Abstract /

The ongoing discussion of the direction of the library in the information society is important to the motivation behind this thesis, as it explores how new media is influencing the position of the library in our society. It draws on mediatization theory as outlined by Andreas Hepp and Stig Hjarvard in order to explain how media affects our society in general, and how this influences cultural institutions such as the library. The study involves political strategies for the development of the library in two of the Scandinavian countries, Norway and Denmark, which despite their long history of shared political and cultural background, seem to have adapted to the mediatization process somewhat differently. Through analysis of specific examples of media influence on certain library functions, differences between the two countries are explored in light of mediatization theory. Despite having the same basic objectives and many similarities in their vision for the future library, differences in how the countries are currently handling the mediatization process are founded in variations in their institutional organisation and legislation. In short, Denmark is adapting the traditional library to the market, whereas Norway is marketing the traditional library. Further, the results indicate a strengthening of the library’s function as a place for social and cultural interaction on a democratic basis with activities and events based around literature and culture. The internal library discourse is dominated by this type of argument, and although both reports support this movement, they show little progressive initiative in this regard, especially in terms of increased financial support.
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1 Introduction

The library institution is at present changing character, because we are now fully able to go to the library from home - a visit to the physical library has to some extent become superfluous, as a visit to the virtual library can be just as satisfactory. That the library has doubled itself in order to be a virtual place as well, demands in itself a massive readjustment for the library as an institution.

- Stig Hjarvard (as cited in Madsen, 2009, p. 19).

1.1 Background

Some argue that the medias’ influence on culture and society, the ever-increasing digitalisation of information, and the constant development and improvement of search engines, online information resources and digital reading devices, are together causing the gradual demise of the library. The information literacy of the public is arguably extending, especially with younger generations, and today we are «all», in fact, librarians: producing, indexing, storing and retrieving information. This takes place online and on our personal devices with the help of an enormous amount of communication media, tools and applications, available to suit every individual need. Stig Hjarvard, in reference to Gudmund Hernes, states, «that the media have transformed society from of a situation of information scarcity to one of information abundance, which has rendered attention a strategic resource, for which anyone with a message must compete.» (2008a, p. 107)

In the days of information scarcity, it was the library's main function to gather, store, spread and produce information. Its patrons have always relied on the library to carry the most updated and most extensive collection of information for a variety of fields and purposes. The process of producing and spreading information was later adapted to different media institutions, such as publishers, the press and television, and later still, the internet. The latter, in particular, arguably functions as a digital library with which no physical library can hope to compete. Billions of «librarians» are constantly extending its global collection around the clock,
and automated indexing programmes make sure patrons are able to retrieve wanted information in any form, from any device, from anywhere at any time.

Some are concerned that even with the growing media skills of the new generations and the technical improvements in online search and retrieval, the abundance of available information is diluting the quality of content, and that the mediatization of information is in fact having a «dumbing down» effect on society. The «attention resource» that Hernes mentions is stretched too thin as too much information competes for it, and the patrons will choose the most readily available source of information over that of the highest quality. These fear that the important skills and knowledge contained by librarians and information professionals will be diminished along with the library, and the result will be an increased production of information of decreasing quality, in an ever-downward spiral.

There are also those who see the increasing production and digitalisation of information as a possibility for libraries and librarians to renew and strengthen their position in society. Where there is more information available, it should logically follow that more information specialists are required to process it, despite the mentioned individualisation of information handling. Professionally, there seems to be an increased demand for staff with the skills of librarians, archivers and others with similar backgrounds to handle digital and physical information systems and archives bulging with data. As for the physical library space and its functions, new uses and features are constantly proposed, tested and implemented in order to adapt to the modern information society.

Very recently, this already heated debate was rekindled in Norwegian online media when editor of the cultural section of the periodical Minerva, Kristian Meisingset, firmly placed libraries «on the landfill of history». He claims that as a direct result of digitalisation, literature distribution should and will in future resemble paid online music streaming services like Spotify and Wimp. The development of such a service does not, according to Meisingset, belong with the library, as it on the one hand could not be a cost-free service to the users due to the market, and on the
other, because the library would be unable to develop a sufficiently user-friendly solution. The response was immediate and in most cases, united: Libraries are not only a place for storing and lending books, it serves many other social and cultural functions that will not be affected by whether or not literature is read on screen or on printed page.

Depending on the type of library; public, educational or research, as well as its location, size and collection, a library typically offers a variety of activities and services that are aimed specifically at the demographic of its patrons. In addition, the public library functions as a meeting place for people regardless of background with a shared interest in literature or with other, specific purposes at the library. Many of the library's advocates refer to these when arguing the case for the future relevance of the library as a cultural institution. The question is whether these activities will be enough to sustain the existence of the library, should its arguably most important function, the lending of books and other media and knowledge material, prove to become redundant.

I will not attempt to propose an answer to which of these premonitions are most correct, or try to predict the most likely future of the library. Nevertheless, the discussion of the direction of the library in the information society is important to the motivation behind this thesis. Meisingset replies to his adversaries that the «other activities» that take place in the library today are neither unique to the library institution nor immune to the effects of digitalisation and mediatization. I therefore wish to explore how new media is influencing the position of the library in our society. To this end, I have chosen to draw on mediatization theory as outlined by Andreas Hepp and Stig Hjarvard in order to gain a better understanding of how media affects our society in general, and how this influences cultural institutions such as the library.

Mediatization is not an establishment-threatening process in and of itself, but its consequences will have implications for institutions with long histories of established responsibilities, traditions and social functions. «The concept most central to an understanding of the importance of media to culture and society is mediatization» (Hjarvard, 2008a, p. 114),
and Hjarvard therefore warns against having a normative attitude to the mediatization process. It becomes unproductive when attempting to identify and analyse the changes media bring about in a given social institution. «At worst such a normative judgement can lead to a general narrative of decline, in which media influence becomes synonymous with a decline in the political public sphere or the disintegration of civil society» (p. 114). Rather, mediatization can, in the very least, help us to better understand our changing society, and even by extension allow us to adapt to the on-going process that we inevitably are a part of. As an institution that revolves around information and communication as well as culture, the library is naturally one of the institutions fundamentally affected by this process.

1.2 Problem Statement and research questions

In order to explore this subject in detail, several steps are required. First, I will conduct a thorough study of the nature and uses of mediatization theory in order to establish a framework and methodology for the analysis. Both Hepp and Hjarvard point out that mediatization is not restricted to nations, but similar mediatization processes may take on different forms in different countries (Hepp, p. 140). In order to identify the current functions of the library, I will therefore study the political strategies for the development of the library in two of the Scandinavian countries, Norway and Denmark. Despite their long history of shared political and cultural background, their library sectors seem to have adapted to the mediatization process somewhat differently. Through analysis of specific examples of media influence on certain library functions, I will explore some of the differences between the two countries in light of mediatization theory. The results indicate a strengthening of the library’s function as a place for social and cultural interaction on a democratic basis.
My problem statement and research questions are:

*What is the function of the modern library and how has it been affected by new media?*

a. *Is there a difference in the way media has affected the library sector in Norway and Denmark?*

b. *What evidence of mediatization theory do we find in recent developments in the public library?*

c. *What social function does the public library serve in the mediatized society?*

**1.3 Method and approach**

**Approach** As the research questions reveal, this thesis is qualitative in nature and consists mainly of analysis of already existing data. The data has been collected and reviewed in an iterative fashion, and this has also affected the analytical process itself. There are three main types of sources used. First, I have studied several major works on mediatization theory. Secondly, I have analysed first- and second-hand sources regarding the modern library, including official governmental documents. Finally, I have drawn on web content from online media such as debates, blogs and news items. By constantly considering the data in light of the different types of sources, the thesis has organically come into shape. Hence, there is no prominent empirical method at the basis of the development of the thesis as such.

**Theory** Nevertheless, mediatization theory is advocated not only as a theory for use in sociology and media and communication studies, but also as an analytical tool: «a theory of mediatization has to be able to describe overall developmental trends in society across different contexts and, by means of concrete analysis, demonstrate the impacts of media on various institutions and spheres of human activity» (Hjarvard, 2008a, p. 113). This suggests that it should be possible to extract a research method from the existing literature on mediatization. However, as Andreas Hepp points out in the final chapter of his book *Cultures of Mediatization* from 2011, «a comprehensive introduction to the empirical study of media culture [is] a book
which, despite the number of existing introductions to the empirics of media and communication, remains unwritten» (p. 127). In the existing literature, there are many examples of mediatization theory applied to different institutions and areas, but as of yet, one prominent approach to the study of mediatization does not exist.

Both Hepp and Hjarvard have gone far in outlining specific aspects that they find essential to empirical studies of mediatization. In his book *En verden af medier: Medialiseringen af politik, sprog, religion og leg* (2008), Hjarvard outlines certain aspects that should be present in studies of mediatization and provides several analyses of different institutions and areas as examples. As such, a combination of the results of existing research on mediatization and the result of the data collected on the development of the library, seen in the light of Hjarvards aspects, form the basis of the analysis in Part 3. In the following chapter, mediatization as a theory and as a research tool is discussed further. Bear in mind that this is not an empirical analysis of the mediatization of the library as such, but rather an investigation of how the mediatized society is expressed through the changes that are occurring in the library sector at present.

As many of the sources are only available in Norwegian or Danish, translations of quotes have been provided by me where necessary.

**Outline** Chapter 1 of this thesis is concerned with outlining the motivation and scope of the research as well as the methods and theory applied. In Chapter 2, two reports published by the Ministry of Culture in Norway and Denmark respectively are presented in detail. The reports are both concerned with future development of the public library in the digital age and highlights the different functions served by the library today, as well as evaluating which of these will be important to the future library. Chapter 3 analyses the findings from Chapter 2 in light of mediatization theory through concrete examples of media influence. Conclusively there is a discussion of the overall results of the analysis, an exploration of the library’s role as a meeting place in society and a short evaluation of mediatization theory as it has been applied here.
**Limitations** Both the material used and the processes studied are largely limited to the immediate past and present, and as the investigation concerns developed, western nations, the discussion is limited to these as well as similar countries. The comparison of the library sector is largely nationally based, although certain regional aspects are discussed where relevant. Much of the theory as well as the reports are contextualised by sociological concepts such as globalisation, late-modernity and individualisation, but these are not explained or elaborated on to any large extent here due to the limitations and nature of the thesis format.

**Concepts** In addition to «mediatization», there are some concepts that I use extensively throughout the thesis, but define quite broadly. I use «new media» to indicate mainly online communication media, but I may also refer to specific technologies that can access or in other ways be connected to these, such as smart phones, tablet computers and e-readers by that term. I use both «knowledge society» and «information society» to describe aspects of the modern society and how we relate to information and information technology respectively.

**1.4 Mediatization theory**

Mediatization theory is anchored in Sociology and Media and Communication studies and as a student of Library and Information Science with a background firmly grounded in humanities it has been necessary to study the existing theory on mediatization in some detail with regards to both fields and to adjust it somewhat to my own. In order to limit the empirical basis I have concentrated on the research of a few but major voices within the mediatization field that I find most relevant. Most prominent of these are Stig Hjarvard and Andreas Hepp, who have both published major works about mediatization. There is a lot of material concerning both the theoretical and practical aspects of mediatization, and these researchers are constantly reviewing the existing research and developing their theories accordingly. They are also central figures in major research programs on mediatization, and regularly appear at conferences with media and communication as a topic of interest. Additionally, they approach the subject from
slightly different angles according to their professional background and interests. Where Hjarvard has a prominently sociological focus, Hepp is more inclined towards a communication angle.

Although the effect of media on society is studied across different academic fields, a lot of the material appears to be concentrated around two major subjects: 1) Reaching a consensus on what the concept «mediatization theory» entails, and 2) establishing mediatization as a method for empirical analysis. I will not reiterate the debate in its entirety here but it is nevertheless necessary to provide a detailed definition of the term as it is understood and applied here through an explanation of the research to date. Despite some variations, most of the mediatization specialists agree on certain defining aspects of the concept, such as regarding mediatization as a metatheory and its potential usefulness as a scientific method in both Sociology and Media and Communication studies.

1.4.1 Mediatization as a theoretical concept
As a concept used and developed by sociologists, mediatization theory does more than analyse the technological aspects of media influence; it focuses on the social impacts of mediated communication on culture and society. «Mediatization should be viewed as a modernization process on a par with urbanization and individualization, whereby the media, in a similar manner, both contribute to disembedding social relations from existing contexts and re-embedding them in new social contexts» (Hjarvard, 2008a, p. 132). This is how Hjarvard concludes his article, «The Mediatization of Society: A Theory of Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change», a work that considers media theory and mediatization from many different aspects. Similarly, Knut Lundby introduces his anthology Mediatization: Concept, Changes and Consequences (2009) by stating that, «‘Mediatization’ points to societal changes in contemporary high modern societies and the role of media and mediated communication in these transformations. Processes of mediatization affect almost all areas of social and cultural life in late modernity» (p. 1). Both Lundy’s and Hjarvard’s are general statements about the overall nature of the concept of mediatization. From this basis, several interpretations and uses
are possible, something that is emphasised for example by the various contributions to Lundby’s collection.

According to Lundby, what separates mediatization studies from other studies about the impact of media, is placing the emphasis on processes of communication. «We defined mediatization as a meta-process that is grounded in the modification of communication as the basic practice of how people construct the social and cultural world. They do so by changing communication practices that use media and refer to media» (Emphasis original, 2009, p. 25). This statement has several implications. First, it means that mediatization is not, in fact, wholly «media centred». It does not undertake to explore how the technical aspects of media affect communication; rather, it is «human centered». It aims to find out how fundamental changes in how humans communicate through media have impact on relations, institutions and society on the whole. Because the term mediatization has been used to explain different phenomena over the past thirty years, this distinction is important. Furthermore, it is vital in centralising and structuring existing and future research on mediatization (Lundby, p. 37).

For this reason, many mediatization scholars find that it is necessary to introduce the topic in books or articles by a clarification of the term «mediatization» and how they define and use it, especially as it has often been confused or used interchangeably with the term «mediation». «Mediation describes the concrete act of communication by means of a medium in a specific social context. By contrast, mediatization refers to a more long-lasting process, whereby social and cultural institutions and modes of interaction are changed as a consequence of the growth of the media’s influence» (Hjarvard, 2008a, p. 114). Some scholars, like Nick Couldry and Sonia Livingstone, prefer to use the term mediation but the concept they describe are in fact closer to mediatization as described by Hjarvard. Nevertheless, mediatization and mediation are closely connected and it can be hard to separate them completely, something that both Hjarvard and Andreas Hepp explores in more detail. Certainly, empirical study of quite specific changes in mediated communication, communication that happens through use of a medium, can serve to inform us about parts of the mediatization process of an institution.
In fact, much of the research on mediatization explore how communication through media have impact on and change how we communicate within a social institution. One of the most explored institutions is politics, where the development in use of mediated communication can be seen quite clearly, for example by how media have been used in political campaigning and how this in turn has affected the role of politics in society (Hjarvard, 2008c, Chapter 2). Similarly, we can see how the mediatization of education is affecting teaching and learning through use of hypertextual learning environments and technological equipment (Lundby, 2009, p. 6-7). Some would possibly regard the latter as more closely related to studies of mediation than mediatization, but as Andreas Hepp puts it, this can also be explained as «the quantitative aspects of mediatization» (2011, p. 52). Through such studies we learn about the larger structural changes in these institutions, or even society. When we understand how mediatization work on a micro level, we can draw conclusions about mediatization on the mezzo and macro levels (Lundby, 2009, p. 32). As such, mediatization as a concept is at once concerned with the specific as well as the broad, and for that reason it has been deemed a «metaprocess» or «metatheory» by many of the mediatization specialists.

1.4.2 Mediatization as a metatheory

In his book Cultures of Mediatization (2011), Andreas Hepp defines mediatization as a metaprocess and a panorama, two very explicative and useful descriptions. A metaprocess is understood as «a basic conception describing a particular kind of theory» (Krotz, as cited in Hepp, p. 47), and by panorama he means «a picture which has no gap in it, giving the spectator the powerful impression of being fully immersed in the real world» (Latour, as cited in Hepp, p. 50). «The concept of mediatization does not involve a finished theory of media transformation, but is much more open, opening a particular panorama, a particular all-encompassing vision of the treatment of the reciprocal relationship between media-communicative change and sociocultural change» (Hepp, p. 46). Thus, a metatheory provides us with a certain point of view through which we can analyse the changes that are occurring around us in order to make sense
of and contextualise these changes. In the case of mediatization theory, the changes are occurring in society and they are contextualised by media communication.

Hepp’s main point is that metatheories “are general theoretical constructs resting in part upon empirical evidence, but […] not empirically verifiable in their entirety” (p. 49). As such, through empirical research on both quantitative and qualitative aspects of mediatization, we can draw conclusions about the mediatized aspects of change (p. 52-54). Hepp calls this the moulding forces of media (p. 54) and like Lundby, he stresses the importance of relating media to human action (p. 57). Simultaneously, he shows where the intersection of sociology and media studies is found in mediatization theory.

Although media in themselves can of course be viewed and analysed as inflexible objects with a limited set of features, the human aspect of mediated communication must remain central in any analysis of media impact. To further this thought, Hepp uses the terms institutionalization and reification. The moulding forces of the media happens by “the concurrency of institutionalization (which include the objectivation of language) and reification (objectivation as a particular form of technological materialization)” (Hepp, p. 59). Institutionalization is understood here “not only as the habitualization of social action, but also as a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by particular types of actors” (p. 58). That is, an institution is created by a set of members that carry out certain actions within and related to it. These actions are “objectivated”; turned into non-human phenomena. These phenomena are reificated “as if they were something other than human products” (p. 58). Nevertheless, Hepp makes it clear that this does not imply that media technologies have “autonomous power” outside of human control. Thus, media are neither completely inanimate objects immune to outside influence, nor are they above human control, one-sidedly enforcing their influence on us. Their moulding capabilities exist precisely in their interaction with human influence.

Stig Hjarvard has a slightly more concrete way of describing the institutionalisation of media that is nevertheless built on the same premise. “Mediatization is to be considered a
double-sided process of high modernity in which the media on the one hand emerge as an independent institution with a logic of its own that other social institutions have to accommodate to. On the other hand, media simultaneously become an integrated part of other institutions like politics, work, family, and religion as more and more of these institutional activities are performed through both interactive and mass media» (2008a, p. 105). Hence, the media have become an institution in its own right with its own influencing forces, and at the same time it is moulded by how they are integrated into already existing institutions. The result is seen in how human communication is influenced and changed through media and what effect this has on the social and cultural institutions, as well as society.

1.4.3 Mediatization as method

In Chapter 4 of Cultures of Mediatization, Hepp goes far in outlining necessary considerations for studying mediatized cultures. His theories, simply put, describe how mediatized cultures can be defined through study of complex structures of mediated communication. «This brief outline [...] should make it quite clear where a consideration of the communicative figurations of mediatized worlds is going: it is not simply a matter of describing the appropriation of an individual medium, or a single communication network» (2011, p. 97). Although Hepp, Hjarvard and other scholars are continuing to work on reaching consensus on how mediatization best can be defined and used as a research method, the fact is that mediatization is occurring simultaneously with this process. The earliest instances of mediatization research as we understand it today dates back to the late 1970’s and has particularly focused on TV and mass media, but the processes it describes has been going on since media became a means of communication through the written word, and it has been altered again with the introduction of digital media (Hjarvard, 2008c, p. 16-21). However, as Hepp states, defining the mediatized world is not as simple as studying the impact of one of these media or one specific process of communication.

Hjarvard is one of the scholars that have applied mediatization theory to a variety of institutions, and he has published his results in several books and articles. En verden af medier:
Medialiseringen af politik, sprog, religion og leg (A World of Media: The Mediatization of Politics, Language, Religion and Play) from 2009 does not only contain a comprehensive explanation of the term mediatization, including its history and background, but also in-depth analyses of the mediatization of the institutions mentioned in the title of the book. Although this may not be «a comprehensive introduction to the empirical study of media culture», it is certainly a comprehensive study of media culture within the institutions it discusses, and it also outlines some of the defining features of mediatized society in general that also serve as a basis for empirical study of mediatization.

At the same time, it might be an indication that the need for a major work that can cover all aspects of mediatization, may in fact be less urgent than Hepp suggests in his conclusion. The mediatization process evolves continuously with the introduction of new media, and it affects all institutions differently, not to mention the geographical variations of similar institutions in different countries and areas of the world. As we have seen, different academic fields also interpret and use the concept differently. Thus, a continous assessment drawing on empirical studies of sources relevant to the institution or field under investigation may be a more fruitful approach, something Hepp himself points out at the end of Chapter 4 in his book.

1.4.4 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis falls somewhere in between the sociological and the communication view points presented above. Rather than conducting an empirical analysis of mediatization, I’m applying the theories described by Hjarvard and Hepp in order to find out how the changes that are currently taking place in the library sector look through the panorama of mediatization. Hepp’s work and methodology is largely focused around the micro-aspects of mediatization and the underlying communication processes, whereas Hjarvard is arguably more concerned with changes in society at large. They both, however, emphasise study of concrete communication processes as a necessity for determining mediatization in empirical research. By using the mediatization of society as a premise for my analysis, and not a method as such, I thus remove myself somewhat from both researchers. Nevertheless, Hjarvards theory of the mediatization of
institutions is a good basis for this process, as I will return to in Chapter 3. At present, I will proceed to an examination of the public library sectors of Norway and Denmark.
2 Role and Functions of the Modern Library

In both Norway and Denmark the library sectors have already come a long way in adjusting to a technologised, digitilised and mediatizised society. Over the last century, libraries have gradually incorporated other media beyond printed material into their collections for the benefit of their users. More recently, the awareness of the impact and importance of digitalisation to the sector has affected their work to a large extent. The library is, for example, an important voice in the e-book debate, and both Norway and Denmark’s library sectors have taken local, regional and national steps towards bringing their libraries online and opening up a dialog with their patrons in virtualised environments, or the so-called «hybrid library» (Jochumsen & Rasmussen, 2006, p. 190). Additionally, the library is a strong driving force and actor in the process of the digitalisation of cultural heritage, which is arguably one of the most important activities carried out by the library sector in present time. This is a complex issue in many ways as it is necessary to make decisions that will have a lasting impact in the future regarding issues such as responsibility, format, platforms and licences.

Reports and surveys also show that the «traditional» library remains popular with patrons (Jochumsen & Rasmussen, p. 9), and, even though the borrowing of books and other media is still the main activity (Audunson, 2012), the fact that patrons also visit the library for many different reasons, encourages the public library to explore what these are and how they can be strengthened. In a closer look at the recent history of the library, it appears that this may in fact be a natural consequence of public library development from its early origins around the 1920’s onward. In 2006, Henrik Jochumsen and Casper Hvenegaard Rasmussen published the book *Folkebiblioteket under forandring: Modernitet, felt og diskurs* (The Changing Public Library: Modernity, field and discourse) that summarises the development of the modern public library in Denmark through discourse analysis. They discover that throughout decades of changing political influence on the library and with the increased autonomy of the library as an institution, there has been a gradual shift from a governmental and material oriented library policy («den
moderne fløj», or «the modern wing») toward a society and user oriented library policy («den traditionelle fløj», or «the traditional wing») (p. 94).

Already in the 1990’s they find a major shift in the discourse from one concerning the quality of library material and the library’s educational responsibility to one where the user and future structure of the library is increasingly central. The 1980’s was regarded as a tough decade for the libraries, possibly due to a combination of economic instability and the increased availability of technology and digital information resources (p. 162). Change, or at least a discussion of change, was necessary, which point to the early origins of new medias tremendous influence on the library sector at large. Jochumsen and Rasmussen conclude that today it is the «dynamically focused and experience-oriented» discourse that characterises the library discourse, and in contrast to earlier eras, it is surprisingly united, which possibly promises a more goal- and value oriented library on the whole. The discourse has arguably shifted from an internal dialogue within the sector revolving around values and quality, to trying to establish why and how the library is still relevant and what functions it serves in the changing society.

I will explore how the cultural ministries of Norway and Denmark are working practically towards developing sustainable libraries in their respective countries based on two recent, government reports on the subject. The Norwegian report, «Libraries: Knowledge Commons, Meeting Place and Cultural Arena in a Digital Age», was published by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture (Det kongelige kultur- og kyrkjedepartement) in 2009. This is used alongside an English summary of the report. The Danish report, «Folkebibliotekerne i videnssamfundet» (Public Libraries in the Knowledge Society), was published by the Danish Agency for Culture (Kulturstyrelsen) in 2010. Both reports are thorough, in-depth analyses of the entire public library sector, including financial and legal aspects and the national library sector viewed in an international perspective. For simplification, I may refer to the Norwegian and Danish reports and library sectors simply as «Norway» and «Denmark» respectively.
2.1 Cultural Norway - Heritage meets future

In 2009 the Ministry of Culture in Norway presented a report to the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament) titled «Libraries: Knowledge Commons, Meeting Place and Cultural Arena in a Digital Age». The overall objective of the report is to propose a strategy for how «to develop robust and adaptable libraries that can offer all inhabitants better library services» (p. 9), especially now that the effects of digitalisation has begun to show within the sector. Other important factors that impose influence on the library are the growing information requirements of the knowledge society and changes in demographics of the patrons, as well as the physical requirements and therefore structure of the library.

In the English summary of the report, the highlights and most important finds are outlined. The most valuable functions of the public library are summarised thus: «As an institution type, libraries have a facilitating mission to ensure that information and knowledge is accessible by all and in many different languages. Viewed in this way it may be said that the social role of libraries is where cultural policy, educational policy and a policy to strengthen democracy intersect» (p. 7). Maintaining a «robust» library service also means ensuring that people have a place where they «have access to art and cultural experiences and opportunities to express themselves through art and culture, independent of geography or economic and social divisions» (p. 9). As such, the library’s overall functions are highly important to the democratic society, both from political and cultural points of view.

According to the report, the library must maintain the ability to create a physical meeting place for all people, based on cultural and educational activities, regardless of personal background. As of yet, this meeting place is based on the public need for free access to information, literature and other media as well as to information technology. However, the report considers the possibility that the physical media that is currently available at the library may not be the main attraction for most patrons in the future.
Thus, the social library accommodates a further understanding of what a library is and captures the core of what a library has always done, while the concept also identifies a mission that is becoming increasingly important for libraries in the digital society – to bolster the social functions of the library, the cultural perspective and the library as a public meeting place for all (p. 10).

Many of the actions proposed in the report therefore attempt to see past or extend traditional library functions and have a forward focus.

The report elaborates on certain aspects of the library that together have the potential to keep the library relevant and effective. It is divided into four main perspectives, outlined below. Each category is presented with a list of proposed measures, more or less concrete. The first two categories are mainly concerned with the organisatorial development of the library; how it can adapt to digital platforms and content, and demands for better library services in terms of accessibility, quality of material and qualification of staff. Category three and four on the other hand, focus more directly on the users and how to attract these to the library in the future, as well as how to adjust the library to all types of potential user groups. I will briefly outline the categories and most important suggestions below.

2.1.1 The knowledge commons in a digital age

One of the main objectives presented in this section of the report is developing a national, digital database for locating material and requesting interlibrary loans, called «Biblioteksøk» (Library search). This is presented as an important contribution to closer collaboration between libraries in Norway, which is a central part of the future development of the library. So much so that it has actually been appointed a section of its own within the report. This is also one of the actions that had been worked on the most and was closest to realisation at the time the report was written. Today, the resource allows you to explore the entire collection of library material in Norway, but as of yet only library staff can actually request interlibrary loans through this portal (biblioteksøk.no).
Digitalisation of literary material is also briefly discussed, although this topic is handled more thoroughly in a separate report that was published simultaneously. Creating a national digital collection of all existing works printed in Norway and making this collection publicly and freely available is seen as a necessity and a priority. The digitalisation project, «Bokhylla.no» (The bookshelf), is administered by the National Library and today it is well underway. The public can now freely access over 100,000 books online, out of which 13,000 can be downloaded. In five years, the number is expected to have increased to 250,000 (bokhylla.no).

Finally, access to e-books, peer reviewed research articles and digital music are discussed. All of these are being reviewed but no major actions are suggested until decisions regarding licences and other practical issues have been made. Nevertheless, changes in these areas are expected to have a major impact.

2.1.2 Collaboration and division of responsibility

Closer collaboration between the libraries internally as well as libraries and other sectors, both public and private, are key ingredients in the development of the future library. There is a tendency towards an increased qualification gap between smaller and larger municipalities in Norway with a number of minor libraries that alone will be unable to implement the massive changes that are anticipated by the Ministry in the report. To have any chance of offering their patrons the same diversity of activities and services as larger libraries, they have to be connected to a larger system (p. 101). However, the library legislation states that there should be at least one physical library within every municipality, and the report emphasises that this law should remain in place; closing down smaller libraries is not seen as a viable solution to their resource problems, especially in municipalities with only one library. The Ministry rather suggests a redistribution of responsibility from the county libraries to the county authorities, which, together with increased intermunicipal cooperation, would ensure a more streamlined
and thus higher quality library (p. 107). Trying out different strategies for creative and flexible collaboration between libraries is therefore suggested.

An evaluation of the Library and Information Science education is also suggested, as is a review of the systems for hiring qualified library staff. Areas of particular importance in this regard are, «the development of leaders, marketing strategies for the library, literary communication, digital competency and the library as an arena for learning and culture» (p. 106). The system for hiring library leaders that is currently in place is described as outdated, and indeed was only meant to be a temporary solution that has now been in place for over twenty years. Finally, closer collaboration between archive, library and museum sectors (the ALM field), which is handled in a separate section, is another aspect that may strengthen the Norwegian cultural sector overall. Thus, the two first sections handles a variety of areas that can be summed up by the overall need for closer collaboration and increased qualification within the sector.

2.1.3 The library as a meeting place and arena of learning and culture

Shifting the focus to the public, the Ministry emphasises the importance of availability of media resources to all users irrespective of background, and using the library as a place for teaching digital competency. This will hopefully ensure that all citizens have equal opportunities for utilising digital resources and technological tools as these become increasingly important in society at large.

The Ministry also points out that the library has changed from a place of quiet, individual workplaces, to a meeting place for people of all ages and from different cultures and that this increased social role is central to future development (Norwegian Ministry of Culture, p. 15). As such, the report suggests upgrading the physical library space to accommodate for this type of use, and if possible, by placing the library or parts of the library in central locations such as shopping centres and train stations. Another suggestion is to combine the library with other cultural and learning institutions, such as museums and science centres. It refers to the fact that
newly constructed or recently remodelled libraries in Norway experience an increase in visitors as well as loans, which indicates that such upgrades are important in order to attract new generations of patrons.

Special emphasis is placed on the library as an arena where children from preschool age to upper secondary school can be subjected to literary and cultural education, both in cooperation with educational institutions and independently of these. Already, several projects are in place that focus on communicating the value of literature and promoting a love of reading in children from an early age. These projects have documented value and will continue to receive support from the government.

2.1.4 Library services for all

Specialised library services directed at the indigenous Sami people in the north of Norway, the Roma people, immigrants and other minorities are dependent on the population of these minorities in specific areas. The Sami people have their own library, controlled and funded by the Sami Parliament. Continuation and strengthening of library services catered specifically at minorities, both for integration purposes and in order for immigrants and minorities to maintain a relationship with their original culture is stressed. The Multilingual Library, for example, is a service offered by the Public Library in Oslo, which provides information about library services in a wide variety of languages, as well as administrating interlibrary loans. Additionally, they administer the online service «Bazar», a digital integration resource. One suggestion is to strengthen the physical presence of the Multilingual Library through courses and networking activities.

Library services for physically impaired, like the Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille and libraries in health institutions and prison will be maintained, although the responsibility for library in health care institutions will be transferred to the health service (Norwegian Ministry of Culture, p. 17-18).
2.1.5 Summary

It is clear that the Norwegian Ministry of Culture both recognises the changes that are currently affecting the public library and are willing to accommodate these changes through actions and initiatives. The title of the report highlights what they see as the areas that will require most attention in the coming years, and the report itself substantiates this. Nevertheless, the report provides few concrete measures that can support their visions, especially beyond strengthening traditional services. Although there are many examples of how to use the library as a meeting place and cultural arena, centralised strategies for supporting this function are few.

2.2 Digital Denmark - Tradition meets innovation

The Danish report is undeniably slightly more recent than the Norwegian and several statements in the former suggest that the library development in Denmark is one step ahead of the development in Norway when it comes to implementing new features. First of all, a major municipal reform was carried out in 2007 and this had a significant impact on the Danish library sector. The libraries in Denmark are now fewer but larger, and the results of this change are already beginning to show. Additionally, the report is based on a previous report called «Future library services for children» (my translation, Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier, 2008, p. 6) and both of these aspects were topics still very much under evaluation in Norway. Shared by the reports, however, is the acknowledgement of the changed role of the library from a place for storage of media and quiet study to a place for social, cultural and educational activities.

«The aim of the report is to evaluate the role of public libraries in relation to the challenges of the knowledge society, the globalisation strategy’s focus on education, life-long learning and societal cohesion» (Styrelsen for bibliotek og medier, p. 7). Additionally, the committee evaluates the basis for creating new concepts within the library as well as maintaining traditional roles. However, they do not consider the financial aspects in any great detail, nor do they suggest any changes to current legislation as the current law is from 2000, and they stress that also here, municipalities should remain in charge of library services in their area.
The report poses suggestions for creating a more timely and value-generative library in the aftermath of the closure of many of the smaller libraries in 2006-2007. These suggestions are then prioritised (p. 7). The committee point to several challenges for the future library that deal with many of the same topics as the Norwegian report, and it has been divided into six sections according to the areas they have worked with. The first focus group handles traditional library services. The second deals with traditional services from a digital perspective, and the third deals with digitalisation of printed material. The three remaining categories deal with new and improved services that focus on the library as a learning centre, creating new partnerships and skills development of library staff. These areas have been studied separately and the result is presented through a collection of suggestions divided into five recapitulating sections that I outline below.

2.2.1 Open libraries

The committee argues that the development of the library over the past century has lead to «a more creative and faceted way of conveying literature than ever before» (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier, p. 3). Based on feedback from the users as well as considering the possibility of attracting non-users, literary dissemination is seen as one of the main functions of the library today and already both digital and physical resources are in place to strengthen this function. «The library space is seen as a self-contained medium that must be developed» (p. 56) and the concept used for this development is in Denmark called «Open libraries», which consists of many features, bot physical and virtual.

«Litteratarsiden.dk» (The literature site) is an online resource where literature is discussed and promoted, and it is used by library staff as well as teachers and others. The page cooperates with other media institutions in order to spread its content further. It was relaunched as a web 2.0 site in 2009 in order to allow users to contribute more freely, and overall it is a very popular resource also used within the physical library on display on screens in the library space, and by staff in their daily work (pp. 53-54). Furthermore, activities such as reading circles, collaborative writing projects and writing courses have been employed with great success.
across the nation. Finally, the term is also used to identify libraries that have extended opening hours with no staff present where patrons thus help themselves; a project that has also proven successful (pp. 54-55).

Suggestions for further development includes an increasingly streamlined and offensive promotion of physical material, establishing partnerships based on activities in the library, creating common concepts for activities, and further development of flexible services (p. 56).

2.2.2 Inspiration and learning

This area has been addressed from two different angles; the requirements of the public and the needs of society. Some libraries have thus developed services that support the users in their specific location based on their typical needs, and as they become successful, other libraries have followed their example. On the other hand, society needs to ensure that its members have the means to handle the increasing reliance on technology and information. This effort has boiled down to two specific areas of particular emphasis, namely IT-education and integration. Research shows that immigrants and minorities use the library more frequently than the ethnic Danish population and that they are very positive to the services provided by the library (pp. 51-54).

As such, the potential for using the library as a place of informal learning and integration activities is large, and has indeed been taken advantage of through many specialised activities. Most widespread is «The Digital Citizen», a measure constructed to help people become self-sufficient users of the public service resource «borger.dk». Other IT-teaching activities are carried out by most libraries in varying degrees. The service «Lektiecaféer» (Homework Cafés) is a collaboration between many instances to strengthen bilingual children’s Danish language skills. Likewise, «Bogstart» (Bookstart) is constructed to promote early literacy in underprivileged areas. Free books are handed out on home visits to chosen families and follow-up activities take place in the libraries (pp. 58-59). Several other activities that focus on IT-
education, culture and creativity and information literacy are carried out by many libraries around Denmark (pp. 59-60).

The committee suggests establishing partnerships with local educational organisations, increased focus on IT-education, establishing partnerships conductive for strengthening reading skills in the population and promoting goal-oriented, scheduled activities in the library (p. 61).

2.2.3 The Danish Digital Library

«Netbibliotekerne» (The online libraries) is a common term used for all the internet resources offered by individual libraries or centralised library institutions. These services have been created gradually as a response to digital development and changes in communication. The importance of the presence of libraries online cannot be disputed, but the question is how it should be implemented and which services to offer. The current services include a digital music service (musikbibliotek.dk, now bibzoom.dk), a library portal for children (pallesgavebod.dk) and the already mentioned literatursiden.dk (p. 60-64). Access to these is possible from libraries’ local websites as well as bibliotek.dk, a resource for searching through the complete collection of all Danish libraries and requesting interlibrary loans.

The digital library can be approached in several ways. There are social aspects, such as communicating literature to the users and communication between users and library, for example. Other aspects are how to procure and offer digital resources (literature, film, music etc.) protected by licences, as well as digitalisation and promotion of the Danish cultural heritage. The committee strongly suggests the development of a common portal to cover all of these aspects in order to make all material more accessible to the user. Their idea is that in the «infosphere» that is the internet, in order to get noticed it is important to focus on user needs and not merely the collection of material in itself. To find and offer the user library information that is relevant to where and who they are, the infrastructure needs to be centralised, and cooperation with other online services such as Google, Facebook, Wikipedia and similar is necessary (pp. 64-68).
The committee urges the construction of a common organisation «Danskernes Digitale Bibliotek (DDB)» (Danish Digital Library) for all national library services, created cooperatively by all interested parties. Closer coordination of procurement of digital resources and digitalisation of cultural heritage is necessary, as is closer collaboration with academic and research libraries. Finally, libraries should support and promote free access to material through initiatives such as Open Access and Creative Commons (p. 69).

2.2.4 Partnerships

According to the report, partnerships have always been an important part of the library, but as it is noted, «with increased use of the internet, the library has simultaneously gone from being an information authority to a sought-after sparring partner» (p. 72). Thus partnerships are important for several reasons, as it ensures openness and access to culture for all users and in various forms. The changing information society requires innovation and the acquisition of new skills, something that different partnerships can provide. Additionally, partnerships strengthen the networks between libraries locally, nationally and internationally as well as the relationship between libraries and patrons and the local community (pp. 70-71).

Partnerships can take different forms and the report provides an ample collection of examples from the Danish library sector; from collaboration with volunteers and public services to the public sector, and from educational institutions to the commercial market. Likewise, the physical combination of several cultural or otherwise related institutions in the same building is, like in Norway, considered another important option. The objective of constructive partnerships is that all sides experience mutual gain through efficient and proactive organisation that answer to the stated expectations of all partners (pp. 72-75).

The committee recommends that libraries offer collaboration and form partnerships that strengthen the library and their relationship with patrons and the local community, and that they consider partnerships across the public sector, private sector and civil society alike. Additionally,
partnerships that use digital platforms for communicative purposes are considered important. Finally, the Danish Agency for Culture should aid this process by developing long-term strategies for strengthening the libraries' motivation and ability to enter partnerships (p. 76).

2.2.5 Professional development

«The libraries must act within a world and an organisatorial framework that are changing fast and unpredictably. Simultaneously, information technology permeate all communication and every activity» (p. 77). As such, new skills are required of the library staff, and the strengthening of other skills are equally important. The committee points out two main types of expertise under which several others are categorised. The first is meta-expertise; skills necessary for the library to retain its relevance as an institution of importance to the society and its users. The staff must be able to handle and accommodate for outside changes as they occur, and as a supplement to their professional expertise. This entails «learning and change-adaptation expertise», or skills-development expertise, internal and external relation-handling skills and dialogue and meaning skills (p. 78).

Furthermore, professional skills that are of particular relevance in the current climate are considered. These are aimed at broadening the set of skills within the library and can partially be handled through the employment of newly qualified Library and Information Science specialists where these skills are embedded in the education as well as further education of current staff, and finally, by employment of people with other educational and professional backgrounds. The emphasised areas are related to both traditional skills such as literary dissemination, but also information literacy teaching skills and information technology skills, as well as more untraditional ones, such as marketing and business management skills (pp. 78-79).

The recommendations include that the individual libraries plan how they can support the skill set of the current staff, that common expertise development through central library
organisation is extended and intensified, and that public business management education must include modules for management of cultural institutions.

2.2.6 Summary

The Danish committee has thoroughly researched the current situation and confirmed the changes that they see as most important to develop further through the initiatives that have already been introduced to the sector. Because of this it has been possible for them to suggest certain specific focus points and concrete measures that can ensure future relevance for the public library in the Danish society. Promoting the library as a cultural institution with a variety of functions that are necessary for the continuance of democracy in the present information climate, is at the centre of these measures and whether these are available physically or virtually, are of less, or at least equal importance.

2.3 Conclusion

Both reports place heavy emphasis on developing digital services and competencies as well as increased interlibrary cooperation and streamlining services across regional borders, yet comparison of the reports show that Denmark is arguably ahead of Norway when it comes to implementing many of the suggested measures, whereas the library sector in Norway has a slightly different focus from the Danish.

Additionally, both aim to strengthen the library’s social function in society. Where Denmark seems to concentrate more on digital literacy and social integration, Norway however, places emphasis on the traditional role as mediator of culture and literature. Nevertheless, there are more similarities than differences between the reports, especially regarding the aspects that emphasise the library as a meeting place for informal learning and interaction. This is perfectly in line with the development of the discourse discussed by Jochumsen and Rasmussen, where this «becomes increasingly evident by the amount of literature describing future libraries that focus on experience, learning, and the library as a meeting place, all wrapped up in spectacular architecture» (p. 216).
Even though both reports are divided into four or five main categories, a general division that corresponds for both reports is possible; for the purposes of this thesis I have chosen to identify these as 1) the library content, 2) the library infrastructure and 3) the social functions of the library. The library content concerns the material available (both physical and digital) and the organisation of this. The infrastructure deals with how the library sector is organised, and finally the social functions describe the role of the library in society. Due to the nature of the information society, these necessarily overlap, but as a general distinction the first two categories deal very much with the practical functions and structure of the library and the latter with a more value-oriented functionality.

In the modern library, there is little direct conflict between these areas, rather, they are equally important and mutually influence each other. From a mediatization perspective, the third category is more likely to be affected by the metatheoretical aspects of mediatization, whereas the technical aspects of category 1 and 2 exemplify the actual moulding forces of the media, as discussed in section 1.4. In other words, the content and infrastructure are affected by how the library adjusts to technological development through how it is organised and run, whereas the social functions are partly the result of these changes, and partly develop relatively independent of these as a result of the change in the overall society. In the next chapter, I will discuss how digital media are influencing the library through examples taken from all three categories.
3 Analysis

3.1 Mediatization on the institutional level

From a sociological point of view, «mediatization is a distinct late-modern process» and thus «a theory of the importance of the media for culture and society is no longer an interesting possibility, but an absolute necessity» (Hjarvard, 2008a, pp. 132-133). In the opening chapter of *En verden af medier* (2009), Stig Hjarvard, like Hepp, discusses the micro and macro aspects of the mediatization process. The microsocial level, or the interpersonal level, is where mediated communication between two or more individuals, or from an institution to one or more individuals occur (Hjarvard, 2008a, p. 122). The microsocial level is arguably where empirical research can best be carried out, by tracking and analysing changes in interpersonal communication (p. 110), and although media certainly affect how users communicate with the library and how the library communicates with users, this is nevertheless not the main purpose here.

On the macrosocial, or institutional level, on the other hand, Hjarvard discusses three ways in which media influence on society is particularly visible. First, media provide an interface for communication «within and between institutions». Secondly, they constitute a «realm of shared experience», and finally, they contribute to the construction of a «political public sphere». In other words, “the three functions of the media on the macrosocial level are to serve as a nexus between institutions, as an interpretive frame for understanding society, and as an arena in which members of a society can discuss and decide matters of common interest» (pp. 125-126). In this chapter I work from the presupposition that we have reached a stage where we can assume that the mediatization of society is an actual on-going process of which it is possible to study results.

In order to continue, however, a clarification of the term «institution» is necessary. As already mentioned in section 1.4., Hepp and Hjarvard have slightly different interpretations of
the institutionalisation of media and the mediatization of institutions. According to Hjarvard, media has on the one hand become an institution in its own right with its own «media logic» that enforces its «institutional, technological and expressive characteristics» (p. 126) on other institutions, an idea that corresponds somewhat to Hepps «moulding forces of the media» The latter is nevertheless sceptical to the use of the term media logic» which he finds to inflexible on the media’s behalf. As media is constantly developing and affects institutions differently through their different uses, he finds «moulding forces» more descriptive of the actual process, whereas «media logic» implies a finite set of attributes with specific consequences (Hepp, p. 45). On the other hand institutions are being affected and moulded by their use of media, particularly for communication purposes, and the institutions usually studied by sociologists are often complex structures with one or more specific social function within society, such as politics, family, art and religion.

The library as an institution is, on the other hand, of a more concrete nature, a physical place with a preliminary practical function that nevertheless has come to serve certain social functions in society, such as being a meeting place and an arena for cultural and learning activities. As such, it is a place where other institutions intersect, creating an interesting «hub» of communication across institutions in itself, with information and entertainment media at the centre of its activities. You could almost claim that in a traditional mediatization sense, the library is more similar to the media than to the institutions usually studied. As the mediatization of other institutions are now more or less a fact, the mediatization of cultural institutions such as the library, become all the more visible. In other words, the mediatization of society at large is also visible in the changes that are occurring in the library.

Chapter 1 of En verden af medier (2009) is to a large extent identical to the article «The Mediatization of Society» (2008a), which is written in English, and as such I will mainly quote from the latter below. The headlines of the first two sub-chapters are borrowed from «The Mediatization of Society», whereas the latter sub-chapter’s headline and quotes are translated from En verden af medier. The analysis follows Hjarvards theories to a large extent.
3.1.1 The interfaces between institutions

According to Hjarvard, all institutions have an autonomous and a heteronomous pole, where the former is characterised by what is unique to that institution and the heteronomous is where it overlaps or is influenced by other institutions. As such, «any empirical analysis of mediatization should [...] enquire whether, and to what extent, other institutions (conceived here as fields) stand to win or lose autonomy in relation to other fields» (2008a, p. 127). He is referring here to Bourdieus’ theories of institutions as autonomic fields within society and how these may influence each other. Increased influence of one field over another causes increased loss of autonomy within the latter institution or field. «The degree of mediatization may be measured according to how much the respective field’s autonomous pole has weakened; eventually, some fields will lose their autonomy entirely» (p. 126). As we will see, media as an institution can either influence other institutions directly, or through its position as a communication resource between different institutions.

3.1.2 A realm of shared experience

Another institutional feature of the media is their ability to present the same message to a large group of people and thereby uniting them through a common experience. «The media are the symbolic mortar that make the individual components seem to be a cohesive social whole». At the same time though, «the creation of a common experiential frame of reference is not just a matter of adding something new and shared; it is also a matter of eroding and doing away with previous experience and culture» (p. 127). Hjarvard claims that the media has influenced society to such an extent that it has not only replaced old forms of communication, but also by extension our sense of the society we are part of. Because the media has the ability to reach people nationwide and worldwide, the media has changed and all but erased many local and traditional structures and replaced them with larger, further-reaching systems (p. 127).

Other social scientists find this development problematic due to the potentially manipulative powers of the media, and they stress how these do not only have the power to change individual institutions, but also enforce change across all institutions. «The media have
an essentially ideological power to describe society in a way that seems the only ‘natural’ way to comprehend it. [...] In other words, media not only describe the world, they provide basic categorical frameworks through which we apprehend it» (p. 128). This power is indeed overwhelming to consider and possibly ominous, but as Hjarvard points out, it depends on how it is wielded. As media is mutually influenced by other institutions, the result may be far from negative when considering the democratic possibilities this undeniably entails.

On a more concrete level, however, mass communication media may be responsible for increasing sensationalism through its very media logic, to use Hjarvards term. «Journalism uses language in ways designed to catch people’s attention, and as other social institutions adopt journalistic functions to help them communicate better with the world around them, they will successively assimilate both the language and ideology of journalism» (p. 128). The risk is of course that employing such an ideology for communication across institutions may influence the content of what is being communicated negatively and lead to misleading representations.

3.1.3 A political public sphere

Editors, journalists, political analysts, and others have established themselves as actors in the political process, and newspapers’ comment pages, debate shows on radio and television, online blogs and news distribution in general, have become important arenas for forming political opinions. (Hjarvard, 2008c, my translation, p. 52).

As more and more of the political debate become public through the media, the political sphere is also spreading to other institutions in society. Thus, an increasing amount of institutions deem it necessary to be part of the political public and incorporate information and communication departments who’s daily work is to communicate outward on behalf of their institution (p. 53).

The media does not only contribute to political debate, it also monitors the decision-making process, the execution of resolutions made, and its results. «Society undergoes a general mediatization as a result of the medias central role in forming political opinion and for
ensuring the public consent to political resolutions» (p. 53). This rings true for all institutions that partake in the public formation of political opinion (something that all institutions must do in order to remain relevant), and it is therefore vital for institutions to be able to present their standpoint properly in public and introduce corrective measures if they find themselves «under attack» from the media (p. 52).

In the following sections, I will look at three different examples of media’s influence in the library based on the data from the reports: 1) digital media in the library, 2) centralisation and collaboration, and 3) the multimedial children’s library. In order to go into some detail, not all aspects of the modern library that were outlined in Chapter 2 have been discussed further. Rather, I have chosen examples that illustrate Hjarvards different macro-social levels particularly well as well as representing the different functions of the modern library. The examples also highlight some of the major differences in library development between Norway and Denmark.

3.2 Digital mediatization in the library

Generally, media is an essential resource in many of the library functions, but not only as a means of communication. Indeed, the library is arguably wholly media-centred as its daily activities revolve around books, films, audiobooks, music as well as other printed material. Changes in media therefore causes changes in the library, and lately this has in no instance been more visible than with the increased popularity of e-books. Market changes in the book industry due to this new medium is affecting the future library as well as the present. What Kristian Meisingset predicts (as discussed in the Introduction), and many advocates of the traditional library fear, is that the library is risking complete loss of autonomy due to the digitalisation of information and entertainment media in most of its forms.
3.2.1 The e-book debate

If the library was only an arena for storing, organising and distributing physical media in a physical space, these predictions would be warranted according to Hjarvard and Bourdieu’s theories, where the digitalisation process possibly results in a complete loss of autonomy, and therefore the ultimate demise of the library. It would not be unlikely that continuation of the rapid digitalisation seen at present would render the need for physical libraries unnecessary in the long run (time estimations at this stage are as impossible as they are useless). If this does come to pass, Meisingset’s streaming library is indeed one possible replacement of the physical library.

Although physical copies of music and films are still very much available today, in the music industry, as Meisingset points out, this process has come much further and shows how online purchase and streaming, as well as piracy and illegal downloads, are taking over the market from physical media retailers. The television and film industry is quickly catching up by offering online content, especially through recent services such as Netflix, which allows users to stream TV-programs and films directly to their home-TV (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier, p. 30). Nevertheless, Meisingset is comparing the music industry to the library, but the library as an institution does not represent the commercial book industry; it is rather part of the market. According to his logic, it is in fact the book industry that faces the largest immediate effects of (or threats from) the e-book. Indeed, the library is eager to buy and distribute e-books to its patrons, but as the situation is today, the relationship between the industry and the library sector is problematic, and the regulations are so far restricting rather than enabling from a library point of view.

Both the Danish and Norwegian reports emphasise the importance of functional, accessible and comprehensive e-book solutions in the library. Since the reports were published, e-books have been introduced into the library in Norway, and the e-book system that was already in place in Denmark has gone through some major changes. At the moment the solutions are trial projects with very limited lifetimes in order to ensure the legal rights of all
parties involved, to be able to make larger amendments, and in order to analyse the results. Nevertheless, the difference between the projects is rather striking, mostly due to their choice of models. In early 2012, the Norwegian National Library published a status report of e-books in the library that not only outlines the situation in Norway at the time, but also in the other Nordic countries. Although there are several different models for e-book agreements, the author divides these into two main categories: «the licence model» and «the rental model». In Norway, the licence model has been most prominent, but in Denmark and Sweden, which both have had e-books in the library for the past ten years, the systems are based on the rental model (Gundersen, p. 19).

In Norway the progression has been rather cautious, starting with only a very limited number of e-books available to a very limited number of libraries. In the latest agreement, the national purchasing system used to select books for the library every year, only 30 copies out of a 1000 are e-books. These are distributed to patrons through selected libraries. The trial is set to end in the summer 2013 but the project has barely started as the limited amount of e-books only allow a limited number of libraries to participate, and several libraries have experienced problems with practical and technological issues such as implementation. The e-books should according to the agreement initially be under the same licence regulations as paper books, but in the recent renegotiations, the Norwegian Publishers Association insisted that e-books be exempt from interlibrary loans if the project was to be renewed. The Norwegian Library Association refused this alteration, and the negotiations collapsed (Ericson, A. 2012). Simultaneously, the General Office for Public Libraries (Biblioteksentralen) has developed the system «BS Weblån» (Webloan) that can be implemented in individual or smaller groups of libraries. Weblån does not only offer books, but also the possibility of lending digital audiobooks and music files. The General Office negotiate terms and sign agreements with publishers on behalf of the libraries, and unless the associations can renegotiate in order to find a national solution, it looks like this will be the best option for libraries who wish to offer e-books to patrons in the upcoming years (Gundersen, p. 9).
In Denmark, the previously existing e-book solution, which consisted of two different systems, was replaced by «eReolen.dk» (The eShelf) in 2011. This system is national and allows users to borrow e-books from any library in Denmark through interlibrary loans. Thus far, books have been available for download in the library as soon as they become available in shops. Unless the library has chosen otherwise, the loans have been unlimited, as the libraries pay a fee to the publishers per «rental», i.e. per download. The project was an immediate success with patrons but has been cause for concern both within the book industry and the library sector. To publishers, the success has already visibly affected sales in the relatively short life span of the project, and smaller libraries are worried that the cost of «renting out» unlimited copies of popular books will become an unmanageable cost. In Denmark too, the negotiations between the Danish Publishers Association and the public libraries collapsed. Nevertheless, eReolen continues to exist, now through agreements directly with the publishers (Forlæggerforeningen1).

The caution that is exercised in Norway thus seems to have its benefits, as it allows the sector to draw on experiences in other countries. Nevertheless, the libraries suffer under the risk of falling behind the times, and the patrons are getting increasingly impatient with what is experienced as lack of initiative from the library’s side, when compared to both Denmark and Sweden as well as the UK and USA, where the e-book development has come much further. On the other hand, the willingness in Denmark, from all parties involved, to try out a liberal model is in some respects more useful considering that the results can be analysed, and hence the solutions can be modified where necessary without shutting them down altogether. As such, the libraries and the industry are building experience and competence and the patrons have a library offer that live up to the expectations of the information society.

Thus, the e-book as a medium is not currently a direct threat to the autonomy of the library as an institution, but it has severe implications for the relationship between the book industry and the library sector. After decades of having a stable relationship, they must now redefine their roles and find solutions that protect the interests of everybody. Publishers experience a
threat to their autonomy by the increased power of the library as distributor of literature through new media platforms, but the implications are wider still. Not only would unlimited, free access to all new published literature through the library surely damage the revenue of the publishers; retailers (physical as well as online) and authors would of course also be greatly affected by such a scenario. This could in turn have long term effects on the book industry as a whole, including the libraries, and even possibly be a threat to literary diversity in small countries like Norway and Denmark where the majority of authors would find it hard to make a living.

3.2.2 The e-book debate in online media

The e-book issue has also brought the library a lot of attention in online media and created debate not only within the book industry, but in the public in general. In fact, in 2012 the debate has been prominent within the book industry in all the Nordic countries. Additionally, in line with Hjarvards ideas of a realm of shared experience and a political public sphere, the debate itself has also been shaped by the way the arguments and developments have been presented both by the mass media, but also by both sides of the conflict in various media channels. The latter to the extent that the Norwegian Library Association is concerned about how the information is perceived by actual decision-makers and politicians. «We believe that the distribution of digital media is a natural part of the library’s mission, and wish that national politicians receive information and knowledge about the library and e-books directly from the library sector, not just the media» (Kure & Hjorten, 2012, my translation). As the quote shows, the Library Association is worried that the media is not presenting an accurate rendition of the debate, but is focusing on attracting readers and emphasising the conflict rather than communicating the facts.

In Sweden, the Swedish Library Association took matters into its own hands as the conflict between publishers and libraries came to a head. In June this year they published an advertisement in the newspaper DN where they openly attacked the publishers and at the same time challenged politicians to take a stand. The advertisement itself makes use of strong graphical means in order to influence the reader by portraying an unpleasant-looking businessman in a suit on a dark grey background. The heading reads, «Say hello to your new librarian»
and the accompanying text concludes thus: «Your new librarian likes money more than books and owns a large publishing firm. Is this acceptable? What do our politicians have to say?» (Biblioteksforeningen.se, 2012). This is a prime example of how the media has become a public sphere for political and institutional debate and it also shows how the Swedish Library Association has adopted the journalistic media logic in order to influence both the public and the politicians in order to further their cause.

On the Danish Publishers Association news page, the association laments a similar attack, though not as open, made on them by the Danish Library Association after the publishers pulled out of the existing agreement and negotiations consequently fell through. «We see this as very unproductive to a constructive dialog, and it will hardly serve the positive cultural policy intentions to dig unnecessary ditches between parties who in the future should work together on the public’s right to borrow e-books» (Forlæggerforeningen2). As in Sweden, the Library Association accused certain publishers of having no desire to make e-books accessible to the public through the library, and thereby breaking with cultural policy intentions and, by extension, resisting democracy. For the library, the increase in media attention is undeniably positive as it helps make the public aware of what the modern library can offer. Additionally, they «serve on the side of the public» as they are defending the right to free information in all forms to all citizens, whereas the publishers have become «the enemy» as they are unwilling to «serve democracy» in their hunt for profit. Yet, their aggressive, open attacks may be accused of damaging an important relationship as it becomes apparent that the conflict is not really about if there should be e-books in the library but how.

3.2.3 Commercialisation and library visibility online

Another concern that has been presented in connection with the e-book conflict, is the actual systems and platforms that are used for accessing and borrowing digital material in the library. Here too, the Danish and Norwegian library sectors have chosen to invest their resources differently. They both acknowledge the importance of the library’s presence online, yet the Danish especially highlights the need for national, streamlined online services that
aggressively target the users. «As libraries must promote education, enlightenment and cultural activities through the internet, close cooperation and constant development is necessary» (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier, p. 32), this at the possible expense of digitalisation of and free access to cultural inheritance (p. 31). The latter, as mentioned earlier, is contrastingly prioritised much higher in Norway and has resulted in the service «bokhylla.no» where anybody, not only library patrons, can access a constantly growing portion of digitalised print material. The National Library estimate that the project will be finished (that is, the entire collection of material printed and stored in Norway will be digitalised) in about 25 years. In Denmark they are currently deciding which parts of the cultural inheritance that are most important and relevant for the future. Only these will be digitalised.

In the e-book debate, one of the accusations towards eReolen is that it is too oriented towards bestsellers, which for many is against the traditional objectives of the library and target the commercial market too aggressively. Some feel that the library should remain neutral to, or indeed avoid promotion of, literature that is at the top of the bestseller lists, and focus on mediating less known yet high quality works, classics and so on. At the moment, many bestsellers are gone from eReolens «shelves» as many of the larger publishers have recently pulled out, but the solution itself is of impressive quality with an intuitive user interface and terms and conditions that I believe would impress even Meisingset. Similarly, their online music service «bibzoom.dk» lets library patrons stream, download and play more than 10 million music tracks including the newest top hits as well as 50 year old Danish commercials. Only music from Universal Music and Sony Music is restricted to a certain amount of downloads per month (bibzoom.dk) and the only other requirement is that users belong to a library that subscribes to the service.

As more of the library’s material become available online and the platforms and interfaces presented to the patrons become increasingly user friendly, the libraries will naturally want to attract more users to these services. «The library must ensure that it appears on the users’ preferred platform when relevant, whether it is Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia or
Google» (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier, p. 64). The commercial market and the libraries are of course both dependent on attracting users and buyers, but when retailers and libraries are competing for the same people on the same arena, the library’s influence on the commercial market becomes more immediate. Imagine for example the effects of a Google search for famous Danish author Jussi Adler-Olsen’s recent novel *Fasandræberne* (in English, *Disgrace*), where sponsored adds comes up for both the libraries and retailers, and the user can just as easily download the book from the library as purchase a physical or digital copy in an online store. If the only difference is that the users have to physically go to a library to register for a library card before they can start using the service, something that may also change in time, this appears as a rather small price to pay for availing of such a service. The libraries defend their strategies and development in this regard:

> According to library regulations, the public libraries are required by law to give the public free access to all types of material, physical as well as digital. This law ensures free and equal access to material and information which it is essential that everybody in the knowledge society has access to. The role of the library is thus to secure access to knowledge and information for all citizens, as a premise for a democratic society. (Danmarks bibliotekforening, 2012b).

Nevertheless, they recognise the current need for certain restrictions and a certain degree of caution, both when it comes to e-book availability and the general commercialisation of the library itself. In the article «Stop the digital panic!» (my translation), which is quoted above, the Danish Library Association states that the libraries are not commercial institutions and should therefore not pose any competition to the commercial market. They encourage all affected parties to meet and work in unison in order to find a solution that ensures both the public’s continued access to library material and a fair income for artists (Danmarks bibliotekforening, 2012b).
On his blog, owner of the publishing firm Replikant, Toke Riis Ebbesen, muses on a possible solution that he means would suit the future (digital) book industry better than a mere imitation of today’s regulations for paper books, which is artificial when comparing the costs of producing digital media to the cost of producing paper books. He suggests that increasing the price per download for popular literature will help regulate both the market and the library activity. «In the long run, it will create a more pluralistic publishing tendency, where it is possible for publishers to publish quality literature to a much larger extent […]. It will make it more rewarding to be a librarian, because it will be about promoting quality literature to the users again. It would also be more likely that the Danish book industry will still exist in 10 years time» (Ebbesen, 2012). This is just an idea from an individual who is part of the process, but it does illustrate just how much has changed, as well as the necessity for radical thinking in order to create sustainable markets in the new information society.

Just as piracy has affected music and film sales, not to mention said industries’ new strategies to counteract this development, a library that offers easy and free access to digital media constitutes a possible threat to the retailers, publishers and even authors. Indeed, the shift from physical to digital media has brought with it a general public idea of media and information as something that should be acquired cheaply or freely and that «everything» should be searchable and accessible online. The Open Access movement that is taking place in the academic world to promote free access to peer-reviewed material is another example of this development (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier, p. 80) This breaking down of physical barriers of information access as well as the shift in public understanding is not only evidence of Hjarvards mediatized realm of experience. It also shows how the autonomy of the library is strengthened through its increased visibility and relevance in the mediatized world as a promoter and access point for free media and information in many variations. As the digitalisation of media continues to influence society, the result of this type of mediatization will possibly force the book industry into new structural forms, just like it has with film and music.

3.3 Centralisation and collaboration in the library sector
One of the major changes that has affected the library in recent years, is the continuous process of increased centralisation of the sector and collaboration between libraries and other institutions. Both reports show that it is regarded as essential for the survival of the library to not only strengthen the bonds within the sector, but also to interact more closely with other sectors, both commercial and public. This trend, according to Hjarvard, is not isolated to certain specific institutions, but a global process that can in part be attributed to mediatization. «The media creates a world that is at once general and empirical. The world appears as a general whole (like «Denmark» or «Copenhagen») and as something concrete, accessible and perceptible» (2008c, p. 50). Furthermore, this world has its own «language» and concepts that it uses for communication. Institutions simply cannot afford to appear as outside of this whole. From presenting the entire world to an audience through radio and TV, to global two-way communication via the internet (p. 50), media has in many ways broken down the smaller, localised sense of community where within libraries arguably had roles that were more easily defined.

As was discussed in the previous section, «as the libraries buy increasing amounts of internet-based content in the shape of e-books, net based music and online film, the character of the traditional library collection changes. We are talking about a change from «collections to connections» - or from collection to server» (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier, p. 100). Both the Norwegian and Danish library legislation’s object clause states that the library’s purpose is to «promote information, education and other cultural activity» (p. 13) but as the information load is increasing so rapidly and so extensively, this puts increased pressure and responsibility on the library to provide more and better information in an environment that can live up to the patrons standards and expectations. This development is seen clearly in both countries, but due possibly to the way the public library sector is already structured, their approach to a more unified library is developing differently and at different speeds.
3.3.1 The united national library

In Norway, the public library's interaction with other libraries, especially research and education libraries, is fairly sporadic. They are not governed by common legislation, like in Denmark, there is instead a separate law for public libraries. Collaboration is still centred around interlibrary loans but the possibility of a more united library sector is now being explored, particularly with regards to communication systems. «Current practice for interaction between different library types is to some extent marked by having been developed in times where telephone and post were the only means of communication» (p. 5), writes Ragnar Audunson in the report «En sømløs biblioteklov for sømløse bibliotekstjenester?» (Seamless library legislation for seamless library services?) from 2004. In the report, he evaluates the need for a review of Norwegian library legislation in favour of a common law for the whole sector, including public, academic and research libraries that receive government support. By regulating library practice from above, such a law would influence and increase cooperation between different library types, rather than the more random, local organisation that has been the case so far. As he points out, the change in communication media indicates that a change in the way libraries interact with each other must follow.

«The vision of a united library sector is a result of the information society. But there are development trends within this society that create [...] cultural differences, and can make it difficult to carry out this vision» (Audunson as cited in Audunson, p. 10). The cultural differences mentioned are linked to the specific roles of different types of libraries. Academic and research libraries are administrated by their parent institution and thus subject to their overall goals and primary users' needs, whereas the public library is administrated through local municipalities and serves the public's needs. Uniting the library sector may thus cause conflict between the institutions as their goals, objectives and financial situation are very different from each other.

Another reason Audunson is reluctant to endorse the suggested change to the law, is lack of data about students use of the public library and the public's use of the academic libraries. Nevertheless, the report concludes by suggesting a new library legislation that includes all state
supported libraries, including academic and research libraries. Mark also, that the above quote is from 1991 and the report itself is from 2004. Although this is not a large timespan as such, it indicates how rapidly things are changing and reminds us that the explosion in digital media and internet use had still not happened at that stage. As these institutional borders are arguably blurred by digital communication, a new library law in Norway that accounts for these changes seems all the more necessary, especially when comparing the service «biblioteksøk.no» to «bibliotek.dk».

As the mediatization process continues, the limitations enforced by the above restrictions no longer make sense for increasingly many members of the information society. One of the most obvious and fundamental changes to society with regards to new media, is that the internet is now the first place people consult when searching for any type of information, whether it is for education, research, news or entertainment purposes. There is also an expectation of finding «everything» online, and for the library this means being able to provide not only material from the local library, but from the library sector at large.

In Norway where it is decided by law that all municipalities must have at least one library, it is unlikely that the smaller libraries alone will be able to keep up with this pressure within their limited resources. The Ministry acknowledges this, and some of the solutions suggested are stronger county libraries and a clear, national strategy (Det kongelige kultur- og kyrkjedepartement, p. 101). Although the tradition for interlibrary loans is strong, it is therefore disconcerting that the online system «biblioteksøk» for example, which is considered of utmost importance in this regard, is today still not developed to its full potential from a user-perspective (see section 2.1.). A strategy for a common national digital solution, whether for public libraries only or for the entire sector, is not mentioned specifically in the parts of the report that considers cooperation and resource sharing. Rather the suggested strategy is as follows: «The Norwegian Ministry of Culture will stimulate collaboration and cooperation solutions in the library network locally and regionally» (p. 110), meaning that although the call for change comes from above,
the actual change will have to come from below with the regional and local library sectors finding solutions that works for them individually.

Contrastingly, in Denmark the idea of a common Danish Digital Library (DDB) is today one step closer to realisation. Many of the main components (bibliotek.dk, eReolen, bibzoom etc.) have been tested and strengthened, but the main framework is not yet in place. In March 2012 however, the Ministry of Culture and the Danish Agency for Culture published a report that sums up the progress so far, and makes recommendations for further development. Although the 2010 report emphasises the need for a national system, the 2012 report concludes that it should be voluntary for libraries to use the service. Nevertheless, the goal is that close to 90% of the Danish population have access to the service through their local library within three years (Kulturministeriet & Kulturstyrelsen, p. 52). Thus, the decisions and the change comes from above, while the libraries still have the option not to join and instead create their own solutions, possibly in collaborations with other libraries in the same region. This in itself makes it easier for the Danish library sector to form a united, streamlined entity.

Mediatization of society is not alone the cause of this development, but the laws and structures that were already in place in the respective countries have a large effect on what development is possible within the current system. The Danish library legislation from 2000 is relatively new compared to the Norwegian from 1985, and in combination with their tradition for «detail management» (Audunson, 2004, p. 13) it means that it is better adjusted to new media influence. Additionally, state governing means that decisions can be made faster and affect more people simultaneously. This model is arguably better suited to the rapid and extensive changes that are currently taking place. As such, the Danish united library can be said to be more mediatized than the Norwegian. It is more visible online and its resources have a more modern expression. As a result, the concerns that the library is becoming more commercialised is also more prominent here than in Norway, as discussed in the previous section.
Nevertheless, a consultation paper regarding changes to the existing library law from 1985 is currently under consideration by relevant parties in Norway. According to Odd Letnes, the editor of library journal «Bok og bibliotek», the suggested amendments do incorporate many changes recommended in the 2009 report toward the hybrid library, which is better adjusted to the mediatized society. Interestingly though, Audunsons recommendations from 2004 have not been followed, somewhat to Letnes’ alarm, especially regarding the «e-book thriller», where a large part of the library sector is calling out for state guidance and leadership in a situation that has immense influence on the entire sector and many related institutions. Instead, the law will according to Letnes remain «neutral to technology» (2012).

3.3.2 Open and closed libraries

In reference to Anthony Giddens theory of modernisation, Hjarvard talks of a «an ongoing ‘disembedding’ of societal structures [as] parochial and traditional cultures are broken up, fall into oblivion, and are transformed through contact with the larger, modern world». Similarly, «media’s creation of a new, shared national realm of experience may, to use Giddens’ terminology, be conceived of as a ‘re--embedding’ of social interaction on a more a [sic] general and abstract level than once characterized erstwhile place--bound cultures» (2008a, p. 127). In terms of the Danish library, this has not only lead to a united, digital library, it has possibly also lead to a rapid decline in physical libraries. First as a planned result of the municipal reform, but even despite the fact that the library continues to be a popular service among citizens, the number of libraries in Denmark is still declining fast.

The work in the library of the knowledge society is less organised around the construction and care of a collection of books and material and more towards developing services and activities in collaboration with many partners on the basis of the users’ many different needs. (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier, p. 6)

«The increased focus on users and the new responsibilities means that the library to a larger extent must attract users and external partners in the adaptation of new library services» (p. 79).
The committee gives many examples of successful cooperation between Danish libraries and other external institutions. These illustrate that there is mutual gain involved in collaborative projects with other sectors (not just the cultural) and indeed that the increasingly common language between institutions of different types facilitates this process (p. 71). Most of the examples from the report are constructed in order to offer different user groups an extended library service, whether cultural, professional or educational. Many are based around digital media and instruction, others are combinations of interaction in the physical library, web 2.0 and on social media, and some projects are collaborations between the libraries and media institutions such as film and TV.

This has created a demand for library staff that has a set of skills different to that of the traditional librarian; increasingly focused around information technology, communication media and marketing and leadership, as discussed in section 2.2.5. «Public enterprises have to demonstrate that they can offer proper services to the citizens, so they hire information consultants in order to communicate more openly outward, and they publish documentation online on everything from waiting lists to exam averages» (Hjarvard, 2008c, p. 53). This is seen particularly well on many library websites where the librarians post information about activities that take place in the physical library and produce literary reviews and recommendations and other metadata about the material they provide. At the same time, many librarians are contributing to the virtual community through blogs about their local library and the library sector at large. At the basis however, is still the fundamental library mission to «promote information, education and other cultural activity» (p. 13). This is also the basis of the development strategy for traditional services in the modern library that the Danish have named «Open Libraries».

Naturally, the digital mediatization of the library is not without consequence to the physical library and the activities that take place there. An open library means a library that to a larger degree focuses on literary communication and social activities for users now that «an increasingly large part of traditional services are internet based, the traditional administration of loans is automated and based increasingly on the patrons’ self service» (p. 51). Statistics used
in the report show that the Danish use and appreciate both their physical and their digital library services, and although the number of loans of physical materials is decreasing, the number of visits remains stable. This shows that «the libraries have been successful in readjusting and renewing themselves in order to remain attractive» (p. 6) and even though Norway is arguably not as «adjusted» as Denmark with regards to renewing themselves, the figures are similar there. As previously mentioned, the numbers are especially positive for remodelled or entirely new libraries, built after a similar strategy.

The new library legislation from 2000 and the mentioned municipal reform in 2007 have both had great impact on the library sector in Denmark. The effect of the closure of 300 public libraries as a result of the municipal reform was evaluated in a report on the subject published by Styrelsen for bibliotek og medier in 2008. Based on studies of the library sector a year later and from many different angles, the closure is described as «an element in the general development of the structure in the sector and the collective library service» (p. 29). The 2009 report supports this conclusion and bases many suggestions on the results of the former report. Nevertheless, the closing of decentralised libraries have continued and the media has shown a different side to this process that highlights that users in the areas where the libraries are closing, are in fact being deprived of the services the libraries are committed to provide (Politiken.dk, 2011).

Although providing better services for the users in the information society is the main focus, the Danish report also reveals that many users are happy with the service they already had. The report highlights the modern library «wishlist» based on a user survey, where more activities, library cafés, enlarged collections of electronic media and books, and increased opening times top the list. Arguably, the numbers are significant and they are definitely indicative of what the future library should consider, but the report fails to mention that as many as 36% of the men and 26% of the women wanted none of the 18 choices on the list. This does not necessarily indicate that they do not appreciate these potential services, but that the library already has a satisfactory service, also when it comes to activities, digital services and so on.
As smaller libraries do not have the means to support «a more active role in communication» (Letnes, O.), both reports suggest that libraries that are otherwise unsustainable become «automised», another aspect of the open library that allows libraries to be self-serviced and thus stay open late without staff present. However, this is not coherent with the idea of offering all citizens the library services they have the right to or utilising the library as a meeting place and educational arena. Danish newspaper Politiken’s Paul Aarøe Pedersen asks if «we can still leave it up to the municipalities to make the large decisions regarding libraries, or if we need a national strategy or new minimal regulations for the library sector». Similarly in Norway, Odd Letnes is worried that as long as the structural and financial support from a higher authority fail to appear, smaller libraries will continue to struggle to remain relevant. At the core of this problem, according to Letnes, is the possible necessity that the general perspective is lifted from local to national (2012).

As some libraries become more «open», ever more physical libraries are closing down. This can in part be ascribed to economic circumstances as the financially hard-pressed municipalities in both countries redistribute library funds to other areas and thus have to close down several of the smaller library branches within the municipality. Nevertheless, a common argument for the continued relevance and importance of the decentralised, public library is that it ensures access to free information for all citizens, an important role in the democratic society, and it is also promoted as an important cultural meeting place and arena for informal, lifelong education. Both of these roles (still) require the presence of physical libraries, but despite being an important foundation stone and the most popular public cultural institution in both Norway and Denmark, financial support to keep struggling libraries open is lacking. Applying the mediatization panorama to this scenario, it is possible that we are seeing the result of the disembedding of the local library in favour of the digital, alongside the re-embedding of social interaction from a physical to a virtual space.
3.4 The multimedial children’s library - Digital culture

Creating a library service that can live up to the expectations and demands of the information society is, as we have already seen, a challenging undertaking. When financial and political restraints are also taken into consideration, the challenge increases manifold. I have already discussed certain aspects of the modern library with regards to the infrastructural and material changes that are influenced by the general mediatization of society. The further development of these are going to be important, although it is still not possible to say exactly how. Luckily, the task for politicians, library staff and the sector at large is not to create a completely new cultural and informational institution adapted to a society we still only know the contours of, but to build on and further develop, concurrently with ongoing changes in society, a service that is already used and appreciated by a large share of the population.

Finally therefore, I will focus on the younger generation of library visitors. Todays children will be the first generation that is «born digital»; who’s initial impulse will be «Google» rather than «book» when considering the concept «information». As this is now the situation for many adults as well, this may not seem all that significant, but in a mediatization context it is. This is a conceptual change that moves the idea of «information» from one medium to another, and such a transition will be meaningful across all social, as well as physical, institutions. The library sectors in Norway and Denmark thus have strategies for ensuring that the library institution will remain important to the generation that grows up with a virtual library at their fingertips.

3.4.1 The multimedia library

«Collectively, children are the population group that uses the most media, and they often use them together. As such, children can be denominated as a multimedia generation as it is the interweaving of and interaction between media that characterise their use, rather than the use of one single medium» (Bibliotekstyrelsen. 2008, pp. 25-26). This is an extract from the report «Fremtidens biblioteksbetjening af børn» that was published by the Danish Agency for Libraries (now under the Agency for Culture) in order to map the new media habits of children. The report is a comprehensive study that draws on research from many different areas and it culminates in
ten «commandments» that the library should follow in order to adjust the services of the children’s library accordingly. The ten focal points are largely based around the same topics as the overall library report of two years later; digital resources, collaboration and skills and the library as a meeting place and arena for culture and education. As the quote illustrates, it adopts the understanding of the current media climate as more than being dominated by one specific medium, and further, that the media is as much an institution in its own right, imposing its own influence on the younger generation. However, the children’s report is non-normative in its view point of media use and rather focus on adjusting the traditional library services to accommodate for this change in children’s media habits.

Both mediatization theory and the library reports show that «marketing and consumer culture» play an increasingly large role in society at large and in the way institutions adapt themselves. This culture is largely media driven, and as the media gains a stronger position as an independent institution, this influence increases. «Whereas culture once was either imbued with the hierarchy of taste that prevailed in cultural institutions or, in the case of trivial culture, was linked to local ways of life, the media today occupy a dominant position as providers of cultural products and beliefs» (Hjarvard, 2008a, p. 108). This is perhaps especially illustrative in the case of children’s relationship with media and media products. In Chapter 5 of En verden af medier, «Legens medialisering: Fra byggeklodser til bytes» (The Mediatization of Play: From Blocks to Bytes), for example, Hjarvard shows how the popular construction toy LEGO has developed and been influenced by media. On the one hand by producing traditional LEGO toys based on concepts from the entertainment media, but also by producing their own video games that are based on the LEGO concept, and thereby contributing to changing the concept of children’s play. Additionally, on the macro level the marketability and sales of LEGO are affected by the popularity of the films and TV-programs that the toys are based on. For the library, «the immediate answer to the challenge that is presented by the globalised children’s market can therefore be to concentrate efforts on intermedial and cross-institutional services, which can both be local, regional and national» (Bbiblioteksstyrelsen, p. 51). One of the results of these efforts is the «Danish children’s library universe» - Palles gavebod.
Regarding mediatized childhoods, Hjarvard writes that since the Second World War, there has been a gradual change in the way we perceive children in society. Instead of being «unfinished adults» that imitate adult life through play, children now have a culture of their own, which is often based in creative fantasy worlds, usually inspired by the media (2008c, pp. 219-221). At the same time, a lot of play has been transferred from physical to virtual worlds, such as computer games, as well as combinations of physical toys, media entertainment and virtual environments all from the same fictional universe (p. 227). This is completely in line with the vision of a reinvented library for children as presented by Palles gavebod’s creators:

Children are used to being stimulated and excited on many different platforms and through many different media. They are also super familiar with brands and stories spreading across several platforms. […] The children’s library should be re-launched as a brand, and it will require a strong media strategy, efficient PR and good ambassadors in order to re-introduce the children’s library as the obvious, public sensory laboratory. (Copenhagen Bombay in Biblioteksstyrelsen, pp. 85-86).

This is not unfamiliar territory to the library as it has always focused on relating the good story and stimulating children’s fantasies, yet the format suggested is governed by a new media logic.

The result is a multimedial online environment «constructed as a special universe with a cast of characters. The focus is to create experiences through the material, and the website is constructed around a «player» that can display film clips and other graphical elements. The website also intends to engage the children in activities on and outside the site through games and competitions» (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier, p. 63). Library material (books, music, film and games) naturally play a central part on the site through presentations, reviews, trailers and similar and examples on the site’s blog show how libraries use the characters from the website in the physical library space and in library activities (projekt.pallesgavebod.dk). Further, the website’s target group are «tweens», 8-12 year olds that are no longer playing with physical
toys but not yet teenagers. They are nevertheless starting to use media increasingly for communication and information purposes, and thus should be most receptive to this type of virtual environment (Hjarvard, 2008c, p. 221). An important means to attract visitors to the site has been a collaborative project with national television channel DR’s children’s show «Ramasjang Live», which is broadcasted live from the children’s library in Aalborg. The themes addressed on the show are afterwards followed up online at Palles gavebod, and in local libraries nationally (Biblioteksstyrelsen, p. 75).

3.4.2 The traditional library in the multimedia age

Despite being inspired by the comprehensive Danish report on future library services for children, the Norwegian library report continues to focus mostly on the traditional library services based around the book as a medium, improving reading skills and promoting joy of reading. Arguably, this is also the driving force behind projects like Palles gavebod in Denmark, and it does not mean that Norwegian libraries are not renewing themselves and their services for children with regards to media and technology, but again these initiatives largely originate locally and are not discussed in the report to any large extent (Det kongelige kultur- og kyrkjedepartement, p. 130). «The Cultural Rucksack», on the other hand, is a national initiative to promote art and culture in the public school system where the public library is considered an important partner, especially with regards to the dissemination of literature to children in both primary and secondary school.

In practice, this is carried out by yearly inviting whole grades from local schools to visit the library. Age-appropriate books are usually presented and the children receive information about the library and its services. Other collaborative activities that take place in the library as part of The Cultural Rucksack, such as visits from authors or theatrical performances, are also mentioned, but beyond this, the initiative is not elaborated on (p. 130). As this project is not initiated by the library sector, it is up to the municipalities to decide how much they want to involve libraries in the process. Nevertheless, direct meetings with authors and other similar activities are considered one of two main pillars of literary dissemination in The Cultural
Rucksack. «The second pillar [...] is the public library as a central cultural, literary and learning arena and actor i all municipalities» (p. 132). As such, the children’s meeting with the library at an early age does not only have the potential to increase reading skills and provide cultural education, it also lays the foundation for a life-long relationship with the institution. Beyond this, however, children in the future library are not discussed further, and the focus therefore appears to be on attracting children to the traditional library services, often through collaboration with educational institutions, and less on creating new media-oriented strategies adapted to increasingly mediatized childhoods, which inevitably will affect children’s relationship with reading, culture and the library.

Children’s reading habits and skills have been a major focus in both Norway and Denmark over the past decade as the early 2000’s saw a decline in both reading skills and literary interests in both countries. In Norway, The Cultural Rucksack is an ongoing, national project that involves a large system of participants. There are also projects that focus on preschool language development and early literary education by increasing reading activities and establishing libraries in preschools where parents and children can borrow books to take home. These have had very positive results, especially in areas with many bilingual children (p. 129). Additionally, The Norwegian Library Association declared 2010 as a «National Reading Year», and the start of «a broad and comprehensive initiative for a national reading boost in the timespan up to 2014» (p. 134).

Similarly in Denmark, the campaign «Læselyst» (Desire to Read) that lasted from 2003 to 2007 has later inspired similar initiatives based on the most successful activities from the initial campaign. As mentioned in section 2.2.2., there are activities such as homework cafés and «Bookstart» in place to aid bilingual and underprivileged children in particular. Additionally, there are countless other local and regional activities that support this important function in the library in different ways and recent surveys in both countries report that these increased efforts have been largely successful. As a result of library involvement in The Cultural Rucksack, libraries in Østfold, Norway, for example, have seen an increase in loans to children in recent years.
In Denmark, 64% of 7-14 year olds now read fiction weekly, compared to only 40% eight years previously. Similarly, only 13%, compared to 34% in 2004, state that they never read (Dannemand, 2012).

### 3.4.3 Form and content of virtual libraries for children

Having a mediatized childhood does not mean that children as such are changing; their motivation for using media is still to engage in play, to learn, and be part of their community through communication (Madsen, 2007, p. 29). As such, «it is a good basis for the library to join in the media reality that under the headline web 2.0 is more concerned with socialisation, making contacts and communicating with each other, than about being culturally educated as the primary goal» (Hjarvard, as cited in Madsen, p. 20). Nevertheless, the statistics employed in the report indicates that the number of children that use the library as a place for socialisation is sinking. In 1998, 28% of 7-15 year olds utilised this opportunity, but six years later the number was almost halved, to only 16%» (Bille et al., as cited in Biblioteksstyrelsen, p. 32). Because of digital media, the places where children engage in social activities have changed tremendously, and this development is more than likely a lot harder to influence than creating child friendly environments in hybrid libraries.

Surveys and numbers measuring the relative success of Palles gavebod and similar resources have been hard to locate, and in contrast to issues such as e-books and library politics, there is a lot less public media attention on the subject. Nevertheless, on BØFAs (the Children’s Librarians’ Occupational Group under the Union of Danish Librarians) website, a debate regarding Palles was initiated by Viborg libraries in early 2012. They highlight several issues with the service, including lack of interest from users, entertainment value and competition, utility value and vision. Although the debate was moved to a closed Facebook site after only six posts, the replies highlight certain aspects that can in part explain these problems.
A challenge with creating virtual platforms to support increased reading activities in children, is communicating their existence to the target group and capturing their interest, something that is also acknowledged by the children’s report (2008).

Common strategies for how we can strengthen children’s relationship with and use of virtual «desire-to-read» services are [...] a possibility. Only a minority of children are today aware of the possibility to use websites such as anmelderklub.dk [for reviews], dotbot.dk [predecessor of Palles], Spørg Olivia [question answering service] and boggnasker.dk [social platform] in order to come in contact with other readers or be inspired to read new books. (p. 51, my brackets).

Since the report was published, some of these services have been closed down, whereas others have much outdated information, indicating a lack of interest from the target groups. Librarians who have commented on the BØFA debate confirm this by stating that children at their local libraries are usually unfamiliar with Palles gavebod, and when presented to the site, they tend to sign up, look around and then seem to lose interest and not return.

The BØFA debaters agree that one of the problems for Palles is that the content is not specific enough to compete with other sites online. Children are interested in specific subjects and want a certain substance in the material they engage with. Although Palles contain a lot of the features they normally like and use, this in itself is apparently not enough to attract them to the site and bring them back to it. This is closely related to the issue of utility value and vision for the page, which is how the Viborg libraries describe it. There is a lack of purpose to the site beyond «being the children’s virtual library universe»: The children might be interested in books and media, but usually books and media that are about something they themselves are interested in. For example, if a child like horses she will find websites about horses, which often contain information about literature on horses. Such pages are often run by one or more people that have in-depth knowledge and interest in these subjects and are updated frequently both by administrators and through interactive content. «A virtual community is not a space that is
constituted by shared values, identities, or traditions. What connects people in a virtual community is a shared interest in certain issues and communication on these topics» (Fuchs, 2008, p. 137). Most children are probably not interested in the library as such and this is why «branding» the library might not be working according to the librarians.

The «magic» of websites, especially web 2.0 platforms, that gain large popularity, is that often they start out as smaller sites created for a specific purpose, and either through form, content or a combination of these, they manage to hit on something that is lacking in the market. They grow as users start joining and more and more functionality is consequently added. Investing a large amount of resources in order to create a web platform with a large amount of various functionality for a wide audience can therefore be a risk. There also has to be enough resources to keep these platforms running with a constant flow of new material. Librarians must be motivated and have resources to promote and follow up on the activities on the site in the physical library.

«We cannot initiate a bunch of activities in order to work together with a website - a website cannot set the agenda - a website should be an amenity» (Viborg Bibliotekerne, BØFA). The debaters maintain that a website alone cannot bring children to the physical, nor the virtual, library, and therefore it should be a service oriented towards children that already use the library. The libraries suggest that the site begins to focus on particular areas of interest through content created both by librarians and children themselves. A library website won’t necessarily attract all children aged 8-12, but in order to attract the children that already enjoy reading, the content has to live up to their expectations (Viborg Bibliotekerne). That said, all the libraries agree that an online portal for children in the library is a necessity, the question is how it should be constructed.

The Danish report on future library services for children is as mentioned a comprehensive and detailed report that together with the general library report covers the topic from not only the media aspect, but also considers the traditional aspects of increasing reading skills and
promoting literature and culture. Additionally, there are chapters on activities in- and outside the physical library that are non-media oriented. Nevertheless, most of the ten focal points are related to media and technology in some way. As a similar report is not available for Norway, it is impossible to compare the efforts equally and it is hard to draw conclusions regarding whether the increased focus on media in Denmark has been at the expense or for the benefit of library services for children. Even though both the Norwegian and the Danish reports stress the importance of keeping up with digital development and virtual services in order to attract children as patrons, a third possibility is that at this stage it might not be as essential as has lately been assumed.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to answer the research sub-questions a) and b) presented in the introduction. Although some of the analysed areas highlight certain of Hjarvards institutional aspects of mediatization better than others, elements of all of them are present whether it is digital material, library infrastructure or virtual libraries that are being discussed. It is thus possible to assume that similar results would be found through analysis of other library aspects that were not discussed here, and to ascertain that the influence of new media has far-reaching consequences on several institutional levels. Despite having the same basic objectives and many similarities in their vision for the future library, differences in how the countries are handling the mediatization process are founded in variations in their institutional organisation and legislation. In short, Denmark is adapting the traditional library to the market, whereas Norway is to a larger extent marketing the traditional library.
4 Discussion

4.1 The role of the library as an institution

The main responsibility of the library is to provide free information to the public; historically a largely political instrument in the endeavour to create a democratic, welfare society (Jochumsen & Rasmussen, 2006, p. 201). The object clauses of the Norwegian and the Danish library legislation reflect this:

Norway: «The purpose of the public libraries is to promote information, education and other cultural activity through information dissemination and by placing books and other appropriate material at the disposal of all citizens» (Lov om folkebibliotek).

Denmark: «The purpose of the public libraries to promote information, education and other cultural activity by placing books, journals, audiobooks and other appropriate material such as electronic sources of information, including Internet and multimedia, at the disposal of all citizens» (Lov om biblioteksvirksomhed).

Thus, the function of the library is to promote information, education and cultural activity, and to do this by providing access to appropriate material, and additionally in Norway, through information dissemination. As has been shown in the course of this thesis, these are still the main functions of the library today, and according to the reports, should remain so in the future. As such, adapting the library to the information society is largely a question of deciding how to incorporate and utilise the constantly changing media (especially communication media) in order to continue to fulfil this role. Nevertheless, the media also has the power to influence the library sector as well as the library institution on a more profound level. That the actual objects clause in Denmark has been amended to specifically include various types of media, for example, is in itself evidence of a certain degree of mediatization of the library institution.
The structural changes discussed in the previous chapters have been anticipated and prepared for by the library sector over several years. As mentioned in the introduction, the library has a long history of adapting itself to changes in the society without compromising the objects clause, and the library discourse has for almost 30 years centred around the advent and creation of the future library. Despite the closure of many smaller libraries in both countries, it can thus be claimed that the position of the library sector in this regard is maintained through its continuous renewal and adaptation.

On an institutional level, e-books and other digital media have in some respects strengthened the library’s autonomy as provider of free information to all citizens, particularly due to the fact that new media has changed our conception of information as something that is easily available in abundant quantities and should be free or at least cheap. With user friendly virtual platforms and a digital counterpart to the physical library, the hybrid library fits perfectly with this conception. But in both Norway and Denmark, this has also lead to increased similarities between public and commercial institutions in society.

With the new media culture and media paradigm’s breakthrough, cultures of taste are also changing, and it has become increasingly harder to administer an aesthetic and professional quality concept toward the users. The libraries still strive for this and have lower quality limits. (Biblioteksstryelsen, p. 53)

One of the consequences is that the user expects to find what she is looking for when accessing the library, whether physically or virtually, and this puts increased pressure on the libraries.

Additionally, cheaper media and increased buying power, as well as a generally higher number of the population that is educated and thus have the opportunity to buy the media products that they want and need, weakens the library’s autonomy by affecting the library’s traditional function. If the library expects to maintain the same role, it necessarily must enter into
competition with the market, as convenience becomes ever more central to the users. As recent development in the film and music industries have shown, more and more people are willing to pay a small amount for digital media services that are user friendly and have a large collection of material, rather than download illegally. It is this development, that according to Meisingset, places the library on the landfill of history as the necessity for «placing books and other appropriate material at the disposal of all citizens» arguably becomes increasingly less important to an increasingly large number of citizens.

Additionally, with the relatively high social equality, standard of living and purchasing power that is dominant in both Norway and Denmark today, and the way media has changed our relationship with information, the conflict that has arisen between publishers and libraries begs the important question of how the object clauses should be fulfilled if not through communication of media to the public. As we have seen in Denmark, with significant investment of resources, virtual library systems like bibzoom and eReolen can have the same quality as similar paid services such as Spotify and online bookshops, and their effects on the market can be seen almost immediately. Thus, according to the industry, this development at the very least needs to be monitored carefully. Nevertheless, the industry is still the producer of the media that is available in the library, and hence it is unlikely that the threat of free, digital distribution through the library will weaken the industry to such an extent that it will lose its autonomy entirely. However, the digitalisation and mediatization of information does have power to fundamentally change the way the book industry is constructed, and by extension, the library.

4.2 The library as a meeting place

When the sustainability of the library is questioned, a favourite counter-argument of library proponents is a phrase that I have continually come across during my work with this thesis and have already mentioned several times, namely «the library as a meeting place». This argument bypasses the question of material, but builds on the democratic and social function and basic aims of the library nonetheless. It is part of the title of the Norwegian report and it is frequently referred to in both. Yet «the libraries have thus far not established larger initiatives that can be
assigned to [...] the performati ve room and the meeting place. A number of the libraries’ projects can nevertheless be placed in these areas» (Styrelsen for bibliotek og medier, p.63). In other words, there are many activities that take place in the library that fall into these categories, but as of yet, they are not a major part of the strategies. Thus, the «meeting place» function was not studied in the analysis, however, it is worth including in the discussion as the increased focus on this concept in the library discourse can arguably also be seen as a result of mediatization.

As media is technically automating many of the traditional library functions and removing others from the physical library space, the discourse has naturally turned to the library functions that are not as easily affected by media influence. Socialisation and communication in the library can take several forms, yet overall, the social library is largely described as «informal». For example, interaction can be guided by library staff in learning situations, but there are no tests or formal requirements, and homework help and IT-education is guidance-oriented (Sections 2.1.3 and 2.2.2). Likewise, there are many possible modes of execution for the library as a meeting place, such as debates, exhibitions and reading groups. These can be organised by library staff, patrons or in collaboration with partners, and staff can play both participatory and administrative roles.

From the examples highlighted in the reports, many of the activities that are focused around instruction and education concern user groups that represent minorities, such as children and elderly, and immigrants and low-income families. These groups have an increased need for the services the library provides, whether as a part of lifelong learning for non-educated citizens and integration for immigrants, training in communication media for elderly, or literary dissemination to children that are not exposed to books in their home environment. Research shows that many of these groups use the library more in proportion to other user groups, especially immigrants who among other reasons use the library as a meeting place for social interaction. In the article «The public library as a meeting-place in a multicultural and digital context - The necessity of low-intensive meeting-places» (2004), Ragnar Audunsson argues for the importance of maintaining the library as a place where people can socialise in an informal,
physical environment with people of different backgrounds, as this type of contact is threatened by increased digital communication and high-intensive meeting places where one tends to only communicate with people of a similar background and purpose. Audunson claims that the intrinsic values and structure of the public library facilitates such a role and he gives examples of successful meetings in the library between groups that would not normally socialise, but where both have gained important knowledge from the experience.

In one of Audunsons examples, the need to use computers by both middle class elderly and working class youth resulted in such an experience (2004b, p. 438), but incidentally, he does not elaborate on the basic, library-specific functions that would attract people there in the first place. His idea is to «replace bureaucratic thinking on the role and structure of public libraries with deep and profound reflections on the role of public libraries as a democratic instrument in a multicultural and digital context» (p. 439). The problem with this type of argument is that it is difficult to decide on behalf of others where they should meet. We can certainly pave the way and accommodate for such a use of the library, but much like with Palles gavebod, although the ideals are sound and the role fits, the execution might not have the wanted or expected results. Although low-intensive meetings across cultures and demographics take place in the library, these are not the foremost reason why we go there, and as such, the meetings must necessarily take place around something else with the positive side-effect of strengthening democracy and understanding.

Nevertheless, there are many trends that support the meeting place ideology. As mentioned, research shows that more people are using the library for things other than borrowing books, and libraries are focusing on activities in the library to a larger degree. Outside the library, the German Literaturhaus movement is a supplement to the library’s social functions in large cities and towns, which through organised activities provide a meeting place for people who are interested in literature and culture. This movement has spread to both Norway and Denmark and it is important to note that as an institution, the LiteraturHaus is first and foremost a place for physical activities that centre around literary dissemination.
There is currently one LiteraturHaus in Denmark, located in Copenhagen. «The objective of LiteraturHaus is to promote, maintain and regenerate general interest in literature, and through this pave the way for the literature of tomorrow» (Literaturhaus.dk, «The Intention Behind LiteraturHaus»). They host several events every week, not only related to literature but also music, art and public debate. This is largely the same as the events that take place in Litteraturhuset in Oslo, Norway, only on a much larger scale in the latter. «Since the opening [in 2007] more than 1 million have visited the house and we organise more than 1500 public events annually» (Litteraturhuset.no, 2011). The reason for this difference between Norway and Denmark is that the physical house in Oslo is large, and that many of the activities are arranged by other organisers, or in collaboration with these. Additionally, the building houses a café, bookshop, bar and restaurant as well as quiet work places. In 2013, two more «Houses of Literature» will open in Norway, indicating interest from users as well as initiative from the enthusiasts behind them. The houses are not public institutions and run on income from events, investors, donations and tenants under leadership from non-profit foundations (Lithusfred.no, Litteraturhuset.no).

The similarities between these institutions and many of the proposals for future «dynamic and experience oriented» libraries are striking (Jochumsen & Rasmussen, p. 204). As they require a large amount of initiative and effort to run and a certain size of the local population to create the necessary number of visits, however, they are not a threat to the public libraries as such, especially in decentralised areas. In stead, they may serve as inspiration as they confirm that there is a market for increased social activities that focus around literature, public debate and informal meetings. Indeed, the library has an advantage to the Houses of Literature by already having funding, qualified staff and devoted patrons. Stig Hjarvards claim from the opening quote that «a visit to the physical library has to some extent become superfluous, as a visit to the virtual library can be just as satisfactory» is thus true only to the extent that accessing material, and virtual dissemination and debate can be done online. With regards to social
activities however, Audunson’s point above considering the continued need for public meeting places in a digital society is equally valid.

The differences in media adaptation of the Norwegian and Danish library are interesting in this regard. The Danish library sector has been quick and efficient in adapting to new media influence and has managed to update the library sector to a marketable media institution with many different functions and a relatively clear vision for the future. However, this has put the Danish library sector at increased risk of competition from other commercial institutions as well as a pressure to remain at the same level as these, which can be difficult seeing as they are arguably in a more flexible situation both economically and ideologically. Whereas commercial institutions have profit as their main purpose, the library must first of all serve the public in a democratic and inclusive fashion. In Norway, the libraries struggle with systems for interlibrary loans and e-books that among others are outdated, not functioning or even non-existent. Additionally, the centralised initiative to invest in and upgrade the library sector overall is somewhat lacking. However, there is a stronger focus on identifying the traditional, library-specific functions in order to strengthen and market these. As such, there has been more development with digitalising the country’s entire cultural inheritance, including music and film, rather than creating the library equivalence of Spotify.

These examples are deliberately pointed, because, as I have already mentioned, overall, the reports, the ideals and the development are similar rather than different. Nevertheless, the differences indicate that there is something to learn from both approaches. The library should continue to focus on its areas of expertise, first and foremost dissemination of culture and literature, and its mediatization should be focused around media influence of these areas. Further, libraries should have access to updated technology and provide proper online platforms that live up to the standards of patrons to ensure the utmost usability, but they should avoid competition with other institutions with similar services that have the means to carry them out more efficiently. In the cross-over between these issues, lies the library as a meeting place, where the traditional role of the library can be maintained in an increasingly physical form.
4.3 Final reflections

4.3.1 Media effect on the library discourse

My work with this thesis has involved the use of several types of information, and although the basis of the analysis is the ministry reports, as well as mediatization and library theory, online news media and library blogs enabled me to follow the process of implementing the changes suggested in the reports in the relatively short space of time after they were published and this was written. Due to communication media and technology, decisions and dialogue are occurring rapidly, and since the chapter on e-books was written, for example, there has already been development in the negotiations in both countries. The democratic benefits of public dialogue of this sort are obvious, as it involves and allows more people to access and join in the debate. It also becomes harder for powerful institutions to make decisions outside of the public eye. However, much online information gets outdated quickly and in the meantime the media may cause unnecessary conflict through their media logic.

The mediatization of the library discourse online has had a tendency to dramatize the issues through journalistic angles and instruments with phrases such as «the death of the library», «e-book terror» and «dumbing down of society». Such phrases simplify the situation and take away from the very complex and alive library sector in both countries that is expressed not only in the reports, but on the relevant websites, blogs and in the «deeper levels» of the online debate. Individual libraries are working hard and finding innovative ways to support both the patrons that are assimilated to the mediatized society already, and those that, as of yet, are not. As such, although the analysis of the new media influence on the library shows both major and minor changes across the institution, the library like most institutions, are adapting to the best of their abilities and as much as resources allow, with constant focus on fulfilling their objectives.

4.3.2 Mediatization as method

The conclusions drawn here are reflected in much of the discourse analysis presented by Jochumsen and Rasmussen and is confirmed by the mediatization theory.
Mediatization theory as a metatheory and panorama provides a framework for this type of discussion that attempts to remain neutral and observe undisputable processes that are occurring around us from a certain perspective. By building on Medium Theory, the idea that there is one dominant medium that influences us more than others at any time and has contributed to major developments in society (Meyrowitz, 1994, pp. 50-51), it expands the area of influence to include all communication media. At the same time it actually plays down the media’s impact factor to some extent and insists on defining communication media as something that despite their intrinsic moulding force are equally moulded by peoples’ and institutions’ use of them (Hjarvard, 2008c, p. 281). This is what initially attracted me to the theory, although it at times has been difficult to apply it appropriately to the matter at hand and discern what can actually be deemed a result of mediatization and what lies outside the scope of the theory. Especially because I have not conducted the type of empirical analysis of mediatization that is most typical, which consists of analysing specific communication processes, nor drawn on many specific analyses produced by others, but rather focused on the idea of the mediatization process in itself and on society at large. Nevertheless, it is a theory that allows you too look past the utopia/dystopia dichotomy that is usually accompanies the question of media influence.

Hjarvard points out that «mediatization characterise the process where media in interaction with other factors transform the institutions of modern society and other social phenomena, but the results of this are rarely uniform. [...] As such, it is also possible to imagine a demediatization of certain institutions in society» (p. 282, emphasis original, my translation). With this claim, he is placing mediatization in a larger context, as part of the globalisation, modernisation and individualisation of society and at the same time he points out the complexity of these concepts when put together. If I were to continue the study of libraries in relation to media impact, I would investigate these relationships further, especially with regards to the library as a meeting place and the relationship between increasing online communication and physical meeting places in a literary context.
5 Conclusion

I stated in the introduction that I wanted to explore how new media has affected the position of the library in our society, but that I did not want to propose a prediction for its future role. Although it seems like the overall role of the library is largely the same as it has been in the past, new media has added new responsibilities to the sector and simultaneously had a large effect on how its main functions are carried out. Yet the question of the library’s position in society is further challenged by the mediatization of both the library material, related institutions and the welfare society at large. This has been apparent in the library discourse for some time, and one of the solutions most often suggested is to rebrand the library as a meeting place and literary and cultural arena. The internal library discourse is dominated by this type of argument, and although both reports support this movement, they show little progressive initiative in this regard, especially in terms of increased financial support. In 2004, Ragnar Audunson claims that «what we need are profound reflections on the unique characteristics of today’s democratic challenges and the ways public librarianship can and must be reformulated in order to be relevant with respect to those challenges» (Audunson, 2004b). For 30 years the library has been discussing the future, and by all accounts, it has brought neither doom nor revolution to the sector. What has opened up is the possibility to continue to provide traditional library services revolving around literature and culture to a public that continues to appreciate them in an increasingly physical and social format. It looks as though the library as an institution could benefit from putting ideology into action. The future is here - let’s meet at the library.
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