 1) study phenomena from the distant past into the present, 2) incorporate existing data sources as well as create new ones as the case unfolds, and 3) construct both idiographic and nomothetic types of knowledge” (2018, p. 144). Moreover, HCS research follows three stages: the collection and analysis of source materials (stage 1), data collection and analysis (stage 2) and data interpretation (stage 3). HCS provides a strategy for researching this complex phenomenon in a diachronic and somewhat systematic manner across of a broad temporality and an extensive collection of varied source materials. Adaptions have been made to the systematic approach described by Widdersheim in order to make it more applicable to the kind of investigation undertaken in this study. In the following, the three stages of HCS are introduced with a focus on how they have informed and directed the study presented in this article as well as when and how this study deviates from the HCS procedures.

In stage 1, source collection and analysis, “theoretical sampling” is used to define the case or the phenomenon studied, identify temporal units of analysis and gather relevant source materials in a dialectic manner. Theoretical sampling is described as “a trial-and-error process”, since researchers “cannot know in advance what sources will be relevant or accessible” (Widdersheim, 2017, p. 58). This means that as source materials are collected and contours of the phenomenon are sharpened more relevant sources will possibly appear. In line with the trial-and-error process of theoretical sampling, a sample of source materials functioned as a way into the phenomenon investigated. In the spring of 2017, 15 public libraries from across the country were contacted by phone or email and asked whether they were in possession of archival source materials documenting their past programmes. A few libraries responded that they were in possession of potential source materials. Visits were arranged and during the summer and autumn of 2017 three libraries were visited, source materials were inspected (first round) and interviews were conducted. In the end, two libraries were selected as case libraries. In line with HCS research, the list of sources was informed by the nature of the case or phenomenon studied (Widdersheim, 2017, p. 57). This has also been the case in this study, where additional sources were uncovered during the visits to the case libraries. This resulted in supplementary source collections taking place from the spring of 2018 until January 2019 (physical collection at the libraries) and again during the spring of 2020 (online collection). The source materials consist of a broad variety of archival documents made available by the two libraries. In this study, *document* is defined as “any symbolic representation that can be *recorded or retrieved* for analysis” (Altheide, 1996, p. 2, emphasis added). In the processes of source collection and analysis, the documents are recorded or retrieved by scanning them, taking photographs or screen shots, entering information into Excel sheets or simply taking notes. As part of the initial analysis in stage 1, the source materials are divided into “temporal units of analysis” (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148) in order to gain

an overview and focus attention. According to Widdersheim, the temporal units of analysis “can be identified and distinguished in a number of ways”, however they “must be well-justified and non-arbitrary” (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148). In this study, the identification of the temporal units builds on findings from the initial analysis, however the units have been revisited and adjusted along with the conducting of the analysis and interpretation and, thus deviates from the HCS procedure.

Stage 2 builds on stage 1 and consists of data collection and analysis. In this process, the temporal units of analysis identified in stage 1 are described and analysed “in a uniform way and according to the same criteria in order to facilitate comparisons” (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148). In the data analysis, a “research framework is used to describe the case over time using the source materials as an evidentiary basis” (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148). In this study, the research framework for the diachronic analysis is inspired by Mathiasson and Jochumsen’s (2020) analytical model. Thus, when analysing the source materials, change and continuity in relation to the format and content of the programmes offered as well as their ascribed roles and functions are observed over time, resulting in a description of the development of programmes offered within or in relation to the two case libraries. In stage 3, the descriptions produced in stage 2 provide a basis for answering the research questions by comparing “patterns in the similarities and differences of the temporal units” (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148–149). This is done by comparing the different units of analysis and elaborating on the findings presented in the analysis, focussing on two aspects of the analysis: 1) the format and content of the programmes and 2) their ascribed roles and functions.

In the following, the results of this study are presented with reference to the three research stages of HCS. Firstly, referring to the source collection and analysis, the cases and source materials are introduced in more detail and the temporal units of analysis are identified. Secondly, referring to the data collection and analysis, the results from the diachronic analysis are presented in the analysis, which forms the greater part of this article. Thirdly, referring to data interpretation in HCS, an interpretation of the findings is presented, providing elaborative answers to the research questions. Finally, a summative discussion reflects on the findings in relation to the existing studies and suggests areas for further research.

Source collection and analysis

The two libraries were not selected for being representative cases but for being suitable providers of a broad variety of source materials and for being willing to share their history of programming activity. The “source material coverage” (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148) refers to the period covered by the many and very different source materials. In this study, the source materials cover the period from 1960 until 2020. At Bibliotekshuset, programmes have been offered since the late 1950s and past programmes are documented since 1960 in monthly reports, flyers and newspaper cuttings. At Herning Centralbibliotek, programmes initiated by the library have been offered since the late 1960s. The library has, however, offered programmes initiated by others earlier than this. Tri-annual reports, flyers and extensive scrapbooks with newspaper cuttings document their programming activity since 1965. Importantly, between 1983 and 2011 the flyers from Herning Centralbibliotek only announce programmes for children and are thus supplemented by newspaper cuttings and articles reporting on programmes for adults. Finally, Facebook events reporting on programmes serve as source materials covering the period from 2018 until the spring of 2020. As part of the source collection, four interviews were conducted with librarians from both of the two libraries: a group interview with two librarians from Bibliotekshuset and three individual interviews with librarians from Herning Centralbibliotek. At the time of the interviews (2017), the librarians had between 12 and 35 years of experience in planning, facilitating and conducting programmes in public libraries. The interview method provides insight into the librarians’ experiences of working with programming activity in the

past and present, as well as their personal opinions about programmes as part of library services. The table below (Table 1) provides an overview of the source materials collected for this study.

Source materials (reference)	Source material coverage (<i>library</i>)	Description
Monthly Reports (MR)	1958–1991 (<i>Bibliotekshuset</i>)	The monthly reports consist of forms intended for reporting the library services, including the types of programmes offered. Often, descriptions and anecdotes about programmes were written on the back of the reports. Thus, they provide both quantitative and qualitative information.
Annual Reports (full in-text references)	1956–1988 (<i>Herning Centralbibliotek</i>)	The (tri)annual reports on library services and activities, including programmes. The information is primarily descriptive and anecdotal, sometimes quantifiable.
Scrap Books (short in-text references) HB: Herning Bladet HD: Herning Dagblad HF: Herning Folkeblad JP: Jyllands Posten)	1970–2005 (<i>Herning Centralbibliotek</i>) 1994–2001 (<i>Bibliotekshuset</i>)	The scrapbooks consist of a collection of newspaper cuttings and articles from local and national newspapers about the libraries, their services and programmes; some announce upcoming programmes and some report on past programmes.
Flyers (FL-B and FL-H)	1984–2018 (<i>Herning Centralbibliotek</i>) 1994–2018 (<i>Bibliotekshuset</i>)	The flyers or brochures announce and promote upcoming programmes and provide descriptive and detailed information about the programmes.
Facebook Events (FE-B and FE-H)	2018–2020 (<i>Bibliotekshuset</i>) 2018–2020 (<i>Herning Centralbibliotek</i>)	The Facebook events announce and promote upcoming programmes and provide descriptive and detailed information about the programmes.
Interviews (IN1, IN2 ... IN5)	2017 (<i>Bibliotekshuset</i>) 2017 (<i>Herning Centralbibliotek</i>)	Four lengthy, semi-structured interviews reporting on the lived experiences of librarians working with programmes.

Table 1: Overview of the primary source materials.

As HCS research operates with a broad temporality, dividing the period into temporal units of analysis serves as a way to gain an overview and focus attention, and is a pivotal part of the analysis. In this study, six temporal units of analysis have been identified and distinguished by referring to change and continuity in relation to the ascribed roles and functions of the programmes mentioned in the source materials. Referring to ideological purposes as roles and practical purposes as functions (Mathiasson & Jochumsen, 2020, p. 366), the descriptive titles represent the most distinctively different roles and

functions ascribed to programmes at the time, however they do not omit other roles and functions. As mentioned above, some deviations from HCS have been made and the rigour of the temporal units is one of them. As the source materials vary and provide different levels of insights from different perspectives, and have been written with different purposes, it is not possible to arrive at “non-arbitrary” units as called for by Widdersheim (2018, p. 148). It is possible, however, to be transparent about the manner in which the units are identified.

The units have been identified by creating lists and maps of the different types of programmes found in the source materials and taking notes in relation to their format and content. Special attention was given to the implicit or explicit mentioning of the reasoning underlying offering programmes in terms of their roles and functions. When revisiting these notes, the source materials were structured and lists and schemas were created, noting when and how changes or continuity were found in relation to the three different levels of abstraction. This has not been a linear process as in HCS, but a dialectic process going back-and-forth between the different stages of the research process. During this study, justification for the choices has been a recurrent consideration. In the end, however, it has been a question of interpretation, and in that sense it would be misleading to proclaim that the temporal units are non-arbitrary. There are overlaps and other units could have been imagined. However, for the sake of the descriptive analysis, these units have worked well and provided a frame for each period’s characteristics. The temporal units of analysis are illustrated in the table below (Table 2).

Unit X	Period covered	Descriptive title
Unit 1	1960–1968	Programmes as a means to disseminate literature and increase book loans
Unit 2	1969–1976	Programmes as a means to promote the library as something more than books
Unit 3	1977–1982	Programmes as an inclusive means to community building
Unit 4	1983–1994	Programmes as shaping the library profile as a meeting place
Unit 5	1995–2008	Programmes as community building
Unit 6	2009–2020	Programmes as ends in themselves

Table 2. Overview of the temporal units of analysis

Analysis

In the following, the results of the data analysis are presented, using the temporal units of analysis as a structuring tool to describe the development of public library programmes between 1960 and 2020. Due to the amount of source materials and the broad temporality examined, any thorough investigation of everything that happened within the two libraries is beyond the scope of this study. The purpose has not been to list all the different types of programmes mentioned in the source materials but to highlight continuity and change in relation to the three levels of abstraction. Therefore, the analysis is based on examples rather than a definite outline. To secure uniformity and consistency, and thereby facilitate comparison (cf. Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148), each of the units report on the different types of programmes offered, their format and content as well as the reasoning underlying offering them in terms of roles and functions. The first paragraph of each unit

reports on the format and content of the programmes offered, while the last paragraph reports on the reasoning underlying offering programmes in terms of their ascribed roles and functions.

1960–1968: Programmes as a means to disseminate literature and increase book loans

The format and content of the programmes offered in the first unit can be characterised by a limited variety of programmes offered, limited target groups and a limited focus on literature “and other closely related topics” (Herning Centralbibliotek, 1969, p. 7). Most of the programmes mentioned in the early years were intended for adults and were predominantly exhibitions. At Bibliotekshuset, exhibitions are offered every month during the programming season (from September to May) and sometimes several exhibitions are offered per month. Many of these are book exhibitions, which are often supplemented by a book list on the topic in question. Programmes offered for children were predominantly story hours, offered at Bibliotekshuset since 1960. Library orientations are also mentioned as programmes in the monthly reports and have been offered regularly since the early 1960s. However, since these orientations have not been publicly available but offered exclusively to specific groups such as school classes or study circles, they are not included in this study. In 1961, the popular travelling exhibition *Ungdommens Bogmarked* (‘Bookmarked of the Youth’), visited Bibliotekshuset. This exhibition was complemented by a film screening and book talk, which was limited to the presentation of books related to the subject of the film (MR, October 1961). Neither the film screening nor the book talk became a recurrent event, but the programme represented a new target group: young people. It would, however, take many years before programmes other than exhibitions were regularly offered for young people. Before the mid-1960s, the programmes mentioned at Herning Centralbibliotek were provided by other organisations such as high schools, evening schools and study circles. In October 1966, the children’s library offered a series of programmes in relation to *Børnebogsugen* (‘The Children’s Book Week’). These programmes were a huge success and resulted in a significant increase in the number of user registrations (Herning Central Bibliotek, 1967, p. 8–9). From the autumn of 1967, Herning Centralbibliotek started offering programmes for adults as well, providing writers’ evenings and facilitating lectures and study circles on “literature – and other closely related topics” (Herning Centralbibliotek, 1969, p. 7). In 1968, record concerts (concerts where a record is played for an audience) and a few instances of live concerts followed. For children, film screenings, children’s theatre and story hours were offered from 1968.

In terms of role and function, the period between 1960 and 1968 is characterised by programmes exhibiting, motivating or reading books. As mentioned in relation to the festivals ‘The Children’s Book Week’ and ‘Bookmarked of the Youth’, increased book loans and increased number of user registrations seem to be the success criteria underlying and reasoning for offering programmes in these years. In relation to ‘Bookmarked of the Youth’, the book exhibition was mentioned as having a direct influence on the increased demand for books “which led a hidden existence before” (MR, October 1961). Thus, provision of books and literature and increased book loans and user numbers seem to be the main function of programmes (practical outcome), while the ideological purpose or role is the dissemination of books and literature.

1969–1976: Programmes as a means to promote the library as something more than books

From 1969, the number and variety of programmes offered at both libraries increased dramatically and in terms of both format and content the programmes were expanded. This expansion is due to an expansion of the library collections to include new media and materials. At Bibliotekshuset, exhibitions used to be the most common type of programme, though the frequency seems to drop from 1971, from several exhibitions per month to just one. Other programmes offered for adults were writers’ evenings, film screenings, debate evenings and concerts. From 1973, Bibliotekshuset offered a film club for children. The aim was to offer regular film screenings (two per months), however, due to limited budgets and technical problems this was not always accomplished. In Herning, programmes

offered for adults from 1969 were exhibitions, concerts and short film screenings. According to one of the librarians, the expansion of the collections characterises the development of programmes through the 1970s (IN1). The content of the programmes were expanded both in relation to topics covered and media and materials used, resulting in the mixing of topics, media and materials in new ways. An exhibition of underground magazines at Herning Centralbibliotek is a good example, since it incorporated music especially composed to fit the content of the exhibition as a key element in the dissemination (HF, 1971). Moreover, exhibitions of comic books are mentioned at both libraries as examples of programmes embracing and promoting new materials.

In relation to the role and function in this period, at a practical level, programmes are explicitly mentioned as library PR activities. In a newspaper article from 1969, Herning Centralbibliotek is described as something “more than books” (HB, 1969). Here, programmes such as film screenings, children’s theatre and musical play groups are mentioned as new offerings and as part of the re-branding of the library. An example is how a live jazz concert is explicitly described as “setting the stage for the music section at the new library” (HB, 1969). Moreover, there is a focus on the social potential of programmes in this year, which can be found in an article in the professional library journal *Bibliotek 70*. Here, librarian Jane Pedersen reports on her experiments with what she terms “open programs”; that is, programmes “providing nothing but a frame for people to fill out themselves” (Pedersen, 1971, p. 328–329). Pedersen found that “a special form of being together” arose between the participants with which the content itself had nothing to do” and that this form of being together had the potential to bridge the generation gap as well as other barriers (Pedersen, 1971, p. 329–330). At Bibliotekshuset, the librarians discussed the idea of open programmes at a staff meeting, expressing a wish to experiment with such “anti-programs” themselves (MR, August, 1971). Programmes are also explicitly mentioned as PR in the monthly reports from Bibliotekshuset, where “PR at the library (about beat- and theatre evenings and movies)” is an independent item on the agenda at a staff meeting (MR, April 1970). Programmes can be seen as part of the extension of the library identity, which is found in newspaper articles reporting on *hygge* (JP, 1972) and social relations (JP, 1973) at the library in Herning and as a means to promote the library as something more than books.

1977–1982: Programmes as an inclusive means to community building

In the years between 1977 and 1982, the format and content of the programmes offered continued to expand. Programmes offered for children were story hours, children’s theatre and film screenings, the latter being the far more popular type of programme, indicated by separate boxes for film screenings in the monthly reports (MR, March 1977). Film screenings were expanded in several ways, including film- and gaming clubs for children, which were offered at Herning Centralbibliotek from 1978, and documentary film screenings for adults, followed by debates. Exhibitions are still a recurrent type of programme and this format was also expanded. Examples include participatory exhibitions such as debate exhibitions and even participatory art exhibitions, where users were invited to exhibit. In Herning, this is found in relation to the “spring exhibitions”. As opposed to the first spring exhibition in 1977, which was subjected to censorship, for the 1979 spring exhibition, local artists and amateurs were invited to an uncensored exhibition “where everyone is guaranteed representation” (HD, 1979a). The opportunity to exhibit was not limited to artists, but collectors were also invited. This inclusiveness is also found in relation to the content of the exhibition, as evident in the list of collectables mentioned in the invitation: matchboxes, medals, stamps, pipes, butterflies and more (HD, 1979c).

The inclusiveness found in relation to the format and content of the programmes can also be seen as a key proponent in the role and function of the programmes in this period, which can be related to an extension of the role and function ascribed to the modern public library. In Herning, this is explicitly

stated in a newspaper article reporting on the library as a workshop with cultural and social aims (HD, 1978). Programmes are considered a central part in reaching these aims. This can be found, for example, in the inclusiveness towards the community as a resource. An example is another “new exhibition format” (HD, 1979b) at Herning Centralbibliotek where local associations, interest groups and organisations (with a non-commercial purpose) were invited to exhibit at the library in order to share and disseminate their work (HB, 1979). The role and function of programmes in this period can be described as inclusive means to community building, mirroring the cultural and social aims ascribed to the public libraries at the time.

1983–1994: Programmes as a means to shaping the library profile as a meeting place

Between 1983 and 1994, the format of programmes underwent an expansion. This is particularly visible in an expansion of target groups and a divide between programmes for children and programmes for adults, which can be seen as due to a change in announcement methods at Herning Centralbibliotek. From 1983, Herning Centralbibliotek no longer offered evening programmes and programmes for adults were limited to “a few exhibitions per year” (Herning Centralbibliotek, 1988, p. 44). As the number of programmes offered for adults decreased, the number of programmes offered for children increased. Programmes such as film screenings, film- and gaming clubs and children’s theatre are consistent, and new types of programmes appeared, such as talent shows (FL-H, February 1984) and magic shows (FL, February 1986). These programmes are characterised by actively involving the participating children. From 1983, mobile libraries or book buses brought programmes such as children’s theatre and puppet shows to the surrounding areas of Herning Centralbibliotek (HB, 1983), thereby expanding the programmes in terms of location, while at the same time promoting the children’s library. At both libraries, programmes especially targeted at young people were offered regularly from 1985 (as opposed to isolated events such as the book festivals in the 1960s). These programmes include exhibitions (MR, April, 1984), film screenings (HF, 1985) and workshops on how to make your own music video (FL-H, November 1986). At Bibliotekshuset, a youth section (*U-afdelingen*) was established in 1985, making this new target group “feel at home” (MR, September, 1985). From 1994, programmes were provided on Saturdays (FL-B, autumn, 1994), expanding the target groups to include families. In relation to content, this period is characterised by a focus on the library’s move into the digital age through computers and technological equipment. This focus directly influenced the extent of programmes offered at Herning Centralbibliotek, where budget cuts, a focus on offering business services and the purchase of technical equipment are mentioned as reasons for the decrease in programmes for adults (Herning Centralbibliotek, 1988). The purchase of technological equipment had a positive influence on the children’s library in Herning, where the gaming clubs offered electronic games from 1985 (FL-H, 1985/1986) and a data workshop was established in 1987 (FL-H, 1987). In relation to the data workshop, programmes such as gaming and instruction in Word processing were offered for children.

In relation to role and function, towards the latter half of the 1980s a more explicit and strategic attitude towards programmes is found. In their strategy from 1988, Herning Centralbibliotek describes programming activity as an area that “complement[s] the classic library functions” (Herning Centralbibliotek, 1988, p. 64–65). The library further expresses a wish to become “a nice place to be”, whether you want to listen to music, read a magazine, play, read books, watch a video or “meet other people”, and programmes are explicitly mentioned as part of “shaping the profile of the library” as a centre for cultural and informational activities (Herning Centralbibliotek, 1988, p. 64–65). Thus, programmes were still considered a means to an end, however the end goal changed and programmes were then considered part of shaping the library’s profile as a meeting place, and where having programmes is considered a part of what makes the library “a nice place to be”.

1995–2008: Programmes as community building

In relation to content, the predominant focus during these years seems to be the provision of Internet and digital skills, and the use of computers for both business and pleasure is a dominating feature in programmes for both children and adults. A series of programmes providing assistance and instruction for Internet use appear in the source materials from 1995 and from 1996; “Internet” is an independent paragraph in the flyers from the children’s library at Herning Centralbibliotek (FL-H, 1996-97). From 2000, there was a second wave of programmes teaching the skills needed for the digital age. This is seen in programmes such as “The first trip to the Internet” and “Learn how to write on a computer” (FL-B, spring, 2000). From October 2003, Bibliotekshuset offered regular IT courses every morning and from 2004, a series of programmes where “seniors are helping seniors with IT” (FL-B, autumn, 2004). At both libraries, writers’ meetings, lectures and concerts for adults made a reappearance from 1995, as well as new types of programmes in the form of plant exchange markets and poetry cafés, which were offered by Bibliotekshuset in collaboration with volunteers and local organisations (IN2). The most common types of programmes offered for children and young people were still film screenings, children’s theatre and musical playgroups (IN4; IN5). Moreover, at both libraries the creative activities, which have been an increasing part of the children’s libraries since the 1970s, are now offered as creative programmes and workshops in relation to festive seasons such as Shrovetide, Easter and Christmas.

In relation to role and function, a focus on relations through social programmes, collaboration and community building is found to be an important aspect of programming activity. Although the digital still dominates the content of the programmes offered, the use of computers in programmes is as much an act of individual learning as it is an act of building relations. This is the case in programmes such as PlayStation tournaments offered at the children’s library at Herning Centralbibliotek (FL-H, spring, 2004) and in the series of programmes where seniors helped seniors with IT at Bibliotekshuset. Moreover, the market- and café programmes are not defined by their specific content (e.g. plants or poetry). Instead, these programmes can be defined by a focus on the social act of gathering around a shared interest. As such, programmes no longer appear solely as a means to something else but as something in themselves. As ways to meet up, share experiences and take part in the local community, programmes are no longer solely considered as tools for community building, but as an active part of community building in themselves.

2009–2020: Programmes as ends in themselves

In relation to both format and content, in this period most of the different types of programmes mentioned earlier are still found, although many of them are expanded. Examples include clubs and groups, which are now offered for all age groups on a broad variety of topics, media and materials. Examples include listening clubs defined by interest offered at Herning Centralbibliotek (IN3). The café programmes from the 1990s have been expanded to baby cafés for parents on leave (Herning Centralbibliotek, since 2015) and language cafés (Herning Centralbibliotek, since 2017). Moreover, conversation salons offered at Herning Centralbibliotek since 2017 can be seen as expansions of the debate evenings of the past. New types of programmes are found as well. Particularly prevalent are health- and fitness programmes such as yoga and mindfulness classes offered since 2009 at Bibliotekshuset (FL-B, spring, 2009). These programmes were first offered for children and their parents, later followed by similar programmes for adults. Recently, a focus on health can be found at both libraries: both practically in physical exercise (such as yoga, city walks, music and movement, and dance classes) and theoretically in relation to lectures on mental and physical health. The fact that Herning Centralbibliotek has been the arena for a Health Fair (*Sundhedsmesse*) since 2018 and an annual mental health day (FL-H, October, 2018) is an indication that health is considered a central topic for programming activity. Other new programmes found in the source materials are community sing-alongs and community dinners. These are characterised by a focus on the social act of gathering.

Community sing-alongs have been offered at Herning Centralbibliotek since 2013 and more regularly since 2017. Community dinners, such as Sunday brunches (FE-B, August 2017) or “Eat with the EU” (FL-H, January, 2019) are found at both libraries though are not as recurrent as the sing-alongs. The focus on digital literacy continues and can be found in a variety of IT courses, introductions to Facebook use and online self-service (FL-H, March, 2015).

In relation to role and function, the dissemination of books and literature is still considered a key purpose underlying programmes at both libraries and is mentioned explicitly by the librarians as a focus area of programme planning (IN2; IN5). Moreover, programmes are still considered as PR for the library, as well as for the city and community. In one of the interviews, a librarian described how the library promotes the city and other cultural institutions through programmes and other activities (IN3). As such, programmes are still considered as a means to disseminate the library’s collections and offers and as a tool for community building (IN2). However, a change can be found in the way programmes are framed as ends in themselves. Programmes such as community sing-alongs and community dinners are good examples, since the act of being together physically, exchanging something or sharing an experience is emphasised over the specific content (e.g. the songs sung or food consumed). A recent example of programmes as ends in themselves is “The Take Away Library” initiative, which has been part of Herning Centralbibliotek since 2017. Here, programmes are offered “to go” (Take Away Biblioteket, 2020). This is an example of outreach in 2020, but it is also an example of how programmes have become an integrated part of the modern public library as something you can “take out” and even bring to your own home.

In the following, answers to the two research questions are provided by comparing the different units of analysis and interpreting the findings presented in the analysis.

Interpretation

When mapping the different types of programmes offered between 1960 and 2020, a high degree of continuity is found. Even though new types of programmes do seem to appear in the data, what is intriguing is the way existing types of programmes are expanded in terms of format and content. Focussing on the development of the format of the programmes offered, an interesting finding is the expansion of target groups, which have occurred throughout this period. In the 1960s and 1970s, programmes for either “adults” or “children” dominated the data. However, since the 1980s, these target groups have expanded to become somewhat all inclusive, focussing less on age groups and more on interest groups. In the table below (Table 3), the expansion of target groups is illustrated.

Unit 1 (1960-1968)	Programs for adults Programs for children
Unit 2 (1969-1976)	
Unit 3 (1977-1982)	
Unit 4 (1983-1994)	Programs for adults Programs for children Programs for young people

Unit 5 (1995-2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs for adults Programs for children Programs for young people Programs for seniors Programs for families Programs for communities of interest
Unit 6 (2009-2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs for adults Programs for children Programs for young people Programs for seniors Programs for families Programs for communities of interest Programs for babies and parents on leave

Table 3. An illustration of the expansion of target groups.

Useful for interpreting the expanded content of the programmes are the three criteria underlying public libraries, their collections and services: *quality*, *versatility* and *topicality*. Despite several revisions since 1964, in the current Library Act these criteria have remained the same (The Secretariat for Legal Information, 2013) and are mentioned in the interviews as criteria underlying the provision of programmes (IN1; IN3). *Quality* was a notion heavily debated in the 1960s, also in relation to programmes. This debate had a huge influence on the materials offered at libraries and the programmes offered mirror this debate (IN1). An example is the exhibitions of comic books in 1969, which were in themselves a defence of the quality of this media as part of the library and their collections (HB, 1969; IN1). *Versatility* refers to offering something for everyone, which is most certainly the impression when examining the development of programmes offered – the expansion of target groups being an obvious sign of this development. Within recent years, versatility in relation to programmes seems to be an even more elaborated part of the library. In a feature on Herning Centralbibliotek in a local magazine, the library is described as “a very lively library” and programmes are proclaimed as part of making the library a community centre, offering “everything from shared reading to lectures, play group activities, writer’s evenings, knitting groups, it-instructions to, well, *everything*” (Volf, 2018, p. 114). *Topicality* is found throughout the period in programmes on trending topics or subject areas. In relation of the rise of the Internet, for example, programmes have played a role in preparation for the digital age. Recently, topicality is shown in the focus on health and fitness, which has dominated throughout the 2010s, found in an increasing number of lectures on physical and mental health issues. A lecture on “how to survive the digital world” (FL-H, November, 2017) is an example of how the topics of the programmes change in relation to society. Another example is the tendency for programmes focussing on being together and sharing experiences, such as community sing-alongs and community dinners, stressing a need for a return to physical experiences. This focus has been challenged during the Covid-19 outbreak and the subsequent cancellations of programmes at both case libraries. Currently, the need for sharing experiences – “together – but apart”ⁱⁱ – seems stronger than ever and creative efforts were made to offer programmes online or in a safe format. At Herning Centralbibliotek, for instance, online lectures (FB-H, April, 2020) and

literature cafés (FB-H, May, 2020) were offered. Live-streaming events is also a tendency found in the wake of the Corona pandemic.

As an answer to RQ1, an understanding of the different types of programmes offered is found to be closely related to an understanding of their development in terms of format and content in relation to the general expansion of the public library, its collections and services since the 1960s.

Just as the types of programmes seem to have expanded in terms of format and content, the roles and functions ascribed to these library services seem to have expanded as well. Based on the analysis provided in this article, it seems clear that programmes have always functioned as a means to something else: as a means for education, public information, entertainment, cultural- and recreational activity, publicity, outreach, community building and probably much more. As the collections were expanded, programmes were used to disseminate the library collections by mixing content in new ways (e.g. exhibitions accompanied by music). Moreover, programmes have functioned as outreach (e.g. puppet theatre in the book buses) and as PR for the library, playing a central role in branding the library as “more than books” (cf. HB, 1969), pointing both to the expanded collections and augmented role and function of the public library as a meeting place. A consistency is found in the dissemination of books and literature, which have been central aspects of programming activity throughout the period studied.

While programmes are still and have always been considered as a means to an end, programmes as a whole have undergone a rather dramatic development. Arguably, programmes have always been experiences in themselves. Exhibitions, story hours and lectures in the 1960s were not ‘just’ dissemination of content but certain ways to experience it. The dramatic change appears when programmes are not determined by their role and function as a means to something else but as ends in themselves. Importantly, this development does not signal a shift from being considered as *either* a means to an end *or* as an end in themselves, but as both. Although at times some roles and functions seem to be emphasised over others, they are not replacing the existing ones but adding to or expanding them, thereby increasing the complexity of the programmes. This development is best described as adding to or supplementing the existing roles and functions. In the figure below (Figure 1), the supplementary development is visualised as overlapping circles representing the roles and functions emphasised in the six units of analysis. The varying sizes refer to their seniority, without being too specific as to whether or not these have been considered the most important.

As an answer to RQ2, in terms of the roles and functions ascribed directly or indirectly to public library programmes the reasoning behind offering programmes can be interpreted as having undergone a transformation: from programmes serving as a means to an end to programmes serving as ends in themselves.

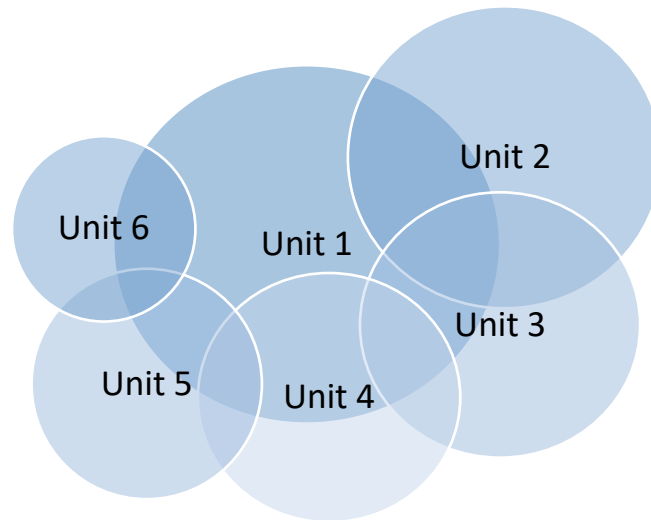


Figure 1. The supplementary development of the ascribed roles and functions emphasised in the different units of analysis.

Summative discussion

By providing both case specific and generalizable insights into the programmes offered during a sixty-year period, this study contributes with new insights into this development, which have not been presented in a narrative form before nor with this level of detail. The diachronic line of development complements and combines the existing synchronic studies. The findings provided in this article support the existing studies in arguing that the cultural political debates of the 1960s and 1970s had an influence on the development of public library programmes (cf. Kjær and Ørom, 1992a, 1992b; Andersson and Skot-Hansen, 1994). As mentioned by one of the librarians, the debate on quality, for instance, influenced the way programmes were thought of and used in the 1970s (IN1). The year 1969 ushered in a new epoch in public libraries as something “more than books” (HB, 1969), and programmes were considered a means to promote this new identity. Thus, with a reference to Kjær and Ørom (1992), already from the late 1960s, public library programmes can be seen as part of the extension of the “library cultural identity” expanding the image of the library. Moreover, this findings from this study support that around the mid-1990s, programmes were considered as “something in themselves” (Andersson and Skot-Hansen, 1994). Today, having programmes in relation to a public library is considered a given and programmes are even considered as ends in themselves as certain “forms of being together” (cf. Pedersen, 1971). In recent years, programmes such as community singing and community dinners epitomise this form of being together related to programmes today. The line of development described in this article is not straight, it has bumps and curves, and it is not complete. Further research into the political, institutional and professional interests underlying programmes and programming activity is needed, as well as ways to theorizing about these phenomena.

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ⁱ Despite several revisions, the mission statement in the current Library Act (revised in 2013) is similar to the 1964 version. However, “other relevant materials” have been expanded several times and are currently specified to also include “access to electronic information resources, such as the Internet” (The Secretariat for Legal Information, 2013).

ⁱⁱ In Denmark, the phrase “sammen – hver for sig” (‘together – but apart’) became a slogan during the Covid-19 lockdown in the spring of 2020.

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Book review:

The privilege to select in an unequal research system

Nora Schmidt (2020) The privilege to select. Global research system, European academic library collections, and decolonisation. Lund Studies in Arts and Cultural Sciences 26, Lund University, Lund

The privilege to select by Nora Schmidt is a doctoral dissertation in Information Studies. Remarkably, the thesis starts out from an ethical stance: "the ultimate and underlying goal of research", according to the author, is to propel "global social justice" (p. 23). More precisely, the book focusses on issues of social injustice in the global research system related to the circulation of academic knowledge in the social sciences and humanities (SSH), in the form of published research results. Who participates in the creation and who benefits from the diffusion of new knowledge? How are inequities reproduced by it? And how are different contexts impacted by new knowledge? Those are the fundamental questions at the core of this book.

The research system in its current state seems to serve the needs of a minority of humankind only. In this sense, it is not fulfilling its function: "After all, assuming that researchers represent the interests of local populations at least to some extent, this thesis asks how far the world society's research system is out of balance in terms of involving local interests globally. The suspicion can be upheld that the research system instead only serves the interests of a minority. Regarding the interests of the majority of the world's population, the system is, at best, barely fulfilling its function, and at worst, it can even do harm, as this thesis will show" (p. 41). For ongoing debates around imbalances and divides within the global scholarly arena, the book is of strong interest. It fills a gap by focussing on one specific key factor in steering or hindering circulation of knowledge: the academic library and its institutional logics. This requires a degree of technical competencies that many scholars do not master.

The library appears as a key factor that reproduces social injustice in the sense that it keeps important parts of globally published literature undiscoverable within Europe. Indeed, from a European perspective, published research results are unequally discoverable depending on their place of origin. Therefore, the author argues, "[m]y main aim is to render visible the ways in which European academic libraries contribute to unjustified neglect [...] of scholarship produced in the 'Global South'. This neglect is explained as a consequence of specific crucial features of current world society, referred to as coloniality, social injustice, and quantified communication" (p. 40). Quantified communication, one of the book's key concepts, refers to the measurement of quantifiable research output. Scholars are supposed to publish many papers, and research management in most countries is based on counting the output of individual researchers or of single institutions, relying on bibliographical databases. However, this is inadequate, since those databases cover only a tiny part of global research output. In particular, they tend to marginalise the global Souths. Therefore, academic libraries, who increasingly rely on bibliometrics as well in order to constitute their collections, also marginalise the same literatures.

In writing this book, the author clearly had an ideal vision in mind: European libraries should make use of their privilege to select to make publications from the global Souths discoverable in Europe and thus diminish social injustice. The thesis therefore calls for cultural humility in library collections, quoting Tervalon and Murray-García: "Cultural humility incorporates a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing the power imbalances in the [...communicative] dynamic, and to developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations (Tervalon and MurrayGarcia 1998)" (p. 106).

The theoretical basis of the study is social systems theory (Luhmann) as well as decoloniality. Embedding the study in social systems theory has the advantage that it allows "[s]eeing science and research as an enormously complex, yet *single* system" (p. 25). According to the theory, the function of the global research system is to figure out what knowledge is relevant to world society. At the same time, the decolonial approach allows for seeing the modern science system as being part of colonial modernity. Coloniality is understood here as a multidimensional power structure that includes economic exploitation but also power imbalances in the domain of science and knowledge. While the combination of social systems theory with decoloniality is rare, it helps to understand the disregard for southern scholarly production within the northern centres of knowledge production as an expression of coloniality. This "unjustified neglect" is a structural problem that Schmidt tries to understand by looking into the institutional logics of libraries and of collection management.

The book follows a mosaic-like structure. Each chapter provides another piece to the puzzle of inequalities in knowledge circulation, combining quantitative methods with more conceptual pieces. The second chapter, entitled "The research system in world society", deepens the conceptual framework. The thesis' focus is on the hard structures inscribed in scholarly communication, i.e. the technical systems of scholarly publishing, registration and literature research. An important embodiment of those technical systems is the citation database, most prominently the Web of Science (WoS). That is the foundation of bibliometrics as a luhmannian "third order observation". In this sense, bibliometrics appear as a problem and as a method in this book. Bibliometrics is a means of stabilisation of the global system.

The third chapter, "Splitting the world, splitting scholarly communication", starts out from the idea of centre and periphery in the global science system: "In the scholarly communication system, a centre/periphery differentiation becomes apparent when a large majority of references of registered publications points to the same cluster of work, which then forms a centre of scholarly communication" (p. 134). This divide is enacted through communication. In this sense, peripheral

communication is necessary to ensure the global reach of scholarly communication: it is only because peripheral communication refers to the centre as centre, that the centre *is* the centre. The discussion about the current distinction between "international" and "local" journals, in the sense that international journals often count as more prestigious and central, is particularly interesting. It shows that different definitions circulate without agreement and that it is actually unclear what makes a journal an international or a local journal. The subsequent empirical parts confirm this. The book illustrates the broad critique of injustice with a study on Southeast African scholarly production. African scholars are confronted with specific problems. They are stuck between contradictory demands for internationalisation on the one hand and for local relevance on the other hand. They bump up against a generalisation barrier because their contexts are framed as "cultural differences" with regard to general social theory. Therefore, they are also faced with "area studies incarceration" (p. 147), i.e. their research is seen as being relevant first and foremost to African Studies, much less to the core disciplines of the social sciences and humanities.

What follows is an application of the theoretical framework in a bibliometric study. Mainstream bibliometrics use databases like WoS in order to count the quantity of output. Schmidt instead uses them to demonstrate how peripheral communication is marginalised, combining researcher demographics with bibliometric data. The results of this original empirical study are partly unexpected and constitute one of the book's key contributions to ongoing debates. For instance, it appears that highly developed countries do not necessarily have high relative numbers of SSH university positions. At that level, the situation in the US is similar to that in Uzbekistan or Iraq. Very highly developed research systems do not necessarily result in a share of WoS-publications as high as expected from relative numbers of SSH researchers. However, a low relative number of researchers and a low human development index (HDI) result in negligible numbers of WoS-registered journals. This means that the HDI does not correlate exactly with scholarly communication. The latter follows its own rules. Other key results confirm existing studies: WoS covers a tiny part of publications from a few countries only. In sum, "three quarters of WoS publications in disciplines which are to a large degree publicly funded, represent the research interests of only slightly more than half of the global SSH researchers, who are working on behalf of less than a seventh of the world population" (p. 166 ff.).

The fourth chapter, "Decolonial scientometrics", confronts mainstream scientometrics with a culturally humble way of doing scientometrics. This comes with particular methodological challenges. It is an especially work- and time-intensive endeavour. Such studies therefore necessarily remain limited in scope, concentrating here on Southeast African literature. Empirically, the aim is to relate the number of WoS-indexed publications in the SSH by authors from Southeast African institutions to the number of researchers based in the region. Technically, this requires a very demanding sampling design, combining university rankings, database indexing, CVs and institutional records to construct an alternative database. At times, the reader runs the risk of getting lost between different types of indices, databases, search tools, discovery systems as well as between different units of analysis (authors, papers, journals, citation counts etc.). The thesis provides a thorough description of the African publication market and indexing landscape and complements the results for the region with an affiliation-based approach, zooming into one single institution, the University of Mauritius. The results reveal that there is a substantial quantity of publications: around 2000 journal titles exist in sub-Saharan Africa. We also find here concretely what has been outlined theoretically, e.g. the area studies incarceration in the form of an index of African published literature exclusively included in the AfricaBib bibliography, managed by the African Studies Centre Leiden Library, i.e. SSH research from Africa is channelled into African Studies in Europe. The WoS coverage is insufficient and with the ceasing of AfricaBib, the discoverability of African journals has worsened. Overall, publishing in the "Global South" is losing momentum.

An original insight generated through the alternative citation analysis is that "local journals" are not limited to Southeast African authors, and that publishing locally is as important as publishing abroad: "These findings confirm that 'local' journals or publishers are, in fact, very 'international', not only in terms of authorship, but also in terms of where they are read and cited" (p. 226). This means that a "local" publication does not automatically lead to a local audience, a result that contradicts authoritative studies like Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras (2014), who found that "Global South" scholars prefer to cite "'central' research". Schmidt demonstrates that this claim only holds when the underlying data is based on a "Global North" index. Overall, the bad coverage and the limited discoverability of Africa-based research confirms the hegemonic bias in the global research system.

The fifth chapter, "Decolonising academic library collections in Europe", asks why we are faced with this continuing hegemonic bias. It addresses the logics at play within European academic libraries, which is the location from where the current system could be changed towards more humble ways of doing research. The author looks into academic library ethics and operations, investigating the institutional level through an analysis of collection policies, and the actor level and professional values through a survey on the self-perception of librarians. The key problem she identifies is that collection management is largely outsourced to commercial aggregators and vendors: "Vendor-preselection products [...] decrease the libraries' agency in arranging records of knowledge, and support the maintenance of colonial power structures, since they seem to undermine the discoverability of small, 'local' or independent publishers' programmes" (p. 248). This has led to an immense influence over the entire research information landscape.

This development comes together with the professional ethos of librarians, "neutrality". It is largely apprehended as passive neutrality: the users' information needs guide the library activities; the task is to provide access to what the user wants to access. But since the user cannot discover literature that is not indexed, this leads to a vicious circle. Schmidt instead calls for more culturally humble neutrality, meaning that the role of the library is "to counter existing biases through proactive acquisition of resources that confront dominant positions with whatever they tend to marginalise" (p. 283). The last chapter addresses the implications of the study and future research perspectives. It returns to the ethical stance of the project and to the idea of the common good: "Libraries of public universities [...] as public institutions, their purpose is to foster knowledge production and dissemination for the common good, hence for cognitive and social justice. They are therefore the first who must advocate for restructuring scholarly communication" (p. 319ff.). Libraries should work together with academic staff and students towards redefining collectively what publications should form part of their collections. The conclusion also suggests inquiring, in future research, more in-depth into the workings of peripheral communication within the global science system. In particular, it would seem interesting to know more about "to what extent the periphery communicates on its own terms, unobserved by the centre"; as well as to understand better "the exploitation of the periphery as a backup system for the centre" (p. 326).

The book makes an important contribution to the ongoing debates around the centre-periphery-divide within global science, focussing on those disciplines that often remain rather marginalised within STS. While it is uncommon to frame this kind of research in terms of systems theory and the theoretical choice is not further justified, the results clearly fill a gap in our understanding of how the circulation of knowledge across places that do not occupy equivalent positions in terms of academic prestige actually works. The chosen theoretical framework leads to consideration of the important link between science and society. At the same time, the more properly epistemic dimension, i.e. the implications of what is observed and analysed for the knowledge produced, are not further discussed. The focus on communication and observation, according to Luhmann, enables us to properly distinguish between levels of observation, an important advantage in understanding the meaning of

bibliometrics as a measure to observe communication, not to measure output. However, simultaneously, the focus on communication leaves other important implications out of the picture. For example, the teaching and student perspective is not considered to be part of scholarly communication as a system. Yet, the reproduction of scholarly communities, the socialization of future generations into their disciplines is vital. Teaching plays a crucial role in circulation of research and lays the basis for future scientific communication.

More importantly, the problems of centre and periphery analysed here have their most serious reasons and effects at the level of consecration. Not only students are graded, but researchers are selected for employment, promoted, funded, allowed to employ others, depending on how they communicate. Leaving this level of consecration, legitimisation, evaluation and their material effects out of the picture is problematic. It is not only a problem of communication and social injustice at the level of whose interests are represented in the communication loops, but those communication circuits and the role that libraries have in structuring them have severe real-world effects on institutional, funding and staff policies, that in turn reinforce centre-periphery relations, globally, regionally, nationally and locally. The author is clearly aware of those problems and names them, but cannot cover them within the luhmannian theoretical framework. In particular, when it comes to understanding the effects of the economic system interfering within the research system, works based on Bourdieu, for instance, seem more convincing in theorising the concern about the threatened autonomy, or the heteronomy of science as a social field.

It seems that the discussion of existing literature on centres and peripheries of global science is too harsh in its critique. A social systems perspective is not the only conceptual choice that allows understanding that what is central or peripheral in communication is not necessarily determined by place, as the author claims. Most existing studies do indeed conceive of "centre" and "periphery" as an analytical tool in order to understand the relationships between different places of knowledge production, and not in a purely geographical sense. It is therefore not necessarily rooted in a tradition of othering, as Schmidt argues, but most often includes a reflection upon one's own position and the relationship between people, institutions, places. What appears within the social systems perspective as internal differentiation is similarly conceived in dependency approaches, for instance. To argue that this differentiation "reduces complexity while a limited number of contributions are flagged out as central, so 'must-have knowledge' stands out" (p. 133) misses the historical dimension that is inherent to the institutional, material and communicative set-up of global science. Social systems theory also proved difficult to combine with decoloniality. While decoloniality requires the idea of an exterior, "uncontaminated" standpoint to colonial modernity in order to produce epistemic alternatives, such exteriority to world society remains unconceivable within social systems theory.

Another point of critique concerns the locating and dating of WoS: "When ISI was acquired together with its indexes by *Thomson Scientific & Healthcare* in 1992, which marks the point of full establishment of this tool of self-observation of the research system, the emergence of research in the 'periphery' [see Chapter 3] was still easy to ignore, and postcolonial theory was only known to some literature and cultural studies scholars" (p. 87 ff.). This appears as historically imprecise, considering that Unesco had established regional and international scholarly associations after 1945 that brought together representatives from most world regions throughout the 1950s and 1960s already, thus creating fora where the representation of southern voices was a matter of discussion early on, let alone the existence of an important "cosmopolitan thought zone" (Raj) through the anti-colonial debates that linked people, movements and places across the globe and right through the European centre. Also, at the latest since F. Beigel's ground-breaking works on disconnected circuits of knowledge, another alternative bibliometrics project, by the way, that is not entirely covered in Schmidt's state-of-the-art, we know that the mainstreaming of the globally dominant circuit, WoS,

has happened at the expense not only of certain world regions, but also of certain disciplines (SSH) and of all languages other than English. This triple marginalisation has hit different world regions differently. Beigel's crucial insight is that regional circuits in Latin America, i.e. international circuits, pre-existed WoS and have been partly resilient to it. The Latin American example would also have been interesting in terms of the region's pioneering role in the domain of open access circuits, something that Schmidt values highly otherwise. WoS cannot count as truly hegemonic, since it is only within this mainstream circuit and its use by donors, funders, and in institutional staff development and promotion etc., that what is commonly defined as "local" becomes largely irrelevant. There are alternative circuits that function as well, with their own rules for accumulation of academic capital or means of consecration, sometimes more inclusive and open access. Such insights shed doubt on the overall idea of a single science system.

The methodological and empirical part of this book will certainly provoke questions by established STS scholars. It is uncommon to normalise bibliometrics with researcher demographics and by country's national population counts. Schmidt shows that this is a worthwhile endeavour though, and it is justified by her focus on social justice and the research system's function for world society. Statistical estimates and extrapolations sometimes appear as adventurous, something the author justifies as a means of demonstrating the shakiness of empirical data at hand. I personally find it regrettable that the survey amongst librarians remains anonymised. As public institutions, academic libraries could be held accountable by scholarly research for their policies. Now we can only hope they take this book seriously and react adequately in order to improve their practices.