

Archiving in the era of online activism

Challenges and practices of collecting and providing
access to activist social media archives

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Title

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Abstract

In the era of digital and online activism, archivists have taken on the challenge of collecting and preserving the records of activist groups on social media. Social media offers users a number of tools for organising and spreading political messages, making it an effective tool for activism. The strength of social media as a political tool can be illustrated by #MeToo and the Black Lives Matter movements, as well as the use of social media during the “Arab Spring” in 2011. Archiving of activist social media is a fairly new phenomenon. Despite this, a variety of individuals and institutions with or without archival functions are involved in preserving this unique type of material. Attempts at collecting this material, including digital collections of a number of political movements present on social media, suggest a growing interest in this type of archive. Due to the uncertain nature of digital records and social media as commercial platforms, these records run the risk of being lost unless active collecting is done. Furthermore, archivists and other professionals are faced with a number of challenges when collecting and providing access to social media, including privacy and security concerns, copyright, and consent and permission-seeking. This study seeks to expand on the limited amount of previous research on the topics of challenges and practices in activist social media archives. Using semi-structured interviews with archivists and other professionals involved in projects on archiving activist social media, this study explores the decisions made and practices chosen during collection and when providing access to this type of collections. The study finds that, despite representing a variety of different projects and institutions or organisations, professionals working with activist social media archives largely share the same ethical, legal and sometimes technical concerns. However, while many of the challenges are shared, the study concludes there is a variety of different approaches to archiving of activism that occur on social media, as well different interpretations of and solutions to the same challenges depending on the mission and function of the represented institution, the purpose of the project, as well as the content of the collected data.

Keywords

ALM; archival science; social media archives; web archives; digital activism; activist collections; digital collections; copyright and intellectual property; privacy and confidentiality; archival access

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Archives are institutions of memory. In an increasingly digital world, our memories are increasingly in digital formats too. Digital technologies and the web offers us opportunities to capture and share our lives (Garde-Hansen, Hoskins and Reading 2009, p. 1). This increasing online participation and communication includes sharing of not just written text, but also user-generated content such as video and images (Berg 2011, p. 121). Digital technologies, the web and social media contain large amounts of information which embodies various aspects of the human experience; from the online presence of large companies, organisations and political leaders, to that of local groups and individuals. From an archival perspective, the digital and the web is an irreplaceable source of information about society today. The role of the digital in access to and participation in the creation of our shared memories is illustrated by Joanne Garde-Hansen, Andrew Hoskins and Anna Reading (2009):

Unlike in previous eras, where keeping the past was an expensive business with access provided often for only an elite, digital media technologies provide cheap data storage, ease in terms of the searching and retrieval of data – with digital and mobile networks providing unprecedented global accessibility – and participation in the creation of memories.

Garde-Hansen, Hoskins and Reading 2009, p. 1

These new forms of memory creation and sharing, as well as personal expression, are characterised by the “Web 2.0”. Today, the web is dominated by user-generated content and user participation in what has been named “Web 2.0” (OECD 2007). The web is also a place of increasing interactivity (Berg 2011, p. 120). Social networking, also called social media, has come to play a big part in people’s life with a large number of both organisations and individuals being present on this type of platform:

With the rise of the Internet in the early 1990s, the networked population all over the world has grown strikingly. In the same period, social media have become the realm of existence for civil society organizations including many different actors such as regular citizens or activists.

Shirky 2011, p. 1

One aspect of this is how the web offers people new opportunities for political participation. Primarily, social media is increasingly being used to spread political messages and to organise political activism. On forums and under hashtags, enormous amounts of political, digital activism on social media is created and gathered. In some cases, these gain widespread recognition - with political impact in terms of spreading information, campaigning and organising “real-life” action and even creating and sustaining revolutions such as in the cases of Egypt and Tunisia during the “Arab Spring” (Ogwuazor Momah 2013; Ravanoglu Yilmaz 2017; Westling 2007; Shirky 2011). Sezen Ravanoglu Yilmaz (2017) explained how social media features, such as the sharing of messages, pictures and other media, and the possibility of creating “events” and “groups”, are all features that make social media platforms such as Facebook ‘...an excellent tool for informing, mobilizing, and organizing political supporters’ (p. 149). These features allows for participating in political discussion, organising

demonstrations or political meetings, and for political groups to reach out to a wider audience (*ibid.*)

In combination with this process, archivists are attempting to collect, preserve and provide access to the data that is created from activism on social media. The relationship between archives and activism is multifaceted. Archives have collected and preserved analogue activist collections and archives for decades, with whole institutions being dedicated to one specific political movement such as the Swedish labour movement archive (Swedish: ARAB, *Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek*). A new archival phenomenon is that of creating separate digital archives or digital community type archives of activist social media dedicated to a specific political movement, event or campaign such as Occupy Archive which preserves, collects and makes accessible records of the Occupy Movements and protests that started in 2011, Documenting Ferguson following the shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, USA on August 9 2014, Preserve the Baltimore Uprising 2015 Archive Project for the protests following the death of Freddie Gray on April 19 2015, and A People's Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland for stories of police violence in Cleveland, USA. Often, these archives are used to actively collect more data by providing users or visitors the opportunity to upload their own material such as stories, images or videos of related events, demonstrations and similar. In some cases, these archives have been created by archivists from university archives experiencing student activism. In other cases, these archives are created by the activists themselves. However, not all collections of activist social media take the form of digital community archives. Activism on social media, like all archival material, can be collected and made accessible in various ways with the common denominator of focusing on activism on social media. Furthermore, activist social media is collected by various types of individuals, groups, organisations and institutions both with and without an archival function or mission.

Like other web material, archivists are experiencing particular challenges during collection, preservation and when providing access to archives of social media activism. However, this type of data and this type of archive creates further problems about issues such as copyright, security, privacy and personal integrity due to the nature of online activism and the fact that the activism is located on social media which are commercial platforms with their own terms of service. One of the biggest challenges for these types of archives is how to provide long-term public access for users, while further issues include collecting permission or consent, and balancing privacy concerns with access (Velté 2018, p. 127). While web archiving and archiving of social media more generally are both established areas of research in archival science, little research has been done on archiving of activist social media due to the fact this is such a new phenomenon. Furthermore, this type of archiving is especially interesting as it in many cases can be seen as a part of emerging types of archiving that are the result of an evolving role of archives and archivists, as part of larger archival and societal ideas of democratisation and participation, and archival practices and theories on archival responsibility, archival social justice, archival activism and community archives. Rather, the archiving of activist social media falls within active archiving methods that often involve participation of the “subjects” or creators of the material, as compared to more traditional, passive forms of archiving. The archiving of activism on social media and activist social media archives is a trend likely to increase with the success of online

and social media activism. Due to these reasons, there is a need for more research on what makes this phenomenon unique and how these archives manage the numerous challenges they are faced with.

1.2 Research purpose and questions

In 2018, Ashlyn Velte published a study on challenges and practices in activist social media archives titled “Ethical Challenges and Current Practices in Activist Social Media Archives”. Based on interviews with three archivists of activist social media archives, Velte discussed how archives currently approach activist social media. However, one of the most unexplored areas of Velte’s research is that of *why* archivists choose different methods in order to deal with various ethical and legal challenges as well as how these decisions are made. Velte acknowledged this limitation and suggests that future research “might focus on determining which characteristics of activist social media collections lead to the adoption of particular practices” as well as “developing case studies of ethical practices in collecting activist social media” among other suggestions (p. 127). Furthermore, out of the three interviews conducted by Velte, none included archivists or archives outside universities.

Therefore, the purposes of this study is to dwell deeper into the questions of what ethical and legal challenges archivists of activist social media confront and how decisions of activist social media archives are motivated. This study presents specific cases (projects) of activist social media archives, with the inclusion of different archivists, archives and other individuals involved with this type of archiving to help understand different factors which may impact both challenges and chosen methods in activist social media archives. The purpose, motives, and objectives of the archives are examined. The goal is to gain insight into and create a greater understanding of activist social media archives; how different archivists and individuals manage these archives; which choices form the basis of the execution of this work; and on what basis these are made.

This study should be regarded as a continuation or complement to Velte’s research on this previously largely unexplored topic in archival science. The study will add to the research on archiving activist social media specifically by exploring different approaches to the particular challenges faced by archivists and others archiving activist social media.

Two broad research questions guide this study:

- What decisions are made during collection of activist social media and how are they motivated?
- What decisions are made when providing access to activist social media archives and how are they motivated?

To answer these research questions, this study makes use of semi-structured interviews with four informants representing different projects on archiving activist social media. The informants have been chosen to represent different types of projects and institutions or organisations.

1.3 Research scope and limitations

This study focuses on challenges and approaches to activist social media archives in two major areas: collection and access. Because ethical and legal difficulties are of most interest in terms of answering the research questions of what and how decisions are made, the study includes findings on surrounding issues which help understand the phenomenon. While less focus has been assigned to questions of *how* collection and access of activist social media archives is provided, this information has been necessary to include to some extent in order to understand *why* different approaches and methods are chosen. This study focuses more on case studies and comparisons between different projects and institutions or organisations that are involved with archiving of activism on social media. The study is limited in terms of specifically dealing with archiving of activism on social media. It does not include archiving of social media generally or archiving of physical collections of activism. Furthermore, the actual content of the archival collections included in this study is not analysed.

The study is limited geographically. Previous research on activist social media archives primarily focuses on American archives. In this study, all informants represent Swedish archiving projects. However, some American examples are used to illustrate and compare the findings of the study.

The study is not representative. As it only includes four informants, it is difficult to generalise the findings. Each informant acts more as a case study. The purpose of the study, however, is not to provide generalisations but rather to explore different aspects of activist social media archives as a phenomenon.

The study does not include archives that may have opted out of archiving activist social media. An interesting aspect to the challenges associated with archiving activist social media is that of motivations for not archiving this type of information at all. Potential challenges such as lack of resources, lack of legal knowledge or support, or lack of digital skills are all aspects which are likely to impact who is able to archive activist social media. This means that there may be more challenges associated with this type of archive than are found in this study.

1.4 Definitions

1.4.1 Activism

In this study, activism or political activism refers to a number of acts with the explicit purpose of bringing about political change. While there are many different types of activism, the textbook definition tends to emphasise an active effort in order to achieve some sort of result.

The Cambridge Dictionary (n.d) defines activism as “the use of direct and noticeable action to achieve a result, usually a political or social one”.

Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines activism as “...a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue”.

Oxford Living Dictionaries (n.d.) defines activism as “The policy or action of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change”.

1.4.2 Social media

This study makes use of Nicole B. Ellison and danah m. boyd's definition of social media, also called social networking sites (SNS) as web-services for interpersonal communication:

We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

Ellison & boyd 2008, p. 211

Social media sites allow for interaction and connection between users. The most frequently mentioned social networks in this study includes Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

1.4.3 Activist social media archives

This study makes uses of what Ashlyn Velte (2018) calls “activist social media archives” which refers to collections of records about activism that, on some level, takes place on social media. The term is relatively broad, including both collection of activist records directly from social media using APIs, screenshots or other technical means, as well as external collection of activism on social media such as encouraging voluntary deposition of social media records via a website, email or other. In this definition, *archive* does not specify a physical space but rather a separate collection of archival records on a specific topic or group. However, when referring to a *digital archive* of activist social media, this implies some level of “physical” space, namely a website or a database dedicated to collecting, preserving and providing access to activist social media.

1.4.4 Public and private archives

The study makes use of the terms “public” and “private” archives (Swedish: *offentliga och enskilda arkiv*) in order to describe the nature of the represented archives and its effect on challenges and practices. Swedish archives are divided into two types. Public archives are created from municipal, regional and state agencies or authorities' public records (SFS 1990:782, 3§). Public archives are subject to legal regulations, namely Arkivlagen 1990:782 (English: *Archives Act*) and Offentlighets- och Sekretesslagen (OSL, English: *Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act*) which regulates secrecy on personal information¹. Private archives, on the other hand, are archives

¹ This is further explained in section 5.2.3.

created “outside the public sphere” such as archives of companies, organisations, popular movements or individuals and families (Edquist 2018, p. 16). Private archives and collections are not regulated by either OSL nor Arkivlagen.

1.5 Disposition

This research study is divided into six chapters. Below is a short explanation of the content of the following chapters.

The second chapter presents previous literature on relevant areas of research, which situates this study into a larger context of archival science.

The third chapter presents the theoretical framework that is applied to the analysis of the findings of this study.

The fourth chapter presents and explains the methodology of the study: research methods, method of analysis, as well as ethical considerations.

The fifth chapter presents the results of the study. This chapter includes a presentation of the informants, as well a presentation of the findings of the interviews. The findings are discussed and analysed with the use of chosen methodology, literature and theoretical framework.

The final chapter concludes the findings of the study and suggests areas for future research.

2. Literature review

This section provides an overview of relevant areas of research in relation to the topic of this study. As archiving of activist social media is both a new and largely unexplored research topic, much of the literature review focuses on overlapping areas which share similar characteristics with that of activist social media archives or certain practices among these archives. The literature was initially found by breaking down activist social media archives into its various components: archiving social media, archiving activism, and archival activism. By identifying key aspects of activist social media archives, other similar and overlapping areas of research emerged to help place this phenomenon within the context of archival science.

The section is divided into four areas of research. First, literature on practices of archiving activism and activist archiving which includes activist social media archives specifically. Second, research on archiving social media and the web, particularly what challenges and practices have been identified in previous studies. The third area concerns the archivist's professional role, more specifically theories and practices on the archival mission, responsibilities, and values which situates activist social media archives within a larger context. The last area focuses on community archives and digital community archives as a phenomenon with shared characteristics with that of activist social media archives.

2.1 Archiving activism and activist archiving

With the rise of digital records, archivists have taken to collecting and preserving digital activist collections, as well as digitisation projects of analogue activist collections. However, archives are also created by activist communities. Elena Carter (2017) interviewed activist groups in London campaigning against a local urban regeneration scheme with the purpose of researching "why and how archival collections are created, used and animated by communities embedded in housing struggles and political movement" (p. 27). Carter's findings included the role of the archive in activism as a "campaigning tool" through keeping the memories of the housing site alive and, in doing so, keeping the campaign alive (*ibid.* p. 32). Carter describes the activist view of the archive: "The archive becomes the 'battle of memory against forgetting'" (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the archive is a way of challenging traditional or dominant history-writing (*ibid.* pp. 32-33). An important aspect of the activist archives studied by Carter is how the purpose of these archives was not collection for future research, but rather active use in the now (*ibid.* p. 34).

Alexandrina Buchanan and Michelle Bastian (2015) further examined how archives can be an integral part of activism. Buchanan and Bastian evaluated the Memories of Mr Seel's Garden: exploring past and future food systems in Liverpool archival project on local food in Liverpool, United Kingdom. The collaborative project included academics, heritage professionals and community groups. The authors found that archives are able to have a profound impact on activist communities. This included helping to develop greater understanding of the topic of interest to the activists and

helping activists find resources to share their cause (p. 448). Buchanan and Bastian describe archives used for activist purposes as “empowering” (*ibid.*). While activist archives are often used to challenge traditional narratives and practices - as in Carter’s case above - Buchanan and Bastian found that “...even ‘traditional’ archival materials, neither created nor selected for activist purposes, have the potential to be valuable resources for activist projects” (*ibid.* pp. 429-430).

While archivists are familiar with activist collections and archive, the rise of activism on social media and archiving of this type of data is a less well-known area. As Ashlyn Velte noticed, research on activist social media archives - that is archives containing activist social media data specifically - is severely lacking (2018, p. 112). In fact, relatively few archives are engaged in collection of this type of material (*ibid.* p. 127). While activist social media archives have been researched to some extent, this tends to take the form of case studies of chosen activist social media archives, as the literature below exemplifies. Velte further noticed how previous research limits itself to “subject-and format-specific challenges” rather than attempts to identify common issues among these archives (*ibid.* p. 112). Velte’s study on ethical challenges and practices in activist social media archives looks beyond specific archives and subjects. Using surveys and semi-structured interviews with archivists collecting activist social media, Velte identified shared challenges and practices among these archives as a first attempt at describing the unique situation for activist social media archives. Velte found that the biggest challenge for the archives included in the study concerned how to provide long-term public access for users of activist social media archives (*ibid.* p. 127). Further issues included collecting permission or consent, balancing privacy concerns with access, and social media terms of service (*ibid.*). Velte’s study found varying and diverse methods of providing access, yet with little indication as to why a specific method is chosen, leading Velte to suggest for future research to attempt to identify potential characteristics of archives that lead to choosing certain methods when working with activist social media (*ibid.* p. 125, p. 127). Velte’s research is further explored in the “Theoretical Framework” section of this study.

The Documenting the Now-project (DocNow) is one example of an activist social media archive. The project, run by three American universities (University of California at Riverside, University of Maryland and Washington University in St. Louis) was started with the purpose to “collect, archive, and provide access to Twitter feeds chronicling historically significant current events, particularly around issues of social justice” (Peet 2016). A second purpose with the project is to develop software for collecting Twitter data through an open source application (*ibid.*). One of the central problems raised by members of the project is that of ethics, particularly the potential (mis)use of the archived Twitter data which risks harming vulnerable groups.

A common reason to archive social media is its unstable nature. As Rose Miyatsu (2017) at Washington University noticed, social media differs from analogue archival material:

...tweets can be deleted, accounts erased, and urls changed. In other words, all of the photos being shared, testimonies being blogged and tweeted, and hashtags being circulated could easily disappear in a matter of years, if not sooner, and be lost to researchers and future historians forever.

Miyatsu 2017

This lead Washington University to start the digital archive Documenting Ferguson which collects and preserves digital material surrounding the Ferguson Unrest in 2014, a protest triggered by one of several police shootings of black Americans in the United States that evolved into the Black Lives Matter-movement. Makiba J. Foster and Meredith R. Evans (2016) who worked with the project produced a case study to discuss the issues and solutions surrounding the Documenting Ferguson-project. The project was described as “a space to tell an alternative narrative other than what is being presented by the mainstream media regarding the community’s response to what happened in Ferguson” (p. 357). The project was collected in real time using so-called “rapid response collecting” methods as events unfolded (*ibid.* p. 352). The authors pointed out that this radically differs from traditional archiving, which is often done years following an event (*ibid.* p. 353). The reason for this unusual method was the nature of digital material which requires fast-acting methods in order to ensure its preservation, as well as a desire to “meet the information needs” of the public during turbulent times (*ibid.* p. 352). The methods and needs for collecting material in real time was further explored by Besser et. al. (2014) who suggested that the best method is to work directly with the people involved or “those on the ground closest to where the events are occurring” preferably using an “insider” archivist (p. 5). Like DocNow, Documenting Ferguson struggled with several challenges, including ethical collection and use of social media. This problem was solved using a function for individuals to submit material voluntarily via the archive’s website, rather than collecting big data sets from social media which risks including users who may not want their material to be archived (*ibid.*). This method, however, raised another issue of making people recognise the value in archiving this type of material and to actively contribute to the archive (*ibid.*). In fact, a study on user habits of Documenting Ferguson found that the main barrier to using the archive is “lack of awareness” (Atiso and Freeland 2016, p. 19). In short, the biggest problem is that people do not know that the archive exists. However, for active users, the study found that the main reason for participating in Documenting Ferguson was social justice driven (*ibid.*).

The relationship between archivist and activist can be complicated. Howard Besser (2012) raised the issues surrounding user-generated data in the archives of the Occupy Movement. User-generated data created by multiple individuals is a challenge for archivists trying to apply metadata or other types of schemes for organising this type of collection:

The material generated by the Occupy movement looks very much like the type of material that will be entering the archives and library special collections of the future. It is a vast quantity of user-generated everyday material, created by a multitude of different users. There is no easy way to control for quality, file format, or metadata. Unlike most organizational collections that try to enforce standards for metadata and file formats, there are not even guidelines suggesting what schemes should be followed. And because the content comes from so many individuals, it lacks even the semi-consistency that a single individual would apply to the items that he or she creates.

Besser 2012, p. 3

Furthermore, Besser found that working with the Occupy activists as an archivist was difficult due to their suspicion towards “conventional organisations” (*ibid.*). The ideology of the Occupy organisation itself proved a challenge, as they valued their autonomy and opposed any external arrangements described by Besser as a “do-it-

yourself” mentality (*ibid.* p. 4). The Occupiers internal organisation and decision-making process proved another obstacle, as consensus had to be reached by all participants before a final decision all while each meeting included newcomers, making establishing a relation with them an outdrawn and repetitive process (*ibid.*). A final issue concerned convincing the activists the values of archiving their own material (*ibid.*).

The Occupy archives have also been studied from a perspective that focuses more on a critique of the archival profession. John Erde (2014) researched several archival projects surrounding the Occupy Movement including both professional archivists and activists, concluding that archivists need to focus on widening the participation in archives with the Occupy Movement archives as an example of an participatory approach to archives as a solution to both the problem of managing the amount of data created by contemporary activists and political movements, as well as the user-demands of the digital age (p. 88).

2.2 Digital memories: archiving social media and the web

The rise of digital information continues to be a cause of concern for archivists and other professionals in the culture, heritage and information sectors, including archaeologists such as Stuart Jeffery who warned of a “new Digital Dark Age” as new digital technologies are developed at a faster pace than the required efforts to preserve the resulting data (2012, p. 554). Another aspect raised by Jeffrey is the use of these same new technologies as a way of actively creating and sharing - in this case - archaeological content, particularly that of user-generated content on social media and collaborative websites, a practice which is also shared by more and more archives. However, Jeffrey pointed out that this in itself raises concerns about a “*second* Digital Dark Age” [author’s emphasis] due to the same reason as the first one: new digital technologies are developed at a faster pace than the required efforts to preserve the resulting data (*ibid.* p. 555). With social media and collaborative web content, however, the problems are less technical and more ethical and legal, including the use of commercial platforms, as well user expectations on their content, privacy and participation (*ibid.*). Using the loss of digital archaeological data as an example, Jeffrey identified the particularly challenging nature of digital data in terms of preservation efforts. Four factors are singled out as making digital data “easily lost” compared to other data: data corruption of digital storage media over time, the high turnover of digital storage formats leading to “media obsolescence”, the high turnover of software and file formats, as well as inadequate metadata risking information to be unreadable and unusable as no one can understand it (*ibid.* p. 556). Data loss for social media specifically may also be the result of platform, user, or third party removal (Day Thomson 2016, p. 21). User removal in particular provides an ethical challenge for archives wishing to preserve the information, versus privacy wishes on behalf of the user (*ibid.*).

Social media content, however, adds additional complications for preservation according to Jeffrey. First of all, commercial platforms rarely guarantee full user-control over their own content, making social media unfit as a real archival solution. This insecure archival environment can also be illustrated by the fact that accidental

data loss continue to occur on commercial platforms². Other aspects include access to social media services which may be hindered by abuse (such as illegal file-sharing), charged membership, intrusive registration or information-sharing such as selling of user information, the selling of the service, and more (*ibid.* pp. 560-561). Jeffrey noticed that the central problem stems from the fact that social media is commercially run with the ultimate goal to produce profit: “Commercial might and marketing power are no guarantee that services will be maintained if they are not commercially viable...” (*ibid.* p. 561). The lack of extraction tools poses a further issue for being able to collect social media data in the first place, let alone preserve it (*ibid.*). The commercial nature of social media sites also results in “...unique terms and conditions, rules for participation and access as well as policies regarding appropriate content, ownership of content and storage of content” (*ibid.* p. 558). This ensures that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to preserving social media, as each platform will have to be carefully researched and adapted to before any preservation effort is attempted.

Attempts at archiving the web date back to the birth of the Internet in the 1990s, (Hakala 2003, p. 1). One of the most well-known efforts is the Wayback Machine (launched in 2001) run by the Internet Archive - a digital archive of the World Wide Web. Juha Hakala mapped the European efforts of web archiving as early as the year 2003. Web harvesting tools were identified as a widespread attempt at archiving the web, defined as “an application which fetches and stores the Web content according to user defined parameters” (*ibid.* p. 1). Web harvesters, however, come with a set of technological difficulties such as storage concerns, defining domains to be harvested, unreachable content stored in databases, scheduling harvesting and metadata (*ibid.* pp. 3-6). Making the material searchable through indexing poses another issue (*ibid.* p. 6). Hakala noticed that web archiving include technological as well as legal and financial questions, and identifies Copyright as the main “political” question (*ibid.* p. 1). However, a major issue for contemporary web archiving, raised by Miguel Costa, Daniel Gomes and Mário J. Silva, remains a lack of knowledge of the its practice and most recent developments (2016, p. 203). The authors conducted two surveys, one in 2010 and one in 2014, studying various characteristics of web archiving initiatives world-wide. The surveys found that while web archiving initiatives continue to grow all over the world - both in numbers and the sheer volume of archived content - resources devoted to web archiving are in fact decreasing (*ibid.*). Repeating the fear put forward by Stuart Jeffrey, the authors conclude that: “The lack of resources will probably originate a historical void in the future about our current time. Our results already show that only a small part of the web has been preserved” (*ibid.*).

Extensive reports on contemporary web-archiving practices include Harvard Library’s 2016 report by Gail Truman “Web Archiving Environmental Scan” and the Digital Preservation Coalition’s 2013 “Web-archiving” report written by Maureen Pennock, concluding that while legislative concerns remain, many archival tools and technologies to preserve the web have developed during the past decade (Pennock 2013, pp. 33-34). At the same time, new technologies and new social media applications also continue to grow, leaving little choice for archivists but to actively collect web and social media material in a continuous effort to fill new gaps in our

² Jeffrey uses the Magnolia social bookmarking site and Flickr accidents as examples. A more recent example would be the enormous data loss suffered by social media site MySpace in March 2019.

collections. Web and social media content are perishable products, as illustrated by Edgar Crook (2009) in his study on Australian web archiving efforts:

In what is an ever-growing internet landscape there are always new technologies and newly identified gaps in our gathering that are in need of addressing. Web archiving therefore is never, it seems, going to become an area whereby established practices or protocols in collection development will ever be fully established or maintained. We will always need to be identifying and gathering content and not waiting for it to come in to us. The web is too dynamic, the technology so changeable, the number of publishers so vast that it is unlikely that we will ever be able to establish, as did our print forbears, a physical deposit style system that will be scalable.

Crook 2009. pp. 835-836

In a report on social media preservation practices, Sara Day Thomson (2016) explained that archivists have made attempts to archive social media for over a decade, yet are restricted by “strict boundaries of platform terms and conditions, ethical guidelines, and available resources for storage and technology” (p. 6). Despite this, several European projects are devoted to collecting social media content as data sets using APIs (*ibid.*) APIs collect raw data directly from the social media platform (*ibid.* p. 7). This differs from the archiving of web pages which is normally done using web scraping or web crawling methods (*ibid.* p. 7). The reason for this is mainly technical as “...APIs are more effective than crawlers because of the fundamental differences in how Web 2.0 web applications operate” (*ibid.*). APIs collect social media as data, while web archiving methods applied to social media content captures the social media interface, such as the Wayback Machine. Furthermore, social media platforms differ from web archiving due to the nature of the data produced: “... social media platforms comprise machine-readable data generated by users in real-time, complicating the issues of capture and indexing even further than similar issues facing current web archiving” (*ibid.* p. 4). The nature of social media causes both unique technical differences and differences in what information is produced and how, compared to web pages. Day Thomson concluded that, due to these fundamental differences, “social media requires a new set of definitions, solutions, and strategies for effective preservation” (*ibid.* p. 4).

Lastly, social media content raises further issues regarding privacy. Jasmine McNealy (2012) examined social media users and privacy concerns, applying Strahilevitz's social network theory of privacy to social media archives, specifically the Twitter Archive acquired by the American Library of Congress. One issue with social media is that it blurs the traditional concepts in privacy theory of private versus public information (pp. 159-160). Regarding the LOC Twitter archive, McNealy raised questions on what users expect to be kept private: “Do Twitter users expect that their messages will be preserved, possibly into perpetuity? Do they expect that people who do not follow them will be able to read and copy their messages?” (*ibid.* p. 138). McNealy further noticed that neither Twitter nor Facebook state that they will record or preserve user information forever (*ibid.* p. 139). In the end, social media raises new concerns regarding archival ethics which continues to be discussed by archivists such as Day Thomson (2016, see: pp. 20-22).

2.3 The professional role of the archivist, archival social justice, radical recordkeeping, and archival activism

To understand archival practices of activist social media it is necessary to understand current theories and practices in the archival profession in general, particularly that of the shifting professional role of archivists and archives as well as emerging concepts of “radical” recordkeeping, archival social justice and archival activism. Archiving activist social media as a new form of archiving must be placed within the evolving field of archival science and be understood as a result of the same.

Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz (2002) examined archives as institutions of power using postmodernist theory, concluding that archives need to acknowledge their power in order to challenge it:

Archives, then, are not passive storehouses of old stuff, but active sites where social power is negotiated, contested, confirmed. The power of archives, records, and archivists should no longer remain naturalized or denied, but opened to vital debate and transparent accountability.

Cook & Schwartz 2002, p. 1

Central to Cook and Schwartz’ argument is how archives have been used by “the powerful” in society to further their interest, while archivists have remained ignorant of their own part in upholding societal power structures and relations under the guise of archival impartiality or neutrality (*ibid.*). Andrew Flinn (2010) expanded on Cook and Schwartz’s understanding of the archive as supporting and representative of “the voices of those with power and influence in society”. Furthermore, the exclusionary tendencies of archives are problematic since they “mirror and reinforce the same inclusions and exclusions in wider society” (*ibid.*). Like Cook and Schwartz, Flinn views the archive as powerful due to its role in creating and reinforcing identity. When excluded from an archival narrative, this also risks alienating the people who feel like they do not “belong” (*ibid.*). For these reasons, Flinn stressed the need for a more democratic and inclusive archive. However, Flinn acknowledged that increasing demands on the archive to become “democratised” is not a new occurrence, but rather can be seen as a result of the political and social movements emerging during the 1960s “demanding that their histories be told, their voices be heard and that the archives reflect their lives and experiences” (*ibid.*).

Like Cook and Schwartz, Flinn acknowledges the power of archives as well as the potential for archives to play a positive part in supporting “more cohesive and equitable societies” (*ibid.*). Archival exclusion and inclusion concerns everyone: “This is an issue for the whole of society, not just for those individuals or communities whose stories might otherwise be excluded or ignored” (*ibid.*). This stance is shared by Randall C. Jimerson (2007) who argued for archivists to play a more active role in social justice, calling it a “professional responsibility” to do so.

Another perspective on the role of the modern archivist is presented by Maria Kallberg (2011). Kallberg studied the archival role in the digital age by researching the effect of electronic record-keeping on archivists’ professional identity, focusing on archivists in public organisations. Using semi-structured interviews with archivists working in Swedish municipalities with e-government development, Kallberg researched questions regarding archival identity and competence in a digital world. One finding

was that with increasing digitalisation of the profession, the archival role becomes broader yet also requires more and more specialised skills, a phenomenon further stressed in the title of the study: “Archivists 2.0”. Furthermore, the necessary skills and resources to work with electronic records are often lacking among these archivists (p. 112).

The Australian academic journal *Archives & Manuscripts* dedicated an issue to the topic of “radical recordkeeping” where editors Katherine Jarvie, Greg Rolan and Heather Soyka described the “radical” aspect as an emerging concept with a working definition (2017, p. 173). However, from the content of and contributions to the issue, “radical recordkeeping” mainly centres around “radical content” which the editors described as “documenting activism, social movements or extreme views” or a “disruption of traditional record keeping paradigms in revolutionary or profound ways using different approaches that inform practice, scholarship and teaching” (*ibid.*). The issue encourages the reader to think about “radical ways of approaching, understanding, and contextualising records and recordkeeping” (p. 174). Kim Schwenk further described the “radical” aspect in an archival context: “...applied to an archivist methodology, the word reflects an essential reason to collect and preserve history and memory, as a means to represent equality, integrity, and justice by the people who create it” (Schwenk 2011, p. 52). To Schwenk, radical archiving or recordkeeping is primarily characterised by a collaborative relationship between the archivist and the creator of the material:

Although radical archiving isn't an exercise on authority or how one should represent another person's history, it is a model for institutional collaboration with communities and the realization that history has the potential to be commoditized and engineered, if not allowed the autonomy and inventiveness with information, all the while respecting the rights of an individual, as a creator or maker.

Schwenk 2011, p. 55

Schwenk's view on radical recordkeeping is based in the critique of archives and archivists as powerful, subjective representatives of an elite (*ibid.* p. 51) much like that of Cook, Schwartz, Flinn and Jimerson. Schwenk, too, calls for archives to use this power to further social justice and equality: “Whether physical or electronic, archives can narrow the gap between the exclusiveness of knowledge and the ‘common’ voice in history” (*ibid.* p. 54). One way of doing this is through the archiving of records from marginalised groups both past and present. Schwenk used the Lesbian Herstory Archives located in New York as an example of an attempt at challenging traditional archiving practices (*ibid.* pp. 51-53). Furthermore, Schwenk emphasised the opportunities for archives to open up, democratise and become more inclusive and representative using digital tools such as open source repositories (*ibid.* p. 54).

Alongside radical recordkeeping, current archival theory and practice includes “archival activism”. Archival activism, like radical recordkeeping, stems from the theories on archival subjectivity, partiality and power (See for example: Findlay 2016). In fact, radical recordkeeping - characterised by radical content, radical archival practices or the relationship between archivist and record creator - differs little from archival activism. Andrew Flinn (2011) studied archival activism in his article “Archival Activism: Independent and Community-led Archives, Radical Public History and the Heritage Professions” which was a result the University of College

London project “Community Archives and Identities: Documenting and Sustaining Community Heritage”. The project included four independent, community-led British archives mainly concerned with African, Asian, and other minority heritages within Britain and it “sought to examine the motivation, form, challenges, and impacts of independent community-led archive activity in the UK” (pp. 2-4). Flinn sees archival activism as two-fold, both as a politically motivated, active and activist effort at history-making by archivists or others to change society through archival practice, as well as:

...an active and activist approach to the archival mission which encourages professional archivists and other heritage workers to engage more fully with a range of external activities and all sections of society whilst seeking better to reflect diversity in the archive.

Flinn 2011, p. 1

Furthermore, archival activism acknowledges and gives credit to the non-professional archiving projects often seeking to document those excluded from the archival narrative (Findlay 2016, pp. 156-157; Flinn 2011). Archival activism, too, stands behind the call for archives to play a more active role in achieving these political aims (Findlay 2016, pp. 155-156).

Vladan Vukliš and Anne J. Gilliland (2016) traced the history of archival activism from radical historian Howard Zinn addressing the International Council on Archives (ICA) in 1970 with the encouragement of archivists “to rid themselves of notions of ‘neutrality’, and actively engage in socially meaningful work”, to Michelle Caswell’s emphasis on the ethical responsibilities of archivists to engage in social justice, to Mario H. Ramirez’ critique of the archival attempt at diversity and social justice in an ultimately predominately white profession reflecting continues societal inequalities (pp. 14-18). In their article “Archival activism: Emerging forms, local applications”, Vukliš and Gilliland presented four different forms of archival activism, which were illustrated using real-life examples from the United States and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The four types of archival activism were identified as: community archives; “socially conscious work within government-funded and other ‘mainstream’ archives” (described as activism “by promoting institutional transparency and accountability”); research-based activism (described as activism aiming at “retracing radical or suppressed histories”); and finally “socially conscious work by institutionally-independent archivists” (*ibid.* p. 14).

Vukliš and Gilliland definition of archival activism mirrors that of Flinn, focusing on archival shortcomings in terms of representation and interests which needs to be met by an active archival response in order to combat this:

A society’s documentary heritage is thus not necessarily a reflection of the totality of social activities and experiences, its preserved records are not always placed in service of everyone’s demands, and archival legislation and practices are usually not inclusive of multiple societal interests. In these situations, when that which is protected is *not all* that should be protected – including not only records but individuals and communities – the *passive* application of ethical standards needs to be replaced with *active* social engagement in the processes of records creation, capture, description and dissemination. The complex of practices that mark such engagement is what is increasingly referred to today as ‘archival activism’.

Vukliš and Gilliland 2016, p. 15

The link between archival activism and archival social justice was further explored by Ricardo L. Punzalan and Michelle Caswell (2016) in their literature review on the rise of social justice concerns in archival studies in which they identify five areas of archival scholarship where a social justice cause frequently occurs:

- Inclusion of underrepresented and marginalized sectors of society
- Reinterpretation and expansion of archival concepts
- Development of community archives
- Rethinking archival education and training
- Efforts to document human rights violations

(p. 27)

The authors tracked 40 years of social justice concerns within the archival profession, making a case for a “long-term engagement” between the two ultimately resulting in social justice as a “central, if under-acknowledged, archival value” (*ibid.* p. 37).

2.4 Community archives and digital community archives

Community archives, like activist social media archives, can be placed within the above mentioned theories on the professional role of the archivists, social justice as a central archival value, and as an example of radical recordkeeping. Andrew Flinn (2010) described community archives as “the grassroots activity of collecting and sometimes creating materials relating to the history of a particular community (self-defined by place, ethnicity, faith, sexuality, occupation, other interest, or combination of these)” (*ibid.*). Community archives are closely tied to archival activism. Two processes among archives and heritage institutions were identified by Flinn. Firstly, active attempts to diversify the archive by including precisely under-represented groups. Secondly, a larger societal challenge to authority in general, which extends to heritage institutions taking the form of increasing demands for representation in the archive (*ibid.*). Community archives, explained Flinn, combine both of these elements. Central to community is its participatory nature and the involvement of the creator of the material itself - the community in question.

Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens and Elizabeth Shepherd (2009) researched independent community archives in the United Kingdom, the impact of community archives on identity, and the implications for archival theory and practice using ethnographic observation. The impact of community archives on communities themselves have been further examined by Michelle Caswell (2014), Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor, and Mario H. Ramirez (2016), as well as Michelle Caswell, Alda Allina Migoni, Noah Geraci and Marika Cifor (2017), particularly regarding the issues surrounding archival exclusion and its impact on communities and positive effects of archival representation through community archives by creating feelings of inclusion through “representational belonging”. Indeed, Flinn, Stevens and Shepherd found that a shared motivation for creating a community archive is due to “... absences, misrepresentations and marginalisations from the formal archives and from the partial national histories that are written in part from those same archives” (2009, p. 82). The community archive is then a response to this exclusion and used as a place to keep one’s own history (*ibid.*) The effect of community archives has been described as “empowering” (Sekhar 2010;

Ormond-Parker and Sloggett 2011). Some community archives expressed suspicion over traditional archives' ability to represent their history and preferred to keep ownership and custodianship over their material (Flinn, Stevens and Shepherd 2009, p. 71, p. 83). Custody can be a way to control the representation of the community and its memory. Custody "...means power over what is to be preserved and what is to be destroyed, how it is to be described and on what terms it is to be accessed" (*ibid.* p. 83). The authors conclude that this constitutes a considerable challenge to traditional professional archival practice, a conclusion shared by Jimmy Zavala et. al. (2017) in their study that mapped the many ways in which community archives challenge dominant, traditional or standard archival practices, such as the question of custodianship.

As previously mentioned, the rise of digital technologies and the internet has had a big impact on the archival profession in terms of rethinking archival theories and practices, introducing born-digital material and practices such as web archiving. The digitalisation of society and the heritage sector extends to community archives through online community archives. According to Amy Williams (2015), these digital community archives share the same purpose as analogue community archives. That is, to represent an often under-represented group in society (pp. 370-371). However, digital community archives combine the aspects of analogue community archives with that of the general opportunities of digital technologies, such as the possibility of reaching a wider audience (*ibid.*). Similarly, Elizabeth Tait et. al. explored how digital community archives "offer scope to widen participation in cultural activities" (2013, p. 564). Digital archives were also identified by Williams as able to "break down traditional barriers that have isolated archives in the past" through collaboration practices, sharing resources and "user-centeredness" (2015, p. 375). Digital community archives as "open and accessible" spaces were also described by Daniel Mutibwa as a means for a community to both tell their story and to "make the past visible in the present in a way they can relate to", as well as a way to market the cultural assets of a locale or region (Mutibwa 2016, p. 22). Encouraging tourism as a positive effect of community archives identified by the community members themselves was also found by Tait et. al. (2013, p. 577).

Despite this, digital community archives are not without problems. Tait. et. al. noticed a conflict between the accessibility of digital community archives and the purpose and representativeness of this type of archive. Potentially, they speculated, opening up a digital community archive could lead to a feeling of loss of control of their own material (2013, p. 578). Furthermore, ethical concerns regarding digital community archives such as "digital equity" were raised by Annette Henry (2018) who researched the potential for a co-created Black Digital Oral History Archive at the University of British Columbia. Henry questioned the potential of technologies and points out its limits: "Politics and power are implicated in how we use (digital) technologies in culturally sensitive ways to represent speakers' voices, histories, and meanings" (p. 96).

3. Theoretical framework

This section presents the theories that will be applied to the analysis of the findings from the interviews. Three broader theoretical frameworks can be identified. First of all, Velte's research on activist social media archives which defines the very core of the subject as well as what sets it apart from other types of archives. Secondly, Cook and Schwartz' postmodernist view on archives as institutions of power help explain the nature of archives more generally. Their theories will be used to place activist social media archives within the context of changing and developing archival theories and practices, including a historical context. Thirdly, theories on archival activism, archival social justice and community archives help explain activist social media archives as a phenomena, as well as helps to further place activist social media archives in the context of current theories and practices in the archival profession.

3.1 Velte: Activist social media archives

This study is based on the research by Ashlyn Velte in her 2018 article "Ethical Challenges and Current Practices in Activist Social Media Archives". Velte's research can be regarded as a first attempt at describing the particular challenges faced by archivists dealing with activist social media as archives, as well as the practices surrounding this type of information. Velte's research primarily concerns ethical and legal aspects regarding acquisition and access, which is also the main subject of this study.

Velte placed activist social media archives within the larger topic of web archiving: "Social media archives are one type of Web archives because social media are found online" (p. 114). The main differences between web archiving and archiving of activist social media identified by Velte concerns the technical ways in which the information is collected, such as using hashtags or keywords, the use of APIs and the opportunities to collect large data sets (big data), as well as the volatile nature of social media as commercial platforms with differing terms and services and motivated by the prospect of profit rather than a concern for preserving culture or history (*ibid.* pp. 114-115). Furthermore, Velte stressed the ethical "ambiguities" concerning social media in general and activist social media in particular, such as privacy, research use and consent to collect (*ibid.*). Activist social media archives are further placed within the theories and practices of archival activism and community archives. Both archival activism and community archives concerns the power of the archivist and the archive as an institution, their responsibilities regarding social justice as well as a desire to start a democratisation process of the archive. Velte theorised that the complex challenges faced by archival activism efforts as well as community archives; privacy, access, inclusion/exclusion, power, custody/ownership, colonialism, displacement and more, may be similar to that of activist social media archives. Particularly since "Balancing privacy and access becomes more complicated for digital records like social media because they may face ownership uncertainty and are sometimes already accessible over the public internet" (*ibid.* p. 116).

One of the central theoretical underpinnings of the nature of activism on social media as well as purpose to research this topic is further laid out by Velte:

Because current events are increasingly documented on social media, preserving them has become a crucial part of archivists' work. Recent activist movements use social media as platforms for citizen journalism; posts made on social media play an important role in organizing protests and sharing information about catalytic current events. Narratives about recent activist movements would differ without the social media record; social media allow events to be seen from the perspective of the protesters themselves, instead of relying on images and video captured by conventional media, thereby expanding the narrative consumed by the general public and consequently the narrative most often archived. In some cases, social media conversations bring underreported social issues into greater public consciousness, such as police violence against African Americans.

Velte 2018, p. 113

This study shares these theoretical conclusions drawn by Velte and seeks to expand on the topic of activist social media archives. To summarise, the central theoretical assumptions of this study as inspired by Velte are those of the nature of social media and activist social media, the particular ethical ambiguities of the same phenomenon, and the shared characteristics of activist social media archives with that of archival activism and community archives. These concepts will guide the description and analysis of the results of this study.

3.2 Cook and Schwartz: Archives, records and power

Terry Cook tracked the history of archival practice and theory in his 1997 article “What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift”, studying the continuous changes in the profession during the past century and tying it to larger cultural, political, social, philosophical and technological changes. Focusing on arrangement and description practices and theory, Cook traced the influential ideas dating back to “The Dutch Manual”, to Sir Hilary Jenkinson’s “the archivist as guardian of evidence” (1997, p. 23), to T.R Schellengberg’s theories on the archival life-cycle, appraisal theory and primary and secondary value, and the issues of use-defined archives (*ibid.* p. 29) which was later challenged by the “macro” context of records: “a context-based, provenance-centred framework rather than in a content-based, historical-documentalist one” (*ibid.* p. 31) - which prevails to this day with the increasing focus on archives arranged by processes rather than subjects. Cook investigated the “rediscovery of provenance” (*ibid.* p. 35) with the rise of the electronic record. Lastly, he identified five “broad changes” during the last century that are used as basic theoretical approaches in this study. First of all, the purpose of the archive has changed from a “...juridical-administrative justification for archives grounded in concepts of the state, to a socio-cultural justification archives grounded in wider public policy and public use...” (*ibid.* p. 43). In short, Cook stressed the democratisation of the archive which is legitimised by its ability to both represent and serve “the people”. Secondly, practices regarding archives as evidentiary information has changed to become more pro-active by ensuring that “...records are initially created according to acceptable standards for evidence...” (*ibid.* p. 44). Thirdly, the focus on the archival record in context as opposed to the individual record itself (*ibid.* p. 45). Fourth, a postmodernist view of the archivist as subjective and partial, as opposed to Jenkinson’s

objective and impartial guardian. Rather, Cook regarded the archivist as an active participant in the creation of the archival narrative (*ibid.* p. 46). Lastly, archival theory as an evolving - not static - concept influenced by the changes of time (*ibid.*). These changes are collectively referred to as the archival “paradigm shift” (Cook 2001, p. 4). The role of postmodernism in archival science was later expanded on in “Archival science and postmodernism: new formulations for old concepts” (2001), in which Cook incorporated postmodernism in his theory on the archival paradigm shift.

One of Cook's central theories, however, concerned archives as places of power. The power of the archive stems from “the politics of archival memory”, referring to archives as frequent representatives or tools by a powerful elite and societal structures with interests in preserving some historical narratives while actively forgetting others. Cook described this historic role of archival institutions as “agents for legitimizing such power and for marginalizing those without power” (*ibid.* p. 18). With archives reflecting these social and political structures, Cook stressed the importance for archivists to study their own history in order to challenge these issues of inclusion and exclusion: “We need to understand better our own politics of memory, the very ideas and assumptions that have shaped us, if we want our ‘memory houses’ to reflect more accurately all components of the complex societies they allegedly serve.” (*ibid.* p. 19). Expanding on this idea, Cook together with Schwartz called for more accountable archivists in their 2002 article “Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory”. Here, they situated the archive within powerful structures and interests in society, describing archives as powerful institutions on multiple levels. The choices made during acquisition, appraisal, labelling and so on, reflect the power of the archive. Archives have power to represent, include, exclude, to remember and to forget. In short, “through archives, the past is controlled” (Cook & Schwartz 2002, p. 1). Through the use of a postmodernist perspective, archives hold power through its role in memory and identity formation (*ibid.* p. 2). Furthermore, archives play an important part in the “... administrative, legal, and fiscal accountability of governments, corporations, and individuals, and engage in powerful public policy debates around the right to know, freedom of information, protection of privacy, copyright and intellectual property, and protocols for electronic commerce” (*ibid.* p. 2). However, the power of the archive can also be used to challenge this. Cook and Schwartz acknowledged the dual nature of archives: “They can be a tool of hegemony; they can be a tool of resistance” (*ibid.* p. 13). As powerful institutions of memory and identity, archives can be used to include those who have previously excluded, and to remember those who have previously been forgotten. Furthermore, with the introduction of the electronic record, archivists must actively intervene in order to preserve “today's history” (*ibid.* p. 15), presenting both an opportunity to challenge the traditional role of the archive while also risking further exclusion. To conclude, Cook and Schwartz stress that being aware of the powerful nature of archives makes us able to hold both ourselves as archivists and the institutions we represent accountable.

3.3 Cook, Jimerson, Caswell et. al.: The Fourth Paradigm, archival social justice and community archives

As Cook and Schwartz (2002) pointed out, despite being powerful institutions, “archives contain more than the dominant, privileged views of the powerful...” (p. 14).

In 2013 Cook expanded on his research on the history of archival theory and practice, putting forward a theory of four phases or paradigms during the past 150 years, in which he described the role of archivist as transformed from “passive curator to active appraiser to societal mediator to community facilitator” (p. 95). The fourth and current paradigm, Cook explained, focuses on archives as places of identity and community, and is made possible through the reality of widespread technologies such as the Internet (*ibid.* p. 95, p. 113). Cook called for a new role for the archivist needed to facilitate this new archival order:

In this new digital, political, and pluralistic universe, professional archivists need to transform themselves from elite experts behind institutional walls to becoming mentors, facilitators, coaches, who work in the community to encourage archiving as a participatory process shared with many in society...

Cook 2013, p. 114

This changing role of archivists and archives can best be seen in work such as “Archives for All: Professional Responsibility and Social Justice” by Randall C. Jimerson (2007). Like Cook, Jimerson regarded archives as institutions of power. However, Jimerson argues that this power can and should be used to benefit all of society (p. 254). In fact, this amount of power carries an “obligation” to use it for “positive purposes”, mainly for accountability, individual rights and social justice (*ibid.* p. 254, p. 274). Jimerson’s central theory on the power of archives can be summed up in the classic catchphrase popularised by the Spider-Man comic books and movies: “With great power comes great responsibility”.

Combining the theories of both Cook and Jimerson, social justice, community archiving and digital technologies are seen as fundamental to contemporary archiving. As Velte (2018) theorised, activist/activist social media archives and community archives are similar in some aspects: “Activist archives share similarities with community archives: community groups create them, they are participatory in nature, and they intend to subvert dominant historical narratives” (p. 115). They also share similarities through facing many of the same ethical and legal considerations such as consent and ownership. Digital archives such as Occupy Archive and Documenting Ferguson combine aspects of both activist social media archives and community archives by collecting activist social media primarily through community members themselves who also own their own records (*ibid.* p. 112). Stevens, Flinn and Shepherd defined community archives as “...collections of material gathered primarily by members of a given community and over whose use community members exercise some level of control” (2010, p. 59). Caswell et. al. described community archives as spaces of “representational belonging” that are able to

...empower people who have been marginalized by mainstream media and memory institutions to have the autonomy and authority to establish, enact, and reflect on their presence in ways that are complex, meaningful, substantive, and positive to them in a variety of symbolic contexts.

Caswell et.al. 2018, p. 76

In a similar way, Velte described the empowering effects of social media by allowing activists to create and maintain their own records (2018, p. 112).

4. Methodology

This section presents the chosen research methods, method of analysis as well as ethical considerations made during the study. As the research questions concern decisions made during collection of and providing access to activist social media, the chosen method of qualitative, semi-structures interviews, the selection of informants, and the method of analysis are motivated based on this need to evaluate what and how decision are made.

4.1 Research methods

The chosen research method for this study consists of qualitative interviews. Interviews have been described as “ideally suited for experience-type research questions” (Braun and Clark 2013, p. 81) Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) state how the research topic decides the choice of research method (p. 142). Interviews are used in cases dealing with “human experiences” [this author’s translation] (*ibid.* p. 142). Interviews are also about exploration of a topic, rather than a hypothesis being tested (*ibid.* p. 211).

Interviews were chosen for this study due to a research question that focuses on the explorative *what reasons* and *why*, over quantitative measurable questions such as *how many*. Furthermore, the information needed to answer the research question is knowledge possessed by certain individuals: archivists and other professionals with experience of working with activist social media. Therefore, interviews with relevant individuals was the logical choice of research method for this study. Eriksson-Zetterqvist and Ahrne describe interviews as a researcher requesting information from an individual, which is collected through the interview (2015, p. 35).

Some authors, such as Mats Alvesson (2011), have criticised interviewing as research method. Alvesson questions interviewing as a way of mediating knowledge and interview material as a “given truth or insight mediation” [this author’s translation] (pp. 9-12). Furthermore, Alvesson is sceptical to what type of material interviews can result in, arguing that interviews are in fact very limited ways of gathering knowledge or understanding of a topic (*ibid.* p. 11). Others argue that an interview must be understood in a social and linguistic context, as a result of the moment the interview took place (Eriksson-Zetterqvist and Ahrne 2015, p. 35). Furthermore, during interviews, the interviewer “...plays an active role in the interview, co-constructing meaning with the participant” (Braun and Clark 2013, p. 79). Braun and Clark argue, however, that it is neither desirable nor possible to minimise this role (*ibid.*). Eriksson-Zetterqvist and Ahrne conclude that: “Interviews do not tell the full story, but - if correctly done - they can give important insights” [this author’s translation] (2015, p. 35).

As the research questions state, the purpose of this study is to research the archiving of activist social media. Particularly, the choices made regarding collection and access to this type of archival material. The study does not intend to present generalising results but rather to present a small number of case studies. Since the amount of informants is so low, it is difficult to generalise or compare results (Kvale and Brinkmann 2014, p.

156). At the same time, the fact that so few projects collecting activist social media exist makes some comparability possible. Brinkmann and Kvale argue that case studies often focus on specific individuals, situations or institutions (*ibid.* p. 160). In this study, each interview present a type of case study in the sense that the informants represent different projects and institutions.

Eriksson-Zetterqvist and Ahrne stress how the choice of selection criteria must be decided by the research question (2015, p. 39). Since the research question concerns archiving social media activism, selection of informants of the study were based on two principles. First of all, informants were selected on professional criteria. They needed to be archivists or other professionals working with archiving social media activism, in some aspect. Secondly, informants were selected based on what type of organisation or institutions they belonged to, in order to ensure a variety of informants from different archival initiatives. While the purpose of the study is not to create generalising or representative results on how archives work with activism on social media, having a variety of informants still offer some opportunities for comparison between individual cases, as above mentioned. Resources, experience and other opportunities may vary greatly between different archives and other institutions. Selection of informants for qualitative interviews should be as “wide as possible” [this author’s translation] (Dalen 2007, p. 51). There is no set amount of informants. Rather, the material should be enough to produce result and analysis (*ibid.* p. 54). Dalen also suggests that informants should “reflect the diversity of the original group” [this author’s translation] (*ibid.* p. 59).

Five informants representing five different activist social media archives projects were invited to participate in the study, whereof four informants accepted. Informants were found through a variety of methods. One was invited as a result of the author’s previous knowledge of the institution as well as the social media archiving project itself. Another was invited through personal connections. A third informant was found while researching archiving practices regarding a specific social media-born activist movement, while a fourth was found while researching archiving of online political movements more broadly.

The following institutions are included in the study:

- Municipality archive (public archive)
- Individual archivist collecting and depositing material to a private archive/community archive
- State agency with archival, library and museum functions (public archive)
- University department collecting and depositing material to a private archive

In this study, informants were invited to participate in via email communication. Each informant was offered to be interviewed in-person, over the phone or by using online synchronous interviewing through Skype. The multiple alternatives were necessary to ensure that distance, age and knowledge of technology would not pose an issue to participate. Offering multiple alternatives was also suitable with regards to the research question, which seeks specific information regarding a specific theme. Participants were located throughout the country as well as abroad, making telephone or Skype interviews preferable in some cases. One informant was interviewed in-person while the remaining informants were interviewed via Skype.

While in-person interviews are often perceived as the superior way of conducting interviews (Holt 2010, p. 113), telephone and online interviewing come with their own advantages as well as disadvantages (see: Holt 2010, Hanna 2012, Lechuga 2012). Choosing between in-person and telephone interviews depends on the type of interview to be carried out, the type of information sought, as well as economic and logistical constraints (Agar et.al. 2011, pp. 6-7). For example, in-person interviews may be preferable in situations where visual or vocal cues are important in order to understand or interpret the material (Lechuga 2012, p. 42). Telephone and online interviews may be more suitable for specific interview questions (Eriksson-Zetterqvist and Ahrne, p. 44; Agar et. al. 2011, pp. 47-48). Online synchronous interviewing has been described as “the most feasible alternative to face-to-face interviews”, as a combination of the benefits of face-to-face interviewing and the benefits of internet technologies by overcoming issues of distance and costs, while still providing some aspects of physical interaction (Hanna 2012, p. 241). Agar et. al. found that there is no conclusive evidence on whether telephone interviews get better or worse responses than in-person interviews (Agar et. al. 2011, p. 9). One criticism of telephone and online interviews is that the interviews are not “natural”, meaning that they do not mimic a natural conversation (*ibid.* p. 14). However, others argue that all interviews are “unnatural” conversations since they do, in fact, not mimic everyday conversation (Agar et.al. 2011, p.14). It is also reasonable to ask whether the interview is meant to mimic an everyday conversation in the first place.

The study used semi-structured interviews, which is described by Braun and Clark (2013) as a list of questions with scope for participants to raise their own issues (p. 78). Semi-structured interviews are useful for research questions concerning specific topics and should be used by researchers who are looking for a certain type of information (Tasker 2000, pp. 122-123). Semi-structured interviews also ensure that all relevant information is covered through the use of an interview guide (*ibid.*). Furthermore, any type of structured interview helps standardise responses and makes processing easier by asking all respondents the same questions (Bryman 2012, pp. 209-210). The questions asked during the interview were so-called “informant factual questions” in which participants took the position of *informants* as compared to questions seeking personal information (*ibid.* p. 253). The questions were also open, meaning there were no alternatives to pick from or multiple choice questions. See Appendix A for the interview guide.

4.2 Analysis

Data analysis of the transcribed interviews was based on the method that Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2013) call “thematic analysis”. Thematic analysis is “A method for identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to a research question” (Braun & Clarke 2013, p. 175). This was done through the use of data coding. Data coding can be divided into selective (the identification of specific instances of the relevant phenomenon) or complete analysis (coding all relevant data) (*ibid.* p. 206). Broader patterns or themes are identified out of codes, which capture one idea, while a theme has a “central organising concept” (*ibid.* p. 224). Monica Dalen (2007) describes this categorisation as a process which leads to generalisation or

theorising (p. 75). The first step is “open coding” which the “main purpose to identify concepts that can be included into categories” [this author’s translation] (*ibid.* p. 79). Secondly, core categories are formed to analyse connections between the concepts (*ibid.*). Lastly, selective coding is used to develop theories to explain phenomena (*ibid.*).

For this study, complete analysis was applied to the data. The data analysis was further based on the steps used by Ashlyn Velte (2018) which, like this study, analyses challenges and practices for activist social media archives. The steps used by Velte were listed as: prepare the data, define the unit of analysis, develop categories and a coding scheme, test coding scheme, code all the text, assess coding consistency, draw conclusions from the coded data, and report methods and findings (p. 118). The coding scheme was developed out of the interview guide which was divided into five themes and categories: organisation, work flows, cooperation and implementation, collection, preservation and selection, and access. Each theme was further sub-grouped into common topics found across the interviews such as security, privacy, copyright and so on. A miscellaneous category included findings that were not covered by the broader themes. This category also made sure to include unique findings specific to one or two archives, as the purpose of the study is not to simply find what is common across all represented archives but also to include potential differences. As Jens Rennstam and David Wästerfors notes, coding identifies patterns can also be used to identify that which is abnormal (2015, p. 224).

4.3 Ethical considerations

This study has been carried out with careful consideration of the recommendations by the Swedish Research Council regarding research in humanities and social sciences (2002). The Swedish Research Council identify four principles for ethical research. These include providing information on the purpose of the research, informed consent, confidentiality and research use. In short, the principles stress the need for actively collecting consent from and informing all participants of the purpose and their role in the study, to ensure their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences, the participants’ right to privacy, as well as ensuring that the research and all related research material is not used for purposes other than the study itself (pp. 6-14). Mark Israel (2015) defines informed consent based on two requirements: participants need to both comprehend and agree to partake in the study (p. 79). This means informing participants “...about the purpose, methods, demands, risks, inconveniences, discomforts and possible outcomes of the research...” (*ibid.* p. 80). In this study, participants were informed during first email contact with an attached document further describing the study. This document included consent forms. Participants were also invited to ask further questions about the study both via email and before going through with the interview. Consent was collected either through the forms or orally during the interview, where they were recorded. For an unsigned consent form with information in Swedish, see Appendix B.

While the topic of the study concerns collection and access of material that may include marginalised and otherwise vulnerable groups, participating in the study was deemed to pose little or no risk to the informants. Many ethical considerations concern

autonomy and privacy. However, the information disclosed in this study was largely not of a personal nature. Rather, the interviews were carried out in an “ethnographic interviewing context” [this author’s translation] in which the person interviewed becomes an *informant* - an expert in their field (Kvale and Brinkmann 2014, p. 129). Braun and Clark point out the potential researcher-participant hierarchy when using interviewing as a research method (pp. 88-89, 2013). Interviews have an “exploitative potential” (*ibid.*). However, a number of factors may influence this hierarchical relationship. In the case of this study, the informant possesses the role of an expert while the author as researcher takes on a more passive role during the interview. In this context, the information disclosed by the informant is based on facts rather than personal experiences, and is “more descriptive than emotional” [this author’s translation] (Kvale and Brinkmann 2014, p. 129). The informants disclosed information from an official, professional stance as representatives of a certain project and/or institution.

All participants were offered anonymising or de-identifying measures in accordance with what Göran Hermerén calls “the anonymity rule” [this author’s translation] (1992, p. 185). In his book on research ethics and principles in humanities and social sciences, Hermerén states that research should strive to make it difficult or even impossible to identify individual people in a study (*ibid.*). An exception to this rule is if the researcher and the participant have agreed to something else (*ibid.*). This means that anonymity is the principal rule in research. The Swedish Research Council echoes this sentiment, stressing the need for researchers to make it particularly difficult to identify marginalised, vulnerable or recognisable individuals or groups (2002, pp. 12-13). These cases often concern personal or private information and follow principles of confidentiality and autonomy. The assumption is that identification can have potential negative consequences for the people involved, which needs to be weigh against “the worth of the expected knowledge to be gained...” [this author’s translation] (*ibid.*) Another reason for anonymising participants is to focus less on specific cases and instead highlight generalisations. However, this study investigates specific projects rather than general practices.

While no particular risks were found regarding partaking in this study, de-identifying measures were offered to erase both the participants’ names and some organisational information such as name and geographical location. Simply removing a participant’s name would not ensure anonymity, as other data could easily reveal their identity. One problem is the topic of the study. There is not a lot of institutions, archivists or other professionals in Sweden who collect and work with this type of material, making the participants particularly exposed. Furthermore, while some of the participating organisations may employ many people, there is usually not a lot of archivists employed in each place. Therefore, both names and organisational information were offered to be de-identified. Complete anonymity was, however, not possible. Some personal information such as job title and duties was necessary for the study, as well as some organisational information for comparative purposes. Anonymity or de-identification of organisational information was offered rather than assumed and pre-decided by the author. While a limited number of individuals work with this type of archival material, it is important to bear in mind that this may not mean that anonymity is wished by the participants. Rather, it could be a reason to participate with full name as someone representing a unique project. It was not assumed that participants want to

“hide” their work through anonymising and de-identifying measures. Participants were informed of anonymising and de-identifying measurers prior to the interview and asked whether they want to make use of these measures at the start of the interview. Out of the four informants, none wished for de-identifying measures of their organisational information. However, all informants have been de-identified by name in order to ensure some level of anonymity, despite the fact that full anonymity or de-identification is not possible in this case.

All interviews were transcribed and recorded with the consent of the informants. The purpose of transcription and recording was explained at the start of the interview. Interviews were done in Swedish and all quotes have been translated from Swedish to English by the author. Since English is not the mother tongue of the author, translation difficulties and errors may occur. All informants were informed and agreed to having their interviews translated prior to partaking in the study.

5. Results and analysis

5.1 Presentation of informants

Below is a presentation of each informant interviewed for the study including information on their respective projects related to activist social media archives. The presentation provides necessary explanations of each informant and their projects, as well as vital background information on the projects gained from the interviews in order to understand the results and analysis.

5.1.1 Interviewee 1, Musikverket

The first informant is an archivist at Musikverket (English: *Swedish Performing Arts Agency*). Musikverket is a government agency run by the Ministry of Culture with various functions including handing out grants for music projects, a studio for electroacoustic music and sound-art, as well as museum, library and archives functions. The aims and purpose of the agency is summed up as: “Musikverket preserves, promotes, makes available, and brings to life the cultural heritage of theatre, dance and music” [this author’s translation] (Musikverket n.d., a). Interviewee 1 works within the agency’s various collections with a focus on music collections.

The activist social media archives project undertaken by Musikverket concerns online social justice movement #MeToo against sexual harassment and sexual assault, popularised on Twitter in autumn 2017. The Twitter hashtag encouraged people to raise awareness on the issue with millions posting the hashtag and thousands of people sharing their stories of experiences of sexual harassment or sexual abuse (Camille 2018, p. 322). #MeToo was quickly divided into sub-hashtags often specific to certain professions or areas in society such as the music industry and academia. The hashtag spread beyond Twitter and was used on other social media platforms such as Facebook. In Sweden, the spread of #MeToo has been credited government policy changes on sexual assault such as the 2018 implementation of explicit consent necessary for sex not to be deemed as illegal assault (Sima 2018).

Musikverket started its #MeToo project during autumn 2017 shortly after the breakthrough of the movement with the purpose of collecting relevant data on music and theatre in Sweden. The project was motivated using the aims and purpose of the agency which establishes Musikverket’s dedication to preservation and providing accessibility to this type of cultural heritage. Interviewee 1 further explained how Musikverket is dedicated to prioritising women in music and theatre as current collections primarily are dominated by men, while the goal of the agency is to represent all of Sweden’s music- and theatre history. This can be further illustrated by Musikverket’s Equality Support project, which commissioned SEK 8 000 000 between the years 2011-2014 to projects “working to increase gender equality in the field of music” (Musikverket, n.d., b) The idea for the #MeToo project was put forward by a

communicator within the agency and accepted among the Collections group as well as management, the highest internal leadership. The project is ongoing and more material is planned on being collected.

The project consisted of representatives from Musikverket and a number of contacts representing social media #MeToo-groups from the music- and theatre industries, including #tystnadtagning, #MeTooBackstage, #Skrattetihalsen, #Närmusikentystnar, #Visjungerut, #Killtheking, and #Theshowisover. Some of the contacts were already known to Musikverket while others had to be invited. The details of the project were decided during meetings with the various groups. Participants of the project from Musikverket included two archivists: Interviewee 1, representing the music collections, as well as the archivist responsible for the theatre collections. The archivists offered “expertise support”, archival competence and helped with any legal questions. The communicator who presented the idea also participated in the project as a fixed contact with the #MeToo-groups.

Due to the purpose of Musikverket, archival collection projects are not unfamiliar to the agency. Musikverket and its predecessors has completed many collection projects during several decades in order to preserve material or traditions at risk of disappearing completely.

5.1.2 Interviewee 2, The Archives and Library of the Queer Movement

The second informant, Interviewee 2, is an individual archivist completing a one-person project to, upon finalisation, be handed over to the Swedish Archives and Library of the Queer Movement (in Swedish: *Queerrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek - QRAB*). QRAB “collects, organizes, preserves and makes accessible documentation and information related to queer movements and people” (QRAB n.d.). QRAB further explains their dedication to making their archives accessible on their website: “By making these stories available to activist, academics, and the general public we wish to further an understanding of history that can inspire to a continued struggle for everybody's rights and full freedom” (QRAB n.d.) While Interviewee 2 is not a representative for QRAB yet QRAB are a part of the project and will be responsible for issues surrounding access once handed over by Interviewee 2. QRAB is not, however, involved in the collection process.

The activist social media archive project undertaken by Interviewee 2 concerns Pride 2018. Pride parades or Pride festivals are arranged across the world every year, often in June and focuses on lesbian, gay, trans, bi and queer (LGBTQ) rights. Pride has many purposes such as celebrating LGBTQ experiences or pride, raising awareness, protesting discrimination, as well as a social gathering. The Pride 2018 archiving project is completely run by Interviewee 2 who is responsible for all aspects until hand-over. The idea for the project came after a discussion with friends on collecting material related to queer existence during the summer of 2018. The project's focus extended beyond Pride and allowed for other material related to queer existence. The archivist explained the motivation of the project as a concern for the preservation of queer history:

If we love these flyers from these clubs, or if we are super happy over these letters preserved from long ago... They are tangible things /.../ How are we then supposed to deal with the fact that very much of today's history is digital? And it is stored on platforms that are commercial where we have no guarantee that the stuff will remain /.../ The modern counterpart to these old things, the pins or the flyers, it is perhaps an event on Facebook.

Interview with Interviewee 2 2019-03-04

This led Interviewee 2 to collect digital media through social media in a type of Pride 2018 “time capsule”. People were invited to hand in their material to Interviewee 2 via a Facebook event explaining the project with a link to the personal email of Interviewee 2. Interviewee 2 further explained that the idea for the project was very spontaneous without big or specific goals and that, while the project is serious, it was more of a first attempt at this type of collecting:

Sometimes you have to think that you just need to try it out /.../ This was a fun thing that I will gladly do again, but I think that the greatest benefit, or what I am most happy about is that hopefully I have made some people realise that file format is really important, or something /.../ Just that people realise that it is history that is being created now and that it needs to be preserved...

Interview with Interviewee 2 2019-03-04

Participating in the project is Interviewee 2, QRAB and a number of people who decided to hand in their material. Interviewee 2 has previous experiences of working with queer archives and theories on queer archiving, as well as archival activism which were used when planning and executing the project. This type of project, however, was a first attempt as explained by Interviewee 2.

5.1.3 Interviewee 3, Malmö City Archives

The third informant is an archivist and the Head of Unit for Supervision and Care at Malmö City Archives. Malmö City Archives is the municipality archive of the city of Malmö. The archive is a part of the local cultural committee (Swedish: *kulturnämnden*) with the town council acting as the unit ultimately responsible for the archive. As a municipality archive, Malmö City Archives collect both public and private records from Malmö. The aims and purpose of the archives is to “...make sure the shared cultural heritage is preserved and that it is accessible to the public” [this author’s translation] (Malmö Stad, n.d.). Furthermore, Interviewee 3 explained that Malmö City Archives are involved with human rights, the right to culture, freedom of speech and democracy as part of a larger commitment made by the city council.

The activist social media archive project undertaken by Malmö City Archives concerns the refugee reception the city experienced during the autumn of 2015. During this time, Sweden received over 300 000 refugees, many who arrived via Malmö (Interview with Interviewee 3 2019-03-05). Many municipal employees dropped their normal duties to assist with the reception. According Interviewee 3, this had a big impact on Malmö. The Malmö City Archives were quick to respond to the events, with one archivist gathering testimonials and stories which resulted in a book called *Ankomst Malmö* documenting the experiences of the various people involved in the reception work. After being contacted by a colleague at Lund University who put forward the idea of collecting social media related to the reception, Interviewee 3 and Malmö City Archives decided to collect social media with the purpose of exploring how the issue

of refugee reception was presented in social media and what people were thinking about it as part of a larger national debate on the issue.

The project was led by Interviewee 3 with the role of project leader together with three students of archival science doing an internship at Malmö City Archives during November 2015. The legal representative of Malmö City aided the project in legal matters. While the idea for the project was external, the project mainly remains within Malmö City Archives without external partners. The project is part of a larger collection of refugee reception memories, where other organisations and institutions have collected other related information. For Malmö City Archives, the purpose of the project was to collect information that can be archived permanently in one place which can later be used for future research. Interviewee 3 described the project, which mainly focused on November 2015, as a sort of time capsule. The project was motivated using the aims and purpose of Malmö City Archives as a municipality archive with the function of collecting records related to Malmö. The project is ongoing. Malmö City Archives' focus on the 2015 refugee reception is both public and well-known, not least because of the publication of the book *Ankomst Malmö* which has been promoted at events. Malmö City Archives also arranged a symposium during the autumn of 2018 called *Refugee Rights in Records* which discussed various aspects of collecting refugee records.

Interviewee 3 and Malmö City Archives had not attempted any similar projects of collecting social media but took inspiration from a project in Norway. Legal considerations were handled together with the legal representative.

5.1.4 Interviewee 4, Department of Government, Uppsala University

The last informant is a lecturer and researcher in political science at the Department of Government, Uppsala University. As a university department, the Department of Government has two main functions: research and teaching.

The activist social media archives project undertaken by Interviewee 4 together with a colleague concerns the online presence of trade unions. The project, named *DigiFacket*, archives the websites and social media feeds of over 50 Swedish trade unions. The idea is to archive “everything that Swedish trade unions leave behind on the internet” in a type of database (Interview with Interviewee 4 2019-03-08). The project was started by Interviewee 4 together with a colleague who had earlier worked together on a database project collecting information on political protests where they discovered a lack of records starting in the 1990s and onward. On the project website the purpose of creating the database is further explained:

But the era of digitalisation poses a threat to such research because there is no guarantee that today's discussions in Facebook groups, messages published on websites, blogs or tweets from the movements are preserved in the way documents from the early 1900s are preserved. Only a fraction of the material produced online is archived today. The amount of material submitted by the organisations for archiving has also since the 1990s decreased in pace with the digitisation and the documents that are archived tend to contain little information compared to older material.

Statsvetenskapliga Institutionen, Uppsala Universitet, n.d. [this author's translation]

This discovery lead to the conclusion that there is a need to archive digital records for future research before they are lost. Interviewee 4 explained that the project was started to ensure future research on trade unions is possible, rather than motivated by solving the question of archiving digital data. The project started in January 2015 and is ongoing.

Participating in the project is Interviewee 4 as project leader, a colleague at the Department of Government as well as a programmer. The trade unions themselves and their archives are also participants. While the database is created by Interviewee 4 and their team, the idea is to eventually hand it over to the two archives that represent Sweden's trade unions: Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek (ARAB, in English: *Swedish Labour Movement's Archives and Library*) and Tjänstemäns och Akademikers Arkiv (TAM, the archives of the white-collar and professional workers' national unions). The project is public and well-known with both lectures and publications being produced on the topic.

Interviewee 4 and their team had not attempted any similar projects of collecting websites and social media. With the help of a programmer they researched the possibilities of this kind of project. They were inspired by the web archive of the Danish Royal Library: Netarchive (Danish: *Netarkivet*). The Danish Royal Library produced an open source software for web archiving used by Interviewee 4 together with a number of publications on the topic.

5.2 Findings and discussion

Below is a presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings from the interviews with the informants. The findings have been divided into two main categories: the collection process and the providing access process. Both are divided into a number of further sub-categories that represent common themes across all interviews. A further section is devoted to other themes, issues or questions raised by the different informants that do not fit into the two main categories.

5.2.1 Collecting activist social media archives

According to Luciana Duranti and Patricia C. Franks (2015) acquisition - or collection - is one of several core archival functions: appraisal and acquisition, arrangement and description, retention and preservation, management and administration, and reference and access. Furthermore, research is described as "the foundation of each archival activity" (p. 167). For archivists, collection is a process entangled with legal and ethical considerations whether dealing with analogue or digital material. Particularly, personal and sensitive information, copyright issues, and consent are permanent issues. Collecting processes vary greatly depending on archive. Public archives in Sweden consist of the public records received from local, regional or state agencies. Donations of collections is another common form of acquisition for both public and private archives. However, cultural heritage institutions including archives are today developing the idea of active collection efforts rather than waiting to receive records (Millar 2010, p. 119).

Among the informants, four common themes and difficulties were discovered: appraisal or what to include and exclude in a collection, ownership issues such as copyright, consent and permission-seeking from the people creating the records, and privacy concerns and solutions such as anonymising and de-identifying individuals in records.

5.2.1.1 Appraisal and selection

The process of assessing archival value for potential preservation – appraisal – is central to theories on archival power. The selection of one record over another remains one of the most obvious exercises of archival power of remembering and forgetting our shared history as explained by Cook (2001, p. 18). However, what is included in or excluded from an archival collection is determined by a range of ethical, legal, and technical factors.

In this study, each informant has made a decision on what material to preserve in terms of selecting a defined area for collection. The collection process for each project is as follows:

Musikverket receive³ its material directly from the #MeToo-groups they have been in touch with. As mentioned, a number of groups related to the music and theatre industries have been requested to participate, which forms the basis of the selection criteria for the project. In addition, the participants decide what is to be included and compiles this among themselves before handing over the material to the archive. Interviewee 1 admitted to not knowing exactly what this process looks like, as this is a process that Musikverket is not involved in. However, they stated that it most likely takes place within closed Facebook groups. Musikverket has accepted all material for which they have received a signed consent form for archiving. The material consists of written stories and related material.

Pride 2018 collected material via email, linked from an event on Facebook. The selection criteria defined that the creators of the material must identify as queer. The material should be digital and relate to “queer existence”. It does not have to be related to Pride, neither does it have to be new material. The material consists of Facebook events, Facebook posts, and pictures among other things.

Malmö City Archives collected their material on the refugee reception based on chosen organisations and hashtags related to the topic. The choices were made by those involved in the project based on their own knowledge of the topic.

The selection is actually very subjective /.../ We have included information from different web pages, Facebook pages and from places where we have had previous knowledge of the existence of some sort of discussion on this [the refugee reception]. So it is possible we have missed a lot...

Interview with Interviewee 3 2019-03-05

³ Musikverket is still awaiting material and the idea is to keep collecting.

The material includes Facebook posts with user comments, Instagram posts, hashtag-specific posts, as well as other web material such as posts on forums and articles with user comments.

DigiFacket collects⁴ material from a number of trade unions that agreed to participate in the project, which form the basis of the selection criteria. The trade unions belong to the two major trade unions umbrella organisations LO and TAM. In terms of collecting social media, this process is left to the trade unions themselves due to legal concerns. Each trade union is encouraged to download their own social media presence using the tools provided by each social media platform (primarily Twitter and Facebook). These are then handed over to Interviewee 4 and their team. The material includes tweets, Facebook posts, images, videos and text posted on social media, not including comments made by other users. Due to technical difficulties, all material that Interviewee 4 planned on including will not be a part of the database. Specifically trade union presence and activity on Instagram was scrapped from the project.

All informants in the study motivated their projects to some extent on the basis of preventing future loss of material and to fill gaps in archival collections. While DigiFacket and Pride 2018 were concerned with the “digital Dark Age” and the nature of commercial platforms not being able to ensure preservation (see chapter 5.2.1.2). Musikverket made use of their internal goals on better gender representation to carry out their project. Malmö City Archives aimed to capture a broad range of voices on a topic which may otherwise have been lost. Velte’s study, too, found the participating informants to be concerned with “creating or filling gaps in the historical record” (2018, p. 126). For example, one of Velte’s informants motivated their initiative on the basis of diversifying collections and fill gaps (*ibid.* p. 121). These concerns are also voiced by Documenting Ferguson “... Documenting Ferguson has the ultimate goal of providing diverse perspectives of the events surrounding the conflicts in Ferguson” (Documenting Ferguson n.d.) and Preserve the Baltimore Uprising 2015 Archive Project:

It is crucial to gather and preserve as many perspectives and experiences of protest and unrest as possible. Too often, history is shaped by official accounts. When the history of the Baltimore Uprising of 2015 is written, we want to make sure it can include voices from the streets as well as voices from the halls of government.

Preserve the Baltimore Uprising 2015 Archive Project (n.d., a)

These attempts exemplify the theories and practices of archival activism which often seeks to improve the representation of previously under-represented groups and to fill historical gaps motivated by a social justice stance or the archival responsibility promoted by Jimerson (2007).

While appraisal and selection primarily constitutes an ethical challenge, centering on questions of representation, diversity and future use, a further challenge arose for the three informants basing their collection process on voluntary submission. For archivists wishing to preserve a phenomena through voluntary submission of material, selection naturally occurs on the basis of who agrees to share their material. Musikverket, Pride

⁴ DigiFacket still collects material and will continue to collect as the database is handed over to the archival institutions.

2018 and DigiFacket all based their projects on voluntary submission of material. While none of the informants experienced difficulties when attempting to find people, groups or organisations willing to participate in the project, they were aware of the potential limitations of voluntary contributions. Interviewee 2, for the Pride 2018, project explained their expectations for the amount of people participating in the project and the reasons why people may not want to participate:

One may think that one's contribution is not interesting. One may have privacy concerns regarding 'should I really share this material with someone I do not know?'. That is completely understandable. And, also, maybe people just don't have the energy. I was prepared for this. So I did not receive a million records.

Interview with Interviewee 2 2019-03-04

The challenge of making people recognise the value of their material and contribution was raised by Besser et. al. (2014) regarding digital community archive Documenting Ferguson. This can be illustrated by a study by Atiso and Freeland (2016) which found that the main barrier to using the Documenting Ferguson archive is "lack of awareness" (p. 19). In other words, many people who may want to contribute do not know that the archive exists. On the other hand, reasons to actively contribute also impacts selection and what material is included. The same study by Atiso and Freeland found that the main reason for participating in Documenting Ferguson was social justice driven (*ibid.*).

Besser (2012) further found that some communities, such as the activists of the Occupy Movement, distrust institutions and organisations such as archives, which makes it difficult for archivists to get active contributions (p. 3). This sentiment is shared by Flinn (2007) who stated that community archives often distrust heritage professionals (p. 163). This distrust is possibly a result of privacy concerns and fear of surveillance that may be more prevalent among marginalised groups (see chapter 5.2.3.1) which, in turn, impacts what material is included and excluded. Another issue raised by informants in this study is that of resources, specifically time. Voluntary contributions may be difficult as participants have to actively spend time on making their submissions. For example, the projects on "#MeToo and Pride 2018 are both based on participants spending their free-time on the project. Interviewee 1 explained that "A big challenge for both us [Musikverket] and for the groups is to find time for this work. When there is no structured financing, this process is much slower" (Interview with Interviewee 1 2019-02-28). This is further illustrated by the fact that several of these projects are still awaiting contributions from participating groups or organisations.

Despite these difficulties, the projects based on voluntary submissions and contributions have accepted all material they have received. Musikverket, although Interviewee 1 emphasised that they wish to receive material with no restrictions on future public access, has been open to accepting material with those kinds of restrictions if requested by the creators of the material. Pride 2018, too, focused less on format and metadata, and focused more on the importance of preservation. Interviewee 2 explained that the project specifically aimed to have a low threshold for participation. Both of these projects illustrate how it was more important to preserve this information than to ensure technical standards or complete access. In fact, all informants pointed out their goal to preserve a phenomena rather than the actual content of the records. Three out of four informants explicitly mentioned how they neither judge nor appraise

the value of their collections. Malmö City Archives based their project on the specific goal of gathering as many perspectives as possible on a single issue, motivated by their organisational aims and purposes of preserving the history and records of Malmö. All informants were open about any potential limitations in their collections, stating that they are not representative but rather subjective. This echoes the theories of Cook's (1997) fourth paradigm and the archivist as a subjective and active participant in the creation of archival collections and, in turn, narratives (p. 46).

To conclude, the content of the collections included in this study has been limited by archival subjectivity, project delimitations, as well as legal and technical concerns or difficulties. Furthermore, the majority of informants are basing their projects on voluntary contributions where appraisal and selection is not necessarily an active choice on their behalf, but rather a result of what material is contributed and the unavoidable gaps that occur with voluntary submissions. As appraisal and selection is intertwined with archival power, these questions are of an ethical nature.

5.2.1.2 Copyright and Terms of Service

When collecting social media, archivists are faced with the challenge of social media platforms varying and extensive terms of service. As both Sara Day Thomson (2016) and Ashlyn Velte (2018) point out, commercial platforms social media sites are primarily concerned with profit from the selling of user data (Day Thomson 2016, p. 15; Velte 2018, p. 115). This makes social media platforms prone to controlling how data can be collected and shared among third parties such as archives (*ibid.*). Restrictions in collection through APIs, for example how often data can be collected, are common (Day Thomson 2016, p. 15). North Carolina State University Libraries' Social Media Archives Toolkit noted how archivists face additional difficulties with consent and social media platforms terms of service, as users may sign over the rights to their data to the platform itself, causing a dilemma regarding who to request consent for collection from (North Carolina State University Libraries 2015). Furthermore, as each terms of service is unique to each platform, archives have difficulty applying consistent collecting and access policies across platforms (Velte 2018, p. 115).

Commercial interests and archival interests of preservation and access are, in this case, in conflict. Half of the informants in this study raised the issue of collecting data from social media as *commercial* platforms. This may serve as a motivation for the collecting of social media, as in the case with Interviewee 2 working on the Pride 2018 who states that while much queer history today is being made online on social media, there is no guarantee commercial platforms will preserve this information. This view is shared by Interviewee 4 and DigiFacket: "Social media are American companies, there is nothing to guarantee you can access this information in the future. It is completely in the hands of big companies" (Interview with Interviewee 4 2019-03-08). Due to the nature of commercial platforms and their volatile nature, a concern shared by Velte among others, DigiFacket makes use of open source software for collection and archiving. Open source software has also been used by activist social media archives such as Documenting Ferguson, Preserve the Baltimore Uprising 2015 Archive Project and Occupy Archive, who are all using the open source web publishing platform Omeka. Not only does this ensure some independence and control over the data, free open source software also offers opportunities for further inclusion and democratisation of

the archive as proposed by Schwenk (2011, p. 54). In addition, Interviewee 4 and a colleague stressed the existence of an open software development community aiding long-term preservation of their project (Jansson & Uba 2018, p. 14). All of this makes open source software a popular tool among digital archives, including digital community archives.

One way of overcoming the issues with collecting directly from the social media platform, which often imposes certain limitations on how the information can be used and when it can be collected, is to ask individuals to hand in their material directly to the archive. Three informants chose different ways of doing this.

DigiFacket, who collected data from Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, was the only informant to explicitly mention the issues of using APIs. When asked what challenges they faced during collection, Interviewee 4 explained that they opted for the trade unions to download their own social media feeds as the most sustainable solution both in terms of technical maintenance and legal restrictions:

The question of copyright was complex. Partly due to images, but also: who has copyright on a Facebook feed? There is a difference between Facebook and Twitter here. Twitter is more like ‘Come and collect our data, we don’t care’, while Facebook do everything they can to stop collection of their data. So our solution was to ask the organisations to download [the data] themselves. Even if Twitter allows for APIs to do it for you, or the use of APIs provided for external download, we do not believe it is a sustainable solution for the archives who possess very little knowledge of programming since it [the APIs] change so often. Asking the organisations to download och hand it in is a more sustainable solution. And there is no legal doubt with this, when the organisations themselves download it and hand it in to the archive they own. It is their own data. And that is something Facebook cannot argue against.

Interview with Interviewee 4 2019-03-08

Here, Interviewee 4 mentioned an additional issue with copyright: that of images. As DigiFacket aims to collect the online presence of Swedish trade unions, Interviewee 4 and their team were hoping to collect data from Instagram. However, they decided to give up on Instagram partly due to the copyright issues with using images. This mainly affects the question of access, as Interviewee 4 rhetorically asked whether displaying an image collected from social media in an archive counts as republishing, and therefore is in violation of copyright law. It may be the case that images will have to be blocked upon providing access, depending on what conclusion is reached between the ARAB and TAM archives together with their legal help.

For the Pride 2018 project, copyright of the information is still in the hands of the creators of the data. When collecting through voluntary contribution via email, the name of the person holding legal rights over the material was asked for. Interviewee 2 explained that copyright has caused no issue for collection. This type of solution is common among community archives and similar archiving methods, where intellectual ownership of a collection remains within the community (Flinn 2011). Other archives choose to use public copyright licenses such as Creative Commons (CC) where the creators of the data agree to hand over some rights for public use. Submissions to A People’s Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland are covered by such a Creative Commons license for public use, granting limited rights of use (A People’s Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland 2019b). However, contributors still retain ownership and Copyright of their material (*ibid.*). Preserve the Baltimore Uprising 2015 Archive

Project grant a license which ensure the Maryland Historical Society who are responsible for the project have the right to preserve, reproduce, distribute, modify and reformat contributions for “perceptibility and usefulness” as well as “educational, research, and promotional purposes” (Preserve the Baltimore Uprising, n.d., b). Occupy Archive, too, determines their right of use all contributions in there submission terms of service: “Your submission of material constitutes your permission for, and consent to, its dissemination and use in connection with the Occupy Archive in all media in perpetuity” (Occupy Archive, n.d., b).

In the case of the #MeToo project, Musikverket chose to have participants sign a contract which waives their legal rights and hands over right to use and distribution to the archive. This type of Creative Commons license, called the CC0, places content completely within the public domain is frequently used for Musikverket’s collections explained Interviewee 1. This frees the material of any legal restrictions and ensures that Musikverket can freely use the material in exhibitions and other public activity, including providing access to the public in accordance with their purpose and mission as a public archive. At the same time, Interviewee 1 explained that flexibility in terms of copyright becomes increasingly important for archives dealing with digital material. Offering limited Creative Commons licenses may be a way to balance a desire for copyright with an archival desire for use and access.

5.2.1.3 Consent and permission-seeking

Acquiring consent and permission for collection of material for archival purposes constitutes both an ethical and a legal issue. Decisions on permission-seeking tend to centre on potential privacy or security concerns on behalf of the creators of the data (see chapter 5.2.3.1). These overlap with legal concerns which may include the use of personal information and questions on copyright as illustrated in the previous chapter. Consent and permission-seeking can be further tied to concerns of misuse of archived information, such as the Documenting the Now project which raised the issue of collection causing harm to the subjects of the material (Peet 2016) (see chapter 5.2.3.1). Even if archives and other institutions may be legally allowed to collect activist social media, should they? As Velte (2018) noted, web archives, and social media archives in particular, vary greatly in permission-seeking policies (p. 114). A survey by the National Digital Stewardship Alliance showed how some institutions always seek permission for web harvesting, while others never seek permission (*ibid.*). Velte concludes that “...it remains unclear if collecting institutions have an ethical responsibility to seek consent for data sets where privacy issues may arise” (*ibid.* p. 121). This suggests permission-seeking policies tend to be highly individual to the collecting institution.

Three out of four informants in this study sought consent and permission from the creators of the collected material. Musikverket and DigiFacket both had regular meetings with the creators in order to organise the project together with the creators themselves. Pride 2018’s relationship to the creators was based on a Facebook invitation as well as email contact. Malmö City Archives is the only informant without a direct relationship to the creators of the collected material. The different methods were primarily motivated by the respective aims and purpose of the projects and institutions or organisations. Furthermore, legal aspects constituted a main motivator for the informants various decisions. Malmö City Archives did not seek permission

since much of the material is already open and accessible online and is posted by public persons or organisations who are open with their views and stand for their opinions, explained Interviewee 3. Furthermore, Malmö City Archives has a responsibility and a duty to collect the cultural heritage of Malmö, as is described in their internal mission. However, Malmö City Archives did discuss legal concerns regarding consent and permission-seeking with a legal representative before starting the collection process where they agreed on this. Additionally, consent is likely to be collected for legal reasons if the material is made accessible.

So we checked the legal aspects, a bit. But this is all relatively new /.../ But this is more important if we make copies and send it [the information] elsewhere. Then we need consent. But as long as it stays here with us, we have a right and a duty to watch the cultural heritage, the written cultural heritage of Malmö.

Interview with Interviewee 3 2019-03-05

Pride 2018 did not actively seek out and contact people regarding participation. Those who wanted to contribute handed in their material via email, which can be described as the consent and permission-seeking process. Privacy laws such as GDPR played a part as contributors were asked to provide information on ownership/copyright and, if other people featured in the material, asked for their consent and contact information as well. Ethically, consent was important to the project as it features people of a marginalised group who may not want to be a part of an archival collection for various reasons, including privacy or security concerns (see chapter 5.2.3.1).

Two informants, Musikverket and DigiFacket, required signed consent for collecting the material. This was due to both ethical and legal reasons. For example, DigiFacket chose to collect signed consent where the creators themselves collected and handed over their material due to copyright and social media platform terms of service limitations. A signed contract is a legal document which protects the institution against potential legal complications. At the same time, Interviewee 4 emphasised the importance of permission-seeking and consent from a more ethical standpoint, where the trade unions retaining ownership of their own information, a viewpoint also shared by the Pride 2018 project. This practice is more in line with that of community archives or archival activism, which both tend to include the creators of the material and let them retain some level of control over their own information (see: Stevens, Flinn and Shepherd 2010, p. 59).

To conclude, practices on consent and permission-seeking for collecting material for activist social media archives vary. The different methods can be explained by different interpretations of ethical and legal considerations, as well as the aims and purposes of the collecting institution and their project. Consent and permission-seeking practices are of both an ethical and legal nature. The interviewed informants primarily emphasised legal aspects motivated by underlying ethical concerns.

5.2.1.4 Anonymising and de-identifying subjects

Anonymisation or de-identification is the process of removing identifiers of a personal nature, such as names or geographical locations. It protects the privacy of individuals featured in archival collections through confidentiality. The use of personal information is regulated primarily through laws such as Offentlighets- och Sekretesslagen (English: *Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act*). Swedish

public archives abide by legal regulations on personal information in OSL which states what information should be restricted by secrecy legislation. In addition, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) recommends some level of anonymisation for personal data. For archives, these regulations mainly impact the process of providing access to archival collections, where anonymisation or de-identification may be required by law. However, anonymisation is frequently used during collection too, where it may be due to either ethical reasons or in order to ensure that less legal issues occur during future access.

One informant, Musikverket, chose complete anonymisation of their material. This can be seen as both an ethical and legal decision. Anonymisation was requested by the contributors and performed by the contributors before hand-over to Musikverket. Musikverket also opted for only accepting anonymised material. This was due to the sensitive nature of the information concerning #MeToo which could potentially both harm the contributors if not anonymised, as well as the archive itself in the case of slander allegations during access. Due to the sensitive nature of the information and the fact that the #MeToo groups decided to anonymise their own material, anonymisation may be a way to lower the threshold for contributors as it poses a lower risk to them in terms of privacy and security violations. At the same time, Interviewee 1 explained, the ethical problem with complete anonymisation before hand-over is that Musikverket is now unable to offer ownership or copyright to the creators, as Musikverket does not know who the individual creator is. In effect, contributors are not able to control their material after hand-over.

Pride 2018 circumvented this issue by offering limited anonymisation for ethical and legal reasons. As mentioned, while the contributor and copyright-holder retained the right to be anonymous, any individuals featured in the material, such as images, had to provide name and consent for being included in the archive. This was due to both ethical and legal issues, to ensure the privacy and security of individuals who may not want to be included in an archive for various reasons, as well as to minimise legal repercussions such as GDPR.

Malmö City Archives and DigiFacket shared concerns regarding anonymisation. Interviewee 3 explained how they regarded anonymisation during collection as potentially risking corruption and distortion of the information. On the other hand, anonymisation or de-identifying may be used during access:

The material we have collected from social media and from websites, those are not things that have been secret /.../ You could anonymise from the start, but we have decided not to do that. We would rather do this at a later stage, because it is distortion to actively go in and to anonymise something, that is to actively corrupt the information. And you can do that. The problem – in my opinion – is that the information lowers in quality. But we can protect people who may have stuck their necks out more than they are comfortable with in retrospect, in other ways.

Interview with Interviewee 3 2019-03-05

DigiFacket opted for secrecy and access limitations over anonymisation. While trade union membership is regarded as sensitive personal data according to legal regulations, Interviewee 4 explained that DigiFacket decided that limitations on access are preferred over complete anonymisation of Twitter handles, which is the only collected data that could potentially identify individuals. The reason for this, Interviewee 4 explained, is

the potential value of Twitter handles for future research. Like Malmö City Archives, this decision fits with the purpose of the project and the institution, which in the case of DigiFacket is mainly concerned with ensuring future research possibilities.

The decisions ultimately centre on balancing ethical and legal concerns with that of the purpose of the project or institution in question. Anonymisation during collection can be used to accommodate potential privacy and security concerns that contributors may have, to build trust and, in turn, to increase the chance of a higher number of contributions in archives based on voluntary submission of material. Anonymisation is also practiced by digital community archives with focus on activist social media collections. Documenting Ferguson offers contributors to remain anonymous in terms of not publishing name and email of the contributor to the online archive. Both A People's Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland and Preserve the Baltimore Uprising 2015 Archive Project offer anonymisation through a tick box during online submissions. As a tool to protect the privacy of individuals included in archival collections, anonymisation during collection may be used to prevent surveillance of particularly vulnerable groups (see chapter 5.2.3.1). On the other hand, anonymisation is problematic for archives as it alters the information and clashes with archival practices on distortion and corruption of information. An ethical conflict between archival values of privacy/confidentiality, ensuring future use and countering distortion and safeguarding records is revealed. Furthermore, this exposes underlying questions of the role of an archive or archivist. As Cook and Schwartz (2002) pointed out, archives play an important part in the protection of privacy (p. 2). At the same time, archives have a responsibility to intervene and to preserve our shared history and memories, to ensure freedom of information, and to aid administrative, legal and fiscal accountability (*ibid.* p. 2, p. 15). As illustrated, this forces an ethical and legal balancing act for archivists and professionals in the field.

5.2.2 Providing access to activist social media archives

Providing access to archives is regarded as another core archival function (Duranti & Franks 2015, p. 167). According to the Society of American Archivists, use of archives through control and promotion, as well as archives as service for education, research and publicity are all aspects of the function of accessibility (Society of American Archivists 2019). With the introduction of an increasingly digital world, digitalisation and digital records are often described as an opportunity to challenge the undemocratic past of the archive and the traditional belief of the archivist as neutral and objective as described by e.g. Cook (1997). Digital archives are seen as more accessible than physical archives as they do not require a user to visit in-person, meaning that the archive can be used by people all over the world (See for example: Macpherson 2010). Others have criticised digitalisation and digital archives for not being as democratic and accessible as suggested.

Legal considerations is a central aspect to decisions on providing access to archives. As explained, Swedish public archives are subject to national laws and regulations on archives, namely Arkivlagen 1990:782 (English: *Archives Act*). The law states the purpose and functions of public archives, concluding that archives are a part of the national, cultural heritage and shall be “preserved, organised and cared for” in order to ensure the right to partake in public records, the jurisdictional and administrative

information needs and research needs (SFS 1990:782, 3§). Furthermore, a public archive needs to be organised to such an extent the right to partake in public records is upheld (*ibid.*). In addition, Swedish public archives abide by legal regulations on personal information in *Offentlighets- och Sekretesslagen* (OSL, English: *Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act*). While these laws regulate access to archival records and for what purpose records are made accessible, not all records are public and are therefore not regulated by the above laws. For example, private archives and collections are not regulated by neither OSL nor Arkivlagen. However, the question of both collecting and making accessible personal and sensitive information is further regulated by The General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR) which extends to any organisation collecting personal data, including private archives. Furthermore, legally, providing access to social media content may be restricted by the social media platform's terms of service, which can limit the use beyond the platform itself (Velte 2018, p. 115). Therefore, platform terms of service impacts both collection and access opportunities for activist social media archives as it restricts the use of social media content even after collection.

At the time of the interviews, none of the informants had completed their projects and made their archives accessible. However, all informants interviewed in this study provided information on current or future plans for accessibility as well as their concerns and considerations. Two main themes were identified across the interviews: privacy and security concerns when making archives accessible, as well as more technical concerns regarding the creation of archival inventories and metadata.

5.2.2.1 The (mis)use of archived data: privacy and security concerns

Archivists are familiar with the fear of archival records being “misused”. It is well-known that archival records are and have been used for undemocratic or problematic purposes that target vulnerable groups in society. Ashlyn Velte (2018) listed a number of examples that problematise issues of privacy and access in archives, such as cases of documenting indigenous groups that raise issues of custody and displacement, cases of state surveillance such as the Belfast Project’s oral histories at Boston College that led to testimonies from individuals involved in the conflict on Northern Ireland being subpoenaed by the federal government. Another case raised by Velte is that of Canadian police archives of activism which were used to conduct surveillance on the LGBTQ+ community (p. 116).

The misuse of archived data becomes an even greater risk with digital archives. Ó Cleircín, Mag Eacháin & Bale (2015) argued that the physical archive has a greater ability of protecting individuals and hinder the risk of spreading problematic material due to being located in a physical space rather than a digital space, which effectively hinders people from accessing the material to the same extent as they need to visit the physical archive in person (p. 196). This can be further limited by the opening hours of the physical archive (*ibid.*). These limitations do not apply to digital material, which is published and accessible instantly in many cases. Furthermore, a digital environment can be hacked and digital material is easier to spread by posting it online, as opposed to physical material.

This fear of misuse of data is also raised by activist social media archives. Interviewee 1 at Musikverket argued that access to digital material consists of risks of misuse that are difficult for archivists to control:

We have been open [about this] with the [#MeToo] groups. We can never control what our users do with the information. How they interpret it, what they will write about it /.../ When you release information digitally, it is my view that you have to be prepared for things, that people can do whatever they want with the material. This question becomes more important the more sensitive the information is, and that is something you have to consider when you make the decision [to publish digitally].

Interview with Interviewee 1 2019-02-28

Concerns of misuse of activist social media archives is further explained by Lisa Peet (2016), writing on the Documenting the Now-project, interviewed several principals and project members from the represented universities running the project who raised the issue of ethics in collecting social justice data from social media, with one interviewee who speculated on cases where the archive may put individual activists at risk of legal repercussions such as the Baltimore Uprising in 2015, a violent protest part of the Black Lives Matter-movement against racism and police brutality:

What does that mean if you're building a collection of tweets, of digital content around Baltimore uprising? Do you have to take into account that maybe one day the Baltimore police might come in and say, 'Hey, we know you have this collection of five million #baltimoreuprising tweets. We're working on a case, we need to go in and see that collection because we think there might be an image of someone in there doing something wrong.' These are things we have to think about.

Evans in Peet 2016

Another interviewee (*ibid.*) continued discussing how the archive may deal with ethical issues surrounding activist social media:

Should we delete tweets that have been deleted by the person that posted them subsequently? What do we do about incriminating photos that are in collections? Personal identifying information that's in the tweets? Those are the ethical issues that we'll be wrangling with as part of this project.

Freeland in Peet 2016

Indeed the Baltimore Uprising 2015 Archive Project, which allows user to upload material to their website acting as a digital archive, seem to share this concern and have chosen to limit the access of some material: "Some materials that are relevant to the collection may be marked as private and made available only to researchers, including materials containing content that could be incriminating" (Preserve the Baltimore Uprising 2015 Archive Project, n.d., b).

This limitation of access is frequently used in archives both analogue and physical. A common topic raised by all informants of this study was that of privacy concerns. This question becomes particularly relevant during access. While none of the informants have provided access to their archives at the time of writing, all four voiced different potential solutions to their privacy concerns.

In the case of providing access to archives, legal considerations are a main priority. As trade union membership is sensitive information in Swedish law, DigiFacket plans on providing limited access to their records. Interviewee 4 explained that while the information collected contains almost no personal information due to comments sections being excluded when using APIs provided by the social media sites themselves, the one identifying information is that of Twitter handles which can be

identified in tweet replies from the trade union Twitter accounts. As mentioned, the Twitter handles have not, however, been anonymised as Interviewee 4 sees a future research value in keeping the names of the user accounts. Musikverket, one the other hand, has decided on no limitation of access at all. The reason for this is Musikverket's role as a public archive with the explicit purpose of both collecting, making accessible and being available for the entire nation. Interviewee 1 explained that Musikverket aims to have their collections accessible and that this is the "default" since Musikverket is a public agency financed by public taxation, which therefore also serves the public and should be accessible. The #MeToo-project is no exception to this default. Interviewee 1 mentioned the solution of limitation to researchers only but rejects this idea and asks on what premise it is possible to decide who is allowed to access the material: "There are examples of archives that have limitations for researchers, but we have said 'no'. First of all, it does not feel good to have that kind of limitation. Secondly, it is difficult to draw this line. For whom?" (Interview with Interviewee 1 2019-02-28). Interviewee 1 continued explaining that due to Musikverket's position as a public agency, Musikverket decided against restrictions such as time capsules. At the same time, they have been open to accepting material with those kinds of restrictions if requested by the creators of the material. In the end, it was more important to preserve this information than to ensure complete access. One solution to privacy concerns put forward by creators, contributors and donors themselves, used by digital archives with functions for voluntary upload of material, such as Documenting Ferguson and A People's Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland, is the option to simply have a tick box where the contributor can choose if their material is to be made public and available to everyone, or restricted to researchers.

Malmö City Archives has a more similar stance to that of DigiFacket on providing limited access. Malmö City Archives plans on implementing limitations such as physical restriction, where the material is only accessible through a physical visit to the archive. Interviewee 3 motivated this with legal concerns of personal information, such as GDPR. Since their activist social media is full of personal information, making it accessible digitally raises a number of legal concerns. Potentially, Interviewee 3 continued, ethical assessments will have to be made regarding the information concerning individuals, as opposed to the public persons and organisations. Lastly, the question of access to the Pride 2018-project is yet to be decided upon hand-over to QRAB. However, the Interviewee 2 considers a temporary and hypothetical solution until this is completed where any requests of access could go through each creator and owner of the requested information, as the number is small enough to make this possible. Upon hand-over, the conditions for access will be explored by QRAB. In this way, Pride 2018 shares characteristics with community archives as some level of control is still in the hands of the creators of the material through the need for consent for access. This level of control is a key aspect of community archives according to Stevens, Flinn and Shepherd (2010, p. 59).

Privacy concerns are closely linked to security concerns, as both illustrated by Velte's surveillance examples and by the DigiFacket-project. Interviewee 4 explained that a main concern with providing access to the social media feeds of the various trade unions is a real security concern and fear of violent far-right groups that have previously accessed trade union archives and identified individuals. Some of the trade unions therefore wished for a 5 year no-access limitation where no one is able to access

the information. These trade unions demanded this 5 year limitation themselves when negotiating the contracts with Interviewee 4, their team and the archives.

We have limited access so that no one gets hurt. Particularly for the LO and SAC trade unions that are fairly often threatened by right-wing extremist organisation. Then it should not be possible for right-wing extremist organisations to use their archives and search on names in a big database. That is not reasonable. That is why this is important, this 5 year-secrecy, [which is] enough time for some questions to die and not be relevant anymore.

Interview with Interviewee 4 2019-03-08

After the 5 years, only researchers with an approved research plan according to ethical research guidelines are allowed to access the material. While the data collected by Interviewee 4 and their team contains little personal information, Twitter handles may give away sensitive details that can put individuals at risk. Furthermore, as Interviewee 4 explained, trade union membership is per definition sensitive information protected by law in Sweden.

Another aspect to the limitation is to make the software or database only accessible from within the physical archives, without internet access. As the information is not online, this limits risks of hacking or leaking the information in DigiFacket, explained Interviewee 4:

It is a question of security because if it [the information] would be online we would need more security measures in place, then it is possible to hack... This will not be accessible directly through the internet. I will not be possible to hack it. I think that is reasonable, that if you have an archive, it should not be able to hack it. Because, partly, the information can then be distorted. That is one aspect. Or that sensitive personal information is leaked. So to put it separately where it is not accessible via the Internet is pretty important for security.

Interview with Interviewee 4 2019-03-08

DigiFacket is the only project that currently restricts its material using secrecy limitations, which could be explained by the purpose and nature of the project. Unlike the project on #MeToo and refugee reception, DigiFacket is less concerned with general public access and focuses more on future research opportunities. DigiFacket is not a public archive with a responsibility to represent or provide access to the larger public, as compared to some other informants.

A further concern is how legally problematic material may affect the archive itself. For the contribution terms of service for A People's Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland (2019b), they carefully distance themselves from legal repercussions of uploaded material:

If your submission does contain libellous or slanderous matter, you understand that you may be subject to legal action. You further agree to defend and hold harmless the Archive, its hosted website, its volunteer members, and ancillary groups and their employees against all claims, demands, costs, and expenses including attorney's fees incurred for any and all claims of copyright infringement or any other legal or regulatory course of action arising from the use of your material.

A People's Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland 2019b

This concern was shared by Interviewee 1 with their #MeToo-project. The risk for slander allegations impacted Musikverket's decision to only accept anonymised data. Interviewee 1 continued:

Then we are talking about perspective - whose perspective. One can imagine that this could be about slander. That is why we have pushed for anonymising, because otherwise it would have made things far more difficult for us. That is another aspect why it is not completely accessible yet. It is to protect ourselves in case someone would get upset.

Interview with Interviewee 1 2019-02-28

To conclude, all informants raised concerns over the privacy of individuals featured in their archives. When deciding on if and how to provide access, the different archives have based their decisions on varying principles. The projects on Pride 2018, DigiFacket and #MeToo have all included the creators of the records in their decision to provide access. In the case of #MeToo, the creators have signed a contract handing over the material and the rights to use and publish it to Musikverket. DigiFacket plans to limit access based on the wishes of a number of trade unions. As of now, access to the Pride 2018 project is likely to go through the creators themselves as they own their records. All informants have considered personal data and sensitive information through mainly a legal perspective, where some information such as trade union membership is sensitive according to law. One archive restricts access due to security concerns linked to the risk of leaking or hacking personal data. Another archive considered potential legal risks for the archive itself when making the material accessible to the public, such as slander allegations.

5.2.2.2 Archival inventories, metadata and technical difficulties

When providing access to archival collections, archives normally construct finding aids in the form of descriptive inventories, which, at a minimum, lists series in a collection (Swedish, see: *arkivförteckning*). At the time of writing, none of the informants have completed archival inventories for their projects. However, all informants raise the issue of archival inventories when asked about providing access more generally. All informants are planning on developing some sort of inventory to make the collections both findable and searchable.

An archival inventory provides information on what an archival holding contains and is essential to providing access to patrons. In fact, archival inventories is necessary for “real” access as, without them, it is difficult or nearly impossible for patrons to know what collections exist and where they can be found. In the same way, a library with a search function cannot properly function without some type of classification system that provides information on what the library contains and where it can be found. In order for both libraries and archives to be truly accessible, simply storing collections is not enough as they cannot be found without some type of inventory. In short, to be able to find an item, it has to be searchable. Archives become searchable with the help of archival inventories.

Archival inventories can be described as a type of metadata. Locating information is frequently aided by applying metadata to archival collections. Metadata serves several functions, such as aiding in identifying, using, preserving and accessing archival records, particularly that of digital collections. In terms of providing access, metadata is helpful as it can add descriptive and administrative information. For digital resources, this can include date and source of capture, file format, and information on content.

Capturing metadata for accessibility purposes can take different forms. With digital resources, metadata may be captured automatically depending on collection method. For example, collection of social media through APIs harvests both the content itself and associated metadata (Velte 2018, p. 114). Malmö City Archives' project on refugees found that creating a separate Excel-file listing the metadata was not necessary, as this information was already imbedded into the records themselves. In the case of the Pride project, where material was voluntarily submitted via email, the donors were encouraged to provide some basic descriptive information on the content of the material. This method is also used by other archives using voluntary submission of digital material such as Occupy Archive, A People's Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland, The Baltimore Uprising 2015 Archive Project and Documenting Ferguson. What metadata is requested depends on the format of the record (for example a written or verbal story, image, or video).

Archival labels and descriptions are ethical issues as they are integral to archival power as described by Cook and Schwartz (2002), providing a tool for dominating the narrative on marginalised groups. Dagmar Brunow (2018) described the use of archival metadata, "Naming", as "a performative act of power" which masks exclusion under the guise of neutrality (p. 180). Furthermore, "Naming" "is inextricably linked to the notion of the archive as an instrument of power, highlighting some narratives while marginalising others" (*ibid.* p. 177). Brunow continued: "Rather than being neutral and objective, metadata entail values and norms which shape the content by defining what is worth searching for and what is not" (*ibid.*). This means that chosen metadata will always be exclusionary to some extent. However, the practice of encouraging voluntary donation of material from marginalised groups such as the LGBTQ community and allowing them to include or exclude metadata (with limitations) can be seen as a part of the archival theories and practices of archival activism and community archives which both tend to challenge traditional practices and narratives, in order to include and empower marginalised groups. That way, the creators of the material hold some sort of control and power over their own records, which is consistent with the Pride project where copyright remains with the creator.

When providing access to DigiFacket, Interviewee 4 explained that they are working on developing an index which helps the user search the database. Through a search platform, DigiFacket will both have defined searchable terms through an index as well as free text search. Furthermore, it will be possible for the user to recreate a website from the past, the same function as the Way Back Machine (Jansson & Uba 2018, p. 17). As much of the purpose of the project is to ensure the possibility of future research on trade union activity online, the index will be broad as to "be of use to as many as possible" [this author's translation] (*ibid.* p. 18). The index includes both metadata over the content of the material (file format, date and time of acquisition, size of file, type of file and so on) as well as thesaurus with defined terms based on ARABs current list of subjects or categories. The challenge here is to provide meaningful searchable terms and metadata which is able to capture relevant information based on the needs of the user. The Twitter Collection at the Library of Congress is one example of this. Despite being donated in 2010, the millions of public tweets are "not yet accessible due to difficulties indexing and searching vast amounts of data" (Velte 2018, p. 115). Interviewee 4 explained that a technical difficulty is how to ensure the relevance of search results, for example with terms such as "work environment" that are included in

almost all documents and will not specifically find the documents dealing solely with work environment issues. Additionally, the index ties into safety issues. Like all archival material in DigiFacket, the index and search functions will not be accessible online to further ensure that personal information is neither found nor leaked. Technical issues and security concerns is further shared by Interviewee 1 at Musikverket, who is undecided on whether to collect the material separately or in one shared file, due to potential consequences of gathering all material in one place.

Lastly, perhaps the most difficult technical issue of digital collections is that of the nature of digital technologies themselves. During the project, DigiFacket suffered a server crash which resulted in the loss of a large amount of data. While digital technologies provide new opportunities for accessibility, they are also uniquely volatile.

5.2.3 Additional findings

In addition to the challenges found in the broader categories of collection and providing access to activist social media archives, three further, shared themes or challenges were identified among the informants.

Firstly, all informants brought up a more general challenge of resources. All informants identified a lack of resources as one of the main reasons for not having completed their projects yet. Two informants, Musikverket and Malmö City Archives, are working with their activist social media project during normal working hours alongside their usual tasks, with no allocated budget or resources to the project. As both archives are public archives with specific aims and tasks where the projects fall within the purpose of the archive itself, it is not surprising this type of project is performed as part of everyday work. Malmö City Archives, however, was able to make use of students of archival studies working on the project as part of an internship. The only informant with a project budget and allocated working hours is DigiFacket, which can be explained by both the fact that the institution is not an archive per se and therefore this type of project does not fall within their everyday tasks. DigiFacket also had technical expertise in the form of a programmer. One informant, Pride 2018, conducts their project with their own personal resources (private computer storage, archival skills et cetera) during their free-time. This suggests that the question of resources is closely tied to what institution, organisation or private person is behind the project, as this affects what type of resources can be accessed. Furthermore, it is clear that activist social media archives require a certain amount of resources, particularly that of archival skills and knowledge with emphasis on legal expertise. For projects working with marginalised or otherwise vulnerable groups, such as Musikverket and Pride 2018 working together with the subjects of their collections, this knowledge aids with a democratisation of archives as providing archival skills to communities which may otherwise have not been able to archive their material. This could be seen as the archival responsibility promoted by Jimerson (2007), as well as archival values of social justice promoted by Punzalan and Caswell (2016). At the same time, it is plausible that many potential activist social media archives are not attempted due to a lack of resources. Activists and activist communities may lack resources, as may smaller archives. While one informant did their project as voluntary work, this may not be an option for others, ultimately risking the “digital Dark Age” Jeffrey (2012) warned us about. If activist social media archives

are left to voluntary projects, this information may be lost. Furthermore, this raises the question of Cook's (2001) archival power and inclusion and exclusion in the archives.

Secondly, while archival activism is a theme throughout the majority of projects included in this study, only two informants specifically mentioned archival activism as a term. The Pride 2018 project made use of literature on archival activism. Interviewee 3 at Malmö City Archives, too, explained their own interest in archival activism, and politics and archives as a motivator for the project. Furthermore, the project aim was to capture a range of reactions, feelings and actions surrounding the refugee reception, thus being an active attempt at capturing a broader representation of an event. Interviewee 3 also believes that archival activism is on the rise and will continue to increase. Here, Interviewee 3 stated, archives have a unique role to play in contributing with active collection and digital tools. At the same time, Interviewee 3 sees a potential problem with political engagement in the form of projects of archival activism. It could risk pushing donors away, making activist social media archives among other projects delicate work for archives that ultimately seek to preserve our shared memories.

What could happen is that people may perceive Malmö City Archives or Malmö City as too globalised for them, and decide to keep their material elsewhere, distancing themselves from us as an institution. This could potentially backfire against [archival] institutions. But then, hopefully, there will be other archival institutions – I am thinking of private archives especially.

Interview with Interviewee 3 2019-03-05

Musikverket's #MeToo project is at least partially motivated by the archive's dedication to increasing representation of women in Swedish music and theatre history. As archival activism, according to Findlay (2016) and Flinn (2011) primarily deals with narrowing the gap of exclusion of marginalised groups, as well as is characterised by an active attempt and role in this political aim, this fits in well with current theories and practices of archival activism. In addition, DigiFacket deals with typical archival activism and community archive theories and practices in terms of copyright, ownership and use of material, as well as the inclusion of the trade unions themselves.

Lastly, as has been demonstrated throughout this study, all informants found particular difficulties with digital material and social media specifically which motivated their projects, especially due to the volatile nature of social media and social media content which is at risk of being lost. One of Malmö City Archives' goals for their project was to collect to ensure archival permanence as social media content is especially volatile. As mentioned, both Pride 2018 and DigiFacket see social media as commercial platforms as a major problem for long-term preservation of this type of information. While archives traditionally have engaged in passive collection by waiting for donations, activist social media archives seem to share the characteristic of active archiving, often collecting as events unfold. This may be required due to the nature of digital material, yet is also a part of larger trends in archival practices influenced by the redefinition of the role of the archivist and the archive.

6. Conclusions

Archivists and professionals working with activist social media content face a number of difficulties and challenges during collection and when providing access to their collections. As Jeffrey (2012) suggested, these difficulties are more of an ethical and legal nature than of a technical nature. Indeed, the findings in this research study indicate that these difficulties are primarily ethical and legal, where chosen methods and practices are the result of ethical and legal considerations in combination with the nature of the collecting institution or the archiving project itself. While archivists and professionals face largely the same challenges and are confronted with the same issues, the informants of this study varied in interpretations and chosen methods of the same questions. These decisions are often the result of what type of institution or organisation is behind the project, the content of the collections and how sensitive the information is, as well as the aims and purposes of this institution or the project. However, methods and interpretations of ethical and legal dilemmas tend to be highly individual to each case, regardless of whether it is a public or a private archive or institution behind the project. This suggests a level of uncertainty and ambiguity among the archival profession on activist social media collections, which confirms the findings of Velte (2018). At the same time, one of the main reasons for collecting social media for all informants centred on social media content as particularly volatile, filling gaps in current collections and the prevention of future loss of material. The findings of this research study confirm the literature on archiving social media and the web which motivate social media collection through a fear of a “digital Dark Age” (Jeffrey 2012), the particular difficulties of archiving commercial platform content (Jeffrey 2012, Day Thompson 2016), and the need for active collection efforts in the digital age (Cook & Schwartz 2002).

Two main categories with further sub-categories were identified and represented common themes across the interviews. The process for collecting activist social media archives identified shared difficulties and challenges during appraisal and selection, copyright and terms of service, consent and permission-seeking, and anonymising and de-identification.

The appraisal and selection process is intertwined with archival power as one of the most obvious examples of how archival subjectivity and decisions effect inclusion and exclusion of the archival narrative (see: Cook 2001). During selection and project delimitation, the informants motivated their projects through the prevention of future loss of material and to fill gaps in their archival collections, a sentiment shared by both theories and practices on archival activism social justice (see: Jimerson 2007) as well as previous studies on activist social media archives (see: Velte 2018). Informants further shared concern for preservation of social media content specifically, singling it out as particularly volatile and easily lost, in accordance with the theories of Jeffrey (2012). Further decisions made during appraisal and selection on how to collect and from where to collect were the result of legal and technical concerns such as copyright and social media platform terms of service. For the majority of informants, the selection

process was based on voluntary submission. Voluntary contributions were motivated by both ethical, legal and technical concerns such as privacy and security issues.

Previous literature has identified the challenge for archives to collect from the web in general and social media in particular. A central problem is varying social media platform terms of service which determine if, how and how often archives and others can collect and use social media content (see: Velte 2018 and Day Thomson 2016). The problems with social media as commercial platforms was raised both by participating informants and Jeffrey (2012). This motivated decisions on both why to collect and how to collect, for example asking content owners to hand in their material directly to the archive rather than having the archive collect social media content which could potentially be limited by copyright and social media platform terms of service. Decisions on copyright and ownership of the archived material varied, with some informants letting the creators retain ownership while others chose to have creators waive their ownership. The different methods were motivated by different values, ranging from the importance of creators to own their own material to the importance of archives being able to freely use and provide access to collections.

The collection process further included decisions on consent and permission-seeking. Practices on consent and permission-seeking varied among the informants, in accordance with previous literature on activist social media archives which pointed out the ethical and legal ambiguities on permission-seeking by archives (see: Velte 2018). The different practices on consent and permission-seeking were primarily motivated by the respective aims and purpose of the projects and institutions or organisations. Ethical arguments regarding privacy and security concerns helped motivate decisions on consent and permission-seeking. These practices shared characteristics with that of community archives. In addition, legal aspects constituted a main motivator for the informants various decisions, including GDPR. The consent and permission-seeking process revealed how different interpretations or emphasis on different archival values influence decisions, particularly that of an archival responsibility to collect and preserve with that of protection of privacy. This balancing act was further revealed during anonymising and de-identification during collection. Decisions made on anonymisation and de-identifying measures expose an ethical conflict between archival values of privacy/confidentiality, ensuring future use and countering distortion and safeguarding records. In addition, archivists and professionals working with archival records attempt to balance this with legal regulations on anonymisation. In both the decisions made on consent and permission-seeking and anonymisation, underlying questions of the role of the archive, the archivist as well as archival values identified in literature such as Cook and Schwartz (2002) are uncovered.

The process on providing access identified shared difficulties and challenges regarding the fear of misuse of archived data, particularly motivated by privacy and security concerns. This fear was placed within literature on access to archives and digital archives such as Cleircín, Mag Eacháin & Bale (2015) who argued that digital archives increase the risk of misuse of archived data, and Velte (2018) who pointed out how archival records are and have been used for undemocratic or problematic purposes that target vulnerable groups in society. The decisions made on access were primarily based on legal considerations, with some underlying ethical considerations, such as the risk of identification of sensitive personal data. This was balanced with a desire for archives to

provide access to collections. Depending on the purpose of the project or collecting institution, decisions on access that balanced privacy and security concerns with that of access. This further places activist social media archives in a larger context of archival purposes and values as illustrated with decisions made on permission-seeking and anonymisation.

When asked about providing access to their collections, informants raised issues of providing sufficient and correct metadata such as archival inventories and indexes. While this first and foremost is an issue of technical nature, it reveals underlying ethical considerations of exclusion and inclusion. This places these findings within a larger theoretical context of the concept of archival power (Cook 2001). Lastly, the study discovered that, in addition to collection and access, archivists and professionals often find resources a challenge to their activist social media archives projects. Access to resources depended on the collecting institution or individual. This was put into a larger context with archival theories of archival activism, social justice and responsibility (see: Jimerson 2007) and archival power of inclusion and exclusion (see: Cook 2001). Furthermore, decisions made on collection and access to activist social media collections were placed within the context of theories on archival activism. The study found that some informants explicitly made use of archival activism, while others may not have used the term “archival activism” yet share characteristics with theories and practices on archival activism.

While literature on activist social media archives is scarce, this study has identified reasons for chosen methods during collection of and when providing access to activist social media collections. The study was based on Ashlyn Velte’s (2018) study which research ethical and legal challenges in activist social media archives, yet differs in terms of focusing on the motivation behind ethical and legal decisions. This study also included and compared different types of archives and archival initiatives in order to identify what factors influence these decisions. In addition, the findings of this study shows how decisions made during collection of and when providing access to activist social media archives and the different approaches to ethical and legal dilemmas are placed within larger archival theories and practices. Mainly, activist social media archives reflect a changing view of the role of archives and archivists, as well as archival values. Activist social media archives are one example of how archives are moving toward a more active collection attempts, much like other heritage institutions (see: Millar 2010). This can be seen as a result of both concerns about representation and filling gaps in collections, as well as the nature of digital material as volatile which requires more active collection (see: Cook & Schwartz 2002), as opposed to the more traditional collection of passive reception. Furthermore, activist social media archives can be placed within current archival practices and theories on community archives, archival activism and archival social justice. Questions of exclusion and inclusion, the relationship between archive and content creator, and consent and permission-seeking are all examples of how activist social media archives reflect larger debates within the archival profession.

As social media continues to be a popular political tool among activist communities, activist social media archives are likely to increase. The findings of this study demonstrate how collection and access practices of activist social media remain individual to each institution, with ethical and legal ambiguity making archivists and other professionals balance various aspect of the archival profession. As these challenges and methods are identified, archives can move to develop further policies

and to network with other institutions in order to share knowledge and advance practices on collection, access and use of activist social media content in areas of uncertainty. More research on these archives may help address these issues and aid a debate in the larger archival community on ethical and legal practices in activist social media collections.

6.1 Suggestions for future research

A number of major shortcomings of this study has been identified, where further research is needed to fill these gaps. First of all, as mentioned, this study is not representative in terms of being able to generalise findings. Neither is it geographically representative, as all informants represent Swedish activist social media collections. As this study focuses more on specific cases, future research may attempt to generalise findings by including a representative amount and type of informants or cases. This is necessary in order to identify further challenges, practices and potential correlating factors impacting decisions made during collection and access to these archives. The inclusion of archives who may have opted out of collecting activist social media content would provide insight on additional challenges which hinder the collection of this type of material. Additionally, future research may identify national differences by further comparing archives in different countries.

Regarding theoretical frameworks, future research may be dedicated to applying further theories on the historical development of archival values and practices in relation to larger societal changes, particularly that of developing societal ideas on democratisation, inclusion and representation in combination with the view of archive as a public institution "for the people" with certain responsibilities. Activist social media archives' practices may be situated within these theoretical frameworks on democracy and public views on the purpose of archives, especially as activist collections are political in nature and often contain underrepresented groups. Theories on "archival silences" is another area where activist social media archives might be placed, which would further explore activist social media collections from the perspective of archival power. Research on activist social media archives as an example of developing practices of active collection could include comparative case studies on activist social media collection efforts across heritage institutions and ALM (archives, libraries and museums).

Regarding methodology, future research may be dedicated to providing a broader perspective on activist social media archives by including interviews and/or surveys with other participants in activist social media archives beyond the archivists or professionals themselves. Complementing interviews with content creators and contributors would give additional insight into the reasoning behind decisions to participate, their concerns and demands and how they fit into and impact activist social media archiving projects. Furthermore, as none of the informants included in this study have completed their projects and provided access, an area for future research is that of access to activist social media collections in practice, which may reveal further challenges and chosen methods. Users of activist social media archives may be another group to research to find out how this material is used, who is using it, for what reasons and how this potentially differs from other collections.

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Interviews

Interview with Interviewee 1 (via Skype), 2019-02-28

Interview with Interviewee 2 (via Skype), 2019-03-04

Interview with Interviewee 3 (in-person, Malmö City Archives), 2019-03-05

Interview with Interviewee 4 (via Skype), 2019-03-08

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview guide

1. Organisation

- I. Vad är din/era arbetstitel/arbetstitlar?
- II. Kan du berätta lite om den organisation eller institution du tillhör? Vad är det det huvudsakliga målet med organisationens/institutionens verksamhet och berätta hur ni arbetar konkret för att uppnå detta mål?

2. Arbetsprocesser

- I. Kan du beskriva det insamlingsprojekt du arbetat med? Vad var målet och syftet?
- II. När startade insamlingsprojektet?
- III. Hur motiverades projektet?
- IV. Vilken var din roll i projektet (arbetsuppgifter)?
- V. Fanns det ekonomiska resurser till projektet? Hur finansierades projektet?
- VI. Vilka framtidsplaner finns för projektet?

3. Samarbeten och genomförande

- I. Vilka var involverade i projektet? Söktes samarbetspartners (vilka/varför)?
- II. Vem eller vilka initierade ert insamlingsprojekt?
- III. Hade liknande projekt genomförts av er organisation tidigare? Blev ni inspirerade av andra (vilka/varför)?
- IV. Etablerades någon slags relation med de som skapat materialet?

4. Insamling, bevarande och urval

- I. Varifrån (vilka plattformar) samlades materialet in från?
- II. Hur samlades materialet in?
- III. Hur bestämdes vad som skulle samlas in (urval)?
- IV. Hur bevaras materialet?
- V. Fanns det riktlinjer att följa för insamling och bevarande?
- VI. Kan du kortfattat berätta hur arbetsprocessen kring insamling såg ut?
- VII. Fanns det juridiska frågor gällande insamling?
- VIII. Fanns det etiska frågor gällande insamling?
- IX. Vilka övriga frågor eller svårigheter fanns kring insamling, om några?

5. Tillgängliggörande

- I. Tillgängliggörs materialet?
Om ja:
 - a. Hur tillgängliggörs materialet?
 - b. För vem tillgängliggörs materialet?
 - c. Fanns det riktlinjer att följa?
 - d. Kan du kortfattat berätta hur arbetsprocessen kring tillgängliggörande såg ut?
 - e. Fanns det juridiska frågor gällande tillgängliggörandet?
 - f. Fanns det etiska frågor gällande tillgängliggörandet?

g. Vilka övriga frågor eller svårigheter fanns kring tillgängliggörande, om några?

Om nej:

a. Vilka anledningar fanns till att inte tillgängliggöra materialet?

b. Finns framtida planer att tillgängliggöra materialet?

6. Övrigt

I. Finns det något du/ni vill tillägga om ditt projekt eller att arbeta med denna typ av material?

Appendix B: Information for participants and informed consent form

Information till deltagare, samt formulär för informerat samtycke

Bakgrund och syfte

Jag heter Lisa Lindström. Jag arbetar för närvarande på min masteruppsats i arkivvetenskap inom programmet för Arkivvetenskap, Biblioteks- och Informationsvetenskap respektive Museologi (ABM) vid Lunds Universitet. Uppsatsen är en undersökning av förhållningssätt och praktik inom etablerade arkiv och mindre arkivinitiativ till arkivering och tillgängliggörande av webbaserat material rörande aktivism som sker på sociala medier. Uppsatsens syfte är att kartlägga och undersöka den praktik och de förhållningssätt som kan finnas inom olika slags arkiv till arkivering av aktivism på sociala medier.

Datainsamling och deltagare

Inom ramen för undersökningen kommer det empiriska materialet samlas in genom intervjuer. Informanterna har valts ut baserat på deras relevans till forskningsområdet och deras praktiska och teoretiska kunskaper i arkivering och tillgängliggörande.

Undersökningens genomförande

Med varje informant genomförs en intervju som uppskattas ta 45-60 minuter. Vid intervjugällena är uppsatsens författare närvarande för dess genomförande. Med informantens godkännande ljudinspelas och/eller nedtecknas intervjun.

Vilka är riskerna och fördelarna?

Det finns inga kända risker vid deltagande i undersökningen. Resultatet kan vara av intresse för forskare inom arkivvetenskap, biblioteks- och informationsvetenskap respektive museologi och mer generellt inom forskning kring nätbaserad aktivism.

Hantering av data och anonymisering

Informanter erbjuds avidentifiering så långt som är möjligt. Om detta önskas kommer informanternas namn i den publicerade uppsatsen ha avidentifieras och istället placeras i olika kategorier som avspeglar roll och/eller befattning, vilket delvis begränsar möjligheten till anonymisering. Organisationsnamn kommer även avidentifieras om så önskas. Organisationen kommer då beskrivas i uppsatsen utan namn och geografisk placering men beskrivs utifrån storlek och typ (exempelvis offentligt eller enskilt arkiv).

Efter uppsatsen är skriven kommer ljudinspelningen, transkribering och dokument där det förekommer namn och andra identifierbara element raderas.

Frivilligt deltagande

Deltagande i undersökningen är frivillig och deltagare kan när som helst att välja avbryta sin medverkan.

Ansvar

Uppsatsens handledare är Ann-Sofie Klareld, universitetsadjunkt vid avdelningen för ABM, Lunds universitet.

Handledare: Ann-Sofie Klareld

Institutionen för kulturstudier, Box 192, 221 00 Lund

E-post: ann-sofie.klareld@kultur.lu.se

Kontakt

Lisa Lindström

Email: li7145li-s@student.lu.se

Formulär för informerat samtycke

Deltagande i undersökning:

Jag har tagit del av informationen gällande undersökningen. Jag har fått tillfälle att sätta frågor om undersökningen som har blivit besvarade. Jag ger mitt samtycke till att delta i den här undersökningen.

Deltagarens namn _____

Deltagarens underskrift _____

Datum _____

Dag/månad/år

Intervjuarens namn _____

Intervjuarens underskrift _____

Datum _____

Dag/månad/år