Memory at stake – Swedish private archives in a changing landscape

1. Introduction
1.1 Background and purpose
A specific feature of the Swedish archival landscape is the existence of a nation-wide number of archival institutions with their origin in so-called popular movements. A popular movement is an organised form of social movement that is satisfying certain criteria (see section *Origin and development of the popular movement archives* below for further explanation). These archival institutions, henceforth popular movement archives, collect records from political parties, independent churches, trade unions, associations and various non-government organisations, and from private persons connected to these organisations. The popular movement archives are private legal entities, independent from the government and from public archival institutions. What is of particular interest is that these archival institutions have their origin within the popular movements themselves, that is, they were not created due to public initiatives or by other external stakeholders. The initiatives came from the popular movement organisations and their members, who thereby contributed to preserve their own memory and their own view on society. The popular movement archives have been important agents in the development of the Swedish archival system: '[t]he private archival institutions fill important functions by collecting and preserving archives, but also because they perform activities of value from a cultural policy perspective. This is often related to popular research and educational activities'[1]. They are important complements to the public archives, covering other spheres of society and contributing to preserve the history of everyday life and of the political and social development of society, and they have also had close ties to their local and regional environment. [2]

The situation is nevertheless changing. During the last decades, the popular movement archives have faced institutional and technological challenges, which imply that they to a lesser degree are able to collect contemporary materials, and that their connections to their patron organisations and to the local and regional communities are loosening up. The purpose of this paper, based on a review of literature, research papers and official reports, is to give a general overview of the development and current status of Swedish popular movement archives, and to explore the challenges they are facing due to institutional and technological changes. The paper will discuss the changing archival landscape; how it will affect the popular movements archives' ability to fulfil their societal mission, and its consequences for the future societal memory. The subject of the study is a particular case, popular movement archives in Sweden. The underlying idea is that the exploration of an individual case, can reveal processes that have a more general relevance. A subsidiary aim is to unfold the impact of social and institutional processes on the arrangement of the archival system in a country. These are phenomenon that on a broad level can be assumed to have a universal character, even if the particular outcome is unique. The findings of this study might provide a basis for comparisons with other national archival systems.

1.2 Literature review
Erik Ketelaar has argued for a 'comparative archivistics' addressing differences in archival systems in relation to cultural differences.[3] However, comprehensive studies of the historical development of national archival systems, or comparative studies of different institutional systems are still rare. An ambitious attempt to give an international picture, was the anthology *Det globala minnet* [The global memory] with presentations of the archival system in 15 countries.[4] The contributions were however mainly descriptive with different approaches and extent, thus not providing a comparable account of the institutional and professional development. Adrian Cunningham gave an overview of the development of archival institutions from ancient to present times, describing the European, the North American and Australian archival traditions, as well as the role of archival institutions in modern post-colonial nations.[5] A particular Nordic archival tradition was identified by former National Archivist of Sweden Erik Norberg, however with focus on public archives and the

development of legal and administrative systems in Nordic countries.[6] A benchmarking study of private archives in Nordic countries and the challenges they face due to long-term preservation of digital materials has been performed on behalf of Nordic national archives, and a few minor academic studies of popular movement archives in Sweden have also been undertaken.[7] The collection and preservation of private archives and particularly labour archives, and the access to such collections have been subject to some research.[8] A few studies also discussed the value of business archives, and the particular problem of maintaining records from transnational business organizations.[9]

There is, however, a paucity in the literature on private archival institutions, and in critical analyses of their origin, stakeholders and societal functions. The present study aims to give a small contribution to the field, and elucidate the need for studies of social and institutional factors impacting on the creation of archives and the organisation of archival systems.

1.3 Memories and monuments

Records compose documentation of activities performed by different actors, 'to meet the needs of accountability, evidence, and corporate memory … to capture transactions, document activities, serve legal and administrative functions, and provide a basis for memory'[10]. It is possible to consult records in order to verify what was said, done, counted or agreed upon. That is, records function as extensions of the human mind, as artefacts that enhance the human capacity to act. They are primarily of instrumental value, as carriers of information or as manifestations of evidence, however, they may also serve symbolic and ceremonial functions, or be valued because of their physical, visual, tangible or aesthetic qualities, or because they are emotionally laden.[11]

The idea of the archives as social memory has gained certain recognition in contemporary archival discourse. Instead of focusing on the instrumental value of records, the archives as collectives and institutionalised phenomena are considered as memory constructs that just by their existence frame the (self-)image of society.[12] The collection of certain archives and the building of an infrastructure to preserve and (within limits) provide access to them, contribute to an institutionalised memory of society. The development of archival institutions served primarily practical and administrative functions, and from the 18th century to provide historical knowledge, but they were also political and socio-cultural manifestations.[13] They functioned as symbols of power and of national grandeur, and so on. Something that often was physically expressed with impressive architectures; the building of monuments.[14] As a result, there is a 'memory bias' towards governmental institutions and more resourceful groups in society. Few activities are on the whole documented as records, and even fewer are preserved in archival institutions. What is left is just 'a sliver of a sliver of a sliver'[15]. The 'archives', as collections of records or as institutions, are thus not representative of the societies in which they were created. Not in the sense that they constitute a representative or 'full' memory of social and historical circumstances. There have, however, been attempts to widen the perspective and to create a more pluralistic and inclusive archival memory, for example initiatives such as the Canadian 'total archives' approach, and the community archives movement.[16]

Cunningham says '[t]he forms, functions and mandates of archival programs and institutions have varied and continue to vary enormously depending on the nature of the society in which they exist and the objectives of those who own or have control of the archives'[17]. The basic assumption of this study is that the archival system in a society is a function of socio-cultural and political circumstances, and bear evidence of human activity and societal performance. Both the existence of and the absence from archival institutions represent social and political processes, however they are not transparent.[18] The Swedish popular movements archives are manifestations of particular historical circumstances in Swedish society; manifestations of the interaction between various social groups, of the exercise of power, of resistance and negotiations. The fact that these circumstances are documented in archives contributes to a more pluralistic archival memory.

2. The popular movements' archives – continuity and change

2.1 The Swedish archival system

The organisation of the archival system, the institutional infrastructure, in a country is a product of several impacting factors – the political and administrative system, legislation, cultural tradition and, sometimes, circumstantial influences. The archival system in Sweden shows some specific features, partly due to the Swedish legislative and administrative system, and partly due to historical factors that have influenced the development of a private archival sector. As a background for the analysis, a brief overview of the organisation of the Swedish archival system will follow here.

The governmental archival functions consist of the archives and records management functions within all governmental agencies, together with the National Archives and its regional branches, the seven provincial archives. The National Archives has roots in the medieval royal chancellery, but is considered as formally founded in 1618.[19] It functions as a final repository for records from governmental agencies, but it also has a normative, supervisory and advisory role towards governmental agencies. The provincial archives were established during a period from 1898 to 1935, and functioned originally as regional repositories. Later they were assigned a specific competence concerning supervision of governmental organisations within their regional catchment areas and they gained status as independent authorities, but since 2009 they range under the National Archives as regional divisions.[20] Municipal organisations (that is, at present 290 municipalities and 20 county councils and regions) according to the principle of local self-government enacted by Swedish constitutional law are not subject to supervisory control by the National Archives, but alongside governmental agencies are governed by legislation concerning official documents, namely the Freedom of the Press Act, the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act, and the Archives Act and Ordinance.[21] The municipal organisations have decisive competence and responsibility for their recordkeeping issues, which means that each municipality, county council or region has an archives function. Some larger municipalities have also formed separate archival institutions, city archives, providing reading rooms and extensive user services.[22] Private organisations and private archival institutions are, with a few exceptions regarding private subjects executing public obligations, not subject to any general legislation concerning recordkeeping, and not subject to control by the National Archives or any municipal authority. The National Archives and other public archival functions are not obliged to collect private archives, but are allowed to do so on a voluntarily basis.[23] The National Archives and some of the municipal archives have for instance rather extensive collections of archives of private origin. The National Archives is also according to its statutes assigned an advisory and supportive role towards private records creators and private collecting institutions.[24]

Outside the public sphere, a rather comprehensive amount of private archival institutions have been established since the early 20th century. Those are to a large extent the result of efforts by non-governmental organisations, particularly popular movement organisations, but there are also examples of other institutions serving particular stakeholders or field of interest, for instance *Archives for the Unexplained*.[25] At present, there are about 20 regional and 35 local popular movements institutions.[26] Beside those, there are two archival institutions with a national mandate belonging to the popular movement sphere: the Labour Movement Archives in Stockholm, today organised as a foundation with the government as principal; and TAM-Arkiv, a national repository for the white-collar unions' central organs. From the 1970s a few business archives institutions collecting archives from trade and industry has been founded, modelled after the popular movement archives.[27] Those have, however, not reached the same magnitude. Today, there exist about ten independent business archives institutions of various size.[28]

To summarise, a rather clear division of responsibilities between governmental, municipal and private archival functions evolved during the last century, even if certain overlaps can be seen, and

besides the public institutions a certain amount of private archival institutions have been established.

2.2 Origin and development of the popular movement archives
Organisations and associations have played an important role in Swedish public life since the last decades of the 19th century, and they have had a significant impact on the structure of political decision making and societal organisation. Many such organisations originate from various 'grass root movements', but the phenomenon has permeated the entire society and engaged different social categories. It has also had impact on the organisation of the Swedish archival system by influencing the establishment of archival institutions outside the public sphere. Leading actors in this development were the so-called popular movements, which have been of particular significance in the formation of modern society. The expression *popular movement* is a literal translation from Swedish, where the concept has a specific connotation. It is thus used here instead of the perhaps more recognised but also more general English language concept *social movement.* Particularly the labour movement, the temperance movement and the revivalist movement recruited large amounts of followers and came to be important agents in the democratisation process and behind the societal changes leading to the modern welfare state.

Popular movement is a somewhat vague concept, but used in Sweden generally with a positive connotation. In contemporary political discourse the concept *civil society* has to some extent superseded the more traditional popular movement, but the concepts are not entirely equivalent.[29] The concept popular movement is not synonymous with organisation, or with social movements in general. Popular movements consist of a wide array of social movements and organisations with widely different goals and agenda, but nevertheless with something in common. A usual demarcation can be derived from Johansson, who identified a set of criteria that characterised popular movements, among others being that they are ideologically driven, based on democratic principles, inclusive, independent from government, and striving for social change (that is, the implementation of fundamental ideas).[30] To be regarded as a popular movement a certain numerical strength (that is, registered members), temporal continuity, and a developed organisational structure were also required. Besides the above-mentioned labour, temperance and revivalist movements, the sports movement, the womens' liberation movement, the popular education movement, the peace and environmental movements are usually regarded as traditional popular movements.[31] Groups representing a more narrow special or local interest, campaigns with short duration, or loosely connected coalitions without formal structure, are generally not regarded as popular movements. Such bodies could, however, form part of a larger, more embracing movement, and thus belong to the popular movement sphere, even if they do not satisfy each individual criterion.[32] The concept popular movement is thus not entirely exclusive, it lacks an exact definition, but can be pin-pointed by some general characteristics.

Common traits of the Swedish popular movements were efforts on systematic training in active citizenship and a mission to form public opinion.[33] The first included organised meetings and deputation, which resulted in a structured records creation (statutes, minutes, correspondence, accounts, and so on). The second, rendered an ambition to tell and document their own history, which generated a need to collect and keep materials related to organisational activities. These efforts lay the foundation for the establishment of independent archival institutions. The first initiatives to form archival institutions came from the labour movement. In 1902 the Labour Movement Archives and Library was founded in Stockholm, the first institution of its kind in the world. An important reason behind the establishment was the Social Democratic Party's adherence to a Marxist ideology and to historical materialism. The materialist conception of history had a central role in the Labour Movement's relationship to the established discipline of history in general and to the National Archives in particular.[34] The National Archives did not at the turn of the 19th century preserve, nurse or promote archival material from private persons or organisations. Their

societal mandate was to preserve archives from governmental institutions. At the time, established academic historians also focused almost exclusively on the matters of the central government, the power of the realm and the relationship to foreign powers. The Labour Movement Archives had thus a relatively strong legitimacy as an institution in the process of documenting the labour movement's struggle towards a future socialist society. There was no alternative but an independent archival institution to pursue this mission.[35] The relationship between the National Archives and the emerging popular movement archives was strained in the first half of the 1900s. Until the 1940s, the National Archives showed modest interest in archival matters concerning the non-governmental sectors, while the popular movement archives, on their side, defended their independence. When the National Archives later started to show an interest in the popular movement archives' need for financial support, the latter responded to assert their independence by arguing that public financial support should be directed to the archival institutions without the National Archives as an intermediary.[36] However, the final political decision resulted in the establishment of a 'Private Archives Committee' connected to the National Archives, with the commission to promote development of and provide subsidies to the popular movement archives.[37]

The original aim of the Labour Movement Archives in Stockholm was to collect records from labour movement organisations all over the country. This turned out to be practically impossible, and its focus became the labour movement's central organisations. The Labour Movement Archives instead launched a campaign to encourage local initiatives, with the result that some local labour movement archival institutions were established around the country.[38] In certain areas, however, the archival institutions were founded in collaboration with the other popular movements. This was probably facilitated by the fact that the dominating movements were directed towards partly the same target groups, and there was an overlap in membership. From the 1950s common popular movement archives became the rule, even if a few pure labour movement archival institutions still exist. In the late 1990s, a network of archival institutions with the aim of preserving the archives of private associations of various kinds covered practically the whole country.[39] The fact that the popular movement organisations themselves acted as principals has probably formed the basis for the legitimacy of the archival institutions. Established and managed by their own people, they were regarded as reliable institutions, and the individual organisations were willing to entrust them with their records.

The popular movement archives were at first managed by representatives from the founding organisations, but later professional staff were hired.[40] To some extent the recruitment of personnel has been made possible by labour market measures and subsidies, but the managers have since the 1970s generally been qualified professionals.[41] Qualified staff also became a requirement for governmental funding.[42] The popular movement archives have with few exceptions been organised as non-profit associations.[43] The non-profit association has been considered as a reasonable model to combine independence and the administering of common responsibilities, and is also regarded as a means of participatory democracy.[44] As offsets of the popular movements, which are basically non-profit, non-governmental associations, this is probably a more or less self-evident choice. The bases for membership (personal or organisational, local organisations or federations, and so on) and the geographical catchment areas (province or county) have nevertheless varied. The institutions normally started out as small scale local initiatives, but in the 1940s the first popular movement archives with a regional, county-based, catchment area were established.[45] The regional scope has later been more frequent. A factor that might have had some impact on the geographical division of archival institutions, was the introduction of governmental subsidies in the 1970s. At first, the popular movement archives were upheld by voluntary work and membership fees, but in the mid 1960s the issue of public subsidies was put on the political agenda. To some extent this was a result of initiatives from representatives of the archives themselves, holding political functions, but it was also a response to a growing interest in social history and a the turn towards a 'bottom-up' perspective in historical research. The subsidies were distributed by the Private Archives

Committee at National Archives founded for the purpose, and the subsidies were directed towards institutions with a county-based catchment area since the county was considered as a sustainable size.[46] A county-based organisation also qualified for financial support from county councils. The subsidisation system thus encouraged the establishment of some new regional institutions and some mergers of former local units.[47] Apart from public subsidies, the primary sources of funding have been membership fees and revenues from deposits or archival services directed towards patron organisations. From 2011, governmental funding of regional cultural activities is distributed by regional organs, county councils or regions, in accordance with regional culture policies, not by central governmental agencies.[48] Hence, the archival institutions have to adjust to the current regional policy to qualify for funding, for instance targeted priorities on certain activities or groups. Both regional and local institutions are also subject to funding from municipalities, and thus depending on local policies. Increasing political demands and conditions for funding are regarded as significant challenges by some regional archives today.[49]

2.3 A changing institutional environment
A distinctive feature of traditional popular movements is a comprehensive societal engagement, rooted in a fundamental ideology. Even if the focus has been directed towards a certain issue, for example, temperance, the over-arching objective has been social and societal change, which means that the movements have been engaged in various issues and activities directed towards different target groups. Parallel with the popular movements and perhaps with increasing influence over time, organisations with a more narrow focus have seized the interest and engagement of groups and individuals. Single-issue associations have become more important actors during the 20th century. An important feature has nevertheless been *organisation*, the establishment of formal associations, structured routines and work models. The phrase 'organisation makes strength' was not just a campaign slogan, but a conscious strategy; a choice of formal organisation as the instrument to achieve results. Also outside the popular movements, the formal association has been a primary instrument to pursue common interests. The citizens' influence on politics and public administration in Sweden has to a large extent been channelled through formal organisations, rather than driven by individual initiatives or by direct influence on political representatives. It can be said that the Swedish political system during the 20th century is characterised by a significant trait of institutionalised corporatism, yet with democratic overtones, complementing the parliamentary system.[50] This phenomenon can partly be explained by the role popular movement organisations have played in societal developments, but also other interest groups have had a profound influence on political processes. Particularly representatives for the unions, the agricultural industry, and the employers' associations have held important positions as participants in drafting committees, as consultative bodies, or as members of the executive bodies of governmental agencies. This can be regarded as an expression of the strong position non-government organisations gained within the Swedish political system, but it has perhaps also been a motive to form associations as a means to protect vested interests, that is, a self-reinforcing system. The corporatist element in politics and administration has, however, not been undisputed. The collaboration between the parties has not always been without frictions, and the system started to erode during the last decade of the 20th century. In the beginning of the 1990s, the Swedish Employers' Confederation withdrew from representation in governmental bodies, later followed by several other organisations, and the system was formally abolished by a parliamentary resolution.[51] The surge for support to the private archives did also coincide with the heyday of the corporate society, but has thereafter waned.[52] The terms of resource allocation did not change until the political sphere had undergone a radical transformation, taking a neo-liberal turn. As a reaction to the left-activist wave in the 1960s and 1970s, the political right mobilised, and the long period of social democratic rule in Sweden was broken. In this new order, partly a result of a global economic liberalisation, free enterprise, market economy and an increase of 'freedom of choice' in health care, education and welfare, and so on, were promoted.[53] This meant that activities that formerly belonged to the public sector ought to be privatised or exposed to competition, but also a general reduction in public subsidies and increasing

demands for self-funding.

If these policy changes affected the organisational landscape, that is, the inclination to formalise activity and cooperation in the form of associations, cannot be concluded so far. However, the reasons can be manifold but the last decades show a decreasing rate of membership and an even more significant decrease in active participation in formal associations, including the political parties and trade unions that constitute the political basis for popular movement archives.[54] Swedish blue- and white-collar unions were for a long time organising about 80% of the entire collective of salaried workers, but union membership has started to dwindle, partly due to the deregulation of the labour market, the deterioration in unemployment benefits and working conditions.[55] Voluntary social or political engagement is today rather manifested as occasional contributions in campaigns, fund-raising, or single work assignments, or cooperation in more fluid and often temporary networks centred around a specific issue or a common identity. Those networks lack the stable, hierarchical structure of traditional organisations, and are based on informal decision making rather than representative functions.[56] This is supposed to facilitate fast mobilisation and action, but may also be ideologically motivated. As a result formal records creation (statutes, accounts, minutes, and so on) and recordkeeping is not given priority. The traditional formal associations are also changing character. Generally non-profit associations have been organised in a hierarchical structure constituted of a national federation, regional divisions and local organs. However, local units tend to close down, and organisations are merging either horizontally or vertically, resulting in fewer and more centralised entities.[57]

These societal changes have also affected institutional practices. The original mission of the institutions can be summarised as being to document the history of popular movement organisations by collecting and preserving their archives, and make the archives accessible for research or other kinds of use.[58] These objectives have been rather constant over time according to the archival institutions' present statutes available at the website of the popular movement archives' joint committee.[59] However, this seemingly continuous development also includes variety and change. Many institutions have extended their field to all kinds of private associations, not only organisations belonging to the popular movements' sphere. That is, the archival institutions are not only acting as agents for their patron organisations in order to preserve their materials, but they are actively collecting archival material of various origin within the private sector. Several institutions have carried out projects with the aim of documenting certain groups, phenomena or aspects of society, not only by collecting archival materials, but also through interviews, narratives, writing projects, and so forth. Examples are the Umeå Hardcore Archives, which is a section of the Popular Movements Archive in the county of Västerbotten, and the central archives for white-collar unions TAM-Arkiv's documentation of professional memories.[60] A few archival institutions have also reached out to business corporations, and in a few cases merged with business archives institutions. Their target groups are thus not necessarily popular movement organisations or non-profit associations, but private organisations regardless of purpose and organisational form.

2.4 Technological challenges
The challenges of digitisation on archival practice, and its impact on the archival profession and competence requirements is the main topic of present day archival discourse. The popular movement archives are, as any other organisations, affected by the developments of information and communication technology. This is particularly challenging for the private sector, where records management is less regulated than in public administrations, and rarely performed according to established standards. Computerised systems have to an increasing extent been used for administrative purposes over the past 30 to 40 years. At first, popular movement organisations and other associations used computers to administer membership records and accounting, and word processors to write reports, memos, minutes and correspondence, while hard copies were printed out for long term preservation.[61] Today digital formats have replaced paper in most situations, and

individuals, public organisations, associations and enterprises create and store records by means of electronic systems. This phenomenon has further been advanced by the emergence of the Internet and in recent years smart phones and other mobile devices, resulting in new ways of organising work and communication, and new ways of creating and storing information. Particularly the new network based communities and action groups employ the Internet and social media as their primary communication channels.[62] Also more traditional formal associations use websites and social media as their main communication interfaces towards their members and other stakeholders.[63] The use of ICT has brought forward a seemingly paradoxical combination of centralised and decentralised administrative routines. Organisations connected to national federations may use common systems for accounting, salaries and suchlike, but otherwise individual, often ad hoc, solutions are sought, resulting in a disorderly information architecture and records captured and stored in distributed information systems including so-called Cloud solutions. The records creators are not all aware that the information they create actually constitutes records of evidential value, or that are worth capturing and preserving for future cultural and research purposes.[64]

Traditionally, the appraisal, collection and preservation of archival records have been performed after the information had lost its immediate value for the creating organisation. The current information landscape requires planning for the management of information before it is created, including long-term preservation planning. This is a complex task, especially when it comes to associations and communities that build on voluntary work, and do not always feel obliged to manage their records effectively. The popular movements archives lack a legal framework to reinforce a standardised way of creating records using recommended formats for long-term preservation, and at present they also lack an infrastructure to capture and preserve digitally born records. Archival institutions that traditionally worked with physical media such as paper, encounter other media today: hard disks, CDs, tapes, USB sticks, and so on. In order to extract textual content, adequate hardware and software are required. If the digital information is not constantly managed through conversion, texts will fade into oblivion, cleared out of the collective memory without us even knowing this is actually happening. It is impossible to preserve all the old hardware and software. Eventually, spare parts may be impossible to come by and knowledge of older technologies becomes scarce. With few exceptions, private archival institutions do not have the technological capacity or relevant knowledge to receive and preserve digital records.[65] There is a need to invest in a technical infrastructure that will facilitate the management of the holdings, and a need to recruit personnel with the knowledge and technical know-how of creating trustworthy archival repositories. The switch from traditional to digital documentation processes means that the information has to be continuously managed from the time of creation and during its whole existence. Hence, the archival institutions have to be more proficient in contemporary records and information management, and to a larger extent provide advice and counselling to records creators. This means that they have to take on a more outreaching and pro-active role to meet the demands of their patron organisations and to ensure future deliveries of archival materials. However, popular movement archives have limited budgets and are therefore financially vulnerable. The regional archives are thus considering acquisition and preservation of digital materials as the overruling challenge in the near future.[66] This is probably an even more challenging task for local archives with smaller resources and less competence.

2.5 A changing archival landscape
From the beginning of and particularly during the second half of the 20th century, the Swedish archival system formed a stable institutional framework, with a fairly clear demarcation between governmental, municipal and private archival institutions. Within the private sector, the popular movement archives have made up a major share of established archival institutions. With the analytical lens of historical institutionalism[67], this division of responsibilities can be regarded as a result of two processes: a formative moment due to the interaction of certain societal processes in

the beginning of the 20th century, and the reproduction and reinforcement of the chosen path by, for instance, the vested interests of certain social groups in society, a professionalised practice, and the impact of public funding steering the activities in a particular direction. The stability should, however, not be exaggerated. The above sketched archival system should be seen as a general superstructure, within which certain variety and ongoing change can be adopted.

Against this backdrop four phases of institutional formation can be identified. These phases represent timely conjunctions of events, that result in a consolidation of institutional arrangements, but also discontinuities that initiate change and disintegration. At first the initial state, the original formative moment, when the Labour Movement Archives and Library, and following that, local labour movement archives, were established. This was an effort elicited by a combination of material and political factors, for instance the achievements of the labour movement, the development of formal work processes and in a sense bureaucratic structures of the labour movement organisations and other popular movement organisations, and the oppositional role towards government and the National Archives. The other phase occurred at mid-century, when collaboration between different popular movement organisations become frequent, and the actual *popular movement archives* (opposite to pure labour movement archives) emerged. This was a period of strengthened institutionalisation as the responsibility for the archival material was transferred from individual organisations to formal joint committees acting as legal subjects of their own. Another significant formative phase commenced around 1970 connected with the introduction of governmental subsidies. This was in itself a result of certain social and political factors and contributed to further institutionalisation by inciting professionalisation and a relative large-scaleness, but also involved a distanciation from the origin of popular movement archives. The archives were to a larger extent managed by professional archivists, instead of representatives from the patron organisations and they also extended their field of interest to other types of records creators. During this phase, popular movement archives became more dependent on public funding and also more adapted to external political demands. The fourth phase, which is the focus of the present study, involves the current situation. This phase is characterised by a conjunction of partly independent processes colliding with the current institutional arrangements, causing tensions and disruptions. These processes include technological changes, changing forms of organisation, and policy changes.

The development of information technology has impacted on the practices of both the archival institutions, their patrons and other target groups. Technological developments have changed administrative practices, and the way work is organised. Traditional forms of stable rule-based organisations with structured documentation practices and recordkeeping routines are dissolving and are being replaced with more loosely connected and continuously changing communities, often working in an online environment. Private organisations are, unlike public agencies, not subject to regulation and control concerning the creation and management of records, and associations and communities rarely create records according to established standards. This has led to rampant information structures, exacerbated by constantly changing information technologies and technological obsolescence. Today most information is maintained in distributed information systems, challenging the traditional notion of provenance and the current geographical catchment areas of the archival institutions. At present, one of the most challenging tasks archives are struggling with is to develop an infrastructure for the long-term preservation of digital records, and not the least to capture and preserve records that they have not yet been in a position to localise. The result is that archival institutions are able to collect materials from contemporary organisations to a lesser degree. A phenomenon of particular impact on the popular movement archives is the changing form of organisations, and the changing role of organisations in Swedish society. A general tendency of globalisation and centralisation, enhanced by the development of information and communication technology, has weakened local connections. Particularly more temporal network communities are less bound to geographical borders, but due to centralising tendencies the

formal associations' traditional structure and local ties also wither. The result is larger and fewer units. This, together with a general decline of engagement in formal associations, underpinned by the de-corporisation of the political system, means that the traditional basis for local and regional archival institutions is diminishing, which implies fewer members and less revenue from membership fees. The internal practices of archival institutions are also more directly affected by other contemporary institutional changes such as the system of public funding, which today is channelled through regional and local political organs. The governmental funds that existed within the committee for private archives, operated by the National Archives since 1970, have been reallocated to the county councils. This means political pressures to adapt the activity to current regional cultural policies, besides performing the traditional tasks of collecting and maintaining the archives from their patron organisations. It may also imply a larger regional diversity.

The popular movement archives in Sweden have been characterised by certain dynamics during their whole existence. This follows the dynamics of popular movements themselves, whose mission and performance have developed in response to societal changes. The core mission of popular movement archives has nevertheless been to preserve the records of their patron organisations and make them accessible for use, either by the records creators themselves or by others, for instance researchers of various kinds. Some institutions have later extended their field to collect archives from private associations and social communities outside the popular movements' sphere. However, in recent years archival institutions have been subject to more comprehensive changes, both exogenous and endogenous, that are causing tensions in the current institutional landscape. Today, the popular movement archives are representing their patron organisations and serve their needs to a lesser extent. They are instead acting as more independent entities with a broadened agenda. Over time the institutions have developed into *collecting institutions* in a more outright sense, and the ambition to function as *documenting institutions* has also become more important. This has in some cases been manifested in new institutional collaborations. These changes are, however, not always decided due to the institutions' self-interest. They are to a certain degree subject to external influence and vested interests, not the least by the funding institutions. Taken together, this means that popular movements archives and their patrons are subjected profound institutional changes and changes in practice in an intricate interplay. These changes result in tensions and discontinuities that might be difficult to absorb within the existing system, and thus in turn force further change. This might imply that popular movement archives are reaching a *critical juncture*[68], a period when previous institutional arrangements and bindings are loosened up, when different options are possible and the future pathway lies open.

3. Final remarks – a memory at stake?
The establishment of the popular movement archives was a bottom-up process, initiated by the popular movements organisations themselves or by individual members. It was not due to governmental initiatives, or by the interest of public archives or other external stakeholders. This fact in combination with a fairly large and decentralised private archival sector is a characteristic of the Swedish archival system. In many countries, the collection of this type of materials is often organised by historical societies, public institutions, libraries or within centralised archival functions. The popular movement archives are important complements to public archival institutions, covering different areas of society, thus contributing to a more pluralistic societal memory. At present, the private archives are at the point of intersection of several radical changes, exogenous changes but also endogenous, tied together in a complex network of dependencies. The first involve rather high-level societal and technological changes, the latter changes in internal practice and organisation. We can still see a clear sectoral division and a strong position for private archival institutions, but within the private sector institutions have undergone certain changes – some have extended their mandate and activities, some have merged with other institutions, and new types of institutions have been established. The archival institutions have gone from representing the originating organisations, to represent user and societal interests. In the long run,

this might impact on the records creators' trust in archival institutions, and the willingness to deposit material in their custody. The technological challenges and changes in documentation practices described above are, if not responded to, likely to lead to immeasurable loss of records that are currently dispersed in different creating environments. The transition from predominantly paper-based to digitally-based archives will require a new form of interdependence between archival institutions and records creators. Archival institutions must adapt to the needs of records creators by equipping their institutions with the right skills and by taking on an advisory role. Otherwise, there is a risk that the continuity of documenting societal developments from the actors' perspective will be broken, and popular movement archives may not be able to uphold their mission to contribute to the documentation of society.

To meet these challenges new institutional arrangements will probably be required to capture the fragmented and fragile materials that are a result of the present day activities of organisations and communities. A few examples of such arrangements could be imagined:

- increased efforts from public institutions to take over responsibility for private archives;
- centralised solutions to concentrate resources;
- regional collaboration or mergers between different archival institutions, or collaboration with other memory institutions, for instance concerning joint digital repositories;
- increased collaboration with records creators and the forming of community archives.

Those scenarios represent diverging interests and would have different impacts on the legitimacy of the institutions. To what extent they are practically and politically feasible is uncertain, and other options might evolve. At the moment the pathway is not given.

Notes

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