



The International Library Manifestos and Media Strategies in Swedish Library Practice

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The Swedish
Library Association

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Svensk biblioteksörening
The Swedish Library Association

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Preface

Libraries are a resource that provides everyone with free access to information, knowledge, and culture and that through their activities inspire users to partake of these things. Thus people are given the opportunity to use their democratic right to develop, think, speak, and write freely, as stated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) has, together with national library associations, drawn up manifestos for clarifying the principles and basic values upon which the activities of libraries are based. Several of the manifestos are recommended by UNESCO. The IFLA has also drawn up ethical rules for librarians and information specialists, and a declaration on libraries and intellectual freedom. Together with the new Swedish Library Act, these rules and manifestos form a framework for the activities of libraries and for their media strategy work.

But how does this function in the daily work in Swedish libraries? To find out The Swedish Library Association contacted Åsa Söderlind and Gullvor Elf, researchers at Högsolan i Borås, for a study. The study should focus on mapping how libraries in their media planning relate to and live up to the normative library documents. The goal has been to obtain deeper knowledge of the libraries' media strategy work. This is a contribution to the on-going and constantly topical debate and discussion on the mission of libraries and their selection of media. The result as presented in the report "Vi arbetar i medborganas tjänst" is meant to increase knowledge about how libraries, in a central process such as media planning, relate to their fundamental mission and basic principles as libraries. This is a revised and shortened version of that report.

The Swedish Library Association is a non-profit and politically independent association with institutions, organisations and individuals as members. We work for everyone to ensure free access to information and knowledge through libraries. We are keeping guard, opinion forming, influencing and promote the interests of libraries. Additionally, we support libraries and those who work there with research and professional development.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Niclas Lindberg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Niclas Lindberg
Secretary General
The Swedish Library Association

Summary

Background

Libraries are a resource that provides everyone with free access to information, knowledge, and culture and that through their activities inspire users to partake of these things. Thus people are given the opportunity to use their democratic right to develop, think, speak, and write freely. As stated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 'everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers'. The IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) has, together with national library associations, drawn up a manifesto for clarifying the principles and basic values upon which the activities of libraries are based. Several of the manifestos are recommended by UNESCO. The IFLA has also drawn up ethical rules for librarians and information specialists, and a declaration on libraries and intellectual freedom. Together with the new Swedish Library Act, these rules and manifestos form a framework for the activities of libraries and for their media strategy work.¹

Mandate

Our mandate has involved mapping how libraries in their media planning relate to and live up to the normative library documents. The goal has been to obtain deeper knowledge of the libraries' media strategy work. This is a contribution to the ongoing and constantly topical debate and discussion on the mission of libraries and their selection of media. The result is meant to increase knowledge about how libraries, in a central process such as media planning, relate to their fundamental mission and basic principles as libraries. The result can also contribute

1 In this report the word media refers to all print and non-print materials available in libraries, including books, newspapers, films, data files, etc.

to discussions of interpretation and application that focus on the mission of libraries.

Realisation

Inquiries were made to all public libraries and to university and university college libraries about their media plans from the past five years.

Qualitative interviews were conducted with librarians from public, school, research, and hospital libraries, and also from combined public and school libraries and from regional libraries. Themes seen as relevant to the issues of the study formed the starting point for the interviews.

An analysis was made of the media plans and the interviews in relation to normative documents such as manifestos and legislation.

The plans and interviews formed the points of departure for a theoretical discussion about a library's selection of material versus censorship, and the concept of freedom.

Results

The issues that are taken up in the international manifestos are present in everyday library work, but, generally speaking, there seems to be a lack of a consciously active attitude with respect to the texts themselves. The strategies of the organisation responsible for the library are usually more important. This is most clearly the case when it comes to research libraries. However, a library's media plans to some extent refer to manifestos and legislation, either directly or indirectly. In summary, this gives a somewhat complex picture of the status of the normative documents in the individual libraries, and there may be reason to ask questions about what it means in practice to 'use' and 'relate to' a manifesto or a media plan.

Dilemmas

The control or lack thereof with respect to the selection and content of a media collection, coupled to the issue of the independence of libraries

and user-controlled selections, but also to the content of licensed digital collections, is a basic problem that permeates all work with acquisition and selection in a library.

The concepts in the manifestos and the legislation, such as quality and versatility, freedom of expression, censorship, impartiality, and neutrality may seem obvious in a modern democracy, but what do they really mean for the professional role of the librarian and the activities of the library? The most apparent dilemma in the study has to do with the conflict between a desire for and goal of having a framework that is as broad as possible with respect to what is acquired – freedom of information with the widest possible limits – and a goal of working for inclusion and diversity in the local library. In this can be discerned a conflict between the principle of the library as an arena where users are able to partake of all kinds of material in order to form their own opinions, and the position of turning down material that is considered xenophobic or discriminatory in favour of a library where such material is not provided on the basis of the idea of the library as an inclusive and secure space. From the study it is apparent that librarians in practice handle this dilemma in various ways. This is done either by trying to follow a principle of, on the whole, saying yes and not no and allowing legislation to set the limits for acquisitions, or by compromising between yes and no through various strategies – using interlibrary loans, purchasing single copies, placing a work in the stacks, or allowing it to fall into disuse without being replaced – or, as an alternative, by putting an emphasis on the need for a dialogue with the borrower regarding individual, potentially sensitive titles.

The wording in the new Library Act regarding quality in relation to the supply of materials has also initiated a discussion in Swedish libraries. Generally speaking, it can be noted that there is a desire for legislators to define what the concept of quality means. Our study shows that there is a comparatively pragmatic attitude to this concept. It also shows that the concept of quality is considered to be more complex in public and school libraries than in university and university college libraries, and

that local, tacit 'corporate cultures' may develop in which there are different definitions of what quality means in relation to various types of media.

Some future issues

The library is meant to protect freedom of information and expression and provide free access to information and knowledge. This is easy to express in principle – but how is it put into practice? Will it result in a passive attitude, i.e., that libraries in principle should acquire everything that is in demand? Do we in a clear and distinct manner relate our own media work to the manifestos of IFLA/UNESCO? Should we do this, and if so, how?

The positive right to information and various media without limitation (freedom to) can be balanced against the right of not having to encounter all too stereotypical and prejudiced depictions of single individuals and groups (freedom from), or other content that may be perceived as destructive or offensive. Where are the libraries in this, and can/should the manifestos of IFLA/UNESCO provide guidance and support for the work of acquisition, selection, and weeding, and if so, how?

Is there a difference between actively making a certain selection at the time of purchase, for instance on the basis of the quality and orientation of the content, and the subsequent removal/weeding of a book on the basis of opinions on that same content? If this is the case, why and in what way is there a difference?

How can library personnel in concrete ways encourage an increased reflection on issues regarding ethics and selection coupled to the manifestos?



Introduction

In 2001 the first edition of Anna-Lena Höglund and Christer Klingberg's now very well-known book *Strategisk medieplanering för bibliotek* [Strategic media planning for libraries] was published, and after that nothing was the same in Swedish public libraries, at least not with respect to work with media in the form of selection, purchase, acquisition, and weeding. There was clear evidence of a change of perspective from the collection as a starting point to the users and their needs. Already several years before the book was published, a number of different projects were completed with the same goal: adapting library selections and media collections more clearly to the demands and needs of the users rather than allowing a certain attitude to determine the idea of what a complete library collection should consist of. The change of perspective can be seen as a part of strengthening the legitimacy and relevance of public libraries in local communities, of meeting the changing needs of the people who are the actual users of the library, and of allowing the selection of media to be shaped according to this. The aim is to achieve political goals with respect to libraries, such as the ability of all citizens to have access to information, knowledge, and culture, and the ability of the libraries to offer alternatives to otherwise easily accessible material in the form of various media.

Subsequent to the publication of Höglund and Klingberg's book, a large number of surveys of library collections were completed and numerous media plans saw the light of day. Circulation numbers were studied, media selections and acquisitions partially changed. The change of perspective can be said to have been comprehensive with respect to the basic approaches that govern the media work of the public libraries.

On the other hand, from a political perspective the issue of the political *independence* of the libraries to select and purchase titles or arrange programme activities is considered crucial to their core mission: to provide free access to information, knowledge, and culture for their users.

In the rhetoric this independence is asserted in order to safeguard and strengthen the opportunities of users to make use of their civic and democratic rights. Here two attitudes confront one another, both of which are based on the idea of providing public library users with the greatest possible access to information and culture. The independence of the public library is emphasised, while at the same time an adaptation to users' demands has become more and more important. The question is, in relation to whom and what is the independence of libraries measured? Between which parties may possible opposition arise? During recent years, portions of the material on offer in public libraries have been discussed and debated from partially new points of departure - the points of view and depictions found in some of the children's books on offer. In this debate the very issue of a library's independence has stood out as central, but what this actually means has been unclear.

Media planning and the development of a collection as such in libraries normally include several stages and steps in a process, from selection/purchase to marketing/exposure/organisation in the library and dissemination work as well as weeding. Media planning can also be regarded from different perspectives and on different levels, from being mainly a question of 'management' in order to, for example, achieve the maximum circulation for the media in a certain library, to being a question of information ethics or information policy regarding the free access to information as a democratic right coupled to the library's mission. The perspectives of the intended users have, as was pointed out above, increasingly become a focus of the media work of libraries. The local community of which a library is a part and the needs and demands of users are assigned crucial significance for both the general activities of the library and the selection and purchase of media. The digital development of e-books and access to digital resources via networks such as the Internet have also affected the media strategy work of libraries in a crucial manner. Through this development, many strategic and political issues pertaining to a library's activities can be accentuated and brought to a head.

The mission statement of the survey has provided a focus for studying potential points of conflict that can arise in a library's media selection. The mission statement suggests that there may be certain problems in finding a balance between such things as the library's mission, the demands of the users, free access to information, and potentially other rights such as, for example, the right of not having to encounter stereotypical and prejudicial ideas about and depictions of single individuals and groups. The media work of the library has to do with selecting material and more or less actively or passively deselecting material. Economic limits may require a significant degree of selection. The library's mission and goals also give reason to actively select certain media rather than others. The question of whether selection is the same thing as censorship can be vital, but it provides a reason for fleshing out the picture of what the purpose and objectives of a library's media selection really are. There may also be a difference between actively making a certain selection with regard to purchasing media on the basis of various criteria, and the subsequent weeding out of an individual title from the collection on the basis of wishes/demands from users or, for that matter, politicians. This is what brings extra focus to the issue of what the independence of the library means in this context. It also becomes interesting for the study to look more closely at the way in which phenomena and concepts such as free access/freedom of information, selection, censorship, the library's mission, and so on are interpreted by the interviewees, individually and in relationship to each other, and on the basis of the activities of various types of libraries.

Our mandate - in detail

For a number of years the IFLA has worked together with library associations around the world to draw up international manifestos in order to formulate conceivable principles and guidelines for the work of libraries. For Sweden this means that the Swedish Library Association together with the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO have collected the various manifestos in a single publication, and have completed a *comprehensive* new translation of them.² In the original mission state-

2 *Bibliotekens internationella manifest* [The international library manifestos], translated by Anna Strandberg and Jan Ristarp (Stockholm: Swedish Library Association, 2014).

ment from the Swedish Library Association, which forms the point of departure for the present survey, the mandate is formulated in close connection to these manifestos and to the current publication. The mandate includes the following:

- Conduct a survey in order to discover how the libraries in their media strategy work relate to and live up to the relevant sections of the normative library documents and to Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Describe how the guidelines and established practices of various responsible organisations prescribe and regulate the libraries' selection, purchase, and weeding of individual titles or programme activities, and state whether these relate to the normative library documents.
- One particular aspect of this is to identify which competency is required in order to operationalise both media plans and the normative documents.
- The survey is also intended to shed a light upon any differences in approach among various types of libraries.

The mandate has been interpreted to mean that it would be interesting to investigate both written media plans and library practice in the form of actual selection and acquisition work in the country's libraries. Methods for investigating this are, in this survey, document analysis of a selection of media plans and interviews with representatives of various types of libraries. A comparison between the media work of various libraries can shed light upon the missions and working conditions of different types of libraries and bring to the fore the special questions that are thrown into focus through the media work of each library. In the study it will be possible to illustrate and problematise the fact that media selection requires competence by focusing on what elements are included in this kind of work and what points of conflict exist in the work. On the basis of the mandate's description as a survey and its given time frame, the study can also be regarded as stock-taking and problem

formulation. The survey can also shed light on and identify interesting questions and problem areas that may be the subject of further study and research.

Aim and research questions

On the basis of what has been said above, the aim of the present survey and study is to obtain deeper knowledge about the media strategy work of Swedish libraries. The study is a contribution to the ongoing and constantly topical debate and discussion on the mission of the library and its selection of media seen from a societal point of view.

The detailed research questions for the study are connected to the mission statement and have been formulated as follows:

1. How do libraries in their media strategy work relate to and act with respect to normative library documents such as the various library manifestos of the IFLA/UNESCO, the IFLA Code of Ethics, Swedish legislation relating to libraries, and Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
2. In what way do the guidelines and established practices of the responsible organisations of various libraries prescribe and regulate the libraries' selection, purchase, and weeding of different types of media, and how does this relate to the normative library documents?
3. How do librarians handle potential conflicts between the comprehensive normative library documents, local media plans, and users' opinions and requests?
4. What knowledge and competence are required from professional librarians in order to operationalise any media plans and normative library documents in their actual media work?
5. What differences in approach, if any, can be discerned among various types of libraries with regard to issues of strategic media work and media selection?

The survey has taken a broad approach and the ambition has been to include various types of libraries. It seemed important to capture and illuminate the varying conditions and prerequisites that apply to different library activities. Another aim has been geographic variation. On the basis of this, the study includes public libraries from large cities to minor communities in different parts of the country, school libraries, one integrated school and public library, university and university college libraries, one hospital library, and county libraries.

In the present English translation of the report the focus has been placed on research questions 1, 2, and 3 and on questions concerning public libraries and school libraries. This means that the portions and sections that deal exclusively with university college and university libraries, as well as with the competence of librarians, have been removed. Also, sections that describe general trends regarding media acquisitions in Swedish libraries have been deleted.

Method and realisation

The survey has been conducted with a qualitative approach through an analysis of collected media plans and interviews with librarians in different types of libraries.

The concrete method used in the study is a qualitative comparative content analysis of documents, based on selected themes coupled to the central issues and focuses of the survey.³ The purpose of a document analysis of media plans is, among other things, to investigate how examples of written media plans and guidelines relate to the selected normative policy documents.

For the collection of media plans a query was sent to all municipalities in the country and all university libraries regarding their media plans or media strategies. The question was directed to the chief librarian if it

3 Barbara M. Wildemuth, *Application of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2009).

was possible to identify such a person from the library's website. Otherwise the question was sent to the library's functional mailbox and directed to the chief librarian. In cases of intermunicipal media cooperation, for instance a common catalogue, a joint query was directed to the collaborating municipalities and, in addition, to the responsible official at the regional level when the cooperation concerned an entire region (= county). The queries were sent via email and the addresses were collected from the websites of the libraries in question. Only one query per library was sent out. If the letter was returned because the address was unknown, no attempt to find the correct address was made.

The query met with significant response. Sixty-five plans that deal exclusively with the media strategy work of the libraries were submitted. In a few cases, the media strategy plan is a part of a municipal library plan. When it was possible to separate the media strategy plan as a distinct section or chapter, we included it in the survey. There were also a large number of negative responses, in which the most common reason for not submitting a plan was that the most recent one was more than five years old. A common answer was also that the existing plan was currently being updated or that a new plan was being developed but had not yet been completed. Another possible reason for a negative reply is that a library or municipality quite simply does not have a plan.

In addition to media plans, the empirical material of the survey consists of semi-structured interviews with librarians that were strategically selected for the problem area in question. A semi-structured qualitative interview is free in its basic form, but is based on a previously formulated interview guide, in which the themes of the interview frame its topic. Within the framework of a semi-structured interview there are various techniques for conducting the interview in practice and for the way in which questions are posed.⁴ The aim of the interviews was to provide an opportunity to have a more detailed conversation about the research questions of the study coupled to both the guidelines that have been drawn up and to library practices.

4 Wildemuth, 232.

A point of departure for the selection of informants was to obtain broad representation for various types of libraries. The distribution of the results of the selection was as follows:

- public libraries: 10 interviews
- university college and university libraries: 5 interviews (of which 3 were paired interviews)
- school libraries: 2 interviews
- integrated public and school libraries: 2 interviews
- hospital libraries: 1 interview
- county libraries: 1 interview

Sum total, interviews: 21

The selection of informants was made in a strategic and goal-oriented manner. Already at the initial stage of the planning of the survey we were given tips concerning people who had an interest in participating, which we then followed up. Through our own contacts and those of colleagues in the library field, we then distributed the queries to a number of librarians. In addition to finding representatives from different types of libraries, the goal was also to cover the juxtaposition large city - small community, to cover different parts of the country, and, if possible, to interview representatives of various possible attitudes regarding the research questions of the study. Regarding the last of these, we partly took as our point of departure the names of people who have been active in media discussions in recent years.

There are advantages and disadvantages with strategic selections. One advantage is the opportunity to direct queries to people who you know in advance are interested in participating and who can also be assumed to contribute a wealth of empirical material to the study. A risk is that the empirical material becomes uniform and biased in one direction. Significant attention has been given to this risk in the collection of the empirical material, and the actual results provide evidence of a very

broad spectrum of angles of approach and perspectives in relation to the research questions of the survey.

The interviews were conducted face to face in the interviewees' workplaces, or, as an alternative, in the form of long-distance interviews via Adobe Connect Pro during the period from 5 March to 22 May 2014. All interviews except one were recorded and carefully transcribed. However, when reproducing quotes in this report, the statements have been corrected with regard to word order and sentence construction in order to improve readability. The duration of each interview was approximately one hour. We conducted the majority of the interviews together, but for practical reasons three interviews had to be conducted by only one of us. With regard to the interviews, all personal names and place and library names are kept confidential in this report. The reproduced quotations from the interviews have been collated with the interviewee in question.



The normative documents – international manifestos, ethical rules, and legislation

One of the points of departure for this survey of media strategy work in libraries is, as was made clear in the introduction to this report, normative documents in the form of legislation, the Swedish Library Act (SFS 2013:801), and the international manifestos and the Code of Ethics that the IFLA/UNESCO have drawn up and adopted. The last-mentioned texts, the manifestos and the Code of Ethics, were published in 2014 in a new Swedish translation through cooperation between the Swedish Library Association and the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO under the joint title *Bibliotekens internationella manifest* [The international library manifestos].

The fact that all of the library manifestos of the IFLA are now collected in a single publication in Swedish offers new opportunities to read, discuss, take in, and work with the content of the manifestos in a single context, but it also makes visible the breadth, diversity, and variety of the contents. The manifestos were drawn up at different times and have different backgrounds, from the nowadays well-known UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, the first version of which was adopted by UNESCO in 1949, to the latest one from 2012, the IFLA Manifesto for Libraries Serving Persons with a Print Disability.⁵ The manifestos also have different background histories and status; both the IFLA and UNESCO are behind a few of the manifestos, while others were drawn up and approved by the IFLA alone. The latter is true not least of the Code of Ethics that was approved by the board of the IFLA in 2012 and that is also included in the newly-published text (the IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and

5 For a short history, see Barbro Thomas, 'På solid ideologisk grund – biblioteksmanifesten och dess historia' [On solid ideological ground: The library manifestos and their history] in *Biblioteksbladet* [The library journal], no. 4 (2014), 24–25.

other Information Workers). Most of the manifestos, with the exception of the public library and school library manifestos, were drawn up in the twenty-first century, and together they clearly reflect social developments and changes with respect to digital technology.

Some manifestos seem to be clearly linked and together they may reflect certain developments, such as, for instance, the Internet Manifesto, the Alexandria Manifesto on Libraries, the Information Society in Action, and the IFLA/UNESCO Manifesto for Digital Libraries. Another example of manifestos that are closely related is the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom and the Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom. The IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (the latest version is from 1994), for its part, covers all public library activities, and several of its points are developed in greater detail in later manifestos, for example regarding various types of library services. Another general manifesto is the IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto that was approved by the IFLA board in 2006 and adopted by UNESCO in 2009.

A total of twelve different manifestos including the Code of Ethics are included in the new publication in Swedish, namely:

- The IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (most recent revision 1994)
- The IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (1999)
- The IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto (2006/2009)
- The IFLA/UNESCO Manifesto for Digital Libraries (2010)
- The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom (1999)
- The Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom (2002)
- The IFLA Internet Manifesto (2002)
- The Alexandria Manifesto on Libraries, the Information Society in Action (2005)

- The IFLA Manifesto on Transparency, Good Governance and Freedom from Corruption (2002)
- The IFLA Library Statistics Manifesto (2010)
- The IFLA Manifesto for Libraries Serving Persons with a Print Disability (2012)
- The IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers (2012)

The manifestos are presented in the Swedish translation as concept papers, and are meant to clarify basic principles and values. What all the manifestos have in common is that they are based on Article 19 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides a strong connection to the basic mission of libraries to work for freedom of expression, the free formation of opinions, and equal access to information, knowledge, and culture.⁶ The genesis of the different manifestos has varied. Within the IFLA, manifestos are approved by the board. UNESCO, on the other hand, is an intergovernmental body within the UN in which member countries negotiate, among other things, common approaches and rules in normative documents of varying status – conventions, recommendations, and declarations. A declaration has no legal standing and the same goes for manifestos, but such a document can of course have a strong moral status.⁷

The IFLA manifestos are firmly established arguments in favour of freedom of expression and information, coupled to the value of these freedoms for a democratic society. It is worth noting that it is precisely an *argument in favour of democracy* that is emphasised in support for free-

6 Niclas Lindberg and Mats Djurberg, prefaces to *Bibliotekens internationella manifest* [The international library manifestos], 3–6. Article 19: ‘Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers’.

7 Mats Djurberg, *ibid.*, 5.

dom of expression and thus for libraries.⁸ It is the free and autonomous citizen who is to be supported, a citizen who, in order to be able to exercise his or her democratic rights in society, needs to be well-informed and have access to the knowledge about society that is necessary to engage in this activity. This way of arguing firmly establishes libraries as a *public concern*, not simply as an instrument for the personal development and possible entertainment of the individual citizen.

However, the manifestos also deal with the individual. Individuals can be different and have different resources and prerequisites for taking advantage of information and knowledge when it comes to being participants in society and users of libraries. In the social structure there may also be various kinds of obstacles to accessing information. This is where libraries have a great potential to have an effect, and this is expressed in various ways in the manifestos. There are also recurring formulations stating that no discrimination of users shall occur, either on the basis of ethnic affiliation, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, religion, or political convictions.⁹ The idea that libraries should safeguard the diversity of the users' resources is most clearly expressed in the IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto, where a social richness of languages, cultures, and faiths is emphasised, and the most vulnerable groups in this society, such as applicants for asylum, refugees, people without residence permits, and indigenous populations are foregrounded in particular.¹⁰

8 In political philosophy there are a number of arguments for freedom of expression, such as the truth argument, the democracy argument, the tolerance argument, and the autonomy argument. Those who are interested in this can see, e.g., Ulf Petäjä, 'Varför yttrandefrihet? Om rättfärdigandet av yttrandefrihet med utgångspunkt från fem centrala argument i den demokratiska idétraditionen' [Why freedom of expression? On the justification of freedom of expression on the basis of five central arguments in the democratic tradition of ideas] (Växjö: Växjö University Press, 2006).

9 See, for instance, the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto and the Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom.

10 IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto, http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/library-services-to-multicultural-populations/publications/multicultural_library_manifesto-en.pdf. A Swedish translation of the passage in question can be found in Bibliotekens internationella manifest, 25.

The manifestos have traditionally had a significant impact on the activities of public libraries, but some of the documents have focused more on research and university college libraries. This is true of the Alexandria Manifesto on Libraries, the Information Society in Action, which mentions an efficient use of information resources, the support of free access to information – Open Access/open source/open content – and the removal of obstacles to access, whether these are structural or of other kinds.¹¹

This is true to an even higher degree of the Manifesto for Digital Libraries, with respect to which we know that 90% of the acquisitions of university and research libraries today is made up of digital media and the remaining 10% of physical media. This document discusses creating, making accessible, and preserving content and trying to achieve a vision of digital libraries being able to communicate with each other. Also, in the Internet Manifesto, librarians and other information specialists are encouraged to negotiate, for the benefit of their users, the most advantageous agreements regarding access to digital services. A common feature for all the manifestos is of course the formulation of the principle of free and unlimited access to information and knowledge. These standpoints are in certain documents very far-reaching and also include some concepts that do not occur very often in the Swedish debate on libraries, such as ‘intellectual freedom’ and ‘freedom of conscience and thought’.¹² All in all, the standpoint on free access nevertheless comprises the idea that freedom of expression is made up of two parts and that each presupposes the other, i.e., the right to seek and receive information, and the right to spread and express thoughts and opinions. Attention is also paid to the fact that in some cases this freedom may presuppose an aspect of integrity for the user.¹³ Never-

11 Alexandria Manifesto on Libraries, the Information Society in Action, <http://www.ifla.org/publications/alexandria-manifesto-on-libraries-the-information-society-in-action>. A Swedish translation of this passage can be found in *Bibliotekens internationella manifest*, 43.

12 The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom. Note, however, that freedom of thought and freedom of expression and conscience are concepts that are found in article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

13 *Ibid.*, and the IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers.

theless, the manifestos say nothing about any limits to freedom of information and thus do not provide any guidance for situations where different rights and principles or interests are in conflict, which they may be expected to be in a complex and open society. This particular point has been taken up in discussions and debates within the library world, and the need for concretisation and for bringing the issues regarding freedom of information down to the level of the individual library has been pointed out.¹⁴

The issue of censorship is, of course, closely linked to the issue of freedom of expression. The call for opposing all forms of censorship in library work recurs a number of times in the documents. The concept of censorship is, however, not defined anywhere, which may contribute to the occurrence of different interpretations of what is meant by censorship and of who actually exercises or may exercise it. The lack of a definition of the concept may lead library workers to think primarily of state censorship, and for this reason they may find it difficult to relate to the fact that censorship can occur in many different forms and on many different levels, such as, for instance, with respect to public authorities or non-profit or religious organisations. In addition, it is possible to read and interpret the manifestos to mean that censorship can also be implemented by individual librarians in their professional practice. That selection and access to material and services should be governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral, religious, or commercial standpoints or pressures is, for instance, prescribed in the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom and in the Public Library Manifesto.¹⁵

14 See, for instance, Caroline Fellbom Franke, 'Urval och etik' [Selection and ethics], in *Biblioteksbladet*, no. 5 (2013), 24–25.

15 IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom, <http://www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-statement-on-libraries-and-intellectual-freedom> and UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/libraman.html>. A Swedish translation of the passages in question may be found in *Bibliotekens internationella manifest*, 12 and 76.

In addition to this central message about free access to knowledge and information, other goals have been formulated for the selection of library materials and services. In the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto can be found, e.g., high quality, adaptation to local preconditions and needs, the idea that all materials should reflect 'current trends and the evolution of society' as well as 'favouring cultural diversity', along with ease of access.¹⁶

One document that stands out somewhat in comparison to the others included in the publication *Bibliotekens internationella manifest* is the IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers, which was approved by the IFLA board in August 2012.¹⁷ In this code the perspective is partially different from that found in the other manifestos, with its special emphasis on an ethical approach for librarians in their professional practice. In addition to the formulations regarding free access to information, etc., which recur in all the documents in *Bibliotekens internationella manifest*, the Code of Ethics mentions an ambition to promote reflection about professional methods and problem management, to increase awareness of the librarian's professional role, and to increase openness both for users and for society at large.

A general feature of this code can be said to be that certain formulations have been emphasised more strongly when compared with the other manifestos. In the five sections one can, among other things, learn that librarians should oppose any withholding of and limitations on access to information and ideas, 'most particularly' through censorship. Librarians must also be 'strictly committed to neutrality' and unbiased with regard to acquisitions, access, and service. The presupposition is that this neutrality will lead to 'the most balanced collection and the

16 UNESCO Public Library Manifesto. The Swedish translation can be found in *Bibliotekens internationella manifest*, 11-12.

17 IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers (full version), <http://www.ifla.org/news/ifla-code-of-ethics-for-librarians-and-other-information-workers-full-version>. The Swedish translation can be found in *Bibliotekens internationella manifest*, 65 ff.

most balanced access to information achievable'.¹⁸ Furthermore, librarians should 'promote the ethical use of information' and 'respect the protection of minors while ensuring this does not impact on the information rights of adults'. The third section of the code recommends that librarians should 'support and participate in transparency so that the workings of government, administration and business are opened to the scrutiny of the general public', and posits that it may be in the public interest that 'crime be exposed by what constitute breaches of confidentiality by so-called "whistleblowers"'.¹⁹

It is almost self-evident that some of these objectives are not obviously compatible with one another, and that a consensus cannot be expected to exist concerning what concepts such as 'ethical' and 'strictly neutral' mean in practice. The wording 'the protection of minors while ensuring this does not impact on the information rights of adults' also in itself gives rise to a plethora of questions, because children sometimes need protection precisely from the 'rights of adults'. In this way the Code of Ethics also opens the possibility of difficult choices, without directly providing concrete guidance regarding the conflicting points. This may be a problem with respect to both the manifestos and the Code of Ethics, which in itself may demand a different type of elaboration on issues such as professional ethics and conflict management. On the other hand, the manifestos and the Code of Ethics form a framework that can be used as a point of departure for important discussions. The survey within the scope of our mission may be said to be yet another piece of the puzzle in this discussion, something that the remainder of this report will show in the description of various ethical dilemmas with respect to selection and acquisition, and the associated arguments and stand-points.

18 Section 5, IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers. A Swedish translation can be found in *Bibliotekens internationella manifest*, 70.

19 *Ibid.*, Sections 2 and 3. A Swedish translation can be found in *Bibliotekens internationella manifest*, 68–69.

Library legislation

In addition to the international manifestos and the IFLA Code of Ethics, the Swedish Library Act is an obvious normative policy document for Swedish libraries. The new, extended Library Act that came into force on 1 January 2014 (SFS 2013:801)²⁰ contains, among other things, the following that has a bearing on our continued survey of the media strategy work done in libraries:

- The Library Act has a section on the purpose of libraries (Section 2) that is to a great degree based on the same approach as the formulation in the Public Library Manifesto (and thus on Article 19 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) regarding the importance of libraries to ‘the development of a democratic society through a contribution to knowledge, development, and the free formation of ideas’. However, there is nothing in the Library Act regarding the ‘free and unlimited access to [...] information’ or concerning censorship.
- Instead, Section 6 of the Library Act prescribes that the media and services offered by public libraries shall be characterised by *versatility* (allsidighet) and *quality* (kvalitet). According to the same section, the public libraries shall also be ‘adapted to the needs of the users’. These formulations also have their equivalents in the Public Library Manifesto, even if the term versatility does not occur in the Manifesto.
- Like before, the new act singles out prioritised groups that, in addition to people with an impairment, are made up of individuals and groups that have a different mother tongue than Swedish. With regard to the literature that the libraries should offer, the Swedish minority languages have been added in comparison

20 Sweden had its first library act on 1 January 1997, following discussions going back many years (SFS 1996:1596). In 2012 a more extensive revision of the act was initiated, with the result that a new library act came into force on 1 January 2014 (SFS 2013:801). The preparatory work for the act provides the background and guidance necessary for its interpretation, see DS 2012:13 and Prop 2012/13:147.

to the previous act, and later in the text ‘other languages’ and ‘easy-to-read Swedish’ are mentioned.

- From January 2014 the complementary supply of media is no longer included in the responsibility of regional libraries. The promotion of cooperation, development of library activities, and quality remain (Section 11).

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The media plans of the libraries

This section contains a brief description of the references to the international library documents and to Swedish legislation that have been identified in the plans submitted. By 'explicit reference' is meant that the title of a manifesto is quoted and/or that the document is quoted in part or in its entirety. Implicit references to central concepts in the manifestos may indicate the occurrence of concepts such as, for instance, 'versatility', 'quality', 'freedom from censorship' or formulations that have the same or similar meaning as in the normative documents.

In the plans that have been drawn up after the coming into force of the new Library Act, the formulation from the legal text that media and services shall be characterised by **versatility and quality** often recurs. In the media plans of the public libraries there are examples of explicit references to some of the IFLA/UNESCO manifestos, most often the Public Library Manifesto,²¹ but also the School Library Manifesto.²² These explicit references may be present in different formats, from simply a bullet-point list of the regulatory/normative documents on which the plan is based to more detailed descriptions of the content of the various documents that have served as an inspiration or to which the plan in question relates, or, in some cases, direct quotations from the Public Library Manifesto. However, in a majority of the media plans there are no explicit references to any IFLA manifesto.

The references that do exist are almost exclusively to the Public Library Manifesto and the School Library Manifesto, and it may be said that the

21 UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/libraman.html>. For a Swedish translation, see *Bibliotekens internationella manifest* (Stockholm: Swedish Library Association, 2014), 11.

22 UNESCO/IFLA School Library Manifesto, http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/school_manifesto.html. A Swedish translation can be found in *Bibliotekens internationella manifest*, 47.

other manifestos, declarations, or codes are relatively invisible. On the other hand, references to other international policy documents occur in the references, for instance the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child²³ with formulations regarding children's right to freedom of expression and to receive and spread information, as well as the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.²⁴ Other documents referred to that are given more or less weight are the policy documents of the libraries' own organisations, such as, for instance, municipal library plans or regional culture plans. Studying such documents from the perspective of the manifestos has not been a part of this study, but a more detailed scrutiny of these documents could produce more links to the IFLA manifestos.

Only one of the submitted plans contains a direct quote from a central section in the Public Library Manifesto:

Freedom, Prosperity and the Development of society and individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.

Occurrence of concepts that are linked to the normative documents

The word 'censorship' only occurs explicitly in a small number of the documents.

23 FN:s konventioner om mänskliga rättigheter [The UN conventions on human rights] (Stockholm: Ministry of Justice, Government Offices of Sweden, 2006).

24 Ibid.

The media collections of the libraries shall not be subject to any form of ideological, political, or religious censorship, nor to commercial pressures, and shall be open for all artistic forms of expression.

The fact that the concept of censorship occurs so rarely may be interpreted as a sign that Swedish library workers take it for granted that there is no censorship in Sweden. The difference between an active selection on the basis of specific criteria and the subsequent weeding of an individual title from the collection on the basis of requests/demands from users or, for that matter, politicians, is not problematised. The fact that censorship is so rarely discussed or even mentioned in the documents that have been studied may also be related to the fact that, as has already been mentioned, the concept is not defined in the normative documents. This may also be interpreted as a sign of the lack of an active, continuous debate about these concepts in Swedish libraries. It is when the presence of an individual title in the libraries becomes the subject of, above all, media coverage that the discussion flares up for a short period only to soon thereafter fall into oblivion.

On the other hand, it is possible to find a fairly large number of formulations about what the library workers do not believe should be purchased or what they avoid purchasing/do not want to purchase, such as racist material, speculative violence, and so on. Corresponding formulations concerning what should not be acquired cannot be found in the manifestos.

In general, there is in the plans an interesting diversity in the formulations regarding how a desirable versatility should be achieved in the collections, while at the same time it may be desirable and necessary to exclude material with content that is too extreme. This may be described in positive or negative terms, either about what is to be avoided or what is to be actively selected. In one case the whole media plan opens with a formulation regarding what should not be placed on the shelves:

The purchasing manager is responsible for deciding what, on the

*whole, should **not** be placed on the shelves on the basis of quality, objectivity, and variation. Media with a racist or in other respects discriminatory point of view, or that contains speculative violence, should not occur [in the library] (emphasis added).*

When versatility and diversity are expressed in positive terms in the plans, it may be formulated in the following manner:

The material on offer in the library shall, in its entirety, reflect a breadth of experiences and knowledge, and a diversity of political and religious opinions. [...] Considerable allowances should be made for demand.

Another way of expressing the desirable balance between things that should be accepted or rejected is to attempt to and find a middle road:

We shall have a permissive attitude, but shall not purchase racist or pornographic material or literature that glorifies violence. [...] It is important to also include controversial topics.

Precisely the question of what libraries should or should not purchase puts an extra focus on what a library's independence means in this context. It also becomes interesting for our study to look more closely at the way in which phenomena and concepts such as free access/freedom of information, selection, censorship, the mission of the library, and so on are interpreted by the interviewees, individually and in relation to each other, and with respect to the activities of various types of libraries, something that will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter.

The explicitness of what should or should not be purchased is most pronounced in university and university college libraries, where material not connected to the university's target group is purchased only in exceptional cases. It may seem like a logical thing to do, but at the same time it would be possible to argue, with the support of, for instance,

the Glasgow Declaration, which, among other things, takes up intellectual freedom,²⁵ that when requests regarding media that fall outside the study areas in question are turned down it is tantamount to repudiating the idea of intellectual freedom. A common 'solution' to this problem recurs in a number of university college library plans – borrowers are referred to the collections of public libraries. In public library plans the formulations of what is not purchased are more diffuse.

The concept of freedom of expression recurs relatively often in the plans that have been studied, but neither is this concept problematised to any significant extent. Just like in the case of censorship, there are signs that libraries tend to set limits on freedom of expression. As Ulf Petäjä claims, there is a clear consensus regarding the central importance of freedom of expression to democracy.²⁶ He also contends that this in itself may pose a problem:

*Because freedom of expression is considered to be valuable, while at the same time the reason why it is valuable is not discussed, the discussions regarding its limitations tend to be arbitrary and ad hoc.*²⁷

In the plans that have been studied there is often a section claiming that the library does not take a position on, for example, political or religious issues. This is expressed in various ways, such as, for instance, that the library 'is independent of moral, political, and religious control' or 'we

25 The Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom, <http://www.ifla.org/publications/the-glasgow-declaration-on-libraries-information-services-and-intellectual-freedom>. The Swedish translation can be found in *Bibliotekens internationella manifest* [The international library manifestos], translated by Anna Strandberg and Jan Ristarp (Stockholm: Swedish Library Association, 2014), 17.

26 Ulf Petäjä, 'Varför yttrandefrihet? Om rättfärdigandet av yttrandefrihet med utgångspunkt från fem centrala argument i den demokratiska idétraditionen' [Why freedom of expression? On the justification of freedom of expression on the basis of five central arguments in the democratic tradition of ideas] (Växjö: Växjö University Press, 2006), 10.

27 *Ibid.*, 12.

refrain from purchasing literature that discriminates against a certain group of people or whose main aim is to speculate in prejudice'. Formulations that express the idea that the media collection should support democracy, freedom of expression, and freedom of information also occur relatively often, as does the statement that the activities of the library are based on democratic values. Statements that the content of, for instance, classics should primarily be judged against the background of the spirit of the times that prevailed when the work was created also occur in several documents, including in plans that are a few years old and reasonably have not been influenced by recent debates on racial stereotypes in children's books.²⁸ Less common are discussions on ethical perspectives, gender perspectives, or discussions about what good quality is. However, there are exceptions:

Purchases shall be preceded by a quality assessment, and any books to be purchased shall be examined from a gender and discrimination perspective.

Or:

Material containing broader concepts of gender, different family constellations, etc. shall be prioritised.

In public library plans there is a large measure of hedging in order to cover most possibilities, a kind of 'both-and' way of thinking.

Material in the library's collection shall be characterised by quality and versatility and shall take into consideration the users' wishes. This means that users shall have access to a large collection in printed and digital form that contains material that is broad as well as narrow, easy as well as difficult, old as well as new.

28 See, for instance, the culture section in Dagens Nyheter, <http://www.dn.se/dnbok/bakgrund-tintin-och-rasismen>. Books that were discussed were, for instance, the Tintin series, Pippi in the South Seas and the Stone Age Kids (Barna Hedenhös).

Two libraries take up the concept of quality as a subjective concept and then use almost exactly the same wording.

Quality is a subjective concept that is determined on the basis of prevailing norms as well as the individual borrower's need for knowledge and experiences.

The goal may be perceived as a requirement that the library should provide access to both mainstream and exclusive titles, popular as well as more esoteric items. Quality may refer both to literary content and also to actual use, a desire to avoid racism and prejudice, and a simultaneous tolerance of the fact that values change over time. This reflects everyday experiences in public libraries, where the target group is broad and mobile and where there is significant influence from what is current and topical just then. It also reflects the pronounced user guidance that public libraries refer to as the basis for their work and that is proclaimed in several of the documents. There is also strong support for this in the Public Library Manifesto.²⁹

The Public Library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users.

The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. [...]

All age groups must find material relevant to their needs. [...] High quality and relevance to local needs and conditions are fundamental. Material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavour and imagination.

29 UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/libraman.html>. For a Swedish translation, see *Bibliotekens internationella manifest* [The international library manifestos], translated by Anna Strandberg and Jan Ristarp (Stockholm: Swedish Library Association, 2014), 11.

A user group that has a stronger position in Swedish media plans than in the manifestos is made up of people with print disabilities, who in most plans are emphasised as a priority group. In addition, in the plans this user group is extended to include people with impairments in general. In this case, references to the legislation governing these activities are included in the plans. The reason for the emphasis on this group can be seen in light of the previous Library Act,³⁰ but also against the background of Sweden having adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.³¹ Also other legislation regarding support for people with impairments adds weight to issues concerning this group, not just on the level of the library but also at a high political level. The content of the IFLA Manifesto for Libraries Serving Persons with a Print Disability from 2012³² is an example of already existing normative documents in Sweden having a greater weight than the international library manifestos.

Also municipal inhabitants with non-Swedish origins are emphasised as a priority group. In this context, reference is occasionally made to the Multicultural Library Manifesto,³³ but more often to the Swedish Library Act and regional documents concerning the provision of media with respect to literature in many languages. Only one plan refers explicitly to prioritising the minority languages, namely Finnish, Meänkieli, Romani, Sami, and Yiddish, even if the number of borrowed books in these languages is reported to be small.

One of the later manifestos, the Library Statistics Manifesto from 2010, emphasises the importance of keeping statistics on the activities of the

30 The Swedish Library Act (SFS 1996:1596).

31 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

32 IFLA Manifesto for Libraries Serving Persons with a Print Disability, <http://www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-manifesto-for-libraries-serving-persons-with-a-print-disability>. A Swedish translation can be found in *Bibliotekens internationella manifest* [The international library manifestos], translated by Anna Strandberg and Jan Ristarp (Stockholm: Swedish Library Association, 2014), 21.

33 *Ibid.* Swedish translation: *Bibliotekens internationella manifest*, 25.

libraries. In the Swedish context this manifesto can appear a late addition or an obvious recommendation, because all the libraries surveyed refer to their statistical work.

Statistics is necessary, as is pointed out in the manifesto, for the 'effective management of libraries' and because it is 'essential for decisions on levels of service and future strategic planning'.³⁴

All media plans from the university and university college sector emphasise the endeavour to provide as much literature as possible in digital form, even if the level of ambition is higher in some libraries than in others. There is, to a high degree, an attempt to procure the right of ownership to, and an unlimited use of, the library's electronic collections. This means, for instance, an opportunity for simultaneous use and full access over time. Even if this is not connected to the normative documents that concern digital libraries or e-media, formulations and discussions on this topic are present in most of these plans. University college libraries formulate strategies for access and attempt to make sure that this access to e-resources is based on Open Access as described in, for instance, the Alexandria Manifesto on Libraries, the Information Society in Action and in the Manifesto for Digital Libraries.

Media plans and manifestos - a discussion

Anna-Lena Höglund and Christer Klingberg's book on media strategy work is still influential with respect to work with media plans. This is true primarily for the often extensive demographic description of catchment areas and/or other detailed descriptions of target groups. It is also true of the work with mapping the mobility of media, even if it seems likely that the goal for following up these mappings has been set too high. It is often stated that the plan is to be updated with an interval of a certain number of years, something that libraries have not managed to accomplish. Even with the support of modern library computer systems it is a very extensive

34 IFLA Library Statistics Manifesto, <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/statistics-and-evaluation/publications/library-statistics-manifesto-en.pdf>. A Swedish translation can be found in *Bibliotekens internationella manifest*, 59.

task to complete such a survey. This also confirms the answers we have obtained to our inquiry about media plans in which regret is expressed that the updating and revision have not been completed as often as was originally planned.

Considering that the normative documents did not exist in a comprehensive Swedish translation until March 2014, and considering that the most recent Library Act was only a few months old when the present survey was carried out, there are nonetheless in the public library plans some basic points of departure that are based on the same tradition of ideas as the normative documents and the media plans. These points of departure are often reinforced by reference to other documents that carry a greater weight in Sweden, both in the form of Swedish legislation and international conventions. For school libraries the most significant policy documents are, for obvious reasons, the Swedish Education Act, but references are also made to, for instance, the eight key competences of the EU.³⁵ At the same time there is a tendency to consider certain ideas so obvious that there is no need to argue in favour of them. Among these ideas are freedom of expression, quality, and versatility. These ideas will be analysed at a later stage in the report.

There are issues in and aspects of the library media plans that have not been discussed above, but that are nevertheless of interest as we proceed to the following chapter about the role of media strategy work in the practical activities of the libraries. One of these aspects is the expression in the plans of the importance of user guidance for media purchases and acquisitions. With some single exceptions, the plans express the idea that the wishes and needs of the users should govern purchases. This is true both of public libraries and university and university college libraries. For academic libraries this is an entirely dominant perspective that is coupled to the clearly delimited target groups of students and researchers, and to the mandate that has been given to the library by the university. User guidance is, however, also expressed

35 http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/

clearly in public library media plans, although in somewhat different ways.

In conclusion, it can be said that formulations of a similar kind often recur in several plans. It is in itself not surprising that those who draw up the plans are inspired by how other people have thought when formulating guidelines or a strategic document. There may, however, be a problem with disseminating 'popular' expressions, and the question that is inevitably brought to the fore is the extent to which individual formulations have been carefully considered and established in a library's own practice. Another question that arises is what weight formulations on the grounds of principles have if they have not been discussed when the plan was drawn up?



Media strategies in practical library work

An individual library's work with selecting and purchasing media is not carried out in a vacuum. There are trends also with respect to acquisition of media as well as events at the social level that affect the organisation of the acquisition work, and so do basic views of what the library should purchase and why. This can be things such as changes in the supply of media in the direction of an increasing amount of digital publication, ideas about the library's role in society, and the library's economy, but also changing attitudes to and perspectives on users. In this chapter the picture will be fleshed out a bit and arguments regarding the main questions of the survey will be deepened on the basis of the interviews that were conducted in the study.

Dilemmas in selection and acquisition

Any conflicts and problems in the work with selection and purchasing in libraries that are in some way connected to the perspectives and principles formulated in the various IFLA/UNESCO manifestos we have chosen to call 'dilemmas'. Dilemmas have to do with points of conflict that arise during acquisition work, or problematic situations that have some form of ethical dimension coupled to questions and perspectives included in the manifestos, but also in the new Library Act. Below a few such situations are described and discussed on the basis of the stories and statements of the interviewed librarians, divided according to various themes: the manifestos as documents in themselves; having or not having control of selection; freedom of information and its limitations; the question of censorship; and the issue of quality.

The libraries and the IFLA/UNESCO manifestos

The questions taken up by the manifestos are in many ways continuously present in everyday library work, but an active way of relating to the manifestos as such seems to be missing in many libraries. A direct question in the study's interviews about the relationship to the manifes-

tos resulted in widely varying answers, but the informants consistently describe their relationship to these documents as distant and, in the case of university college libraries, virtually non-existent. This was true whether or not the interviewee we spoke to had a personal interest in the perspectives and issues taken up in the manifestos. For example, one public librarian answers the question whether the manifestos are active documents in the following manner: 'No, no, absolutely not yet, but I really think they ought to be included.'³⁶ Another public librarian says,

Quite honestly, I can say very little. I did read the UNESCO manifestos at some point, but I don't exactly look at them every week and try to remind myself of their contents.³⁷

A school librarian in the study feels that

they are part of our action plan. [...] Then of course they are not documents I have before me in my daily work, but they sit somewhere as a kind of backbone. [...] And of course it is a great advantage to have these library manifestos, and if I sometimes feel I don't know what I'm doing I can always go back to them.³⁸

A representative of a university college library says the following regarding the importance of the manifestos to their own library:

The manifestos are of course important in their own context [...] but when it comes to what is important to us we fall back on the documents regulating our activities locally rather than the UNESCO library manifestos. So that's probably the harsh reality of it.³⁹

36 Interview 15.

37 Interview 17.

38 Interview 10.

39 Interview 1.

Another university librarian even asks what documents we are talking about in the interview; to her the IFLA international manifestos are virtually unknown.⁴⁰

Those who express themselves appreciatively and positively about the significance of the manifestos to the activities of libraries do this in a relatively hypothetical manner, by describing the importance of the fact that there are normative documents also at the international level that provide a common ground on which to stand, especially for public libraries. One informant also expresses great joy over the new translation of the collected manifestos in a more tangible way coupled to activities of their own library:

*I feel that I'm really happy about these [manifestos] having been translated and that they exist in this form, and although I haven't read every word in them from cover to cover, I still feel that the Public Library Manifesto, and the multicultural one as well... we're already doing much of what it says in them and for that reason I'd like for us to work with them even more.*⁴¹

If the interviews as a whole provide a picture of the manifestos primarily as paper products in everyday library activities, the media plans express something partially different. As has been shown in the preceding chapter, the media plans contain explicit, but above all implicit, references and links to formulations in the manifestos, primarily the Public Library Manifesto. Taken together, this provides a somewhat complex picture that cannot obviously be interpreted in one way or the other. The majority of the informants express a positive evaluation of the manifestos, and then primarily the Public Library Manifesto and the School Library Manifesto, and emphasise the significance of their existence. Nevertheless, there is no concrete relationship to them in the informants' everyday activities. Drawing up a media plan or a policy can actu-

40 Interview 20.

41 Interview 8.

alise various policy documents such as legislation and manifestos. The formulations that are in circulation may prove to be useful, but does this imply an actual implementation of the perspectives that form the basis of the formulations in the manifestos? And is this preceded by deliberate discussions and a conscious strategy?

Several of the librarians interviewed also emphasise the difficulty of using documents like the Public Library Manifesto as a guide for their everyday work on the basis of the lack of concretisation in this type of text. In order for them to become actively used documents it is necessary to have discussions about the issues touched on in the manifestos. They can also be read and interpreted in different ways. Because if formulations in, for instance, a manifesto are not just to look good, while in practice being meaningless words, they have to be formulated in ways that mean that they can be contradicted, as one of the interviewed librarians puts it. Only then can they be of significance in the practical work of the libraries. Another of the librarians draws attention to the importance of discussions:

If we are to find a common point of departure in them we need to have a debate. [...] After all, a personal standpoint may have been part of the background of the very decision to become a professional librarian, so it's very closely connected, and then the readings of the texts... I think they could be very diverse.⁴²

Even if the informants say that they do not relate to the manifestos on a daily basis, practical library work, just like the media plans, can be said to comprise a number of situations and questions that touch on the perspectives of the manifestos. The continued presentation in this chapter describes this from a few different perspectives. The answers we have obtained make it clear that librarians feel both insecurity and doubt when it comes to issues of principle regarding selection, purchase, acquisition, and collections coupled to such things as freedom of informa-

42 Interview 18.

tion, versatility, quality, and censorship, but there are also very carefully considered positions.

Having control or not having control of the media collection

A basic issue regarding the acquisition of media in libraries has to do with control of the selection and how this can be exercised in the context of the changes in the actual media work that have been described in the preceding chapters. Is it still the librarians who may be said to have this control, and if so, what does it look like? Also, is having control desirable and/or necessary? In what way does control over acquisitions relate to the increasingly strong trend towards user guidance that has become clear from the study, and to such things as Patron-Driven Acquisition (PDA) and acquisition of electronic media in package solutions? The answers to such questions can vary from library to library, but also in one and the same interview a contradiction can be expressed about the issue of the desirability of control over acquisition and selection. In the end it is perhaps a matter of being able to have obvious influence over and effect on acquisitions and thereby on the collection as a whole in one's own library in order to be able to take responsibility for it, without having control over every single title purchased, but also in this there may be conflicting feelings and contradictory arguments. One example of this concerns a desire to be able to add or remove titles in e-book packages from Elib⁴³. One of the librarians from a library that has introduced profile purchasing says the following with respect to the experience of a lack of influence on the selection when it comes to e-book packages:

When we profile purchase we still make the selection, we say which type of books we want, but with Elib we buy a product. We can't affect it for one moment. On the other hand they now say we should be able to choose which titles we want, and I think that's good. [...] I think it's very good that we ourselves can think about how to select e-books. [...] Because today we can't control anything because we buy, as it were, a package. Take it or leave it.⁴⁴

43 Elib, the leading producer and distributor of digital books in Scandinavia.

44 Interview 5.

Another informant in a library that uses profile purchasing feels that the work with profiles primarily is a question of streamlining the process, and that they still in principle can purchase all fiction published in Sweden. Nevertheless, the work with profiles is described as a constant dialogue, with the supplier regarding the number of titles and so on in relation to any particular target group campaigns, but also with other aspects of library work, such as the stage of mediation to the users. This can be seen as a way of retaining control and influence:

There is a constant dialogue really on the basis of - this is what we think, says our distributor and then we say, - OK, that looks good, perhaps a bit more there and a bit less there and then back again. [...] Then this year we will try to strengthen [the mutual discussions] by having more explicit dialogues between the units working with mediation and the ones working with acquisitions, so that there is a clearer connection.⁴⁵

In university libraries it seems to be less of a problem that a less qualified title may slip through in an e-book package, perhaps because there is significant faith that the users of these libraries are themselves capable of assessing the relevancy of individual titles and texts. Similarly, the problem of an individual title that is less relevant following along with the others is not considered particularly serious in that context. However, even in research libraries the content of the e-packages can be questioned:

That's also why we write the way we do in the media plan, that we don't have any control over the package once we have purchased it. [...] You expect to get the question, why do you have this title? That's also happened in other workplaces where I have been.

The same informant who reflects over the fact that package purchases of journals can result in titles following along that are not really desir-

45 Interview 18.

able also highlights another problem with the transition to mainly electronic media, i.e., that these media still can be said to be of a comparatively transient nature. Suddenly an individual electronic title may no longer be included in a package because of, e.g., a loss of rights or 're-packaged product portfolios', something that also affects the degree of control over the collection. However, the informant considers this to be a practical problem connected to access for users rather than a principle-related issue of selection:

A book sits in its place, and if it doesn't it is missing or has been borrowed, but when something disappears on the Internet or between systems, then we don't really know how to deal with that at the present time. And that can be anything from having a package deal where titles are suddenly withdrawn to not receiving MARC records.⁴⁶

A context where a certain control over the media collection can be extra important is the school library. This is because children and adolescents in different age groups cannot be said to have attained sufficient maturity or a sufficiently developed ability to make assessments of every subject, depending on how these subjects are dealt with in individual media. This sort of control does not have to do with limiting access to a specific work, but rather with knowledge about what is conveyed to the pupils. This is so that a discussion about content can be had if this is felt to be necessary:

If one purchases something that one knows takes up a sensitive subject, at least one should know that it is a sensitive subject, so one can look a bit at how often it's borrowed and the like. Sometimes it can be good to problematise certain things and talk to a pupil about different books.⁴⁷

All in all, the need for influence and control over the selection of media can have different causes or different purposes. It can have to do with

46 Ibid.

47 Interview 10.

having and preserving knowledge about a library's own collection for mediation work, with being able to choose to not acquire things considered irrelevant to the library on the basis of its mission as formulated, with having a way to achieve and safeguard a desirable breadth, versatility, or quality in the collection, or to limit it, to say no to something. It can also have to do with a desire to protect the user if, for instance, he or she is underage or ill; the latter may be an issue in hospital libraries. An interesting perspective is presented in this context by a librarian who feels that the transition to profile purchasing in their library may possibly have resulted in an increase in breadth and versatility in the fiction collection. This is on the basis of the idea that the library's staff is too homogeneous to be representative of the users, and that because of this there is a risk for unintended blindness and distortion in the purchasing:

If you consider the fact that we are a very homogeneous group in the library in general, even if we are a large workplace, one may perhaps imagine that we nevertheless have an opportunity to obtain a bit more breadth by having the profiles than if we hadn't had the profiles, possibly.⁴⁸

This leads us to the following section, in which we discuss at greater length issues regarding freedom of information, censorship versus selection, choosing to add or to remove, and the issues of diversity and quality.

Freedom of information in libraries - and its limits

The interview material for this study contains many good and well-formulated arguments for freedom of information as a principle for libraries and against censorship in the form of, for example, turning down suggestions for purchases or weeding out a work because of external attitudes, but it also contains several descriptions of and stories about how maintaining such a principle may come into conflict with the goal of not conveying any content that is thought to be racist, pornograph-

48 Interview 18.

ic, or too violent. Such cases are sometimes 'resolved' by way of some kind of compromise; perhaps the book is borrowed through interlibrary loan rather than being purchased, only one copy of the book is acquired rather than several (which is the norm); a book is purchased but is placed in the stacks after a while, and so on. Having a conversation with the borrower about certain content is also a useful method, for instance in school libraries, when the content is judged to be problematic. Dialogue is also used as a method when opinions are presented by a borrower about removing a work because of its content. In general there is a very clear goal and a desire to say yes rather than no to requests that are judged to be on the border of what is acceptable, and no to demands for weeding out a work because of its content. Stories about dilemmas and situations of conflict regarding these questions of selection nevertheless testify to how difficult it sometimes is to make assessments in situations like these, and the interviewed librarians describe having both an appraising and a reappraising attitude, 'did we do the right thing here?'

There is also variation in how the informants regard the entire issue of freedom of information in libraries and how fraught with conflict they feel that questions regarding selection and acquisition are. There are librarians in the study who believe that the library they work in has never received a suggestion of purchase for any 'spectacular' or controversial material.⁴⁹ Big city/small community may be a factor that affects the appraisal of how urgent these issues are felt to be, given that it is possible that libraries in big cities have a more heterogeneous user group. Another factor may be the proximity to work on the 'shop floor', i.e., how often a librarian is faced with situations that have to do with opinions on the selection of material. Questions about freedom of information with respect to acquisitions also typically arise mainly in public and school libraries. After all, by means of their collections university libraries are supposed to serve more specific activities, i.e., teaching and research, where an assessment concerning possible ethical questions and prob-

49 Interview 6.

lems is expected to be done at another level than that of the library. Also, research can, in principle, be done on very controversial material. A dilemma for librarians in these libraries could hypothetically arise if the university, for example, were to begin doing research on something that runs totally counter to a librarian's personal values.⁵⁰

Freedom of information in the library is interpreted by the informants in our study to mean having the widest possible framework for the acquisition, selection, and purchase of media, to consciously try to achieve breadth and versatility in the collections with regard to perspectives and opinions, and to not say no to any individual suggestion for purchase and not to remove or weed out any material on the basis of its content even when complaints have been made and criticism has been voiced by users. Regular weeding is, however, acceptable when certain material has become completely out of date or obsolete because of its age, provided that the library is not a legal deposit library.

The arguments in favour of an approach where the principle of freedom of information is prioritised can be of various kinds. A few examples formulated by the informants are:

A library is a neutral arena where visitors should be able to find different kinds of material and partake of things that are under debate in order to have an opportunity to form their own opinions.

Making sure that different perspectives and a breadth of opinions and positions are represented is in itself part of the democratic mission of the library.

A library as an institution cannot put the world right for the users and only contain the 'right' material, nor is this part of the library's social mission.

Beginning to remove material on the basis of external viewpoints, no matter the origin of these viewpoints and the issue under discussion, does something to the independence of the library - it is, as a matter

50 Interview 11.

of principle, the wrong basis for any possible weeding.

A desire to say yes rather than no in general, and as a principle regarding purchases and acquisitions.

Weeding material can be historical revisionism. All material reflects the time when it was created and was true to some extent on the basis of the values and views of its time.

A few examples of how these arguments are expressed in practice in the interviews follow here. In the first place, the library can be seen as an arena where the user should have an opportunity to partake of widely diverging opinions regardless of perspective:

To in fact offer alternative stories about the world, about democracy, about politics, about society. That is, to make sure that one has a good selection so that people can partake of what is being discussed. [...] What courage is required to resist and dare to say that this is a place where we are actually able to hold different opinions? [...] After all, I do feel that people should be allowed to make up their own minds, and that it is very important that they do so. For instance, we have the Scientologists, they are sitting on the shelf out there.⁵¹

There is an opportunity for taking a radical position in favour of versatility and freedom of information in the material offered by the library, even where the content may cause considerable friction, and likewise for resisting if and when opinions arise regarding the content of some work, in order to hold on to the library's independence in decisions concerning the collection, also down to the level of titles if the discussion arises on that level.

To be able to stomach the fact that the world is not complete, the world isn't just beautiful, and libraries must in some way reflect this

51 Interview 19.

as well. We shouldn't be a revised image of reality. [...] Dare to have some breadth and bite in the collection. After all, the values in society change as well. If one has worked for a long time one can see this pretty clearly. Even Nestius's book was published once.⁵² And it had a completely different purpose than the one for which we now weed it out.⁵³

And furthermore:

So the ambition when it comes to purchases is to be as open as possible. But then to remove something because someone feels it is offensive, that's a different matter. Then you're more, well, how should I put it? It does something to the independence, which of course is relative also in its prerequisites, but it does something more to it. [...] Then there can always be someone who can feel offended or troubled or whatever by a book, and we can sympathise with that at the same time that we don't weed books out on those premises.⁵⁴

One school librarian feels that for their part it is completely pointless to try and limit access to material in the school library:

We can't filter away all that information, they find it on the Internet anyway, so then we feel we do them a disservice, so we choose to focus on creating awareness and finding strategies for checking up things.⁵⁵

52 Hans Nestius, *I last och lust - sexuella bilder förr och nu [Vice and lust: Sexual images now and in history]* (Stockholm: Prisma, 1982). The book was published in cooperation with RFSU (the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education). In 2014 the book was the subject of debate in Swedish media when it turned out to be included in a number of Swedish library collections in spite of its containing photographs that in accordance with present-day legislation could be regarded as child pornography.

53 Interview 16.

54 Interview 16.

55 Interview 10.

One of the interviewed librarians follows a longer line of reasoning about the importance of, on the one hand, being an arena where the visitors can also find controversial material in order to form their own opinions about a topic, while on the other hand it is possible in library work to distinguish more clearly between acquisition and mediation when it comes to the content of the media. This line of reasoning can be compared with the school librarian's strategies and focus on dialogues about the content of various media. The library in question would also prefer to stick to the principle of saying yes rather than no when it comes to media acquisition:

This is the yes we say we want. I mean, what is the basis for what we are doing? The basis is to make material available, and then it can be the case that also media with content that is controversial is as important to have as media that no one has an opinion about, if you see what I mean. We have freedom of the press in Sweden, we have freedom of opinion, and we see the library as a place where you can go and partake of many opinions in order to form your own opinion in an educated way. [...] Then in a library we also work with mediation, and in mediation work I feel that one can take entirely different steps if one wants to say something special. But in acquisition work I think that this thing about saying yes to a high degree is important.⁵⁶

Upholding the principle of the most extensive freedom of information possible in one's own library is, as has been pointed out above, not always easy. Especially not as the work against, above all, xenophobia and racism can feel at least as important as freedom of information to many librarians, as can acting as inclusively as possible in the activities of the library. In the interviews are described discussions among the staff about various doubtful acquisitions, where the doubt has however usually arisen when the result in a particular case has been a no, for example where the content in a certain children's book was considered borderline illegal, or where the content has been considered very xeno-

56 Interview 18.

phobic. One telling example from a public library has to do with a debate book that was published a few years ago about immigration and Sweden as a multicultural society, written by the pseudonymous Julia Caesar⁵⁷. The example illustrates the dilemma of acquiring something that is considered to have content one really does not want to disseminate in one's own library, the self-reflection made by the library staff, and the compromise made in dealing with the book after it was purchased, but then disappeared from the shelf:

This was a borrower who didn't really want to accept that we didn't purchase it [the book in question] because we didn't think it measured up. Then we had to have a discussion about that, we had to think a bit about our versatility - do we have literature that takes up both parts of this perspective on this issue? And then we decided we actually had to purchase it anyway. A colleague was given the task of reading it and couldn't quite say if it constituted incitement to hatred; even if there was a rather poorly constructed argument in it, one couldn't consider it an illegal statement, so we realised that we'll purchase it after all. This satisfied the borrower, who returned it, and then it disappeared from the shelf. At that point we decided not to replace it with a new copy [...] this is sometimes the case with books that are lost.⁵⁸

Another librarian in a public library felt uncertain at the time of the interview about the actions and decision in connection with a debate book similar to the one mentioned above entitled *Invandring och mörkläggning* [Immigration and cover-up],⁵⁹ that they did not acquire in the library in question and that they did not wish to borrow through interlibrary loan either, and where a complaint had been lodged against these actions:

57 Julia Caesar, *Världsmästarna: När Sverige blev mångkulturellt* [The world champions: When Sweden became multicultural] (Visby: Nomen, 2010).

58 Interview 17.

59 Karl-Olov Arnstberg, *Invandring och mörkläggning - en saklig rapport från en förryckt tid* [Immigration and cover-up: An objective report from a crazy era] (Skärholmen: Debattförlaget, 2013).

It would feel very odd, that we didn't purchase it but nevertheless borrowed it, but one can of course understand that it is a pretty complex matter because we don't want to purchase this Invandring och mörkläggning, and we have several reasons for this. [...] I don't know, we find it a bit difficult to... it feels like we have to read the book in order to answer this complaint properly. So in this case I probably have the feeling that we probably made an assessment that was a bit shallow.⁶⁰

Borrowing a book through interlibrary loan instead of purchasing it is otherwise a common way of compromising and complying with the borrower's wishes when suggestions for the purchase of titles come in that the library in reality does not want to have on its shelves:

One can of course borrow material through interlibrary loan rather than purchase it. In some cases we can perhaps skirt the issue in this way. OK, this is perhaps not a book we want to have on our shelves later, but for now this pupil is going to read it for whatever reason.⁶¹

In another library discussions arose about a book about the Swedish king⁶² on the basis that certain writers claimed that it contained a lot of dubious speculations. At the same time, a lot of people wanted to borrow it from the library. In this case the library bought one single copy in order to still be able to make the book available:

If one wants to read something in order to form one's own opinion rather than base it on what other people have said and what is said in reviews it's very difficult if one doesn't have an opportunity to borrow

60 Interview 8.

61 Interview 10.

62 Thomas Sjöberg, Deanne Rauscher and Tove Meyer, *Carl XVI Gustaf - den motvillige monarken [Carl XVI Gustaf: The reluctant monarch]* (Stockholm: Lind & Co., 2010). The book caused a lively debate when it was published because it contained claims about the King's private life that were founded on rumours, the veracity of which could not be confirmed.

*the book in question from the library. [...] But we try to deal with it on a case-by-case basis and find a good balance there.*⁶³

If a purchase is to be justifiable from an economic point of view, there has to be more than one person who has a potential interest in the work in question. For this reason, among others, public libraries can refrain from and say no to purchasing too advanced or specialised research literature or student literature, because this can be said to be primarily the responsibility of university and university college libraries. Course literature coupled to studies in municipal adult education can be a particular problem because students on different levels to an increasing extent use a public library for their studies, a trend that many libraries have experience of.

One example of potentially illegal material being mentioned in the interview material is a children's book that is supposed to be about growing marijuana in a non-problematising manner, based on the fact that possession of this drug is illegal in Sweden.⁶⁴ However, the fact that something is covered by certain legislation is perhaps not always a limitation that works. One librarian discusses this on the basis of the fact that in her library it has been decided that anything contrary to Swedish law will not be purchased:

*If you look at it from a global perspective then legislation perhaps isn't enough? It perhaps isn't really sufficient reason for removing a book. After all, it depends on what the legislation looks like.*⁶⁵

One of the most sensitive examples of an ethical dilemma being foregrounded in the interviews in the study, but also one of the strongest arguments for freedom of information that has been stated in our material, has to do with a photo book by a well-known artist that contained

63 Interview 12.

64 Interview 18.

65 Interview 16.

pictures of, among other things, the artist's children depicted nude with, for certain people, a perceptible undertone. For a time the library staff in a certain library noticed that these particular pictures were cut out from the books and disappeared. This happened on numerous occasions with new copies purchased to replace the others. The library continued to stock the book in question, and in the interview the librarian in question formulates an opinion in a very powerful way:

We continued having it [the photo book in question]. I mean, a library exists in a world [...] and things exist in this world and the question is then - do we make things better or worse in the grand scheme of things by having this work when it's still possible to get it from somewhere else? When we start removing things, what do we do then and what do we become then? If we say that we choose to add things and if we also say to the community around us - help us help you, that is to choose to add things, then we build something together, an accessibility to all manner of things. But if we begin to remove, or if we say you can remove things, we'll remove it if you don't want it to be in this collection of communally owned things, then I feel we are on more dangerous ground. I can't arrive at any other conclusion. But it isn't easy, it sure isn't.⁶⁶

The question of censorship in libraries

The concept of censorship can create problems and sometimes uncertainty in communication about the issues under discussion in this report. This is not strange in itself, considering that the concept is ambiguous and has both a formal definition coupled to legislation, such as the Swedish Freedom of the Press Act, and a more everyday meaning and use in expressions such as 'self-censorship' and similar things. On a social level it is also possible to talk about a 'harder' censorship in the form of authorities inspecting information before it is made public, and a 'softer', more subtle censorship that can take the form of making pub-

⁶⁶ Interview 18.

lished works difficult to obtain in various ways.⁶⁷ With the legal meaning and the ambiguous connotations of the concept, it can be difficult to talk about censorship coupled to libraries, because who wants to be said to practise censorship with respect to their collections? On the basis of this, it is possible to reflect on how apt the concept of censorship really is for discussions about how and when libraries impose limitations for their acquisitions and collections. This is of course a question of values.

In the study the informants cover a broad spectrum with respect to their attitudes to and views on the concept. Linking it to the judicial and to a central authority's control of flows of information in a particular country is one kind of approach:

Censorship has to do with an interference in the freedom of information for citizens by the state; I'm thinking that censorship must be what's happening in Turkey now, that you close down certain social media. [...] That the state actively prevents citizens from having access to certain information or certain channels of information.⁶⁸

That it is possible to have different views on whether a library practices censorship or not is obvious to librarians; this is a tension they live with, if not on a daily basis then at least every time opinions arise regarding acquisitions and the collection. However, several of the informants in our study question whether at least public libraries can be said to exercise censorship if they choose not to purchase certain material, at least on the basis of the legal definition of the concept. 'Selection' may be felt to be a more suitable concept, and also more positively charged, coupled to ideas about the social mission of the library:

Censorship is a stupid word, because that's not really what it's all

67 Torbjörn Elensky, among others, writes about this in an article in the culture section of Svenska Dagbladet on 10 October 2012 under the heading, 'Hårfin gräns mellan ansvar och censur' [Thin line between responsibility and censorship].

68 Interview 7.

*about, censorship is really preventing a text or something from being published. It is the state's way of preventing that. [...] So what we do, that is making a selection, and of course individual borrowers could define that as censorship.*⁶⁹

*I think it's very foolish to talk about censorship in libraries, because it feels as if one is adding to this image of our being obliged to carry everything, and if we don't have everything then we have censored certain parts, without talking instead about us having to make a selection based on our mission and our values and our patrons.*⁷⁰

Other informants in the study are able to admit that they come close to some form of censorship in their libraries when making limitations for purposes that are nevertheless considered legitimate, on the basis of a formulated goal of, for instance, limiting xenophobic material:

*We have a multicultural school, for instance, we have a lot of different nationalities. It's important that there is no xenophobia. [...] So if anything were to be censored it would be something that gives free rein to that kind of opinions. Again, this is very difficult, there are grey areas. [...] But there is also a limit somewhere.*⁷¹

One librarian who is a chief librarian says that in her library it has happened that individual titles have been removed when visitors have reacted to their content, but that this then has been done as it were in passing, without any real discussion, something about which our informant expresses doubts:

I discussed the matter a bit with the people who purchase fiction for adults and asked if they had encountered these problems. It turned out they had removed, I don't remember the titles, but they were

69 Interview 17.

70 Interview 8.

71 Interview 10.

books that may have received very good reviews, and then there were pictures, drawings, that were very sexual in nature and that the public had reacted to, and then they had removed them, and then I might think, should we really remove that material?⁷²

One librarian in the study refers directly to the library's media plan when the question of censorship is taken up: 'In our media plan it clearly says that we should not exercise censorship.'⁷³ One chief librarian expresses anger, and questions the way in which libraries potentially choose to remove older material from the library because it reflects the values of its time:

This politically correct censorship when we erase racist imagery and racist statements. It acts from a perspective of authority in which the individual citizen is deprived of an opportunity for independent critical thinking. So we are not able to see things from a historical perspective, is that it??⁷⁴

The informants in the study thus testify to the fact that material in some individual cases has been removed from the shelves because of its content, or rather because of complaints from visitors regarding some content, without this having been examined or discussed to any extent. A questioning of the fact that libraries can potentially be said to exercise certain censorship recurs in a couple of interviews, but most librarians in the study consider censorship to be something that is exercised primarily by other social agencies than libraries, if it is exercised at all. One informant mentions that more commercial media publication can also be said to involve a form of censorship, depending on how you look at it: 'One of my earlier superiors said this when you talked about censorship: But damn it, censorship isn't done by libraries, it's done by publish-

72 Interview 13.

73 Interview 18.

74 Interview 15.

ing companies!⁷⁵ That libraries make selections when acquiring material, just as when they remove material, if nothing else in connection with the necessary process of weeding, is inevitable. However, on the basis of the concept of censorship it is possible to choose to foreground how this is done, how well-founded and debated various possible decisions regarding selection and weeding are. Is there reason to say that a 'silent' or 'unconscious' censorship is exercised in our libraries that does not attract any attention?

For the university and university college libraries in our study the question regarding censorship may feel more or less artificial in contexts connected with acquisition. Their mission has to do with providing a service for the education and research that is conducted within a parent organisation, where, for instance, research can also be done on controversial material. If anything, the ethical scrutiny in this context is coupled to the research projects in themselves, according to special regulations and is not carried out by the libraries themselves. One interesting example from a research library is nevertheless mentioned in the study, and that has to do with the Swedish State Institute for Racial Biology in Uppsala⁷⁶, the access to whose archived material has been limited out of respect for the integrity of the people who were documented in this material. This, however, has to do with limitations on the dissemination of material rather than acquisition, something that is an important difference. That there are different types of material that research libraries choose to limit the dissemination of is nevertheless a question that sometimes receives a lot of attention, something that happens in one of the libraries in our study, in this case for security reasons. This can then be a matter of whether or not a borrower is allowed to take material home. Its use may be limited to studying it in the special reading rooms of the library.⁷⁷

75 Interview 5.

76 The Swedish State Institute for Racial Biology, active in Uppsala between 1922 and 1958.

77 Interview 20.

That university or university college libraries acquire the material and the media that the university is in need of is thus a given. The ethical dilemma that may arise for librarians is on a more personal level, that is, whether an individual librarian can consider being part of the context in question, something that however feels a bit hypothetical to the informant who raises the issue:

One can really hope that the research that is done in this university stays within the framework of what is acceptable. It's of course possible that material might appear that one wouldn't at all- now I'm just ad-libbing freely here, but how much fun would it be to start purchasing information resources connected to the establishment of a nuclear weapons programme? ⁷⁸

Representing and working with diversity in libraries

The staff in one library in our study have formulated a more distinct and radical position in their work with creating both diversity in their library and saying no to xenophobia and racism. This choice has then also entailed more strict limitations on certain media, where, for one thing, an assessment has been made that the content is xenophobic/too stereotypical, and, for another, a decision has been taken that these media should not exist in the libraries in the municipality, and that for the sake of consistency these media will not be borrowed through interlibrary loan either. Instances where a library has declined to purchase an individual title can receive a lot of attention and become a central focus, but to the librarians in this particular library it is possibly just as important to foreground the material that is actually acquired and purchased, what they *choose to add* on the basis of the multilingual mission they have. They work very actively with acquiring literature in a large number of languages, and have as their goal to do this in explicit dialogue with their user groups from municipal districts and on the basis of the requests for purchase that they have received:

78 Interview 11.

It is about working together with the local community, discussing things with the citizens of the municipality - how do they see different things, how can we cooperate with them in order for things to turn out well, how can we meet their needs in various ways? ⁷⁹

At the same time it is impossible to deny the fact that to a certain extent there is a difference in principle between this library and most others with respect to decisions in certain questions concerning selection, where a children's book about the character Lilla Hjärtat [Little Heart]⁸⁰ has been the example that garnered the most attention. For the library in question this has to do with the perspective of explicitly giving the users' interpretations priority with respect to the media collections in the library. In the same way, the removal of a title in the collection is not considered a vital problem. A wrong purchase may quite simply be made on the basis of ignorance or insufficient information about the content of the media at the time of purchase.⁸¹ The municipality has developed an intercultural action plan, where the goal is to work in a way that is based on a critique of norms in various municipal activities. This perspective can involve a questioning of viewpoints and perspectives that without reflection are perhaps taken for granted regarding such things as identity, gender roles, family constellations, culture, and so on. When it comes to the example of Lilla Hjärtat, the library also chose to explicitly publicise and talk about their decision concerning the book and the motivation behind it, something they were relatively alone in doing. The background for the decision regarding this book in particular was a reaction from a user, as well as the fact that the book was a children's book:

It's not as if we go around looking on the shelves for stereotypes, but rather that we react if a borrower raises the issue with us, that this is

79 Interview 7.

80 The picture book about the character Lilla Hjärtat by Stina Wersén has, over the last few years, caused much debate, primarily regarding the main character in the book who is thought by some people to have a racially stereotypical look.

81 Ibid.

a problem [...] and then we deal with that situation then. Then it isn't a given what a decision in the library will be, but as we have said, we deal with every book on its own merits.⁸²

Regarding these children's books that we removed, it became a very acute issue, I think we thought that this was directly offensive and very problematic, just because it was aimed at children. We look at adults a bit differently, I think. [...] But if there are very stigmatising stereotypes that are offensive with respect to children, then it becomes a different problem, we think.⁸³

I think that the most important thing was that we gave priority of interpretation to those who were offended, and that we didn't say 'no, this isn't racist'. [...] If someone else can say how they experience this and also substantiate it with pictures that show how this figure relates to a tradition, then I don't understand what interest there is in saying 'yes, this is OK'.⁸⁴

Even if the above-mentioned library in principle was the only library that went public and talked about their decision to remove this children's book, it does not mean that the book was considered unproblematic in other libraries. Another library in our study made an active decision about the book, but chose to keep it, which was not an easy or uncontroversial decision in the context in which this library found itself. Also this children's book seems to have been subject to compromises in the manner in which it was handled:

Then this thing about Lilla Hjärtat... that was a decision made very centrally, that we are going to have Lilla Hjärtat, it should be available in our libraries. But I know that there are libraries that kind of hide it away and things... one can't control everything, but one can counter

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Interview 8.

*with a discussion. [...] Because of course there will be dilemmas in this type of very value-based issues.*⁸⁵

Nevertheless, it may be worth pointing out that the differences in viewpoint do not necessarily have to reside in whether a depiction is stereotypical or not, but can instead have to do with a variation in the nuances of views on the library's mission and role with respect to a media collection. That is to say, whether the library with its media collection is seen, if possible, as a neutral place that is supposed to reflect the different sides of a community, for a visitor to partake of in order to form a personal opinion, or whether it is a place for everyone in the sense that no one should have to feel discriminated against or offended in encountering its content, or even if it is possible for libraries to take a stand for or against something with the media collection as such.

Even if the library mentioned above is one of the very few that went public and explained their decisions to remove certain titles from their collection and to say no to certain suggestions for purchase, such positions are not alien to the public library sphere. The opportunity to both say no to suggestions for purchase and to remove titles are mentioned by several informants in our study:

*We have never had a suggestion for a very spectacularly racist book or anything like that, but if we were to suspect and understand that it is such a book, then we'd say no. [...] But then it's impossible to know what is hidden under a neutral title. I'm thinking that something might slip through. But of course, if we then find out that it is such a book we'd withdraw it.*⁸⁶

Another informant says the following:

We say no to some things as well and I suppose it has to do with... we

85 Interview 16.

86 Interview 6.

*have said in this document that exists that we won't purchase books that have racist, sexist, or too violent elements in them.*⁸⁷

Both of these chief librarians argue at a virtually hypothetical level in their statements, because they simultaneously claim that there have very rarely been any problems or dilemmas or conflicts regarding purchases or the collection in their respective libraries. It is thus doubtful whether their principle-based positions have been tested in reality.

The desire to work inclusively and in favour of diversity in a librarian's own public library, with a media selection that is felt to be interesting and of relevance to existing and potential users in the community, can naturally give rise to difficult questions regarding limitations on the selection of media. This is especially true if the interest in a real dialogue with users is a goal, and if the community and the target groups are heterogeneous, with inhabitants with widely differing backgrounds and experiences, and perhaps also opinions about the media on offer. That is actually the situation in several of the municipalities in which the informants in our study work. Yet another informant wants to avoid working to remove existing books in the collection and instead wants to put as much effort as possible into having a dialogue:

*Today we have to be very humble in the discussion and try and take in and understand why people react. I believe that things can be allowed to remain [in the library], but I also think that perhaps we have to choose a bit which signals we put out about what we do.*⁸⁸

In her interview, the same librarian recounts a more in-depth conversation she had with a person who had expressed criticism of another children's book in the library's collection, a book that plays with relatively crude stereotypes of men with a different cultural background than a

87 Interview 5.

88 Interview 19.

Swedish one [however, it is a bit unclear exactly which one] in a humorous way.

Then he wrote to me and said this book makes us very sad, because it's a depiction of a Muslim man that we don't recognise. And instead of just throwing away the book, like so many people do, I thought - interesting, what does this mean? Why does he take an active interest in this, and what can he and we do? And then I invited him [...] I mean, there are many things that are very exciting in this book. We talked about how it would be if everyone came to me and said, 'listen, we don't want this book'. [...] There are lots of good examples. And I asked him in some detail what he thought about this particular book. And I've asked other young people what they thought about the book, and they're really surprised, because they only thought it was kind of a crazy book, and they hadn't felt that they were offended or anything. Together we had a long, exciting discussion. The book was worn, so it's true we could have thrown it away, but we kept it. [...] I don't know if we learned anything, but we made it clear that we kept the book because we thought it was important, but I also made it clear that I don't want anyone to feel that we hold material that feels offensive [...]. So in some ways perhaps we learned something from each other, I hope.⁸⁹

This story is a good example of several questions that are of interest in this context: the importance of dialogue; that people can get really involved in the media collections and the selection of material in our public libraries that the intentions of an author and how the text is received and experienced by readers do not at all have to coincide; that different user groups can experience and evaluate content in completely different ways, even when they are part of a group with similar cultural, ethnic, or religious backgrounds, because no group is homogeneous when it comes to opinions and positions; that an interest in, openness to, and respect for other opinions than those held by a person him- or herself

89 Interview 19.

can be decisive; and that there can be a real contradiction between the goals of a wide principle-based definition of freedom of information in libraries and how people experience the content of individual media, that is, people's feelings of integrity in their encounters with the content. The example can be regarded as an 'ideal' dialogue situation, something that requires that the user who expresses the criticism is also prepared to have a dialogue, and also that the individual librarian feels that he or she has the experience, knowledge, and arguments needed to be able to engage in the discussion, something that is perhaps not always the case in everyday library work.

In the social debate of recent years, and also in our interviews, the question regarding diversity in libraries has been an issue that has mostly interested and involved staff in public and school libraries. One may potentially assume that these issues could even be of interest for research libraries, but this does not seem to be the case at present (according to results that have not been included in this translation).

The concept of quality

If the concept of censorship creates problems, then this is even more true of the concept of quality. 'How do you measure beauty? How do you measure goodness? In short, how do you measure non-quantifiable values?' These questions are posed by the business economics scholar Lars Strannegård in his introduction to the anthology *Den omätbara kvaliteten* [The immeasurable quality],⁹⁰ in which several representatives of, among other things, the culture sector discuss the concept of quality with respect to various forms of art. In the sections on quality in literature Ingrid Elam claims, among other things, that quality is dependent on context, time, and place.⁹¹

90 Bengt Brülde and Lars Strannegård, *Den omätbara kvaliteten* [The immeasurable quality], 2nd unrevised ed. (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2013).

91 Ingrid Elam, 'Kvalitet i litteraturen' [Quality in literature], in *Den omätbara kvaliteten*, 41-55.

The fact that the new Library Act introduces a section where it is prescribed that the material on offer in libraries should be characterised by quality and versatility has started a discussion in Swedish libraries. Several of the participants in our interviews have also taken an active interest in this issue, and, generally speaking, it can be noted that there is a desire for the lawmaker to define what the concept of quality means. Is there a consensus about what literary quality is? In the preliminary legal documents for the Library Act the following can be read:

In the government bill it is stated that the concept of quality, among other things, means that public libraries should make an active selection based on quality criteria when they plan their purchases, procure services, or weed their collections.

In the concept of versatility is embedded a demand for neutrality and that the media and services on offer must not be controlled by political, ideological, or religious pressures.⁹²

In several consultation responses concerning the proposed bill it is pointed out that common criteria for quality should be developed. The government replies in the government bill that it agrees with the assessment that this is important. However, the government also says that the question regarding how this is best accomplished should not be regulated by law.⁹³

Our study shows that among librarians there is a comparatively pragmatic attitude to the concept of quality. It also shows that the concept of quality is felt to be more complex in public and school libraries than in university and university college libraries. In this context it is important to remember that, according to the law, it is only public libraries that are subject to the requirements of versatility and quality. Fulfilling the goals set by the responsible organisation is a comprehensive and prioritised

92 Bet 2013/14:KrU2, *Ny bibliotekslag* [New Library Act], the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Stockholm.

93 Prop. 2012/13:147, 22.

aim for university and university college libraries. With the proper information resources, the quality of research and teaching will improve. On the other hand, staff in research libraries have to rely on the people responsible for research and teaching being conversant with their topics and therefore that the suggestions for the purchase of resources are of good quality.⁹⁴ It is patently absurd to assess the scholarly quality of each individual resource. In this case the staff relies on publishers who deliver packages that have been agreed on, and on the university's researchers who conduct research and do the teaching. It cannot be the librarian's job to question the level of this literature. The scholarly community should make a quality assessment before the book ends up in the library, one of the interviewees points out.⁹⁵ University college libraries also have an opportunity to refer borrowers to the nearest public library with respect to media that are not in their own collections.

The opposite situation, that public and school libraries refer borrowers to university libraries, probably occurs to the same degree in places where there is a university library nearby, but then for different reasons. If anything, the reason may then be that the title being requested is too exclusive or 'difficult' to be purchased by a public library. The same is true of interlibrary loans in the university libraries. To what extent public libraries make use of the opportunity for interlibrary loans instead of purchasing material that has not been obtained for reasons of quality cannot be determined from our study, but as stated earlier in the report, this is one of several possible compromises with respect to the selection of material.

There is an ongoing discussion in public and school libraries about the concept of quality. There are different interpretations of what the concept really means and above all of who has priority of interpretation with respect to the meaning of the concept. For instance, it is possible to assess the quality of the entire collection and verify that it is good, while at the same time finding individual titles that do not measure up.

94 Interview 11.

95 Ibid.

*To me, when I try to interpret quality it isn't literary quality but quality in the sense of versatility, breadth, and access... and then I feel that quality is created in the meeting with the reader.*⁹⁶

As has been mentioned earlier, a significant degree of caution is exercised when it comes to turning down a suggestion for purchase. This caution is, if possible, even greater when it comes to making decisions for borrowers about what constitutes good or less good literature and turning down a suggestion for purchase because of poor literary quality. For a person who wants a book, journal, or other material to be available in the library, the material in question has a qualitative value for that individual and the library should respect this. This seems to be the prevailing philosophy. A few examples:

*But that a book has received bad criticism, bad reviews, that is no longer a valid reason for our not purchasing it.*⁹⁷

*I have to say that this thing with the concept of quality is something we sometimes compromise on, but sure, it's a pretty flexible concept.*⁹⁸

*Who has the right to decide what is good or bad, really? We can think, obviously, that some books have a high literary quality, but we don't make judgements anymore. The reading experience is different [for different people].*⁹⁹

To the question whether there is a conflict between demand and quality we receive, among others, the following answer:

*Well, I'd like to say that the magnitude of that conflict is very overblown, I don't quite see it.*¹⁰⁰

96 Interview 16.

97 Interview 12.

98 Interview 17.

99 Interview 13.

100 Interview 16.

At the same time we can see a difference in what one might call the corporate culture of different libraries. Because quality is so difficult to measure and define we see tendencies in individual libraries of an upper and a lower limit developing for what does not qualify because of a lack of quality, and for what is too exclusive and esoteric in spite of its being considered to be of high quality. Too long-running series are mentioned by one library as constituting a lower limit, Disney books in another, and the currently extremely popular series about elves in all colours and shapes in a third one. Obscure and too esoteric publishers are mentioned in several interviews. It is within this 'range' that public libraries work, and the limits differ from library to library and can result in a tacit set of rules that leads to collections being different in different libraries. One might reflect on how this tacit purchasing policy develops, but it usually cannot be found in media plans or other policy documents. In spite of our getting answers in the study to things that are 'obviously' not purchased, we have found it difficult to find concrete examples of things that fall outside the boundaries. When the staff or management are replaced or there are reorganisations this consensus may be questioned and the limits can be expanded or perhaps restricted. Then discussions about quality may flare up.

We have identified two areas where the discussion about quality becomes especially interesting. On the one hand, this concerns the question whether public libraries really should hand over that much responsibility to their borrowers when it comes to deciding how the collection should be built up by the library.¹⁰¹ Where do we draw the line? Shall we always say yes? Where does the professional competence of the librarian come in? On the other hand, it is also interesting to follow the discussion concerning the public libraries' common e-book collection, delivered by Elib. Regarding this collection one person felt that there are titles of poor quality and 'things we ourselves would never purchase'. In both cases the feeling that was mentioned earlier of losing control over the collection recurs.

101 Interview 15.

There is also a difference in the discussion of quality with respect to purchasing literature for children and for adults, where the limits for what is purchased are quite a bit wider when it comes to literature for adults, for both non-fiction and fiction.

We know that this type of literature is demanded by a lot of people and then we take a chance [by purchasing the book although we suspect the quality is not so good].¹⁰²

The tendency to let the borrowers decide what is good quality, that is to say that quality is something subjective and not value neutral, has become more pronounced in recent years also when it comes to children's literature, even if we can see that opinions differ among various informants. One librarian clearly states that no work of fiction is rejected for reasons of quality on the grounds of poor linguistic quality if there is a demand for the work in question, and this is also true of literature for children and young people, where quality is quite simply defined as whatever children want to read. The rule is to give the children priority of interpretation regarding what constitutes a good book. Quality is interpreted on the basis of the children's perspective.

From a book-publishing perspective several people testify to the decline in published non-fiction books for children, and to the deterioration of the fact-checking performed on the material that is published. It is difficult to find good non-fiction books that are suitable for children about topical issues and about various countries, something that in its turn leads to material that has become out of date remaining on the shelves because it may be the only thing available in printed form. The use of the Internet as a factual source can be one of the reasons for this, and here school and children's librarians request more resources to find things that are on the right level for an individual child or pupil. But they would also like for there to be more Internet resources that have been quality-assessed and adapted for children. Several of the interviewees

102 Interview 17.

feel that ultimately it is neither libraries, nor politicians, nor users that control the purchases in public libraries but the trends that spread via different media and groups and that are then adopted by the publishing industry.

The problem is that we, too, are subject to what is published, as it were. And of course the fact that a lot of non-fiction literature does not go through any kind of assessment at all.¹⁰³

In spite of the concept of quality being difficult to define, our study indicates that there is significant awareness among librarians about what objectively speaking may be considered literature of good quality. There is also a commitment to safeguarding the place of literature in society and to contributing to the reading campaigns that at present are underway in Sweden. The need for greater competence in the dissemination of literature is also something that is demanded, something that we will touch on in the following chapter. It is, in other words, not a lack of 'quality awareness' that controls the purchasing but rather a significant consideration of and respect for the wishes of users. It may be interesting to keep this in mind when criteria of quality with respect to the material available are discussed in and outside the world of the library.

103 Ibid.



Five approaches

When it comes to the question regarding strategies for how the librarians in our study think and act with respect to media with a content that may be controversial, it is possible to distinguish at least five different types of approaches. These can be summarised as follows:

- Remaining on the level of rhetoric
- Saying Yes
- Saying No
- Compromising
- Having a dialogue

These approaches can be more or less pronounced and deliberate. It is also possible to discuss to what extent an approach is a conscious strategy or not, and this varies in our study. A variation can also be found concerning how clearly the library as an organisation has assumed a standpoint on the question regarding the limitation of certain types of content.

Remaining on the level of rhetoric means that a clear position is assumed in favour of both freedom of information as a foundation for libraries and a standpoint of not disseminating media with, for example, obviously racist or sexist content, without problematising the limitation or expressing the opinion that the issue is not problematic. This is often the manner in which the issue is formulated in the media plan, but the interviews also provide evidence of an approach that is based on an unproblematised outlook. There may be several reasons why a person remains at this level: he or she may not have encountered challenges in his or her actual work; as a librarian the person in question is somewhat distant from the concrete issues; or he or she has simply not had reason to reflect more deeply on the issue.

Saying Yes of course has to do with the will to and the principle of saying yes rather than no, and with establishing the widest possible framework for the material acquired by the library, even when it comes to media with controversial or contentious material. The main argument for this approach is that the role of the library is not to be a place that has been sanitised, but rather an arena where users should be able to find material in order to form their own opinions. At the same time, the freedom of expression or freedom of information is never completely unlimited, but based on the view that a yes is the basic principle, legislation rather than a library's own assessment should be what limits the collection, both as a whole and with respect to individual titles. In our study several people express the opinion that the foundation for a library should be versatility and breadth, but fewer express the idea that the answer in principle should always be yes even when considerable discussion arises about, and criticism is directed toward, the content of a work. Holding on to the yes-principle can in itself be difficult and controversial.

Saying No in our study is not primarily a matter of setting limits for a librarian's own sake but of the desire to assume a clear position also with respect to the library's collection, for example on the foundation of a perspective based on a critique of norms, which is then grounded in a carefully considered viewpoint and the idea of sensitivity and respect for the library's borrowers and their experiences in their meetings with the content of various media. No one should have to feel offended or excluded in the library. There are also answers in the study that indicate that a no occurs in the form of more routine decisions about media with content that is not thought to fit in the collection. This can then be a matter of a single borrower who has reacted or of the librarians themselves. This means that this approach can also justify removing material that has already been purchased on the basis of the idea that this is a purchasing error. Saying no can also be a way to protect borrowers from certain material, a way of thinking that in the study is most common in school and hospital libraries.

Compromising can probably be said to be the single most common approach in our material when it comes to how librarians in individual cases deal with media whose content is in some way controversial and on the boundary of acceptability. This can be reflected in the practice of buying only single copies of a book, placing the work a bit out of the way or in the stacks, borrowing it through interlibrary loan instead of purchasing it, or not replacing lost material when some controversial material that is nevertheless in demand has been lost from the shelf. The compromise as an approach does not have to be the same as a lack of principle but can constitute a carefully considered decision on the basis of the idea that separate principles and values can be in conflict. Generally it is not enough that a particular content is controversial in general terms for the library to start compromising, but it is in cases where the work is believed to convey values that the library does not want to or cannot support on the basis of its mission that the situation becomes problematic. This may be the case when the values of the library (or the individual librarian) are in complete conflict with the content of the work.

Having a dialogue, finally, is to many librarians the ideal and desired approach that is not always easy to achieve in practice. Dialogue can be a method when titles in the library's collection are criticised by borrowers but it is also a more general way to foreground and problematise a library's collection. Dialogue is also practised in school libraries with pupils in relation to their meeting with the content in various media. A dialogue requires two interested parties who are willing to be open and respectful. A dialogue can also require certain knowledge about the conditions under which the library works and about the library's mission.

How tall



Analysis and discussion

This concluding chapter will begin with a discussion of the research questions of the study on the basis of a more theoretical perspective and with respect to a few selected texts. The purpose is to deepen the discussion about the relationship between choosing to add and choosing to remove material in a library, and to investigate whether a pair of concepts from political philosophy can add something to the discussion. After this, the study's stated research questions will be answered explicitly and a few summarising conclusions are presented. The chapter, and thus the entire report, is concluded with a sketch of some conceivable future questions for libraries regarding acquisition and media collections.

Choosing to add or to remove - freedom to and freedom from

One central issue that may be said to permeate the entire discussion of the present study has to do with the difference between selection and censorship. Is there a difference, and if so, how can it be described? In the preceding chapter it is made clear that the librarians' approaches to this issue vary, but that a general opinion may still be said to be that libraries and librarians deal with selection on various grounds, but not with censorship.

The issue concerning libraries, selection, and censorship is as old as libraries themselves and has also been dealt with in research in the field of library and information science. An early and virtually classic text in this context is the article 'Not Censorship But Selection' by Lester Asheim, later Professor at the University of Chicago Graduate Library School, among other places.¹⁰⁴ Asheim takes as his point of departure

104 Lester Asheim, 'Not Censorship but Selection' in *Wilson Library Bulletin*, vol. 28 (1953), 63-67. Also published on the website of the ALA (American Library Association), www.ala.org .

precisely the obvious fact that most librarians in our study refer to, that is, that at the very least things like the economy and available space force librarians to make selections when it comes to purchases and acquisitions, but at the same time he believes that the discussion must not remain there. On the contrary, he claims that many of the arguments and reasons put forward by librarians as a basis for their selection of media are deceptively similar to what a censorship body would put forward, even if the underlying intentions are not the same. A certain work (for Asheim primarily a book) may be considered to be harmful to society or to the individual; the perspective, or content, or the purpose of the writer may be considered unacceptable; the type of medium may be considered unsuitable for the target group, and so on. Nevertheless, Asheim claims that there both is and should be a difference between selection and censorship, but that this difference cannot be stated simply without further discussion or with reference to the economy, but must be formulated in a basic principle that differentiates between the two concepts, or in a clearly discernible basic perspective. The differentiating principle that Asheim formulates is that selection should be based on a positive approach, with a goal of finding reasons to keep a work rather than reject it, while censorship is based on a negative approach whose primary aim is to find reasons for rejecting material rather than the reverse.

For the selector, the important thing is to find reasons to keep the book. Given such a guiding principle, the selector looks for values, for strengths, for virtues which will over shadow minor objections. For the censor, on the other hand, the important thing is to find reasons to reject the book; his guiding principle leads him to seek out the objectionable features, the weaknesses, the possibilities for misinterpretation. The positive selector asks what the reaction of a rational intelligent adult would be to the content of the work; the censor fears for the results on the weak, the warped, and the irrational. The selector says, if there is anything good in this book let us try to keep it; the censor says; if there is anything bad in this book, let us reject it.¹⁰⁵

105 Ibid.

In his argumentation for this difference in basic attitude between those who select versus those who censor, Asheim takes another few steps and suggests that librarians doing positive selection work should promote and protect the opportunity for reading and communication rather than protect the reader from the content; they should encourage the presentation of a multitude of perspectives and opinions rather than limit certain opinions, and they should promote discussion and even controversy rather than hold back and follow consensus. He also suggests that a faith in the reader's ability to assimilate and process content without protection and limitation should guide a librarian's work.

In our study can be found examples of a desire to follow such a positive principle. Several informants clearly emphasise the importance of sticking to a 'yes' rather than a 'no' as a basic principle when the question about an individual sensitive or controversial work is brought to the fore: *'This is the yes we say we want'*. The idea that the library can be an arena where a true multiplicity of opinions and perspectives can be found for a user to partake of in his or her attempt to find his or her own standpoint can also be found and is pronounced among most librarians in the study: *'The library is the place where you can go and partake of many different views in order to form your own opinion in an educated way'*, just as the idea that even controversial positions can and should be available in the library: *'We shouldn't be a sanitised image of reality'*.

All this may be easy to subscribe to in theory, but in the light of today's society and the debate and discussions that are ongoing, just like the concrete work and goals of many public libraries, Asheim's basically liberal perspective can, in part, fall short. The description of the difference between selection and censorship that he provides can for many people seem simplified, and it also fails to provide support in situations where a limit for some reason perhaps nevertheless has to be drawn for certain material. Similarly, his perspective hides the fact that there may be other contradictory goals and interests for libraries than those that in his text are negatively coupled to censorship, for instance between freedom of information in the sense of offering the widest possible se-

lection, and the desire that has been identified in our study to oppose xenophobia and racism.

In public debate, and also in political theory (for instance feminist or post-colonial theory), the liberal position on issues about, among other things, freedom of expression and information has been subject to criticism in a long and still ongoing discussion, which falls outside the scope of the present study. However, the thrust of some of the criticism is, in short, that a liberal perspective may have a tendency to, in some respects, obscure the fact that there exists structural inequality and difference when it comes to resources and opportunities among people and groups. People perhaps do not *have* the same conditions or a similar ability to make use of resources, even if, objectively speaking, an opportunity is provided. The obstacles can be on a much deeper level than that. This is to say that there may be reasons for libraries to problematise who their users are, something that is, of course, also done to a great extent. Discriminating structures and attitudes may permeate our entire conceptual world, as well as our attitudes to ourselves, which is something a library may wish to work against. The representatives of the libraries that have participated in the study have, at any rate, voiced an explicit desire to do so, most clearly in the library whose representatives expressed an approach grounded in a critique of norms for their work. This is in addition to the social and economic differences that may exist among people and groups, the bridging of which at least public libraries have also had as a goal. To take as a point of departure for a principle of selection *'the reaction of a rational intelligent adult'* can apparently also be seen as not entirely unproblematic for librarians, in particular children's and school librarians: *'But if there are strongly stigmatising stereotypes that are offensive with respect to children, then this becomes a different problem, we think'*.

Asheim's formulated principle for a positive basis for selection in libraries has nevertheless retained its obvious relevance for libraries, but has also been discussed by a number of other writers in the library field, among them Tony Doyle in the article *'Selection Versus Censorship in*

Libraries.¹⁰⁶ Doyle essentially shares Asheim's liberal position in favour of freedom of expression, but in his article he wants to critically scrutinise arguments and test perspectives by discussing situations when the principle of a positive selection might be brought to a head. For one thing, Doyle points to the fact that in the principle of positive selection there may be hidden or problematised ideas about what material is valuable to choose, no matter how positive the choice may be. In formulations such as '*the selector looks for values, for strengths, for virtues*' it is obvious that one can ask the question whose values and assessments about strengths and potential weaknesses that should be considered important and what these assessments are based upon. The problem is reminiscent of the difficulty of assessing quality that was discussed in the preceding chapter, and Doyle suggests that, from this perspective, the result of a positive selection can in principle be the same as one made on the basis of censorship, or at least that the differences between them will be unclear. For another thing, Doyle foregrounds critical arguments that have been directed more generally at a liberal attitude regarding the issue of freedom of expression and information on the basis of a formulation about unbiased selection that has been taken from a later article by Asheim, '*What the collection reflects is the librarian's view of what readers and users want and need, whether the librarian likes it or not*'.¹⁰⁷ In the shadow of 9/11 (the article was written in 2002), the writer discusses as examples, among other things, books in the form of more or less obvious 'manuals' for how to make harmful tools for political purposes. In the text it is said that the ideal of trying to achieve as impartial a selection as possible in connection with unlimited access is practically unimpeachable and a general and respected principle, which, however, is often difficult to realise in practice. For instance, criticism to which Doyle refers in his article conveys a message that the difference between positive selection and censorship in Asheim's sense of the terms

106 Tony Doyle, '*Selection Versus Censorship in Libraries*' in *Collection Management*, vol. 27, no. 1, 15–25. Tony Doyle is Assistant Professor at Hunter College Library, City University of New York (CUNY).

107 Lester Asheim, '*Selection and Censorship: A Reappraisal*' in *Wilson Library Bulletin*, vol. 58, November 1983, quoted in Doyle, 18.

is mostly a matter of splitting hairs and makes no significant difference to a user as long as it still is the librarian who decides what is to be placed on the shelves. In the same way, there is, after all, always some kind of limit to freedom of information; if nothing else, all the legislation on freedom of expression is based on this idea, since its catalogue of crimes is an attempt to formulate limits to other values that freedom of expression might threaten, such as people's integrity, security, and so on. On the one hand, one might claim that it should then be the justice system that makes assessments about a particular work, not a librarian. On the other hand, dissemination of such material may be considered ethically indefensible in the library, and would perhaps be considered as such by most people in certain cases, but who is to set the limits and how? One interesting detail is that the development of the Internet and the more or less unlimited access to material via this network can give rise to arguments both for a limitation of more tangible media in the library (*'Why should we purchase this when it can be accessed via the Internet?'*) and against this (*'It is pointless and unnecessary to introduce any limitations, because everything exists on the Internet anyway'*).

Doyle ends his article and his argument by holding on to a liberal basic attitude regarding freedom of expression and information even in libraries, in line with Asheim's argument, on the basis of the idea and principle that the opposite, i.e., accepting a principle of censorship and limitation, would in the long run do greater damage to society.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps it can be said that unlimited freedom of information in some cases is impossible to combine completely with other human values we treasure when we move around on the border and in the grey zone of what is ethically defensible, and that for this reason the discussion and the debate must continually remain open also because social values are so obviously in flux. Perhaps in certain situations a compromise is then also

108 Ibid., 21: 'After all, speech is a type of action. Like other actions, it can lead to (or prevent) harm. If society legally tolerates certain types of harmful behavior, including potentially harmful speech, it should do so because the social costs of enforcing laws against it are greater than the costs of putting up with the greater amount of that behavior that will occur if it is not illegal.'

the only reasonable approach? Or as an alternative, taking a stand for the one or the other side and thus also be prepared to weather the criticism that may arise around individual decisions.

Another question that may be important to investigate/discuss further is how quality is connected and related to assessments of content from the perspective of freedom of information, if nothing else than in order to avoid spontaneous references to quality becoming some form of 'catchall' when other arguments fall short. On the other hand, the empirical material from the report shows that there is scope in the librarians' interpretation of the concept of quality, and that, if anything, there is a tendency to define the concept as the things that they in other ways would like to achieve with their collections, such as versatility, breadth, relevancy, and so on.

It would be possible to problematise and deepen the discussion of freedom of information in libraries further, through theories about the concept of freedom. In political philosophy the British philosopher Isaiah Berlin has, in the essay *Two Concepts of Liberty*, developed the pair of concepts of positive and negative freedom, freedom to something and freedom *from* something. Berlin relates these concepts to the political level and the relationship between the individual and the governing state in society. Negative freedom is then defined as the protective sphere that surrounds or should surround people where they can act without the risk of interference or coercion from, for example, the state: *'the area within which the subject - a person or group of persons - is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons'*, while positive freedom has to do with the opportunities that are available for independent action and development for individuals and groups: *'What, or who, is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be, this rather than that?'* In constitutional freedoms and rights of states, negative freedoms are usually formulated as, for example, freedom from torture or deprivation of liberty, but also things like freedom of religion and the freedom to demonstrate are included among them. Two points that can be made

are that different phenomena can include both aspects of freedom, and that they are connected. As individuals and as members of groups, people have a need for both kinds of freedom: the freedom to do and act without limitations, and the freedom to themselves control their own direction and to act independently, to affect their own development.

To extract concepts from their original contexts can sometimes be difficult, but it would be interesting to find whether the pair of concepts of freedom to/freedom from could have any bearing on other contexts than the purely political one that Berlin discusses. Is there a freedom to and a freedom from also with reference to libraries? And how would this be connected to the argument above about the difference between selection and censorship? After all, the basic formulations in, for example, the Public Library Manifesto so clearly proceed from an idea about a library's opportunities for supporting people in their development to independent and active citizens in a democratic society. As a source of information and knowledge, the library is here indisputably a positive resource that can provide freedom for development and learning for people. Nevertheless, there is a strong tradition connected to the idea of protecting the user/borrower, whether from 'the negative effects of commercialism'¹⁰⁹ or obscene books, and to the idea about the library as a protected and secure zone where it is safe for children and young people to look for material that is not offensive. There is no doubt that both perspectives and approaches may be legitimate, and they both also occur in our empirical material. In which contexts do librarians act from the principle of freedom to something and when do they act from the principle of freedom from something, and how do these two positions interact in individual cases?

109 To counteract the negative effects of commercialism was an important and explicitly stated goal in Swedish cultural politics in the 1970s, which over time became a somewhat disputed and debated goal that was also tossed around during the 1990s.

Answers to the questions of the study, and conclusions

To complete the report we will now tie together the various threads of the study by returning to our point of origin, that is to the research questions posed by the survey. Below are summarised the answers we have found that our survey provides for each question. Thereafter we reason about and discuss a bit further the conclusions that can possibly be drawn on the basis of the results.

How do libraries in their media strategy work relate to and act with respect to normative library documents such as the various library manifestos of the IFLA/UNESCO, the IFLA Code of Ethics, Swedish legislation relating to libraries, and Article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

From our survey a somewhat complex picture has emerged regarding the libraries' relationship to normative library documents such as the manifestos and IFLA Code of Ethics. We have earlier in the report pointed to the fact that these documents were not published in a comprehensive Swedish translation until the spring of 2014 as being an important factor in the context. That university and university college librarians do not have an active relationship to the international manifestos is perhaps not a complete surprise, but also in the public library sphere the relationship to the manifestos is relatively distant. The most well-known manifestos, such as the Public Library Manifesto and the School Library Manifesto, as well as the UN declarations, sometimes form the basis for formulations in public library media plans, but an active relationship in everyday work does not seem to be as clear. However, we do not interpret this to imply a general lack of interest either for the manifestos as such or for the issues touched upon in them, rather the reverse. People, including librarians, take an active interest in questions about the selection of media and freedom of information in libraries. It is, however, possible to pose questions about the prerequisites in local libraries for more principle- and value-based issues. When and in what way are opportunities for discussion provided?

In what way do the guidelines and established practices of the responsible organisations of various libraries prescribe and regulate the libraries' selection, purchase, and weeding of different types of media, and how does this relate to the normative library documents? How do librarians handle potential conflicts between the comprehensive normative library documents, local media plans, and users' opinions and requests?

These two questions may be said to be relatively closely connected, and on the basis of the results from our study, they are also somewhat difficult to answer in a simple fashion. They imply that there is an obvious and fixed way in which to interpret the formulations in the manifestos, an attitude that we so far in the report have attempted to problematise. The desires and opinions of users vary to a very high degree, as we have found. We have, as was made clear in the previous chapters, chosen to look more closely at some of the dilemmas the international manifestos and the Library Act give rise to, this in order to provide an opportunity for deepening the discussion about them.

Users sometimes have requests for the purchase of media that librarians judge to be problematic for some reason, in our study especially in connection with the goal of setting limits and saying no to xenophobia and racism. On the other hand, users sometimes want libraries to remove a title from their collections. In the examples that have been foregrounded in our study, these cases have also primarily had to do with content that was considered offensive or xenophobic, but there can also be a number of other reasons. In summary, libraries prefer not to acquire and disseminate certain material that is considered to be, for example, xenophobic, although this material may be *in demand* by users, or users may want the library to *remove* material that has been acquired but that users experience as offensive or xenophobic. Librarians themselves may also experience media in the library as problematic with respect to things like xenophobia, pornography, and speculative violence, media that have a content or express values that the library does not want to support with respect to its mission, and for that reason choose not to ac-

quire or in some cases choose to remove/weed, with or without discussion. Irrespective of what has been said above, it is in practice difficult to operationalise and set concrete limits on what is xenophobia/racism, pornography, or speculative violence. It can nearly become a question of philosophy. When such cases appear in a librarian's own library it is however obvious that a discussion usually occurs among the staff, but perhaps not always. And is this enough? What support can there be except legislation and manifestos for being able to evaluate any such limitation? Social values change over time as well, something that, naturally enough, changes the assessment in individual concrete cases. The type of library and the community around it, as well as its target groups, may also be factors that affect the assessment. The most urgent dilemma at present has to do with the conflict between the desire for and the goal of having a framework that is as wide as possible with respect to what is acquired - a freedom of information that has the widest possible limits - and the goal of working for inclusion and diversity in each librarian's own library, where questions regarding xenophobia, racism, and also other forms of discrimination become very pressing. What does it take to create a library where absolutely everybody feels welcome, and not just in theory? What opportunities and frameworks are there to *choose to add* and to *choose to remove media*? To base any decisions on a *freedom to* or a *freedom from*? And to what extent do libraries do this? It is possible to discern a conflict between the principle of the library as an arena where users are able to partake of all kinds of material in order to form their own opinions, and the position of saying no to material that is considered xenophobic or discriminatory in favour of a library where such material is not provided on the basis of the idea of the library's democratic mission. From the interview material it emerges that librarians handle this dilemma in various ways. They may try to follow a principle of, on the whole, saying yes and not no and allowing legislation to set the limits for acquisitions, or to compromise between yes and no by using interlibrary loans, purchasing single copies, putting the work in the stacks, or allowing it to fall into oblivion and not be replaced, or, as an alternative, to have a discussion with a borrower about an individual title, which happens naturally in, for instance, a school library. Librar-

ians may perhaps appear vague in their assumption of positions, but perhaps compromises are the only reasonable approach and strategy in situations where conflicting goals and values – values that on a certain level perhaps are not, and should not be, compatible or consistent – exist in library work? The actual decisions in one of our libraries regarding a certain children's book may on the one side be considered erroneous or rash and based on a double-edged principle, but on the other hand the decisions and actions of these librarians have perhaps uncovered a potential conflict that lies dormant and unspoken in many public libraries, hidden behind standardised formulations against the one or the other in a media plan?

What knowledge and competence are required from professional librarians in order to operationalise any media plans and normative library documents in their actual media work?

This is, as has been stated earlier, a not entirely simple question to answer through the empirical material of the study, based on the fact that many informants lack a more profound and cumulative knowledge about normative documents such as the international manifestos other than on a general level. In our study it becomes clear that the librarians in many cases agree with the ideological basic attitude represented by the manifestos, but that they perhaps do not have a more specific knowledge about the content of all the various individual manifestos. This is true also of the IFLA Code of Ethics that is relatively recent. The new Swedish Library Act is more close at hand to Swedish librarians, and the debate and discussion about this act is obviously well-known in a very different way to librarians in the local libraries in Sweden.

For all that, we believe that both the libraries' own media plans and the international manifestos cannot become actively used documents in local libraries other than through a continual discussion and an open and problematising approach in the librarians' professional practice. The question then becomes how to create and develop such a climate and an interest in the issues as such? That there are no easy answers or sim-

ple solutions to questions that have to do with freedom of information and its limits in libraries, not even in individual cases when librarians often compromise, can be a point of departure as good as any. So is continually asking questions of oneself and each other about who the borrower is, and what the library's mission is. An interest in dialogue, as well as an ability to participate in an actual dialogue, both with colleagues and users; an interest in society and an ability to orient oneself in the contemporary social environment; knowledge of media publishing and technology development; and, from time to time, courage and integrity, may be qualities that can be valuable for future media strategists.

What differences in approach, if any, can be discerned among various types of libraries with regard to issues of strategic media work and media selection?

It has been an explicit goal that our study should include different types of libraries, and this has been accomplished. Above all public libraries on the one hand, and university and university college libraries on the other, may, to a significant degree, be said to reside in completely different worlds, but they also have points in common. School libraries and hospital libraries, that were also included in the study, have their own unique research questions but also display similarities to other library types. University and university college libraries belong to a parent organisation and have a clearly defined target group, something that completely governs acquisitions. Many of the complex situations and dilemmas that public libraries may face when it comes to purchases and collections therefore never arise for these libraries. Any ethical problems will have to be dealt with at another level, for instance with reference to specific research projects or teaching situations. The fact that different policy documents partly govern the respective library type also affects the librarians' approaches. In this way the issues of freedom of information, selection, and potential problems of censorship never really become pertinent for university and university college libraries. The librarians in these libraries may take a personal and active interest in these issues, but the issues are, in principle, never actualised in their

professional practice. Not even the issue of a potential uniformity of research toward the Anglo-American linguistic area is something in which university and university college librarians of today have a significant and active interest. Other topical issues are far more immediately relevant. All in all, library work in public and school libraries, as in hospital libraries, appears to be far more complex from this perspective.

It also is relatively clear that certain groups are considered in need of more protection than others when it comes to the media available and their content. This is true of children and young people, who may be assumed to not yet reflect on all conceivable content on their own, but also ill people who visit a hospital library may require more of certain types of consideration. Nor does this issue seem to be actualised in university and university college libraries to a significant extent. For public libraries, with their multifaceted target groups, the question of whether the user needs to be protected, and in that case against what, is completely central, irrespective of whether it is made apparent or not in an individual library.

The translation of the manifestos - the challenge of keeping a concept paper alive

'It is unclear whether the manifestos have had much effect on the development of Swedish libraries'. This is what Barbro Thomas says in an article in *Biblioteksbladet* [The library journal] in connection with the release of the translation of the collected manifestos in March 2014. We hope that our study has answered this question. A natural follow-up question is of course what effect the translated collection will have on the development of Swedish libraries in the years to come, and, as far as this study is concerned, on media strategy work. We suspect that this will not happen automatically but that initiatives must be taken in order to foreground the content of the documents and at the same time connect it to practical work in the libraries. We believe that this will be necessary, even though we in our study see that, just as Thomas writes,

the Public Library Manifesto, for example, rests on a solid foundation of library ideology.¹¹⁰

A few examples of this solid foundation can be illustrated by way of quotations from a chief librarian with long experience of media strategy work, who has this to say about freedom of expression:

*I'm thinking that I have the best job in the municipality, it has to do with this thing about freedom of expression. [...] Obviously it has to do with people having access to information in order to form their own opinions.*¹¹¹

And about the demand for quality in the new Library Act:

*Sooner or later we have to take the bull by the horns and think about what this really means for us. Or we can shrug our shoulders and do what we have always done.*¹¹²

Another chief librarian has this to say:

*Well, it isn't exactly that we talk about it every day, but it's there in the background. This thing about the mission and safeguarding freedom of expression. So it feels more natural, this is how it is, this is our mission. And that's also what we take as our point of departure, that there is no calling this into question.*¹¹³

110 Barbro Thomas, 'På solid ideologisk grund - biblioteksmanifesten och dess historia' [On solid ideological ground: The library manifestos and their history] in *Biblioteksbladet*, no. 4, 24-25. (*Biblioteksbladet* is the leading journal in Sweden for professional librarians.)

111 Interview 5.

112 Ibid.

113 Interview 15.

Conclusion: media strategist of the future?

The traditional media plan that we in this study call a survey with circulation numbers has proved to be a rather blunt instrument that takes a long time to develop and that is not always used as the tool it is intended to be. By some informants it is experienced as instrumental. When significant changes are made to a collection, in connection with a move or the building of a new library, or in order to safeguard the connection between demography and the material available, we see that the plan can fill an important function as a complement to strategic documents, precisely in order to create an on-the-spot description of the collection as a basis for change.¹¹⁴

Nevertheless, the empirical material in our study shows that a new picture of media strategy work is developing. One description of strategic media planners on the basis of the dialogue we have had with the interviewees, but also on the basis of reading the media plans, can be as follows:

The strategic media planner does not primarily work to create a set of rules but to reach certain goals. These have been developed in cooperation with the responsible organisation, but also in close dialogue with users. The strategic media planner understands the ideological foundation on which library activities are based and supports him- or herself, in any context where it is necessary, on the laws, international regulations, and so on that may form the basis of local activities, but not until these policy documents have been adapted for local activities: What does freedom of information mean to us? What do we mean when we talk about censorship? Have we made clear what we mean with quality? Is it possible for us to do that? Shall we leave it to users to make that assessment? The media strategy that has been developed should be transparent enough that users understand it and can refer to it. Then users, librarians, and politicians can have a discussion about the selection of

114 Interviews 12 and 16.

media in libraries. This strategy is relevant to the population in the time in which we live, and leaves more about which citizens can assume a position and form their own opinions. The strategy safeguards a citizen's right to freedom of information as well as the citizen's right to integrity.

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Borås, 14 April 2015

CD-böcker

Pocket



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Twenty-one interviews with librarians, chief librarians, and county librarians at public, school, hospital, university, and university college libraries, conducted between 5 March and 22 May 2014, at the interviewees' workplaces or via Adobe Connect Pro.

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