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The will to activate library users and the making of citizens

How different rationalities influence the notion of participation in a library context

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The Will to Activate Library Users and the Making of Citizens: How Different Rationalities Influence the Notion of Participation in a Library Context

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how the notion of participation informs policy documents in a public library context. Library users are expected to manage on their own, to a large extent, as society calls for self-governing, active subjects who are willing to participate. To explore this notion of participation, we utilize the concept of problematization and analyze policy documents regarding the public libraries of Copenhagen, Denmark, and Malmö, Sweden. Although all of the documents are concerned with participation and user involvement, they have different points of departure and call upon different rationalities. Whereas the outlined policies of the Malmö libraries problematize social inclusion, the Copenhagen libraries primarily problematize inefficiency. Despite this contrast, increased participation seems to be the proposed solution in the policy documents of both cities. An analysis of these documents shows the complex and sometimes contradictory meaning of the concept of participation, depending on which rationality is put into play.

In cultural institutions and their corresponding policies, as well as in society in general, participation is encouraged in multiple ways. This call for participation is prevalent in public libraries, where users are expected to engage in library activities, and to manage their visits by themselves. If participation is considered an answer, what is it an answer to?

Most Western democratic societies call for self-governing subjects who take responsibility for their own lives and are willing to participate in society. For example, active and responsible citizens are the postulated solution to segregation (Dahlstedt 2006), technologies of empowerment and self-help are considered to be a solution to poverty (Cruikshank 1999), and children are included in certain "decisions affecting their lives" (Ryan 2011, 763). Through this approach, a national politics of governing citizens is replaced by a politics of governing citizens via their

freedom to choose (Ryan 2011, 765). For example, we are not just encouraged but, in many countries, forced to choose health-care providers, schools, and so forth.

According to Peter Miller and Nicolas Rose (2008, 61), "The ideals of government are intrinsically linked to the problems around which it circulates, the failings it seeks to rectify, the ills it seeks to cure." Nonparticipation is an acute "ill" in this context of self-management, where individuals are expected not only to choose but also to make the right decisions. Therefore, societal institutions, such as libraries, have a role to play in making individuals responsible and engaged. In addition, these institutions rely on individuals to self-manage. For example, library users are expected to manage on their own, using self-service technology. Therefore, libraries construct both users who act in the library and citizens who participate in society. It is from these premises that our research departs when analyzing the concept of participation.

In this article, we explore the will to activate (Dahlstedt 2006), engage, and make individuals participate. Specifically, we analyze the will to create participatory subjects in different contexts, through the policy documents of two public libraries. By exploring these different utilizations of the concept of participation, we aim to discuss how the policy documents construct users as responsible, self-governing, and willing to participate and how the meaning and effects of such characteristics are dependent on the rationality—that is, both the "problem" and the "solution"—that permeates them.[1]

To explore the notion of participation and the will to activate library users, we conduct textual analyses of policy documents: two concerning public libraries in Copenhagen, Denmark, and one concerning the public libraries of Malmö, Sweden. Although all documents highlight participation and user involvement, they have different points of departure and call upon different solutions to the problems they pose. The different rationalities of these documents help us explore the complex and sometimes contradictory effects of the will to activate. To paraphrase Barbara Cruikshank (1999, 2), the will to make users participate is neither a good nor a bad thing, it is political; the will to make users participate contains the twin possibilities of domination and freedom. We investigate how this will to make users participate constructs a certain user and how different rationalities affect this process.

To situate our exploration, we relate it to an excessive prevalence of the concept of participation in previous research. Then we introduce our theory, methodology, and cases. Afterward, we analyze the concept of participation through the policy documents. We conclude by discussing the different meanings of the concept of participation.

The Participatory Agenda

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, there has been an extensive discussion on different aspects of participation within research concerning cultural policies and cultural institutions

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1. Throughout this article, *rationality* denotes a way of thinking and reasoning about how things are and how they should be (Dean 2010, 18–19).

(see, e.g., Balling and Kann-Christensen 2013; Valtysson 2014; Sørensen 2016). Therefore, we will focus on previous research concerning participation relevant to this article and categorize it into two different perspectives of participation: the first on the concept of participation and the second on participation versus nonparticipation. In addition, we will introduce a participatory perspective on public libraries.

The first category of research concerns the concept of participation and the meaning it is given in policy documents and within research (see, e.g., Stevenson 2013; Virolainen 2016). According to Nico Carpentier (2015), the concept of participation is vague despite its frequent use in academic debate. To clarify the meaning of the concept of participation, Carpentier (2015, 24) compares participation with the concepts of access and interaction and finds these concepts to be necessary preconditions for a participatory process to exist. By linking participation to power, Carpentier also distinguishes between minimalist and maximalist articulations of participation. A minimalist articulation of participation is limited to access and interaction, whereas a maximalist articulation emphasizes "the importance of equal power positions in decision-making processes" (24).

Whereas Carpentier's point of departure is to define the concept of participation and to distinguish between different levels of participation, others such as Jutta Virolainen (2016) analyze the situated constructions of the concept. Virolainen's aim is not to fix the meaning of the concept but to analyze the meaning it is given in a specific context. Our analysis in this article emphasizes both what is similar and what differs in the meaning given to the concept of participation as it relates to the specific context of each policy document. Therefore, we discuss the different understandings of the concept in the analysis.

The second category of research concerns how the meaning given to the concept of participation intertwines with a problematization of who is not participating (see, e.g., Jochumsen and Hvenegaard Rasmussen 2000). David Stevenson, Gitte Balling, and Nanna Kann-Rasmussen (2017, 100–101) discuss how European cultural policies, through the means of specific measuring methodologies, create the nonparticipant "as individuals from certain demographics that do not interact with specific types of publicly subsidized cultural activities and organizations." The discourses of enlightenment, redistribution of culture, and social inclusion are described as being important for problematizing nonparticipation because the individual needs to participate to be included and enlightened and to receive the redistributed wealth of society (Stevenson et al. 2017). These identified discourses, and the problematization of the nonparticipant, inform our analysis because similar problematizations are prevalent in the documents we analyze.

We discuss above some aspects of the widely used concept of participation in relation to cultural policies. However, in recent years, public libraries, have also been influenced by participatory culture in both policy and practice. The "participatory library" and "library 2.0" have become well-established concepts (Casey and Savastinuk 2007; Lankes et al. 2007), not least in

relation to digital aspects of library development. Casper Hvenegaard Rasmussen (2016) emphasizes three characteristics of participation, all of which are simultaneously prevalent in a public library context. The first, "from access to user participation," focuses on the active participation of users who "create, share and connect with each other." The second, "from one-way communication to dialogue," describes how passively taking in is increasingly being replaced with taking part. The third, "from clients to partners," implies that the perception of the user is transformed when users are seen as partners who contribute to creating library content (Hvenegaard Rasmussen 2016, 546–47).

Today, initiatives such as makerspaces provide tools for users in public libraries to create and be creative (Crawford Barniskis 2013, 2016). Such initiatives allow users to not only create content but also to shape the form of the activity and thus become a partner in the library. Many libraries also encourage users to contribute to library content through social media platforms or by providing space for exhibitions and/or community initiatives and civic engagement. Initiatives like the those mentioned above manifest Hvenegaard Rasmussen's (2016) characteristics of participation and are all commonly used to stimulate social connectedness, creativity, and partnership in public libraries (Nicholson 2017). Thus, user engagement and the will to increase participation are now fundamental aspects of public library development and organization (Nguyen, Partridge, and Edwards 2012).

In this article, our purpose is neither to encourage nor to criticize participatory ambitions in public libraries. Instead, we want to explore how participation works as a technology of governing and how the will to activate could be liberating or dominating, depending on which rationality is put into play. We aim to contribute to research on participation in the context of public libraries.

Participation as a Technology of Governing

Participation is not only highlighted within cultural policies and institutions, but also in society in general. We consider cultural participation to be linked to participation in general society because participation in cultural institutions is believed to create a wider societal engagement. When cultural participation is encouraged—in libraries, for example—culture is a means of nurturing active and participatory citizens.

Furthermore, we acknowledge participation to be a technology of governing, and as such, the effects of participation are not determined beforehand. The concept of participation is intertwined with democratic ideals. From this point of view, participation is closely related to information and education, two aspects that are seen as necessary for individuals to make informed decisions in the political process (Ilshammar 2013, 354). There are also other aspects, however, related to the notion of participation as a potentially liberating technology, such as its equalizing potential in regard to increasing social inclusion for disadvantaged groups in society, or heightening "citizens'" (or "noncitizens'") possibilities of taking part in

decision-making processes on different levels in society (Arnstein 1969). However, if participation really should be able to make a difference, it cannot be limited to "joining the game" but must also involve "the possibility to question the rules of the game" (Sternfeld 2013, cited in Sørensen 2016, 8).

In accordance with societal changes, the way individuals are governed has shifted, from state-centered and collective responsibility over health, schools, and security to decentralized and individualized solutions inspired by the market (Rose 1999, 174; Dahlstedt 2006, 85). This could be described as a turn from societal governing to self-governing, which also implies a certain ideal for citizens that emphasizes individual autonomy and responsibility and a striving for self-fulfillment (see, e.g., Dahlstedt 2002, 2006). If society was formerly responsible for educating the citizens, assisting and guiding them in their acquisition of information and culture, individuals in the neoliberal society are now expected to seek, find, and value information on their own. This self-governing individual is constructed with different technologies, although the homogenous technologies all form individuals who want to act and who are expected to participate (Dahlstedt 2006, 86). In other words, the recent focus on participation is closely entwined with neoliberal ideals of citizenship.

As noted, participation contains within it both domination and freedom. To explore the different meanings of participation, we utilize Leslie Bella's (2010) distinction between intransitive and transitive verbs. Bella uses those concepts in relation to empowerment in a healthcare context and understands "*to empower* as an intransitive verb, in which one can only empower oneself, and *to empower* as a transitive verb, which provides for one to empower another person" (Bella 2010, 23). We are inspired by this distinction but adjust it to better fit our purpose. Thus, we understand *to participate* as either connoting its intransitive meaning, in which one can decide to participate and thus also have the opportunity to change the rules of the game (which we consider to be a practice of empowering oneself), or *to participate* in line with its transitive meaning, in the sense of empowering another person.

In the health sector, the transitive meaning of empowerment is strongly represented in policy documents. Bella (2010, 24) describes how patients are expected to seek information and make responsible choices regarding lifestyle and treatment "all in the name of 'empowerment.'" The same tendencies can also be seen in the library sector, where users are more and more expected to seek, find, and evaluate information by themselves. In libraries with staff-less opening hours, this is even more the case because librarians are not present to help (Engström 2019). However, library users could also participate by being engaged in critique and in practices that counteract power, thereby empowering themselves (see Mouffe 2005). Hence, there is a difference between providing opportunities for users to engage in activities and leaving them no other choice than to be active and manage on their own. Therefore, participation in its intransitive meaning contains the possibility of deciding to participate and changing the rules of the game or deciding not to participate at all.

Closely related to participation is the notion of citizenship, which can be understood in different ways depending on different democratic ideals. As a concept, citizenship has both inclusionary and exclusionary potential, depending on how it is used. When used as a momentum concept, citizenship continuously needs to be reworked "in a way that realizes more and more of [its] egalitarian and anti-hierarchical potential" (Hoffman 2004, cited in Lister 2007a, 49). From this, an alternative approach to citizenship emerges, meaning something more than just legal status. This approach is closely linked to the notion of "acts of citizenship" (Isin and Nielsen 2008) or citizenship as a sociopolitical practice (Lister 2007b). From such a perspective, citizenship is a participatory practice but also a site of political struggles (see Mouffe 2005).

As noted previously, participation is a technology of governing. When we refer to governing throughout this article, we make use of a Foucault-inspired concept of governing and governmentality. Michel Foucault (2008, 186) conceptualizes government as the conduct of conduct, or how to exercise power on the actions of others. Governmentality is realized at the point where domination and techniques of self meet—where someone's aspirations to govern another in a certain direction transform into the other person governing his or her own actions in a new direction. Thus, governmentality is to govern by the means of self-governing. In this context, we need to acknowledge that power not only permits or prevents, power also produces and regulates knowledge, discourses, and practices (Foucault 1980, 119). To summarize, when users are governed to participate, they are not forced to participate. Instead, their desires and wills are acted upon.

With an understanding of participation as governing, the complexity of participation is actualized. Citizen participation could be seen as beneficial for the development of democratic societies (Dahlgren 2009, 12), but the question remains: Are these "active citizens" given the means to actually contribute and change the rules of the game? That is, is the concept of participation used in its intransitive or transitive meaning? If it is used in its transitive meaning, citizens are governed to participate in accomplishing a goal over which they have no influence. To understand the meaning given to the concept of participation, we thus need to analyze a specific use of the concept in a certain context. In our analysis, we explore the concept of participation, and the problematizations it represents, in the policy documents. However, we present the methodology before undertaking this exploration.

Utilizing Problematization as Methodology

In this article, we are inspired by Carol Bacchi's (2012) use of the theoretical concept of problematization in our analysis of how participation works as a technology of governing in the policy documents that are the focus of this study. Bacchi's analytical concept is developed from a Foucauldian-inspired, poststructural theory that starts with the question: "What is the problem represented to be? (WPR)." Bacchi (2012, 1) describes how an analytical focus on problematizations can politicize taken-for-granted "truths" and open up new ways of theorizing

public policy. Problematizations in public policies, such as the strategic documents focused on in this article, are often invisible because we take them for granted, or only focus on the solution (Kann-Rasmussen and Tank 2016, 7). The WPR method makes visible how such (political) problematizations are both constructed and maintained and how they shape the field.

According to Bacchi (2009, 1–2), the policy text represents "the solution," and the aim of the analysis is to discuss what the problem is represented to be. In our analysis, we depart from the schematic character of Bacchi's method because we consider it fruitful to have a more open approach. For our purposes, we do not find it necessary to separate between solutions and problematizations, because they influence each other and switch places; what is outlined as a solution in one part of the document can, at the same time, be part of the problematization. The theoretical concept of problematization does, however, guide us through the analysis.

The analysis was conducted through repeated close readings of the policy documents. Through such, we identified themes of problematizations and solutions by asking the questions: What is the problem represented to be? What assumptions underlie this representation? What is the solution represented to be? (Bacchi 2009, 2). In relation to these themes, key concepts were detected and are further discussed and clarified in the analysis (8). By utilizing the analytical tool of problematizations and solutions, we also explored the construction of library users in the text, because both problems and solutions require certain subjectivities.

Finally, we want to add two methodological clarifications. First, we emphasize that we analyze policy documents. These texts are part of several practices, and as such, they have effects, but they do not necessarily correspond with the actual practices taking place inside the libraries. Second, the policy documents we analyze are written in Swedish and Danish, respectively. We have translated the quoted statements into English.

The Swedish and Danish Public Library Context

As mentioned throughout this article, over recent years, the notion of participation has become increasingly important in the public library sphere, and in society overall, often in relation to digital participation and/or inclusion (Casey and Savastinuk 2007; Lankes et al. 2007; Nguyen et al. 2012; Hvenegaard Rasmussen 2016, 549). This is evident in both Sweden and Denmark.

The Swedish Library Act was revised recently, and it now states that public libraries should work to increase awareness of how information technology can be used for information retrieval, learning, and participation in cultural life.[2] The act states that the main purpose of the public library institution is to promote the democratic development of society by promoting the dissemination of knowledge and freedom of opinion, and that library services should be provided for all.[3]

2. SFS 2013:801, "Bibliotekslag" [Library Act in the Swedish Code of Statutes], par. 7.
3. SFS 2013:801, par. 2.

The increased focus on participation is also visible in the interim report for the upcoming Swedish national library strategy (Lägesrapport i Maj 2016, 20). One of the chapters concerns how the library room can be used to increase participation in a variety of ways, such as through staff-less opening hours, through activities and meetings in the library room, or through the library's use as a place for creative and artistic expression, and through different learning activities.

The Danish Library Act (2013) states that the main purpose of public libraries is to support enlightenment, education, and cultural activities by making books, magazines, audio books, electronic resources, and other materials accessible.[4] Public libraries are open for all, and every municipality is obligated to administer a library with sections for adults and children. In contrast to the Swedish Library Act, the concept of participation is not mentioned in the Danish act.

However, in other Danish national policy documents, the increased focus on the concept of participation is prevalent. For example, a Danish national report on public libraries describes library users as a resource for user-driven innovation and library development (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier 2010). The report states that such innovations demand self-sufficient users who do not perceive themselves as passive. In addition, the report not only refers to library innovation but also to innovation in society in general, and it emphasizes the need for public involvement in solving social problems (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier 2010, 45).

Our Cases: The Library Plans of Copenhagen and Malmö

Malmö is the third biggest city in Sweden, with approximately 330,000 inhabitants. There are 13 public libraries within the municipality, including Malmö City Library. In addition to the Swedish Library Act, the public libraries in the city, as well as the school libraries, are governed by a common policy document titled *Library Plan 2016–2020: Malmö public- and school libraries* (*Biblioteksplan 2016–2020: Malmös folk- och skolbibliotek*; Malmö stad 2016). This is the policy document we analyze in this article, and hereafter we refer to it as the Malmö library plan.

In preparing this document, the report of the Commission for a Socially Sustainable Malmö (Stigendal and Östergren 2013) played a central role. In the library plan, it is stated that the libraries in Malmö have a mission to work for a socially sustainable Malmö in accordance with the commission's recommendations. In the report from the commission, it is stated that structural factors such as educational level, housing and living conditions, and degree of participation in society contribute to a growing divide between the populations with the best and poorest health conditions in the city (Stigendal and Östergren 2013). Among the factors contributing to a socially sustainable Malmö are three areas that explicitly touch upon the library's mission, and that are in line with the Library Act.[5] These are culture, education, and social networks (Malmö stad 2016, 8).

4. "Lov om biblioteksvirksomhed." Biblioteksstyrelsen.
5. SFS 2013:801.

Copenhagen is the capital city of Denmark. The Copenhagen public libraries consist of 21 branches throughout the city, serving a population of 600,000 inhabitants. There are two main policy documents governing these libraries: the strategy document *Copenhagen Libraries: Strategy 2014–2019* (*Københavns Biblioteker. Strategi 2014–2019*; Københavns Biblioteker 2014) and a complementary document titled *Strengthen the Citizens* (*Styrk Borgerne*; Københavns Biblioteker 2015). We analyze both of these documents in this article. The reasons for such are twofold. First, the documents are closely related and concern different aspects regarding how to govern the libraries during the same time span. Second, compared with the policy document from the Malmö libraries, each of these documents is shorter and more succinct. Together, these documents make up a text that is of suitable reach for our analysis.

Problematizing Participation

We now make use of the concept of problematization to analyze the selected policy documents. First, we discuss the Malmö library plan, and second, we analyze the plans of the Copenhagen libraries. Afterward, we discuss some aspects relating to the policy documents of both cities.

Malmö: Problematizing Inequality

In the Malmö library plan (Malmö stad 2016), the main theme is a commitment to increase social inclusion and equality. The document states that "structural factors contribute to an increasing gap between those with the best and those with the poorest health in Malmö," and that libraries should support and work for social sustainability in the city (Malmö stad 2016, par. 3.2). Three areas from the plan by the Commission for a Social Sustainable Malmö in which libraries play a role are pinpointed as vital in this context: culture and leisure, education, and social networks. It is stated that culture is important to "create increased social integration and cohesiveness," and the library's role as meeting place is expected to strengthen the inhabitants' access to social networks and participation (Malmö stad 2016, par. 3.2). Social networks are seen as related to the ability to participate and to engagement. Education is related to the users' need of language skills and also in terms of strengthening the inhabitants' general education competencies. In the context of representing solutions, we find integration, meetings, social cohesiveness, and participation to be important key concepts.

The considered needs of creating cohesiveness, increasing integration, and strengthening the users' skills implies a lack of social inclusion, a lack of skills, and an existing inequality. Examples of key concepts relating to the problematization are segregation, lacking skills, and inequality. These different types of deficiencies have certain things in common; they are directed toward the individual, they are a sign of nonparticipation, and they could be "treated" by engagement and participation—by taking part in activities in the library, and thereafter in society. Therefore, we consider the problematization—and sometimes the solution—in the Malmö

library plan to be social inclusion. In the ensuing text, we elaborate on the above-mentioned aspects of this problematization.

The first aspect mentioned is that this policy document is clearly directed toward individuals. This may be obvious, because the library is able to act toward individuals but not toward society in general. However, the problems raised, such as inequality and lack of social inclusion, could be seen as structural problems, and the document states that "structural factors contribute to the increasing gap" (Malmö stad 2016, par 3.2). However, by stressing the importance of individual users educating themselves, strengthening their language skills, and getting involved in networking, the structural and societal perspective tends to fade. As such, the Malmö library plan contributes to individualizing the user and making the user responsible for his or her own well-being.

In addition, when the individual is brought to the fore, it is not clear what skills and competencies are taken into consideration. For example, the Malmö library plan (Malmö stad 2016, par 3.2) states that the library is supposed to contribute "to strengthen the language skills in Malmö" and thus create a more just and sustainable future. To accomplish this, it is vital to know which skills the plan refers to. When the need to improve users' "language skills" is mentioned, it refers to a need to improve Swedish language skills. Users who are considered to be lacking in language skills could potentially exceed in other languages, just not in Swedish. By making this remark, we do not want to reduce the importance of Swedish language skills, but we want to stress the need of taking the specific situation into account. This is highlighted when the language skills of librarians are referred to in the library plan, because language skills in that context refers to skills in languages other than Swedish (Malmö stad 2016).

The second aspect concerns a problematization of nonparticipation, which is related to a lack of inclusion. The lack of inclusion is partly understood as a lack of interpersonal meetings and networking, particularly with people of other cultures or lifestyles. The Malmö library plan (Malmö stad 2016, par. 3.4) states that the library, as a meeting place, has a key role in creating a sense of "security and trust." One way of doing this is to create meetings "across borders," with users from different areas of the city. The image of the library as a place where people of different lifestyles and socioeconomic backgrounds can interact is closely related to the notion of the library as a public sphere. By getting users to meet and interact in the library, the library is expected to make users take part in the democratic process and participate in society (Malmö stad 2016).

The third aspect concerns participation as a key factor in solving the above-mentioned problematizations. The Malmö library plan calls for users to participate in the library and its activities, and by doing so to manage problems such as a lack of education, a lack of skills, or a lack of meaningful activities. The document also encourages users to participate in society by the means provided by the library; for example, to develop creative projects or to be digital producers. Accordingly, by making users participate in the library, users are enabled to participate in

society. By making the users involved in the library, the library is also part of the solution to the assumed lack of social inclusion and to the growing gaps in society.

Copenhagen: Problematizing (In)efficiency

Whereas the problematization in the Malmö library plan (Malmö stad 2016) concerns social inclusion, the library plans of Copenhagen (Københavns Biblioteker 2014, 2015) take their point of departure in a desire to make the libraries more efficient. For example, it is stated that the library service needs to be more "target-oriented," the libraries "should make a bigger difference to more inhabitants of Copenhagen," and the libraries should be "more systematic and goal-oriented in order to get more inhabitants of Copenhagen to use the library" (Københavns Biblioteker 2014, 1–2). In addition, it is clarified that the goals will only be met if greater efficiency is achieved by releasing enough resources (Københavns Biblioteker 2015). Thus, we identify limited resources and competitiveness as examples of key concepts that construct the problematization. This points to the fact that the demand for efficiency, at least in part, is of an economic character.

There is an implicit paradox behind the assumed need to make the libraries more efficient. The paradox consists of an explicit aim to keep the current level of service while reaching out to "nonusers," on one hand, and a demand to cut costs, on the other hand. Increased efficiency is the postulated answer to this paradox. Analogous to the Malmö library plan, in which social inclusion is treated with participation, the problematization of efficiency in the Copenhagen library plans is to be solved through participation, in the form of users' self-management in the library. We elaborate and discuss aspects of this paradox next.

The strategy document of the Copenhagen libraries explicitly states that the libraries are subject to budget cuts: "Like other institutions in Copenhagen municipality, the [library] services are due for reductions" (Københavns Biblioteker 2014, 2). Within this reduced economic framework, the libraries are expected to serve more inhabitants and to reach out to nonusers (Københavns Biblioteker 2014). In addition, the current level of service, the user satisfaction, and the number of visits are expected to remain the same (Københavns Biblioteker 2014, 7). Accordingly, the plan of the Copenhagen libraries (Københavns Biblioteker 2014, 1) states, "The biggest challenge is to implement the public libraries' goals of favoring enlightenment, education, and cultural activity in a society that demands more of the individual citizen."

Increased user participation is outlined as a technology that can solve this problem. That is, by letting the users become "a resource" for library development, to a greater degree, as well as "innovators" (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier 2010), the library organization will become more efficient and progress. Staff-less opening hours are one way of letting the users become a resource, by making users self-govern. During staff-less opening hours, users can log in, enter, and manage the library by themselves. According to the strategy document, "increased self-management" is expected from the libraries (Københavns Biblioteker 2014, 3). Accordingly,

key concepts used in the documents relating to the represented solution are efficiency, self-management, innovation, and participation.

The participatory user who self-manages in the library is a prerequisite for implementing the outlined efficient library service. This participatory subject is also explicit in the policy document: "The point of departure is a trust in the citizens and a belief that citizens who can, also want to, manage by themselves" (Københavns Biblioteker 2015, par. 9). Users must be willing to act and to participate in both managing their own visit—for example, searching, finding, and accessing materials by themselves—and engaging in and creating arrangements in the library (Københavns Biblioteker 2014, 1). In addition, these self-governing users need to be responsible and have sufficient competencies to self-govern. Therefore, the social character of the library is important for making users feel responsible for each other and the community.

Traditionally, library services are for all. However, in the Copenhagen library plans, there is a shift toward users who are unable to self-manage and, most of all, toward nonusers. In other words, users who can manage by themselves should not "occupy" the librarians' time and resources with "very time-consuming individual guidance" (Københavns Biblioteker 2014, 2). Instead, these users are expected to self-govern and make resources available for outreach programs. The aim is to reach more—and other—residents of Copenhagen. In this way, a division between users and nonusers is constructed, and nonusers are targeted to transform them into users.

The Same Answer, Different Problematizations

In society, there is a tendency of transferring responsibility from the state onto an individual level and to the civil society. This is visible in the Malmö library plan and in the Copenhagen library plans. This shift can be understood as a form of "governing through community," where the citizens are implicitly supposed to act as "moral beings," with their own networks and obligations toward each other in the social sphere (Dahlstedt 2002, 1). The focus on relations and building mutual trust between individuals and as an active civil society is closely related to theories of social capital as a central aspect of developing and sustaining democratic societies (e.g., Putnam 2000). According to Miller and Rose (2008, 214), the problem of governing individuals in the advanced liberal society is to "find means by which individuals may be made responsible through their individual choices for themselves and those to whom they owe allegiance." In this context, mutual trust and social capital are effects of practices and arrangements, partly effectuated in libraries, that integrate subjects "into a moral nexus of identifications and allegiances" (Miller and Rose 2008, 214) when the individuals are about to make their choices. As such, libraries contribute to the construction of individualized and responsible subjects that can be governed by advanced liberal technologies.

The policy documents of Malmö and Copenhagen both emphasize the libraries' role in educating individuals in digital skills. By providing courses in digital literacy, the library becomes

a means of making citizens responsible for their lives. Digital skills become a requirement when more responsibility is put on the individual to handle everything, from finding health-care information to contacting the social services, by using the internet (see Bella 2010). Educating users in digital literacy can be understood as a way for the libraries to empower the users and, consequently, uphold a relationship of power (Cruikshank 1999; Bella 2010). However, digital skills are also necessary for questioning, and trying to contest, societal inequalities through communicative actions. Users who access and incorporate those skills via the library could potentially empower themselves (Bella 2010). Hence, both the transitive and intransitive meanings of empowerment are prevalent in the library's educational activities.

In both policy documents, the library as a positive force in society is self-evident. By entering the library, users are taking part in society, and taking part could be considered the first step in building a sustainable and democratic society. Therefore, nonusers are problematic because they do not even participate in the (democratic) game (see Balling and Kann-Christensen 2013). The Copenhagen library plan (Københavns Biblioteker 2014) clearly aims at reaching nonusers and users who are assumed to lack necessary competencies. However, it is never clarified how a nonuser is defined. In the Malmö library plan (Malmö stad 2016), the aim of reaching nonusers is not prevalent. Instead, the policy document states that the library should focus on users in most need of library services (Malmö stad 2016). In the Copenhagen library plan, the assumed lack of competencies refers to users who are unable to manage the library by themselves, whereas in the Malmö library plan, the supposed need of library services refers to users' needs in a societal context. Thus, both the Malmö and the Copenhagen plans aim at activating the inhabitants of their respective cities, to make them competent by participating in the library.

In the Malmö library plan, the problem represented is of social character. It is social integration, communication, and networks—and neither economic equality nor efficiency—that are emphasized. This relates to the description of neoliberal governing as a "game of inequalities" (Ryan 2011, 770) because the importance of involving disadvantaged inhabitants is emphasized rather than how to eliminate the sources of disadvantage. The library is able to contribute to a solution, for example, by facilitating interpersonal meetings. In addition, the library as a meeting place is delegated as a "key function" for making Malmö a more "safe and secure place" where, for example, people from different areas can meet and social and professional networks can develop (Malmö stad 2016). Thus, the focus on strengthening social inclusion and equality is a form of risk management (Dean 2010, 205–27).

The social character of governing in the Malmö library plan is also reflected in the role given to librarians, because the text assigns librarians a crucial role in making the users participate. For example, librarians are highlighted under the heading "Library staff and library competencies," under which the mediation of reading and culture is discussed (Malmö stad 2016). In other words, the concept of participation in the Malmö library plan includes the activities of librarians. In contrast, in the Copenhagen library plans (Københavns Biblioteker 2014, 2015), the

librarians are told what not to do and which users not to focus on. In this text, user involvement in some cases is even laid out as a replacement to librarians' activities. For example, users, to a high degree, are expected to plan and carry out "arrangements, reading clubs and mediation" (Københavns Biblioteker 2014, 1). However, there are also social aspects of governing in the Copenhagen plans. For example, the document states that users who meet and interact in the library get "smarter together" (Københavns Biblioteker 2014, 2). We find the social character of governing in Copenhagen to consist of users who govern themselves and each other, without assistance from librarians.

The possibility of making the library more efficient is presupposed in the Copenhagen libraries' policy document. To effectuate this efficiency, the users need to self-govern to a higher degree. This is described as an opportunity for the users: "By increased self-service, more digital material, and new forms of digital service, it is possible for most users to be more self-governing" (Københavns Biblioteker 2014, 1). Also, self-governing is considered something the users themselves request (Københavns Biblioteker 2015). This self-governing represents another aspect of user participation, when compared with how participation is outlined in the Malmö library plan. If the concept of participation in the Malmö library plan is seen as a technology for increasing social inclusion and cohesion, the concept of participation in the Copenhagen libraries plan is a technology of making the library more efficient by encouraging users to self-govern. These different meanings of the concept of participation also relate to different ideals of the library users. In the Malmö policy document, the targeted users are considered to lack education, to lack proper language skills, to lack meaningful leisure activities, and to lack social networks. In contrast, in the Copenhagen policy documents, most of the users are believed to be able—and willing—to self-govern.

Zooming out, Malmö's "problem" could be described as a complex social problem, or what Bacchi (2016, 7) refers to as a "wicked problem." Wicked problems denote "messy" and "fuzzy" problems that are multicausal and require intersectoral interventions. In the Malmö case, the public library is one of several actors that are seen as necessary for building a socially sustainable city. The library's increased participation in societal matters, and intensified relations with other institutions and organizations, is seen as part of the solution, but so is the (increased) participation of the library users and, maybe even more so, the nonusers. From a governing point of view, this can be understood as the library increasing its governing through relations, collaboration, and networking.

When it comes to the citizens, the Malmö library plan aims to construct users who engage in society, with the purpose of creating social cohesiveness and a sustainable city. The notion of participation is therefore twofold: the library is to increase its societal role among other actors in the city and, at the same time, the residents of the city ought to become more involved with how the library is being used, and participate in different forms of activities, exercise influence in their surroundings, and express themselves.

In the case of Copenhagen, the problem to be solved is also of a complex nature, but instead of being described as of a social character, it takes its starting point in a problematic financial situation for the libraries. The library is not seen as one of several actors that should work to promote a more inclusive and sustainable city through increased societal participation; instead the participating citizen is seen as a necessity for managing cost-cutting in the libraries. From a governing point of view, the library plan constructs self-governing individuals who can and are willing to act independently and to take responsibility for their own lives in the library and in society at large.

The notion of participation in the respective policy documents constructs two partly differing ideals of citizenship: one that relates to citizenship as a form of doing (acts of citizenship) and can be seen as users constructing participation on their own terms, and one that relates to acts of citizenship as a demand, when the library leaves users no choice but to participate according to the library's rules. In the case of citizenship as acts of doing, the user can decide to participate or choose not to participate at all, which also relates to participation in its intransitive meaning (see Olsson Dahlquist 2019). From a more fixed perspective of citizenship, the user must participate to not be excluded, which relates to participation in its transitive meaning. Neither of these ideals of citizenship is exclusively prevalent in either of the policy documents. However, we consider the possibilities of users constructing participation on their own terms to be more visible in the Malmö library plan (Malmö stad 2016).

Concluding Analysis

Foucault (2007) considers governmentality to be an art of government. This government consists both of "rationalities that construct problems . . . in certain ways" and of "technologies that would be employed to make them actionable" (Gray et al. 2015, 382). We find the problem constructed in the Malmö library plan to be one of inequality and a lack of cohesiveness, which is a problematization of social inclusion. The technology employed is participation, to make the users take part in the library and in society. In contrast, the problem constructed in the Copenhagen library plans is an assumed need to make the library more efficient to handle an increasing number of visitors, and reach out to nonusers, with a downsized budget. The technology employed consists of participation in the form of users' self-governing. The meaning of the concept of participation differs in the policy documents because the concept is related to different problematizations.

The analysis of the policy documents highlights how the meaning given to the concept of participation depends on the specific context. Participation includes the possibilities of both a transitive and an intransitive meaning, depending on what the problem is represented to be. In the context of budget cuts and a neoliberal rationality aiming at efficiency, participation is a technology to govern users to self-govern: users are expected to manage by themselves in the library and in society. However, participation also holds possibilities of resisting inequalities.

Further discussion and research are needed on how libraries can contribute to users' abilities to not only take part in the game, but to change the rules of the game.

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