

ALM in the public sphere¹

How do archivists, librarians and museum professionals conceive the respective roles of their institutions in the public sphere?

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Abstract:

Background: There is an increased focus on libraries, archives and museums as meeting places and public sphere institutions as well as on digitization of the institutions' services. We term these trends the social and technological turn. How do professionals in the three fields adapt to these trends?

Method: A questionnaire was distributed to librarians in public libraries, archivists and professionals in museums in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany and Hungary aiming at measuring the attitude to the legitimacy of the institutions and the role of non-traditional services in that respect, the degree to which the institutions in which they work have developed services related to the social and technological turn.

Findings: All three institutions have adapted to the social turn with physical meetings as an important part of their service portfolio. Lending of e-books is an important part of the service portfolio in all countries except Hungary. Apart from that, digital services in libraries tend to be offered to their users in the physical premises of the library, e.g. computer classes. In the museum field there are larger national variations as to the development of digital services. Digital exhibitions are rare in all countries. Services related to the traditional roles of the institutions are regarded to be more important as legitimations of libraries, archives and museums than services rooted in the social and digital turn.

Conclusion: In spite of the preoccupation with libraries, archives and museums as meeting places, experience centers, public debate, makerspaces etc., traditional roles related to the preserving and promoting the cultural heritage and promoting learning is still regarded as the most important legitimations by professionals in the three fields.

1. Introduction

The role of archives, libraries and museums is changing. In addition to the traditional roles of preserving and promoting the cultural heritage and being arenas for learning, there is an increased focus upon their role as meeting places and arenas underpinning the public sphere (See for example Buschman, 2018; Hobohm, 2019; Rivana Eckerdal, 2017; Widdersheim & Koizumi, 2016). How do professionals in the respective ALM fields perceive the challenges related to this new focus on their role as meeting places and arenas for promoting the public sphere? We will investigate this question in this paper.

Two trends are of particular importance regarding the topic of our research. One trend can be termed *the social turn*, Söderholm and Nolin's (2015) assertion that we are in the middle of what they call the *third community wave*, the start of which dates from the turn of the century and continues to the

¹ This paper is a part of the ALMPUB project financed by the Research Council of Norway's KULMEDIA program

present day. Klinenberg's perspective on libraries as important parts of the social infrastructure can be subsumed under this category (Klinenberg, 2018). We are, for example, witnessing an upsurge in physical meetings, such as discussions and debates, reading circles, and game nights. Community pubs and cafes frequently have such programs. The other trend is digitalization with the explosive growth in social media platforms, blogs, Internet-based news media, and streaming of cultural content. How have the ALM professions adapted to these trends?

We will elicit the following research questions based on surveys undertaken winter 2018 / spring 2019 among librarians, archivists and museum professional in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and Hungary:

RQ1: Do we find indications that the digital and social developments referred to above have led to the development of new services and new forms of working, particularly the development of services related to the social turn and services based on digital technologies? Are there differences between the three fields with respect to taking digital technologies into use and are there differences between the countries?

RQ2: How do librarians, archivists and define their role as professionals underpinning the public sphere in a digital age? Do professionals from the three fields think in similar or different ways and are there differences between the six countries?

2. Research methods, sampling and organization of the survey

Drawing the samples from the three professional groups proved to be a major challenge. None of the partner countries has a register of librarians, archivists or museum professional from which we could draw samples. In addition, the definition of what librarians, archivists or museum professionals are is ambiguous. One of the authors of this paper undertook a survey among Norwegian librarians in 2000 (Audunson, 2001) and, at that time, a librarian for all practical purposes could be defined as a person with a diploma in librarianship from a school in library and information science. This is not the case anymore. For the current study, the three target groups, or professions, are defined as follows: 1. Librarians are defined as all employees in public libraries with a diploma in librarianship or any employee, no matter the educational background, with a professional responsibility for developing and mediating library services to the public. 2. Museum professionals are defined as employees with a responsibility for collection management, curating exhibitions, mediation and museum pedagogy and/or research. Leaders of museums are also included. 3. Archivists are defined as employees with a responsibility for archival appraisal, archival and historical outreach programmes within archives, collection management, curating exhibitions, mediation and archival pedagogics and/or research. Directors of archives are included.

The data were collected as follows: In Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Hungary directors in local government libraries, archives and museums were approached and asked to distribute the electronic questionnaire to employees falling within the respective professions defined above. In Hungary, professional mailing lists were used to reach librarians and museologists. In Germany, the questionnaire was distributed via relevant mailing lists and newsletters for the three professions.

This resulted in the following datasets:

Table 1. Number of respondents – professional field and country

	Den	Swe	Nor	Ger *)	Hun
Librarians	817	782	332	1014	812
Museum professionals	229	193	138	209	141
Archivists	69	173	135	302	44

*) total N of respondents at least partially answering the survey

We see that in all the countries we were far more successful in reaching librarians compared to archivists and museum professionals. This is probably related to the fact that the departments and researchers in question are first and foremost library researchers working in library and information science departments and, therefore, more closely affiliated to and better known among library professionals than among archivists and museum professionals.

The social turn dimension of RQ 1 was measured via a set of questions asking the respondents if open meetings and seminars, user participation, creative and collective activities such as social reading and maker space are parts of the service portfolio of the respondents' institutions. The questions were not identical – it was necessary to adapt them to librarianship and archival and museum practice. Adaptation to the technological turn was elicited by asking the respondents if they offered a set of technological services in addition to traditional ones, for example digital access to materials, web-based exhibitions and hybrid exhibitions in museums. These questions were not included in the archival survey.

Research question 2 was elicited via a short questionnaire asking the respondents to evaluate different statements regarding justifications for using scarce public resources to uphold library, archival or museum services.

As we were not able to obtain a randomized sample, we cannot generalize our results to the national populations of public librarians, archivists or museum professionals. Some of the differences reported may also have resulted from translating the original questionnaire formulated in English into the various languages of the partner countries.

3. The technological and social turn

3.1 Libraries

The questionnaire respondents were asked if certain services are offered by their institutions and, if yes, if these services play an important or a marginal role within the service portfolio of the library or museum. The listed services were categorized as relating to the social or digital turn. In the tables below the first value indicates the percentage of the respondents who reported having that particular service in the library or museum, while in the brackets the value indicates the percentage of respondents who considered that it plays an important role within the service portfolio.

In the case of libraries activities realised in a physical space like outreach services, special events, community building or creative programs were considered part of the so called social turn, while those

services that are related to the new digital responsibilities of libraries were categorised into the digital turn. The providing of digital material (e.g. e-books, audio-visual material, other electronic content) and those kind of activities that are related to supporting users with special knowledge necessary for being successful in the digital era (e.g. computer classes, digital literacy initiatives) were placed to this category.

Table 2. “Services the library offers apart from providing access to traditional media.” (Percentage of answers: yes - in brackets: yes: important role)

	Den N=595	Swe N=782	Nor N=332	Ger (N=637)	Hun N=812
Activities outside the library	94(44)	81 (11)	62 (14)	69 (12)	66 (28)
Social reading	98(78)	87 (34)	72 (35)	55 (14)	82 (34,5)
Meetings and events in the library	98 (86)	99 (72)	99 (91)	92 (68)	99 (82)
Conversational programming (e.g. language cafés)	52 (16)	82 (50)	80 (65)	47 (14)	21 (4)
Creative activities	91 (45)	84 (25)	78 (49)	56 (17)	77 (41)
Game nights	41 (5)	31 (2)	52 (21)	32(6)	50 (10)

Meetings and events in the library is by far the most important service category belonging to the social turn. Almost all respondents in the respective countries report that their library is involved in such activities and that it is an important part of their service portfolio. Social reading is also an activity a clear majority report being involved in; however, Denmark and Germany deviate from the other countries. A much larger proportion in Denmark report that social reading plays a central role compared to the other countries, whereas a significantly lower proportion in Germany report being involved in social reading. We also see that most respondents report being involved in activities outside the library with the exception of Denmark where these activities are clearly marginal.

Conversational programming (language cafés) are extremely important in the Sweden and Norway and has a very little importance in Hungary. These kinds of events are mainly organised for immigrants who would like to develop their language skills to more easily integrate to the society of the receiving country (Johnston, 2018). As Hungary has a very low ratio of people with non-European background these programs also have less importance in the country’s libraries.

Table 3. "Services the library offers apart from providing access to traditional media." (Percentage of answers: yes - in brackets: yes: important role)

	Den N=596	Swe N=792	Nor N=332	Ger N=637	Hun N=812
Lending of ebooks	99 (69)	99 (50)	96 (54)	89 (65)	15 (2)
Digital meeting places	44 (5)	33 (4)	26 (9)	33 (8)	35 (8)
Digital literacy initiatives	83 (31)	79 (30)	75,8 (37)	55 (16)	71(39)
Citizen services related to e-government, internet banking etc.	92 (48)	52 (17)	62 (24)	13 (2)	75 (42)
Computer classes	82 (38)	63 (17)	66 (30)	24 (5)	78 (38)
Helping individuals with electronic devices	91 (33)	89 (35)	77 (35)	88 (37)	94 (60)

The results indicate, as shown in Table 3, two major differences between the participating countries. The first is the low proportion of Hungarian libraries that report lending e-books. In the four other participating countries a clear majority report that they lend e-books and that this service plays a central role. The reason is probably that Hungary has not launched a national e-book lending system, whereas the other countries have such systems in place.

The other main difference is the extremely low value for (digital) "citizens services", i.e. helping users with e-government, digital banking, etc., but also for "computer classes" in German libraries. This may indicate that there is no demand for these services, that competing services are functioning well or that there is still some catching up to be done in terms of basic service orientation. In view of the backlog in digitality in Germany, the reason is certainly a mixture of these aspects. A clear majority in all the other countries report having such services and significant number report that they play a central role.

As for the technological turn in libraries, the lending of e-books dominates. With the exception of Hungary, this is the only service that a clear majority of the respondents report their libraries are involved in and that it constitutes a central service.

3.2 Museums

Museum professionals were given the same question in which new museum services were listed. Different ways of presenting artefacts ranging from the provision of digital access to the curation of digital or hybrid exhibitions represented the digital turn.

Table 4. The digital turn - museums: “Does your museum offer the services and activities listed below?” (Percentage of answers: yes - in brackets: yes: important role)²

	Den N=229	Swe N=193	Nor N=138	Ger N=86	Hun N=141
Digital access artefacts	43	90 (68)	83	31 (27)	87 (37)
Digital exhibitions	n/a	70 (21)	28	18 (7)	52 (11)
Hybrid exhibitions	40	n/a	50	39 (13)	65 (18)

Ensuring digital access to content means a lower level of process and does not require curatorship. It can be accomplished with use of aggregation services or by uploading digitised items to the institutions’ website. More respondents offer digital artefacts on their websites than those who create digital exhibitions. Hybrid exhibitions are an emerging trend that incorporate digital elements so that visitors can interact with digital content relating to the displayed physical items. Hybrid exhibitions are more widespread throughout the participating countries than exclusively digital exhibitions.

Germany and Denmark had the lowest number of respondents who reported that digital artefacts or digital or hybrid exhibitions are accessible or play an important role within the institutions’ service portfolios. The reason for this difference may be the lack of representativity of our sample. The bigger national or regional institutions are more likely to work with digital content than the ones having only local responsibility.

Table 5. The social turn - museums: “Does your museum offer the services and activities listed below?” (Percentage of answers: yes - in brackets: yes: important role)

² In the Danish and Norwegian questionnaires to museum professionals it was only asked if the service is offered or not – the respondents were not invited to distinguish between a marginal or important role.

	Den N=229	Swe N=193	Nor N=138	Ger N=86	Hun N=141
Open meetings/lectures	65	92 (62)	88	22 (75)	97 (72)
Inviting public take part or plan exhibitions (“co-creation”)	18	74 (24)	36	45 (16)	50 (10)
Help groups present their own history	24	66 (27)	43	45 (16)	79 (33)
Makerspace, creative activities	51	72 (37)	54	35(19)	62 (39)

As seen above, open meetings and organized programs have become very significant for libraries in the last few decades and here we see that this is also the case for museums. Both librarians and museologists attribute higher importance to these kinds of services. Concerning user participation, such as inviting the public to take part or plan exhibitions, helping groups present their own history, or offering makerspaces, there are significant differences between the countries’ responses and they are generally attributed less importance than open meetings and organized programs.

3.3 Archives - the social turn

Table 6. The social turn – *archivists*: “In what kind of external arrangements/events is the archive you are working in involved?” (percentag of answers)stionnaires.

	Den N=69	Swe N=173	Nor N=135	Ger N=241	Hun N=44
Exhibitions in the premises of the archive	73	71	67	43	77
Open lectures, seminars, debates	58	65	64	40	73
Classes genealogical research	64	41	59	13	48
Classes other topics	52	NA	49	24	64
Invite user contributions/participation	68	31	36	15	30

Respondents were asked about what kind of external arrangements or events their archive is involved in and to select from the above options. The exhibitions are the most important services in all countries, even more important than open lectures and meetings. This suggests that archives generate

their own interpretations rather than allowing users to generate new knowledge through more interactive means. The relatively low figures regarding user contribution further suggests that archives rely much less on user contribution than do their museologist and librarian counterparts.

The low percentages of all data in the German survey indicate the strong legal establishment of archival practice in this country, which has a strong focus on the long-term preservation of documents, including extended protection periods regarding the public accessibility of the material.

4. Perceptions of ALM-institutions as public spaces: what legitimizes archives, libraries and museums?

We presented the questionnaire respondents with a battery of questions that aimed to measure their perception of the fundamental social mission of their institutions. We were particularly interested in eliciting the priority given to the traditional role of the institutions, which includes the collection, preservation and mediation of cultural heritage, compared to the new role(s), which includes the provision of meeting places, promotion of public debate and facilitation of democracy and democratic processes. The categorization into “traditional” and “new roles” was done only after the survey for analytical purposes and was not present in the questionnaires.

The statements aiming at catching the traditional roles of libraries were:

- The library provides people with information they need in their everyday lives.
- The library promotes learning, supporting informal as well as formal learning.
- The library promotes contemporary literary and cultural expressions of high quality.
- The library promotes the literary and cultural heritage.
- The library provides their users with experiences and meaningful leisure time, e.g. by providing entertainment and popular reading material.

For museums the statements aiming at covering the traditional roles were:

- The museum collects, documents and preserves the cultural heritage/natural history.
- The museum mediates within its subject area, e.g. cultural heritage or natural history, or both.
- The museum is an arena for learning.
- The museum promotes the qualitatively best in the cultural heritage, e.g. the cultural canon.

The parallel questions for archives were:

- Archives support research.
- Archives are arenas for learning.
- Archives promote the cultural heritage.

The following statements elicited the new socio-political and meeting place-roles:

For libraries:

- The library promotes democracy by being an arena for public discourse.
- The library is an important social meeting place in the community.

- The library promotes creativity and innovation by giving their users options for performing different activities independently or jointly, e.g. knitting clubs, reading circles, hip-hop laboratories, poetry labs, or makerspaces.
- The library promotes integration and social cohesion by being a meeting place across ethnic and cultural belongings.

For museums:

- The museum’s exhibitions and mediation promote democracy by giving the users access to knowledge and information they need to be active citizens.
- The museum promotes democracy by being arenas for public discourse.
- The museum promotes creativity and innovation by giving its users the possibility to engage in different activities individually or together with others, e.g. makerspaces.
- The museum promotes the cultural heritage of everyday life/ordinary people.
- The museum promotes integration and social cohesion by being a meeting place across ethnic and cultural belongings.

For archives:

- Archives promote transparency, making it possible for media and citizens to obtain information about the activities of public bodies and institutions.
- Archives provide citizens with information they need for leisure time activities.
- Archives provide citizens with information they need to exercise their rights as citizens.
- Archives provide citizens with information they need to participate actively in democracy and society.
- Archives are arenas for public debate.
- Archives are arenas where minorities and other marginalized groups can present their histories and cultural expressions, as well as build their identities.
- Archives promote integration by including the history of minorities and other marginalized groups in the common cultural heritage.
- Archives promote equality by making archival material digitally accessible.
- Archives facilitate public debate by means of digital discussion forums.

We invited our respondents to evaluate each of these statements by using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 indicates very low importance and 10 indicates the reason in question is of vital importance in legitimizing the institution. In table 7, 8 and 9 below, the mean values for all statements are presented:

Table 7. Traditional and new reasons for upholding a library service: “How do you as a library professional evaluate these different dimensions of the role the library has in your community.” (mean scores of a scale from 0 to 10, italics = high standard deviation (>2,5); bold = low standard deviation (<2,0))

	Den N=564	Swe N=773	Nor N=330	Ger N=595	Hun N=812
Traditional: Everyday life information	8,9	8,2	7,3	8,5	8,6
Traditional: Provide an arena for learning	8,6	8,7	8,5	8,9	8,9
Traditional: Promoting contemporary quality literature	8,4	9,2	8,4	6,3	8,3

Traditional: Promoting the cultural heritage	8,8	7,9	8,4	7,0	9,1
New: Promoting democracy as an arena for public debate	7,3	7,3	7,3	8,3	6,0
New: Community meeting place	8,8	9,0	8,3	9,0	8,6
New: Makerspace, creativity and innovation	7,3	6,9	6,3	6,2	8,3
New: Integration	7,9	8,4	8,1	8,4	8,0
Total "traditional roles for libraries"	8,7	8,5	8,1	7,7	8,7
Total "new roles for libraries"	7,8	7,8	7,5	8,0	7,7

Overall, it can be observed, that traditional views regarding the tasks of libraries continue to prevail, in some cases the difference is considerable. Interestingly, Germany is the only country where the new roles tend to be given more importance than the traditional roles. There is a high consensus (expressed by a low standard deviation of results) regarding the "learning" and "meeting place" roles, which could converge as "place of learning". There is relatively little acceptance, as well as little disagreement, regarding high culture, but also regarding the topic "Makerspace and Creativity", which has been intensively discussed in the German library community and for which a strong weakening of the hype-status can already be observed. The topic of integration, on the other hand, is "still" very relevant for libraries in Germany, as is their (increasing) role in "democracy and public opinion formation". In this respect, the differentiated picture provided by the data from Germany is perhaps politically significant in contrast to the other four countries. Is there a greater political awareness among German librarians? Of recent, the fostering of "third places" and the taking on of community orientated approaches have been strongly promoted by the official German cultural policy and corresponding campaigns and support programmes.

Table 8. Traditional and new reasons for upholding a museum service: "How do you as a museum professional evaluate these different dimensions of the role the museum where you work concerning the following statements?" (11-point scale: Mean scores; italics = high standard deviation (>2,5); bold = low standard deviation (<2,0))

	Den N=151	Swe N=187	Nor N=135	Ger N=86	Hun N=141
Traditional: Collect/document the cultural heritage	9,4	9,0	6,4	9,4	8,6
Traditional: Mediate the cultural heritage	9,4	9,2	9,4	9,5	8,5
Traditional: Facilitate cultural heritage research	8,8	6,4	8,4	8,5	8,3
Traditional: Provide an arena for learning	8,7	9,0	9,0	9,1	8,2

Traditional: Preserve the cultural heritage, cultural canon	5,9	6,2	5,6	<i>6,7</i>	<i>7,5</i>
New: Provide access to citizenship information	8,0	8,1	8,0	8,3	7,7
New: Serve as an arena for public debate	6,9	6,8	7,8	7,7	4,6
New: Offer maker spaces and opportunities for creativity and innovation	6,2	6,3	6,6	<i>6,9</i>	6,7
New: Facilitate participatory heritage	7,0	7,1	7,2	7,0	7,9
New: Foster integration	6,2	6,8	8,6	7,5	6,9
Total "traditional roles for museums"	8,4	8,0	7,7	8,6	8,2
Total "new roles for museums"	6,9	7,0	7,6	7,5	6,8

We see that the average of means for the traditional roles are higher than the average of means for the new roles in all the countries except Norway, where there is no difference. The German museum professionals who responded to the questionnaire tend to be the most conservative whereas the Norwegian respondents give less priority to collecting cultural heritage. The results for Germany may have been influenced to some degree by the data collection method, which may have caused small, community oriented museums (e.g., museums that incorporate participatory heritage practices to a greater degree) to be underrepresented in the sample.

Table 9. Traditional and new reasons for upholding an archival service: "How do you as a professional evaluate these different dimensions of the role the archive where you work?" (Mean scores of a scale from 0 to 10; italics = high standard deviation (>2,5); bold = low standard deviation (<2,0))

	Den N=61	Swe N=169	Nor N=135	Ger N=192	Hun N=44
Traditional: Support public administration	8,9	7,1	5,1	<i>6,4</i>	7,27
Traditional: Support research	8,8	9,3	4,3	9,1	8,2
Traditional: Provide an arena for learning	7,7	8,0	7,0	7,8	6,7
Traditional: Preserve and promote cultural heritage	9,1	9,2	5,8	9,0	8,1
New: Ensure public administration transparency	8,6	8,0	3,8	8,2	6,5
New: Support leisure time and hobby activities	5,1	5,4	7,5	4,4	4,1
New: Access to information on citizens' rights	7,7	7,9	3,4	7,8	6,4
New: Information supporting citizen participation	7,8	7,3	6,2	6,7	6,9

New: Serving as arenas for public debate	5,9	5,3	8,0	6,6	4,8
New: Serving as arenas where minorities can present themselves	5,8	6,5	7,8	5,6	5,5
New: Promote equality by making archival material digitally accessible	7,8	6,5	7,5	6,0	7,3
New: Support public opinion building through digital discussion forums	5,4	3,4	7,7	3,7	4,4
Total "traditional roles for archives"	8,6	8,4	5,6	8,0	7,6
Total "new roles for archives"	6,7	6,3	6,5	6,1	5,7

The figures indicate again that the traditional roles are generally perceived as more important than the new roles when it comes to legitimizing archives, however, the Norwegian responses deviate from the other countries in this respect. The Norwegian respondents generally regard the new roles to be more important than the traditional ones. We see that the Norwegian respondents also deviate significantly by perceiving some reasons, both traditional and new, that are valued highly by respondents from the other four countries as very unimportant; for example, providing research data and access to information needed for citizens to exercise their rights as citizens, as well as ensuring public administration transparency.

The results once again demonstrate the special role of the German archives, which by law are primarily oriented towards long-term historical research and the preservation of archival material. Virtually all new roles for archives are assessed very differently by the German archivists surveyed (high standard deviation), but tend to be rejected. Digital aspects in particular are not well received by German archivists. This roughly corresponds to the relatively low digital affinity of German museums (Table 4).

Summarizing and comparing the results for all three institutions, we find that:

- Librarians in the five countries perceive the library's role as a learning arena and the library's role as a meeting place as the two most important reasons legitimizing libraries. The mean for all the countries is 8.7. The library as an arena for public debate and the creative/makerspace role are the least important, with an average mean score of 7,2 and 7,0 respectively.
- Museum professionals are similar to librarians by giving a very high value to the importance of the museum as an arena for learning (average mean 8,8) and ranking public debate and maker space at the bottom with average scores of 6,8 and 6,5.
- Archivists also give a low value to public debate as a reason for upholding archives. The average mean score is 6.1 for physical meetings and 4,9 for promoting public debate on digital platforms. Promoting the cultural heritage and supporting research are the two most important legitimations. We must add, however, that the results for the archival field are affected by the extremely low scores for some of the items from the Norwegian respondents; for example providing research data, which has an average score of 8,9, up from 7,9, if we take the Norwegian respondents out.

5. Contributions to upholding a sustainable public sphere

Table 10. "How can libraries contribute in building a sustainable public sphere?" (Mean scores on a scale from 0 to 10; italics = high standard deviation (>2,5); bold = low standard deviation (<2,0))

	Den N=564	Swe N=767	Nor N=330	Ger N=594	Hun N=812
Provide knowledge people need to make informed choices	9,0	8,8	8,8	9,0	8,5
Provide knowledge people need to know rights and obligations as citizens	8,5	8,5	8,3	8,4	7,8
Helping people keep generally updated and politically informed	8,6	8,6	8,6	7,9	8,4
Serving as arenas for physical meetings and discussions	7,6	7,8	8,4	7,3	6,7
Provide digital platforms for discussions	6,0	5,9	5,8	5,6	6,7
Develop civic skills related to traditional media	7,4	7,4	7,8	7,8	7,1
Develop civic skills related to digital media	7,3	7,6	7,8	8,0	7,3
Develop community partnerships	8,3	7,7	NA	8,3	7,9

Table 11. How can museums contribute in building a sustainable public sphere? Mean scores on a scale from 0 to 10. (In brackets: standard deviation)

	Den N=141	Swe N=185	Nor N=138	Ger N=84	Hun N=141
Provide access to knowledge people need to make informed choices via exhibitions	8,2	7,8	9,2	8,2	7,7
Create engagement and emotional involvement	8,2	8,1	9,7	8,5	7,8
Provide arenas for physical meetings and discussions	7,3	7,9	9,0	8,0	6,0

Provide digital platforms for discussions	5,5	6,5	7,8	5,9	5,7
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We see from table 10 that librarians give top priority to providing people with knowledge that they need to make informed choices closely followed by helping people keep generally updated and helping them know their rights and obligations as citizens. The average of the means is 8,8 for providing knowledge for informed choices, 8,4 for helping people keep generally updated and 8,3 for knowledge on rights and obligations. There are no big differences between the countries. Being an arena for physical meetings and discussions scores considerably lower, in particular providing platforms for digital discussions. Whereas the average of means for Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Hungary is 7,4, the Norwegian librarians deviate from their colleagues in the other four countries with a score of 8,4 for arranging public meetings.

The museum professionals perceive creating engagement and emotional involvement regarding the issues an exhibition deals with as their most important contribution for keeping up a public sphere, which is slightly more important than providing knowledge to support informed choices. The average of means is 8,5 for creating emotional engagement and 8,2 for providing knowledge. The Norwegian museum professionals have particularly high scores on both these dimensions compared to their colleagues in the other four countries. The Norwegian respondents also have a much higher score than respondents from the other countries when it comes to the importance of having physical meetings and discussions in the museum and providing digital platforms for discussion. Norwegian museum professionals give arranging physical meetings and discussions the same score as Norwegian librarians, a result that is somewhat surprising given the high focus on meetings in Norwegian libraries as a result of the change in library legislation. Norway's museum professionals also give the provision of digital platforms for debate and discussion a significantly higher score than Norwegian librarians.

6. Basic professional attitude: neutrality or professional activism?

To tap the professional attitude of archivists, we formulated a question focusing the archivist's role as a neutral guardian of the material submitted to the archive versus his or her independent responsibility for taking an active stand as to how society best can be documented or even actively strive to secure and make visible marginalized histories.

Table 12. "Which basic professional attitude do you think is the best in order to make the archive a public arena/arena for the public sphere?" (percentage of answer chosen)

	Den N=61	Swe N=173	Nor N=135	Ger N=192	Hun N=44
A neutral guardian of the material submitted to the archive	10	34	13	19	25
Take an active stand as to how society best can be documented	42	28	47	38	16

Actively strive to secure and make visible easily marginalized histories	48	38	40	43	59
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In all the five countries, those who define their professional role as being neutral guardians of the material submitted to the archives are in a clear minority and, in all the countries except Norway, the largest group consists of those maintaining that the archivists should actively strive to document easily marginalized histories. Given the impact of identity politics in Sweden, it is a bit surprising that we find the largest group of neutral guardians, as well as the smallest group of minority activists, among Swedish archivists.

In Germany there is a long running academic debate about the role of archives, which is triggered by the first two possible answers. It is all the more surprising that a large number of German archivists choose option three and prefer an active role for minorities.

The museum professionals were also presented with three sets of dichotomous statements. There was one question regarding building national (or regional or local) identity versus promoting critical reflection on history and identity; one counterposing neutrality versus creating involvement, if necessary by provoking and taking a stand; and one counterposing the professional responsibility for presenting the history and heritage of minorities versus offering minorities a platform and professional help for telling their stories themselves.

Table 13. The museum professional's attitude regarding basic professional role 1: "Which of the two statements below do you agree most with (without necessarily agreeing completely with any of them)." (percentage preference chosen)

	Den N=138	Swe N=185	Nor N=138	Ger N=84	Hun N=141
Contribute to a common national, regional or local identity	54	16	33	21	44
Promote critical reflection on national, regional or local identity	47	84	67	79	56

Table 15. The museum professional's attitude regarding basic professional role 2: "Which of the two statements below do you agree most with (without necessarily agreeing completely with any of them)." (percentage preference chosen)

	Den N=138	Swe N=185	Nor N=138	Ger N=84	Hun N=141
Strive for neutrality	47	61	30	46	89,4

Promote engagement – if necessary by taking a stand and provoke	53	39	70	54	10,6
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Table 16. The museum professional's attitude regarding basic professional role 3: "Which of the two statements below do you agree most with (without necessarily agreeing completely with any of them)." (percentage preference chosen)

	Den N=138	Swe N=185	Nor N=138	Ger N=84	Hun N=141
A professional responsibility to tell the stories of minorities, marginalized group	69	57	56	41	50,4
Offer a platform for minorities so that they themselves can present their stories.	NA	43	44	59	49,6

The museologists, we find that an overwhelming majority are of the opinions that museum professionals should promote critical reflection on national identity. A majority, but far from an overwhelming one, seem to be of the opinion that museum professionals should not necessarily strive for neutrality, but for engagement - if necessary by provoking and taking a stand. Here the Swedish and particularly the Hungarian respondents deviate by believing much more strongly in the ideal of neutrality than their colleagues in the other countries. When it comes to presenting the history of minorities, respondents in all the countries, with the exception of Germany, believe that this is a professional responsibility of museologists and that the task should not be left to the minorities themselves, but by offering them a platform, help and professional guidance.

7. Conclusion

Which conclusions can we draw regarding our two research questions?

RQ 1 asked if the social and digital turns have led to new forms of working and new services in archives, libraries and museums. All the institutions seem to have adapted to the social turn. A clear majority of the respondents from all three fields report they are engaged in arranging meetings, seminars and public debates. In the cases where we asked if such events constitute a marginal or central part of their service portfolio the tendency in all three fields is that these services are central. For libraries, the social turn is evident in all countries. As for museums and archives there are some significant differences. The proportion of museum professionals from Germany who report being involved in arranging public meetings is low compared to the other countries. The same is the case for Danish museum professionals. German archivists also have considerably lower scores on the questions measuring the social turn in archives compared to their colleagues in the other countries.

When it comes to the technological turn in libraries, the lending of e-books is the only service, with Hungary as an exception, which almost all respondents report that their libraries are involved in and which has a central role in the service portfolio. Helping people with digital devices apparently has developed into an important service in all the countries. A majority report being involved in it and a substantial proportion in all the countries report that such services play a central role. A majority in

all the countries report being involved in digital literacy initiatives and, with Germany as an exception, substantial proportions report that such initiatives play a central role. In Denmark,

Sweden, Norway and Hungary, helping people with e-government, electronic banking and offering computer classes are services in which a majority report being involved. Providing platforms for digital discussion and communication scores low in all countries.

Libraries, then, seem to have adapted to the digital turn via a varied set of services. If our respondents reflect the generalized reality, most of the services, with the exception of lending of ebooks, are services based on physical encounters between librarians and users in the library, such as computer classes, helping users with devices, helping them with e-government and e-banking. Services based on communication on digital platforms are more seldom.

Our findings relating to adaptation to the digital turn in museums are more difficult to interpret. The variations between the countries are large. The proportion reporting that they provide digital access to artefacts in their museum varies from 31 per cent in Germany via 43 in Denmark to 80, 87 and 90 per cent in Norway, Hungary and Sweden respectively. If our data reflects reality, they seem to indicate that: ● Providing digital access to artefacts in the collections is becoming common practice, although with some variations. ● A substantial proportion report that they offer hybrid exhibitions. ● Curating web-based exhibitions are still relatively marginal.

RQ 2 is related to perceptions of the legitimacy of the ALM-institutions and the role of traditional legitimations versus new ones related to the social and digital turn. Generally, the traditional legitimations related to for example the cultural heritage and learning are more important than the new ones in all the professional fields and in all the countries. One exception is German librarians, who tend to perceive the new legitimations as more important than the traditional.

Archivists and librarians tend to be of the opinion that their role as professionals is to be critical to what they present, not neutral guardians of the documents submitted to archives or uncritical and neutral promoters of the cultural heritage and national identity whereas museums tend to be less critical and more neutral guardians of the cultural heritage as far as museums are concerned

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