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## INTRODUCTION

### Libraries, archives, and museums in transition

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Libraries, archives, and museums (LAMs) have a long, interrelated history and, since the turn of the century, growing relations between LAMs have become more apparent. Internationally, the number of collaborative projects and partnerships has increased and the incidence of libraries, archives, or museums sharing premises or even merging has grown. Many of the collaborations follow trends in digitalization, which can be seen in the development of shared digital cultural heritage platforms and content sharing. Accordingly, digital convergence among LAMs is a growing field of research. The number of cross-sectoral textbooks and other publications is slowly increasing and collaborations between sector-specific educational environments are discussed in tertiary education. Collectively, this indicates that a common LAM perspective is in the process of becoming an established phenomenon (Hvenegaard Rasmussen and Hjørland 2021).

Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) offers a fruitful region for LAM research for several reasons. First, Scandinavian LAM institutions are relatively well funded and developed compared to the situation in other parts of the world. Second, LAMs in Scandinavia are governed by a cultural policy rooted in the welfare states' values of enlightenment, community building, and participatory democracy. Third, some of the tertiary education of the respective LAM professionals in Scandinavia is in cross-sectoral departments, or so-called "LAM departments." In Sweden and Denmark, some departments offer programs and specializations in library and information science, archival science, and museum studies, and in Norway there are programs in library and information science and archival science in joint departments. In this book, we will address all three sectors. The book encompasses a common LAM perspective and addresses issues related to LAM institutions' environment, collections, and challenges.

Even though educational convergence may appear most apparent in Scandinavia, institutional mergers between LAMs are widespread in Australia (Robinson 2019) and research on digital convergence has been initiated in North America (Marty 2014). The described challenges and the transition of LAMs are thus an international trend. Although we adopt a Scandinavian perspective in this book, we deal with tendencies and issues discussed internationally within library and information science, archival science, and museum studies.

## **Relations between LAMs**

The borders between libraries, archives, and museums have always been complex and ever-changing. On the one hand, LAMs are cognate fields with different tasks. Basic definitions of LAMs generally highlight collections: Libraries have books, archives have documents, and museums have artifacts. Therefore, it makes sense to talk about librarians working at libraries, archivists working at archives, and curators working at museums. On the other hand, the borders between LAMs are not as clear and well defined as they may initially appear. The definitions of libraries, archives, and museums have changed over time and the division of collections between books, documents, and artifacts has become increasingly blurred. National libraries frequently exhibit artifacts and normally own special collections of documents. Archives display artifacts and some even maintain libraries. Museums often have archives and sometimes also libraries.

Noticeable changes in the relations between LAMs have taken place in recent decades. As collections have been digitized, books, documents, and objects have been mixed in new ways. The respective institutions have all responded to external pressures, such as increased demands for demonstrating relevance. Libraries host makerspaces and literary workshops, archives fight climate change and support the culture and rights of indigenous peoples, and museums are used as instruments for economic growth and urban planning. At first glance, these changes may appear to be divergent developments. However, the observed changes in LAMs should mainly be seen as a convergence for several reasons that are discussed below.

### ***A common historical ancestry***

The birth of libraries is normally dated back to Mesopotamia 2500 BC. Those early libraries consisted of clay tablets, some of them with literary text but more often with different types of legal and financial contracts, administrative texts, and letters – or what we today should define as archives of documents (Pedersén 2005). The Library of Alexandria is another frequently used example showing the blurred borders between LAMs. Here originals or copies of much of the known text in the world were stored in the form of papyrus rolls, a huge archive in the present understanding. It also had cultural artifacts and even a zoological garden. The Library of Alexandria was a place for researchers and therefore it was called

the “Mouseion,” or the “Temple of the Muses.” Mouseion is the etymological precursor to the museum as we know it today (Dilevko and Gottlieb 2003; Marcum 2014). Another precursor to the museum was the “cabinet of curiosities,” which could contain any notable object. It could be artwork, books, natural items, etc. For the premodern collector there was no distinct border between objects, documents, and books. The collectors were generally royalty, scientists, or wealthy individuals, and many of their collections became the foundation for a modern collecting institution. One of the most energetic collectors was the Irish physician Hans Sloane. He collected more than 71,000 items, and after his death in 1753, his collection became an important part of the British Museum, with some of it being channeled later into the Natural History Museum and the British Library, as they grew out of the British Museum. The British Museum served as the national library in Great Britain until the British Library was established in 1973 (Delbourgo 2017; Høiback 2020, 51–55). The overlapping borders between libraries, archives, and museums have a long history.

### ***Intersecting cultural policy aims***

LAMs have been described as “memory institutions” collecting cultural heritage in different ways (Dempsey 1999). In a Scandinavian context, many LAMs are subsumed under the culture sector. Therefore, LAMs are part of the national cultural policy serving certain shared political purposes such as supporting enlightenment and national identity (Brown and Davis–Brown 1998; Vestheim 1997). Furthermore, LAMs form an important part of the infrastructure of the public sphere, through supporting access to knowledge, freedom of speech, and deliberative activities (Audunson et al. 2019; Larsen 2018). Finally, together with other cultural institutions that receive public funds, LAMs are influenced by dominant trends in cultural policy. Mangset et al. (2008) highlight some of these and point to the following as the two most important: (1) Scandinavian cultural policy tries to promote equal access to culture and to reduce structurally based inequalities in cultural life; (2) since the 1970s, Scandinavian cultural policies have taken a distinct sociocultural turn where diversity and broadening of the concept of culture have been at the forefront of cultural policy. With this in mind, it is not surprising that a Swedish survey has documented only small variations between professionals’ visions in LAMs (Huvila 2014).

### ***From collection-driven towards user-driven***

“From collection to connection” has been a buzzword in the public library field for two decades. The slogan indicates that a library is more than a collection. It is not only a quiet place with public access to published documents, it should also be a vibrant and social place supporting the aims of public libraries in new ways such as makerspaces or reading groups (Jochumsen, Hvenegaard Rasmussen, and Skot–Hansen 2012). Likewise, museums have been transformed from

being about something to being for somebody (Weil 1999). Just like libraries, museums have moved from being collection-driven towards a more user-driven approach (Anderson 2012). The same tendency can be identified among archives. According to Cook (2013), the archivist has been transformed over the past 150 years from passive curator to community facilitator. Thus, on a general level, LAMs have gone through the same transformation. The collections are still an important part of LAMs, but the users have been given greater priority over the last 50 years. This increased user orientation has been put into practice in different ways, such as considering diversity, focusing on user surveys, or co-creating content with users.

### ***Proximity in government agencies***

As mentioned above, the relations between LAMs are ever-changing, but this is not synonymous with an increasing convergent development. During the twentieth century, the institutionalization and professionalization of libraries, archives, and museums expanded with the result that borders between the three fields became sharper (Given and Mctavish 2010; Tanackovic and Badurina 2009). However, LAMs have been placed together in different government agencies. In Chile, that happened back in 1929, when the Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos was created. In the US, the Institute of Museum and Library Services was formed in 1996. It is a federal agency with the mission that museums and libraries work together in order to transform the lives of individuals and communities (Pastore 2009). Library and Archives Canada, formed in 2004, is a merger of the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada (Bak and Armstrong 2008). Previously, Norway had the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority and England the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries. They have both closed down now, although not due to a lack of relevance: The English LAM authority was abolished due to public budget cutbacks (Hooper-Greenhill 2004), and the Norwegian closure was the result of a power struggle between the National Library and the LAM authority (Hylland 2019; Skare, Stokstad, and Vårheim 2019).

### ***Collaboration between LAMs***

The main argument for establishing LAM authorities was the new digital possibilities in the wake of the Internet. According to Marty (2014), Rayward's (1998) book chapter "Electronic Information and the Functional Integration of Libraries, Museums, and Archives" was the starting point for a new research agenda on the topic of digital convergence. Rayward's point of departure was that the separation of books, documents, and objects in libraries, archives, and museums did not make sense in a digital environment. Since the new millennium, there have been many examples of digital convergence from small collaborations between local institutions to the supranational level. One example

of the latter is Europeana, the European Union's digital platform for cultural heritage, to which more than 3,000 institutions across Europe have contributed. These institutions range from major international names like the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the British Library, and the Louvre to regional archives and local museums from every member state (Valtysson 2012). However, digitalization is not the only driver for collaboration. According to Kann-Rasmussen (2019), the collaboration between cultural institutions itself is a quality in the present society. In this, the ability to create connections between fields is of considerable value. The most valuable links are those that connect different fields or cross boundaries. Hvenegaard Rasmussen (2019) argues that this is exactly what digital convergence is all about: Collaboration between different fields.

### ***Cultural imperatives and shared professional practices***

Working in a library, archive, or museum is based on different professional practices. Furthermore, being employed in a metropolitan art museum or a small museum of local history is not the same thing. However, LAMs, along with other cultural institutions, have been influenced by several trends or imperatives over the past few decades. An imperative is an authoritative command or call for action that is perceived as being universal and self-explanatory, and those who criticize the basic idea of the imperative runs the risk of being perceived as irresponsible, foolish, or morally corrupted (Henningesen and Larsen 2020, 53). We have already touched upon some imperatives in the culture sector, such as user orientation, collaboration, and digitalization. In addition, new public management, the experience economy, and participation can be viewed as imperatives. The content of the various imperatives is not so important in this context, as the crucial aspect of the highlighted imperatives is their push towards a convergent professional practice in LAMs. Compared to the twentieth century, it is more common in the twenty-first century for all kinds of LAM professionals to carry out user surveys, to work in a project-oriented manner, to design experiences, to digitize collections, to use social media for marketing, and to co-create content with the users.

### **The historical roots of LAMs**

A basic assumption in this book is that institutions such as libraries, archives, and museums do not develop in a vacuum. On the contrary, the development of an institution is an interplay between internal and external forces. An internal driver for change could be power struggles between professionals within a field, while external forces could be changes in legal requirements, a certain zeitgeist or social, cultural, or technological changes pushing for adaptation within organizations. In this section, we will discuss four key forces of social change that have influenced the emergence and development of libraries, archives, and museums, as well as the rest of society. These are enlightenment, nation state,

modernity, and democracy. In reality, these are inextricably linked with each other. For pedagogical reasons, we have nevertheless divided these into separate sections in our discussion on drivers for the formation of modern libraries, archives, and museums.

### ***Enlightenment***

In European history, the period between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is often entitled the “Age of Enlightenment.” More specifically, it was an intellectual movement driven by the bourgeoisie arguing for new ideas such as liberty, progress, constitutional government, and separation of the Church and state. The historical background for the Age of Enlightenment was the established privileges for the Church, the king, and aristocracy (Zafirovski 2010). For adherents of enlightenment, absolute monarchy and religious power should be replaced by science and reason. The destiny for each person should be taken from God and king and handed over to the individual. If the individual is to have a fair chance of proving successful in life, enlightenment is an important precondition. One of the most influential enlightenment thinkers was the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who in 1784 replied to the question “What is enlightenment?” in a Berlin journal:

Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the inability to use one’s own understanding without another’s guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one’s own mind without another’s guidance. Dare to know! (*Sapere aude.*) “Have the courage to use your own understanding” is therefore the motto of the enlightenment.

*(Kant 1996, 58)*

Courage and reason are indispensable ingredients for Kant if the individual is to be enlightened. However, without access to knowledge, the enlightenment of the people would fail. Thus, LAMs were vital sources of knowledge. From the middle of the seventeenth century and onwards, highbrow art was increasingly perceived as an expression of the highest condition of mankind and granting public access to art museums was seen to a greater extent as a duty of the state (Duncan and Wallach 1980). Furthermore, other kinds of museums were also imposed a didactic burden as compared to earlier collections that were more concerned about creating surprise or provoking wonder (Bennett 1995, 2). Free public access to knowledge is the foundation for the public library movement, which originated in the US and UK, and later spread to the Scandinavian countries (Frisvold 2015; Torstensson 1993). According to Emerek (2001), the formation of Danish public libraries was based on Anglo-American inspiration regarding rational operation and organization, and the Age of Enlightenment when it comes to the value base for establishing public libraries. Finally, the Age

of Enlightenment plays an important role in public access to archives. In the wake of the French Revolution, a legal act from 1794 underlined for the first time the citizens' right to access public archives in France. In the time that followed, this right to civic access to archives was increasingly recognized in other parts of Europe (Duchein 1992).

### ***Nation state***

Since the eighteenth century, the nation state has gradually replaced kingdoms, empires, and city states as the dominant way of ruling over geographic territories. A nation state is a state in which the great majority identify themselves as a nation. Ideally, the cultural boundaries match up with political boundaries in a nation state. In reality, all nation states consist of people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Thus, nation building has been an ongoing task for maintaining the legitimacy of a nation. LAM institutions have played a conspicuous role in nation building. According to Berger (2013), national archives have supported the construction of national master narratives in Europe. A major task assigned to historians was to legitimate the history of the nation state, and archives adopted an important position in nation building. For example, after Norway achieved independence from Denmark in 1814, the Norwegian national archive was established in 1817. The national master narratives are also embedded in the museums' chronological exhibitions, which became more widespread in the wake of the Enlightenment. After the French Revolution, the Louvre was reorganized in a chronological way that allowed visitors to decode the nation states' history of development. Roughly speaking, the chronological national master narrative begins in an "oppressed" or "uncivilized" past and ends with an "independent" and "civilized" present nation state (Mordhorst and Wagner Nielsen 1997). Furthermore, throughout Europe, the values of national cohesion were manifested in the architecture of the national archives, libraries, and museums, all situated in the most prestigious parts of the nations – the capitals (Aronsson 2015). Sometimes, the alliance between the nation state and cultural heritage was expressed in the national institutions' ornamentation. One example is the three busts outside the German national library. Here are Gutenberg and Goethe located together with Bismarck, who masterminded the unification of Germany and served as its first chancellor. Finally, according to Duncan and Wallach (1980), the Louvre changed from celebrating the glory of the king to becoming a symbol of France's superiority as a nation state.

In summary, the Louvre embodies the state and the ideology of the state. It presents the state not directly but, as it were, disguised in the spiritual forms of artistic genius. Artistic genius attests to the state's highest value – individualism and nationalism. It demonstrates the nation's destiny and the state's benevolence (Duncan and Wallach 1980, 463).

The citation above refers to an embedded conflict in modern LAMs, namely the tension between individualism and nationalism. On the one hand, LAMs

pay tribute to such values as accountability and neutrality, growing out of the Enlightenment and making up important prerequisites for individual formation of opinion. On the other hand, LAMs, and especially the big national institutions, are potentially an integrated part of the value-based national master narratives.

### **Modernity**

Seen from a sociological perspective, enlightenment and the formation of nation states are part of the modernization of society: The transformation from a feudal or premodern society to a modern society (Giddens 1990). One of the most predominate characteristics of modernity is social change and the awareness of change as a condition for living in a modern world. According to Bennett (1995, 10), museums in the late nineteenth century were referred to as “machines for progress” because many (chronological) exhibitions allowed visitors to follow a path of evolutionary development that led from simple to more complex forms of living. Furthermore, the systematic and institutionalized way of collecting is modern. For the French philosopher Michel Foucault, LAM institutions are emblematic of modernity:

The idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity.

*(Foucault 1986, 26)*

In addition to change, other significant characteristics of modernity are rationality and differentiation of society into different relatively independent expert systems. The formation of modern libraries, archives, and museums is an obvious example of such relatively independent expert systems. Consequently, modernity has been a driver for a divergent development of libraries, archives, and museums, whereas a feature of a postmodern society is de-differentiation (Smith 2001, 225), which is also manifest in the move towards convergence in LAMs. As mentioned above, Hans Sloane’s huge collection of many different items got divided into a library, an archive, and a museum. In each of these institutions, experts managed the collections. Many libraries used Dewey’s universal decimal classification system, and according to Hvenegaard Rasmussen and Jochumsen (2007), the use of the universal decimal classification is more than a functional tool for storing and retrieval, it is a symbol of modern society’s endeavors toward differentiation and putting everything in its rightful place. The same endeavors can easily be identified in the modern museum because science became the guiding light for knowledge organization. Museums were divided into different types of museums such as art museums and botanical museums. In art museums,



works of art were arranged chronologically into periods defined by art history, while botanical specimens were arranged taxonomically according to Linnaean classification (Roppola 2012, 14–16). In the introduction to *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in the Modern Society*, Cox and Wallace (2002) discuss the significant roles that records play in accountability. For instance, when our personal data are records in archives or records are used as evidence in court proceedings, “accountability” is an unavoidable term. In the same way, accountability is vital to all modern LAM institutions because the legitimacy of these institutions is related to accountability.

### **Democracy**

The French Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire advocated freedom of speech and freedom of religion but did not believe in democracy – he preferred an enlightened absolute monarch. However, it is nearly impossible to imagine the Scandinavian democracies without the Age of Enlightenment. In a democracy, it is not only the monarch who needs to be enlightened; all citizens need enlightenment to participate in democracy. The Danish public library pioneer Andreas Schack Steenberg clearly points that out:

It is important to consider the position that “common man” holds today compared with his position only a hundred years ago. The right to vote, eligibility, and the impact on the corporate world through unions have given the masses a responsibility as never before. The people’s horizon is broadened and thereby their need for knowledge and critical thinking. The huge power average people have obtained today underlines the increasing need for “society to enlighten its master.”

*(Steenberg 1900, 14)*

It is not surprising that Steenberg recommends that libraries should solve the task of enlightening the entire population. Retrospectively, public libraries have ensured free access to knowledge in the Scandinavian countries. However, throughout the twentieth century, there were extensive disagreements about the content within the library field. Steenberg argued for highbrow literature and nonfiction as defined by experts in the library field, while other actors within the field preferred literature in accordance with the literary preferences of the “common man.” National cultural policies in the Scandinavian countries reflect this conflict, under the labels of “democratization of culture” and “cultural democracy” (Mangset et al. 2008). Democratization of culture was the point of departure for national cultural policies in the postwar era. In this strategy, the culture sector supports democracy by giving access to highbrow art and culture as a part of the publicly funded enlightenment. As a supplement or alternative to the democratization of culture, cultural democracy gained speed in the 1970s. It is a strategy supporting democracy by ensuring that cultural diversity flourishes,

among other things by supporting amateur cultural activities. According to this strategy, all kinds of cultural preferences should be present in publicly funded cultural life. Today, freedom of speech is an important value in cultural policy. These strategies have also influenced LAM institutions. Supporting democracy is perceived as an important task for LAMs, but disagreement will potentially occur when the question of how to best support democracy is raised.

## The structure of the book

Finally, in this chapter, we will present the main themes of the book: The history and policy of libraries, archives, and museums in Scandinavia; LAMs and their collections; and challenges for LAMs in the twenty-first century. Part I consists of four chapters, dealing with the development of libraries, archives, museums, and cultural policy in a Scandinavian context. All chapters have a societal perspective, focusing on how enlightenment, nation building, modernity, and democracy have shaped the LAMs. Furthermore, all the chapters pinpoint different types of libraries, archives, and museums. The first three chapters end their discussions at the turn of the millennium. The last chapter in this section describes the development of cultural policies in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, mainly focusing on the period from the 1960s to the present. As already mentioned in the paragraph on democracy, the guiding light for Scandinavian cultural policy is the access to information and art (democratization of culture) and the support of diverse cultural expressions (cultural democracy).

Collection is the point of departure for the second theme of the book. It is a common feature of all kinds of LAMs that they collect, maintain, and develop their collections. Part II consists of three chapters concentrating on different aspects of LAM collections. In the first chapter, the authors describe and discuss the collection status for LAMs. If the above-mentioned slogan “From collection to connection” is a reality, are LAMs still constituted by their collections? The authors of the next chapter focus on the selection, maintenance, and exhibition of collections. Despite curation primarily being connected to museums, the concept is in this chapter used for discussing selection, maintenance, and exhibition in all kinds of LAMs – how has the selection of content changed over time? All collections entail a need for knowledge organization, which is the topic for the last chapter in this part of the book. The aim of the chapter is to describe and discuss differences and similarities between knowledge organization in libraries, archives, and museums.

The last theme of the book is eight common challenges for LAMs. Part III starts with two chapters discussing the impact of digitalization on LAMs. The first chapter is dedicated to the challenges that digitalization represents for LAMs, their professionals, and users. The next chapter is focusing on the use of digital communication in LAMs. The main aim of the chapter is to explore the current state of digital communication across and between LAMs. The third

chapter in the section deals with literacy and the education of LAM users. In the chapter, the authors present how LAMs have shifted from being enablers of mainly informal learning to increasingly becoming places for formal learning as well. The fourth common challenge is participation. The entire cultural field is witnessing a “participatory turn,” and among LAMs, “participation” has been the most prominent buzzword for more than a decade. The authors of the chapter describe and discuss different types of participation, including crowdsourcing, co-creation, and the facilitation of shared experiences in terms of culture and art. The fifth challenge is the increased pressure to demonstrate the worth of one’s work to a broad public, and the need for managers of culture organizations to engage in continuous legitimation work. This chapter contains discussions on a range of issues related to ongoing legitimation work in Scandinavian LAMs. Due to the increased need for legitimation, LAMs need to develop and strengthen ties to their local communities. In the sixth chapter, authors describe and discuss how the institutions are anchoring themselves in their communities and connecting with various user groups. Special attention is paid to services to immigrants, the use of volunteers, and collaboration with local partners. Traditionally, LAMs have been perceived as neutral institutions, but this alleged neutrality has been questioned over the past two decades, and different kinds of activism have emerged. This growing LAM activism is the topic for the seventh chapter in this part of the book. In the last chapter, the authors address how LAMs support some of the challenges that the Scandinavian societies face in the twenty-first century. The point of departure is the United Nations Member States Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, of which the chapter discusses two of the goals, as related to LAMs: First, how LAMs are advancing environmental responsibility; second, how they promote social equity related to diversity and equality.

The anthology is completed with a concluding chapter, where the described differences and similarities between libraries, archives, and museums are discussed and future common challenges are outlined.

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